Characterize Without Acting: The Powerlessness of Belgian Secret Services in the Face of the Muslim Brotherhood Threat

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Qualifying Without Acting

The Impotence of Belgian Intelligence Services in the Face of the Brotherist Threat

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Critical Examination of Report No. 2025.319
by the Standing Intelligence Agencies Review Committee (Comite R/I)

"Muslim Brotherhood: Update of Control Investigation 2021.287"
Declassified version of 17 March 2026

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The following analysis examines the report from the standpoint of its methodological rigour, the balance of its sources, and the internal coherence of its conclusions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of the Document

This document is a critical analysis, produced by CERIF, of Report 2025.319 by the Standing Committee for the Oversight of Intelligence and Security Services (Comite R/I), entitled "Muslim Brotherhood -- Update of Control Investigation 2021.287". This report was commissioned by the Parliamentary Monitoring Committee (Commission parlementaire de suivi) on 10 July 2025, in the wake of the publication of the French report "Muslim Brotherhood and Political Islamism in France" (21 May 2025), which designated Belgium as a "European crossroads" for the Muslim Brotherhood.

Key Findings

1. A report that qualifies the threat with one hand and erases it with the other

The Belgian intelligence services (PFCECT) explicitly qualify the Muslim Brotherhood ideology as "extremist" and the threat as "high and priority". They identify four non-violent threat vectors: ideological dissemination, harm to social cohesion, subversion of the democratic process, and capture of public funding. Yet the analytical section of the report systematically relativises this qualification by relying on the absence of a violent threat -- a criterion that the services' own definition does not regard as determinative.

2. A systematic bias in the choice of sources

The Comite R/I cites four commentators on the French report -- Olivier Roy, Franck Fregosi, Michael Privot, and Corinne Torrekens -- all of whom are critical of that report. No researcher who validated all or part of its findings is mentioned. The Committee thus creates a false impression of academic consensus against the French report.

3. An undisclosed conflict of interest

Michael Privot, presented as a neutral "Islamologist", was formerly Secretary General of FEMYSO (an organisation identified in the French report as linked to the Muslim Brotherhood) and Executive Director of the European Network Against Racism (ENAR). Failing to disclose this conflict of interest in a report by a parliamentary oversight body is a methodological failure.

4. The factual allegations of the French report left unevaluated

The French report makes specific factual allegations about Belgium: funding of the LMB by Qatar and Kuwait (EUR 1.2 million), reconstitution of the CCIF as CCIE via Brussels, control of schools, instrumentalisation of the MAGIC project. None of these allegations is individually evaluated. The Comite R/I merely relies on the PFCECT's blanket position that "the threat analysis diverges", without specifying on which points.

5. Six years of warnings, zero consequences

Since 2020, the same figure of "approximately one hundred individuals" active has been carried forward without reassessment, despite the creation of the PFCECT, the relocation of French actors to Belgium, and the development of online Brotherist education. The most structurally significant recommendation -- integrity screening for sensitive public positions, arising from the Haouach affair (2021) -- has not produced a single piece of legislation in five years.

6. Significant blind spots

Hamas in Belgium is dealt with in a footnote of a 29-page report. Online Brotherist education, identified as a new vector, is the subject of no recommendation. The rejection of the French claim about five Brussels municipalities being "controlled" is based on press commentary, not on verification by the intelligence services.

Conclusion

Report 2025.319 is an institutionally useful document in its factual elements (common definition, CIIB alert, confirmation of the relocation of actors), but profoundly problematic in its analytical section. It reveals a Belgian institutional malaise: the services qualify the threat, OCAM ignores it, and the Comite R/I, rather than adjudicating, drowns this symptomatic divergence in a profusion of media reactions that serve as a substitute for analysis.

Recommendations are formulated by CERIF.

1. About Report 2025.319 of the Standing Committee for the Oversight of Intelligence and Security Services (Comite R/I)

This report, entitled "Muslim Brotherhood -- Update of Control Investigation 2021.287", dated 17 March 2026, was commissioned by the Parliamentary Monitoring Committee (Commission parlementaire de suivi P&R) on 10 July 2025, in the wake of the publication, on 20 May 2025, of the French report "Muslim Brotherhood and Political Islamism in France", according to which Belgium is the European hub of the Muslim Brotherhood, with a dense network of associations and organisations on its territory.

The Comite R/I requested from the intelligence services, as early as 28 May 2025, and from OCAM on 3 June 2025, a detailed assessment of how they monitor the Muslim Brotherhood phenomenon and the follow-up given to the recommendations made in control investigation report 2021.287.

Its triple mandate was:

- to update the picture of the Muslim Brotherhood threat in Belgium;
- to evaluate the follow-up to the 2021 recommendations;
- to take a position on the allegations in the French report concerning Belgium.

2. Why This Report, and How the Various Intelligence Services Operate

The key Belgian intelligence and oversight bodies discussed in the report are:

- **Comite R/I:** Standing Committee for the Oversight of Intelligence and Security Services (Comite permanent de Controle des services de renseignement et de securite)
- **VSSE:** State Security Service (Surete de l'Etat)
- **SGRS:** General Intelligence and Security Service (Service general du Renseignement et de la Securite)
- **PFCECT:** Platform Counter Extremism & Counter Terrorism
- **OCAM:** Coordination Unit for Threat Analysis (Organe de Coordination pour l'Analyse de la Menace)

2.1. The Comite R/I: Standing Committee for the Oversight of Intelligence and Security Services

Report 2025.319 is part of a sequence of work carried out by the Comite R/I since 2020. The Committee identifies shortcomings, issues recommendations, notes that they remain without effect, and the cycle begins again.

2020 -- The VSSE annual report qualifies the Muslim Brotherhood as a "high and priority threat", estimates the number of active individuals at approximately one hundred, and identifies 39

associations and two umbrella organisations (Ligue des Musulmans de Belgique, Council of European Muslims). It should be noted that these figures were carried over unchanged for five years, without methodological reassessment. Two investigations were then opened simultaneously.

Investigation 2021.287, the first systematic investigation into the Muslim Brotherhood, found that the VSSE and SGRS qualified the movement as dangerous but noted an "absence of coordination between the services". The Committee formulated five recommendations.

Investigation 2021.285, the so-called "Haouach affair", followed the publication on social media by the Observatoire des Fondamentalismes a Bruxelles of a possible collusion between Ihsane Haouach, appointed as government commissioner, and the Muslim Brotherhood. It brought to light the total absence of any prior verification mechanism. The Committee's investigation revealed that the VSSE had finalised a warning note as early as 3 June 2021, but had withheld it for over a month, judging the document "politically sensitive" and not wishing to "be instrumentalised". This affair concretely demonstrates what the reports describe abstractly: a recognised entryism threat that political considerations prevent from being disclosed and addressed.

2022 -- An organisational response was provided. The PFCECT was created, pooling VSSE-SGRS capabilities. But while the structural advance was real, no investment was made: the SGRS saw it rather as an opportunity to "reduce the need to recruit additional staff".

2023-2024 -- The acknowledgement of impotence by the Committee's president. Serge Lipszyc publicly stated that "the risks do not always seem to be taken at their true measure" and denounced entryism. He again proposed the screening of civil servants, which remained unapplied. The Comite R/I reiterated its recommendations, which remained without effect.

2025 -- The French report: an external shock. The publication of the French report on the Muslim Brotherhood in May 2025 triggered, in an emergency, a first genuine analytical advance: the CIIB alert, a note dated 24 June.

Report 2025.319, examined here, was then produced. **It confines itself to minimising the threat and maximising the few measures taken.**

Six years after the first warnings, the report carries forward the same estimates, the same divergences between services, and notes that the post-Haouach screening recommendation has remained a dead letter. Knowledge of the Brotherist phenomenon in Belgium has not substantively progressed and remains far below expectations.

It is this finding of institutional immobility that justifies the present analysis and the recommendations that conclude it.

2.2. The State Security Service (VSSE): The Lead Agency on the Muslim Brotherhood

The VSSE is the Belgian civilian intelligence service. In the institutional landscape described by the report, it occupies a central position in monitoring the Brotherist movement: it has been designated, de facto, as the lead agency on the Muslim Brotherhood. Since 2024, all documents published on the Muslim Brotherhood by the VSSE "systematically represent the single and

common viewpoint of both intelligence services expressed through the PFCECT".

The VSSE was the first to produce a public assessment of the Brotherist threat. In its 2020 annual report (p. 13, cited at para. 23), it estimated the number of individuals actively participating in the dissemination of Muslim Brotherhood ideology in Belgium at "approximately one hundred", and the number of Brotherist-leaning organisations at several dozen. This figure is repeated without modification in the 2024 report (para. 28) and the 2025 report (para. 29).

On the question of threat qualification, the VSSE's position is unambiguous: it considers the Muslim Brotherhood movement to be an "extremist movement representing a high and priority threat" (para. 26). This qualification nevertheless coexists with a recurrent assertion in the annual reports: "The Muslim Brotherhood does not directly pose a threat in terms of violent actions in Belgium or against Belgian interests" (para. 28, 2024 annual report).

This juxtaposition reveals the fundamental tension in the Belgian system: the VSSE qualifies the threat as extremist and priority, but evaluates it primarily against the yardstick of physical violence -- even though the definition it has itself adopted identifies four non-violent threat vectors (ideological dissemination, harm to social cohesion, democratic subversion, capture of public funds).

In accordance with the 2021 recommendations, the VSSE states that it has developed, in consultation with Belgian intelligence and security partners, "a common vision and strategy around the Muslim Brotherhood phenomenon and a shared definition". It uses its annual reports (rather vague, it must be said) to inform and raise awareness among the general public.

2.3. The SGRS: Monitoring Focused on Defence

The SGRS (Service general du Renseignement et de la Securite) is the Belgian military intelligence service. Unlike the VSSE, whose mandate covers the full spectrum of domestic threats, the SGRS concentrates its action on the Muslim Brotherhood threat specifically against Defence, in accordance with its statutory missions.

In 2021, the Comite R/I had recommended that the SGRS conduct an analysis to determine whether the resources it deployed to monitor the Muslim Brotherhood were sufficient given the estimated risk of an attempt to influence Defence. The Committee also invited it to organise internal briefings for designated security officers.

The SGRS response is revealing of its posture. It informed the Comite R/I that "since 2024, all documents on the Muslim Brotherhood published by the VSSE as the lead agency systematically represent the single and common viewpoint of both intelligence services expressed through the PFCECT". The SGRS considers that the establishment of the PFCECT had the benefit of "pooling human capabilities in the fight against terrorism and extremism, including the Muslim Brotherhood, thereby reducing the need to recruit additional staff".

In substance, the SGRS has offloaded most of its Muslim Brotherhood monitoring to the PFCECT and the VSSE, while claiming to provide a general training course on terrorism and extremism. This posture raises questions: Brotherist influence in military circles or within defence structures does not fall under the category of classic terrorist threat but may take the form of institutional entryism that general training modules do not specifically cover.

2.4. OCAM: An Anti-Terrorism Service That Does Not Work on the Muslim Brotherhood

The Coordination Unit for Threat Analysis (OCAM) works in close collaboration with its partner services within the T.E.R. Strategy (Terrorism, Extremism, Radicalisation). In principle, it monitors non-violent but potentially destabilising ideological movements. Yet as early as 2021, when questioned by the Comite R/I, OCAM had replied that it had never drafted a note or study on the Muslim Brotherhood.

It did not identify any direct threat from this movement to Belgium, mentioned neither a short- nor medium-term threat, nor confirmed the high level of the threat -- contrary to the analysis of the two intelligence services. OCAM reiterated this position on 3 June 2025.

This divergence is largely explained by a question of institutional scope. OCAM is structurally designed to assess the terrorist threat -- that is, the risk of violent action. It is not equipped to measure a threat of the entryism, institutional subversion, or systemic influence type, which constitute precisely the Muslim Brotherhood's modus operandi (as defined by the PFCECT itself).

2.5. The PFCECT: Origin, Necessity, and Substance of the Platform

Origin and Necessity

Before 2022, the monitoring of extremism and terrorism in Belgium was divided between two intelligence services operating according to distinct logics: the VSSE on the civilian and domestic front, the SGRS on the military and Defence front. This duality created risks of redundancy, gaps in information sharing, and divergences in threat assessment. The creation in 2022 of the Platform Counter Extremism & Counter Terrorism (PFCECT) responds to the need for integrated cooperation. The two intelligence services have pooled their capabilities for combating extremism and terrorism. As the SGRS itself emphasised, the platform made it possible to "pool human capabilities", reducing the need for additional recruitment and creating a single and common viewpoint for both services.

Substance and Outputs

The PFCECT has produced several achievements on the Brotherist dossier:

- **A common definition of the phenomenon:** the Muslim Brotherhood movement is defined as "a political-social Islamic movement, hierarchical, pyramidal, and decentralised", whose ultimate goal is "to establish a regime in which religious fact determines all aspects of the lives of individuals, society, and the State" (page 3).
- **An explicit qualification of extremism:** in its note to the authorities of 24 June 2025 (para. 21), the PFCECT affirms that "the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood is extremist" and that it "endangers the achievements of the rule of law".
- **The identification of four operational objectives** (para. 21): ideological dissemination; harm to social cohesion; subversion of the democratic process; capture of public funding.
- **A quantitative estimate:** approximately one hundred active individuals and several dozen Brotherist-leaning organisations in Belgium.

- **Targeted alerts to authorities:** notably the unclassified note of 29 April 2025 (NA/2025/679), addressed to the Walloon Government and the Federal Minister of Justice, signalling that "the lobbying and networking activities of the Muslim Brotherhood represent a risk to political institutions", on the occasion of the appointment of the CIIB to the Walloon Council for the Fight Against Racism.

Conclusions of the PFCECT

Its conclusions are: no threats because no money.

- Absence of "major projects" by the Muslim Brotherhood due to insufficient funding; development of new online education offerings (?).
- The PFCECT expects "the threat posed by the Muslim Brotherhood to remain stable over the next five years", with ideological dissemination limited by the decline in their financial revenues.

The Paradox of the PFCECT's Position

The PFCECT produces substantial work in defining, qualifying, and alerting. It explicitly acknowledges the extremist character of Muslim Brotherhood ideology, identifies non-violent but destabilising operational methods, and issues specific alerts on cases of institutional entryism (the CIIB case, see below).

Yet, faced with the French report, it adopts a minimalist posture: it "sees no indication suggesting that there is Islamist control in Belgium" and considers Muslim Brotherhood influence to be "more limited than what the French report suggests".

This paradox raises questions: either the threat is extremist, high, and priority -- in which case the minimisation vis-a-vis the French report is inconsistent -- or it is indeed limited -- in which case the qualification of "high and priority threat" is over-determined. The Comite R/I does not resolve this tension; it presents it as a divergence between services, without drawing any conclusions.

2.6. Definition of "Muslim Brother" in the Report

The report presents the definition of the Muslim Brotherhood adopted by both the VSSE and the SGRS (the PFCECT):

> *"The definition of the phenomenon can be summarised as follows: it is a political-social Islamic movement, which has roots in many countries, including Belgium. The Brotherhood is organised in a hierarchical, pyramidal, and decentralised manner. Its ultimate goal is to establish a regime in which religious fact determines all aspects of the lives of individuals, society, and the State. The Muslim Brotherhood cultivate a polished external image, which contrasts with certain internal discourses."*
>
> -- Report 2025.319, page 3

The PFCECT estimates the number of individuals located in Belgium actively participating in the dissemination of Muslim Brotherhood ideology at approximately one hundred. The PFCECT assesses that there are several dozen Brotherist-leaning organisations in Belgium.

This definition (p. 20) explicitly qualifies Muslim Brotherhood ideology as extremist, acknowledges the double discourse, and identifies four distinct threat vectors:

> *"The ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood is extremist. Their long-term objective of creating a society in which every aspect of life is governed by religious norms endangers the achievements of the rule of law."*
>
> -- PFCECT, note to the authorities of 24 June 2025 (para. 21, declassified)

The report identifies four operational objectives of the Muslim Brotherhood (para. 21):

- ideological dissemination;
- harm to social cohesion;
- subversion of the democratic process;
- capture of public funding to achieve these ends.

2.7. The CIIB Case

The report notes that the PFCECT very explicitly alerted the Walloon Government and the Federal Minister of Justice (para. 31), on 29 April 2025, regarding the risks associated with a Brotherist structure such as the Collectif pour l'Inclusion et contre l'Islamophobie en Belgique (CIIB -- Collective for Inclusion and Against Islamophobia in Belgium), prior to the appointment of this organisation to the Walloon Council for the Fight Against Racism.

> *"The lobbying and networking activities of the Muslim Brotherhood represent a risk to political institutions."*
>
> -- PFCECT, unclassified note of 29 April 2025 (NA/2025/679), cited at para. 31

The services point to the threat of interference by Muslim Brotherhood members who present themselves as "neutral", "experts", and "the only legitimate and credible representatives of Muslim populations in Europe". In particular, they highlight the risks of influencing the democratic decision-making process, diverting public subsidies, and the reputational risk for institutions associating with the Muslim Brotherhood.

The report confirms the relocation of Muslim Brotherhood actors from France to Belgium (notably the CCIF, which became CCIE in Brussels), a direct consequence of French security pressures: "The security pressures of the French authorities on the Muslim Brotherhood have led to a relocation of certain actors to Belgium" (Report 2025.319, para. 30).

The report confines itself to this single example. Has it truly investigated the issue?

3. Intelligence Services That Acknowledge the Threat in Theory, While Simultaneously Refuting the Importance Attributed to It in the French Report

3.1. The Belgian Services' Critique of the French Report

The Belgian intelligence services, which show attentiveness to the threat, say they have serious reservations regarding the conclusions drawn in the French report.

The PFCECT "sees no indication suggesting that there is Islamist control in Belgium". The influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in Belgium is assessed by the PFCECT as being more limited than what the French report suggests.

3.2. OCAM's Position

OCAM makes recommendations on how to handle the threat (prevention, community cohesion, etc.) -- except that it does not study it. Let us recall that as early as 2021, when questioned by the Comite R/I, OCAM had replied that it had never drafted a note or study on the Muslim Brotherhood.

> *"OCAM works in close collaboration with its partner services within the T.E.R. Strategy (Terrorism, Extremism, Radicalisation). In this framework, monitoring of non-violent but potentially destabilising ideological movements (in that they disseminate an extremist narrative) is ensured. The finding made by the French authorities, evoking a strategy of discreet influence within society, can, to a certain extent, be transposed to the Belgian context. However, local dynamics differ, and the phenomenon is generally perceived as less concerning there. In Belgium, the approach adopted favours awareness-raising, prevention, and the strengthening of social cohesion. The objective is to preserve community relations and avoid divisions, while maintaining appropriate vigilance."*
>
> -- OCAM

OCAM therefore did not identify any direct threat from this movement to Belgium. It mentioned neither a short- nor medium-term threat, nor confirmed the high level of the threat -- contrary to the analysis of the two intelligence services.

OCAM reiterated this position on 3 June 2025 to the Comite R/I.

3.3. Developments Noted by the PFCECT

On 24 June 2025, the intelligence services (PFCECT) described to the authorities the presence of the Muslim Brotherhood in Belgium.

Among the developments noted, the services point to the "absence of 'major projects'" due to insufficient funding; the "development of new online education offerings" disseminating Muslim Brotherhood ideology and polarising discourses; and the withdrawal of certain actors present in France towards Belgium.

The services specify that they expect "the threat posed by the Muslim Brotherhood to remain stable over the next five years", and that initiatives for ideological dissemination and recruitment will remain limited given their financial difficulties (about which we learn nothing).

The influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in Belgium is considered by the PFCECT as being more limited than what the French report suggests.

On what basis these claims rest, the report does not say.

3.4. What Underlies the Negative Reaction to the French Report

Section 3.2, entitled "A Controversial Report (French) and Contested Conclusions" (paras. 38-47), shows that the report takes a position against the allegations of the French report.

Over two full pages, the Comite R/I exclusively compiles criticisms of the French report published by the MI on 21 May 2025, essentially confining itself to citing experts and researchers who expressed criticism of the report in the press.

A warning was also issued about the political instrumentalisation of a report described as "much less catastrophist than what people make it say" and which "essentially shows that the Muslim Brotherhood is in decline". While praising the historical description of the movement, judged comprehensive and well-documented, several researchers point to the "alarmist tone" of the report, reflecting a "moral panic" in France on these issues.

The experts summoned by the Comite R/I express concern about an excessive focus on the Muslim Brotherhood, "disproportionate to their actual threat and weight", to the detriment of more serious threats in a context of limited resources.

The Comite R/I cites four commentators, all critical of the French report:

> **1. Olivier Roy** -- cited via *L'Obs* (23 May 2025). Characterises the report as a "moral panic rhetoric" (para. 40).
>
> **2. Franck Fregosi** -- cited via *Le Monde* and *France Inter*. Denounces an "alarmist tone" and questions the "geopolitical considerations" that guided the choice to target the Muslim Brotherhood rather than Salafists (paras. 40, 42).
>
> **3. Michael Privot** -- cited as an "Islamologist" contesting the title of "European crossroads" attributed to Belgium (para. 44).
>
> **4. Corinne Torrekens** -- cited via her book *Islams de Belgique* for the phrase on the "label-bogeyman" (para. 46).

Media reference presenting the report as controversial: Ayad C., Couvelaire L., "'Entryism' of the Muslim Brotherhood in France: what the controversial report contains", *Le Monde*, 22 May 2025.

No recognised academic who validated all or part of the French report's findings is cited: neither Hugo Micheron, nor Bernard Rougier, nor Gilles Kepel, nor Florence Bergeaud-Blackler (the present report's author), nor any French intelligence analyst.

The Committee creates the false impression of an academic consensus against the French report.

3.5. An Undisclosed Conflict of Interest

The case of the expert Michael Privot merits particular attention. The Comite R/I presents him as an Islamologist contesting the conclusions of the French report (para. 44). But:

Michael Privot was Secretary General of FEMYSO (Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations), an organisation explicitly identified in the French report as linked to the Muslim Brotherhood (p. 34 of the French report, cited at para. 77 of the Comite R/I report).

Although he publicly announced his departure from the Brotherhood after denying his membership for years, he continued to hold positions of responsibility (notably as Executive Director) at the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), an organisation regularly identified as a vector of Brotherist influence at the European level.

Citing Privot as a neutral commentator on a report that precisely evaluates the organisations in which he held leadership positions constitutes, at the very least, a methodological failure if not an ethical one.

Failing to disclose this conflict of interest in a report by a parliamentary oversight body is incomprehensible, and indeed concerning.

3.6. An Activist Register

The report adopts, in its analytical section, a vocabulary borrowed from the anti-Islamophobia activist register. Two formulations are particularly problematic:

> *"More generally denounced is the policy of suspicion fostered by the report, by erecting into suspect behaviours the most ordinary Islamic practices (halal food, wearing the veil, etc.), that is, the simple 'urban visibility of Islam'."*
>
> -- Report 2025.319, para. 45

The expression "policy of suspicion" (para. 45) belongs to the activist vocabulary, not to intelligence analysis. The body tasked with overseeing the intelligence services here uses the same register as the organisations it is supposed to help monitor.

> *"The label of 'Muslim Brother' serves as a veritable bogeyman in public opinion, the risk then being to delegitimise as a Brother any movement or any organisation structured around openly Muslim personalities engaged on themes such as community relations or the fight against Islamophobia."*
>
> -- Torrekens C., Islams de Belgique, cited at para. 46

This quotation, reproduced without critical distance, amounts to suggesting that any identification of a link between an organisation and the Muslim Brotherhood risks being equated with stigmatisation.

This is precisely the discursive strategy that the services' own definition describes at para. 21: "the Muslim Brotherhood never reveal their affiliation to the Brotherhood and deny any connection with it".

The report thus contradicts itself: its factual section (para. 21) describes the denial of affiliation as a strategy; its analytical section (para. 46) legitimises this denial by pathologising

vigilance.

3.7. The French Report Is Judged by Standards the Comite R/I Does Not Apply to Itself

The Comite R/I criticises the French report for the "absence of systematic source referencing" (para. 39). Yet the French report's authors acknowledge this themselves: they are commissioned senior civil servants, not researchers. The French report is an administrative document, not a peer-reviewed article.

The Comite R/I does not apply this same standard to itself. Its own report contains "summaries of classified paragraphs" (paras. 49, 68, 70) that the reader must accept without any possibility of verification, as well as numerous references to unpublished confidential notes.

4. The Systematic Minimisation of the Threat

4.1. A Figure Frozen for Five Years

The estimate of "approximately one hundred individuals" actively participating in the dissemination of Muslim Brotherhood ideology in Belgium has been unchanged since the 2020 VSSE annual report (p. 13), cited at para. 23. This same figure is repeated in 2024 (para. 28) and in 2025 (para. 29).

The French report advances the figure of 200 activists (para. 77). The Comite R/I notes this divergence (para. 42) but neither explains nor adjudicates it. It raises no question about the counting methodology or about why this figure has not evolved despite:

- the creation of the PFCECT and the strengthening of capabilities;
- the relocation of French actors to Belgium, which the report itself signals (para. 30);
- the development of new online education initiatives (para. 30).

4.2. The Confusion Between Violent Threat and Systemic Threat

The report is structured around a recurrent assertion:

> *"The Muslim Brotherhood does not directly pose a threat in terms of violent actions in Belgium or against Belgian interests."*
>
> -- Report 2025.319, para. 28 (extract from VSSE 2024 Annual Report)

This sentence is used as though it exhausted the question of the threat. Yet the services' own definition (para. 21) identifies four **non-violent threats**: dissemination of an extremist ideology, harm to social cohesion, subversion of the democratic process, and diversion of public funding.

OCAM pushes this logic to the extreme:

> *"OCAM does not observe concrete threats linked to the Brotherist movement in recent years."*
>
> -- OCAM, response to the Comite R/I of 3 June 2025, cited at para. 51

The Comite R/I never points out that OCAM is structurally designed to assess the terrorist threat and that it is not equipped to measure a threat of the entryism or institutional subversion type. The PFCECT/OCAM divergence is noted but never analytically resolved.

4.3. The Factual Allegations of the French Report Left Unevaluated

The report reproduces in Annex 1 six extracts from the French report concerning Belgium (paras. 74-79). These extracts contain precise factual allegations:

- funding of the LMB by Qatar and Kuwait to the tune of EUR 1.2 million;
- 60 former Belgian students of the IESH at Chateau-Chinon forming the core of the Belgian movement;
- reconstitution of the CCIF (dissolved in France) as CCIE via Belgium;
- control of the Belgian halal butchers' association;

- five schools under control, using translations of manuals produced by the CEM;
- instrumentalisation of the MAGIC project by the CIIB for targeted legal proceedings;
- "multiplication of territories controlled by Islamists" in Belgium.

None of these allegations is individually evaluated. The Committee merely relies on the PFCECT's blanket position: "the threat analysis [...] diverges" (para. 50). The reader does not know on which specific points this analysis diverges and on which it converges.

> *"Although the description of the overall situation of the Muslim Brotherhood in Belgium is partly factual, the analysis of the Muslim Brotherhood threat and Islamic extremism in Belgium presented in this report diverges from that of the PFCECT."*
>
> -- PFCECT, confidential note of 24 June 2025, cited at para. 50 (declassified)

The phrase "partly factual" is revealing: it acknowledges the materiality of some of the alleged facts, but the report never specifies which part is factual and which part is not.

For a parliamentary oversight body, this level of imprecision is a dereliction.

5. Recommendations Against the Muslim Brotherhood That Are Never Followed Up

The Comite R/I had formulated five recommendations in 2021:

- The VSSE has, since 2022, developed in consultation with Belgian intelligence and security partners, "a common vision and strategy around the Muslim Brotherhood phenomenon and a shared definition".
- The Comite R/I welcomed the VSSE's ambition to produce a brochure on the Muslim Brotherhood and disseminate it widely for awareness-raising purposes. The VSSE has used its annual reports to inform and raise awareness among the general public about the Muslim Brotherhood.
- The Comite R/I recommended that the SGRS conduct, in 2022, an analysis to determine whether the resources deployed by the SGRS to monitor the Muslim Brotherhood were sufficient given the estimated probability of a Muslim Brotherhood attempt to influence Defence.

The SGRS informed the Comite R/I that: "In the area of Muslim Brotherhood monitoring, the SGRS recalls that it focuses, in accordance with its missions, on the Muslim Brotherhood threat against Defence, and that since 2024, all documents on the Muslim Brotherhood published by the VSSE as the lead agency systematically represent the single and common viewpoint of both intelligence services expressed through the PFCECT. The SGRS considers that the establishment of the PFCECT had the benefit, among others, of pooling human capabilities in the fight against terrorism and extremism, including the Muslim Brotherhood, thereby reducing the need to recruit additional staff."

- The Comite R/I also invited the SGRS to organise internal briefings for designated security officers to raise their awareness of the issue.

SGRS response: "Regarding the awareness-raising of Defence security officers on the Muslim Brotherhood issue, the SGRS wishes to specify that the training of security officers and their deputies (training modules 'Basic Security Course' and 'Manager Security Course') includes a TESSOC component that covers, among other things, the issues of terrorism and religious extremism, without however limiting them to the Muslim Brotherhood alone."

However, the most important recommendation has remained in abeyance:

> *"The exercise of certain public functions requires the prior verification of integrity, loyalty, and discretion, as required by the legislation in force in certain European countries."*
>
> -- Report 2025.319, para. 73 (2021 recommendation)

This recommendation, arising from the Ihsane Haouach affair (a government commissioner whose monitoring by the VSSE had been the subject of a specific investigation in 2021), aimed to establish a legislative framework for the screening of candidates for certain public functions: government commissioner, military chaplain, and "other key positions at federal, regional, and community level".

Five years after this recommendation, the Comite R/I states that it "does not have information to determine whether [it] has been followed up". Yet the report itself, through

the PFCECT note of 29 April 2025 (para. 31), demonstrates that the risk of entryism in institutions persists. The absence of a legislative framework for verification, five years after the affair that motivated it, is in itself a finding of failure.

The Committee cites European examples (Switzerland, the Netherlands, France) where this type of verification exists (para. 73, note 78), but formulates no new recommendation to restart the process.

6. Internal Contradictions and Overall Coherence

The report suffers from several structural contradictions between its factual section and its analytical section.

Factual Section	Analytical Section
Para. 21: "The Muslim Brotherhood never reveal their affiliation and deny any connection"	Para. 46: cites Torrekens denouncing the risk of "delegitimising as a Brother any movement" -- thereby legitimising the denial strategy described at para. 21
Para. 26: "extremist movement representing a high and priority threat"	Para. 42: the 200 activists "appear to represent a relative threat"
Para. 30: relocation of French actors to Belgium	Para. 30: "the threat remains stable" over five years
Para. 31: PFCECT alert on the CIIB / institutional entryism	Para. 51: OCAM "does not observe concrete threats" -- divergence left unresolved

The rhetorical structure of the report is as follows: (1) show that the services are doing their job; (2) accumulate academic and media criticisms of the French report; (3) cite the PFCECT, which "sees no indication of Islamist control"; (4) conclude that 4 out of 5 recommendations have been followed up. All while carefully avoiding addressing the substance of the French allegations.

7. Blind Spots

7.1. Hamas in a Footnote

The presence of Hamas in Belgium is mentioned exclusively in a footnote (note 29):

> *"Hamas in Belgium does not have a branch or formal organisation tasked with structuring all of its activities in Belgium. Individuals considered to be Hamas members organise themselves in the form of an informal network of individuals involved in charitable and lobbying organisations."*
>
> -- Report 2025.319, footnote 29 (declassified)

The existence of an informal Hamas network in Belgium, involved in charitable and lobbying organisations, is treated as an aside in a 29-page report. No further development, no recommendation.

7.2. Online Education: A New Vector Ignored

The report notes "the development of new online education offerings disseminating Muslim Brotherhood ideology and polarising discourses" (para. 30). This vector, transfrontier by nature and difficult to control, is the subject of no specific recommendation.

7.3. The Consequences of the French Withdrawal Not Evaluated

The report notes the "relocation of certain actors to Belgium" following French pressures (para. 30), but draws no consequences: no reassessment of the figure of 100 activists, no strengthening of surveillance, no recommendation for specific Franco-Belgian cooperation.

7.4. The Five Brussels Municipalities: Rejection Without Investigation

The French report refers to Brussels municipalities "where the social control of Islamists over society appears almost complete". The Comite R/I rejects this assertion as emanating from a "conspiracist interpretive framework" (para. 43), citing a press article.

> *"The 'finding' of 'Islamist control' over five Brussels municipalities is widely rejected, as an emanation of a 'conspiracist interpretive framework'."*
>
> -- Report 2025.319, para. 43, citing Carlot P.

The Committee does not say: "we have verified and this assertion is unfounded". It says: "commentators reject this assertion". For a body that has the legal power to question the intelligence services, deferring to the press is an admission of impotence or indifference.

8. Conclusion

Report 2025.319 of the Comite R/I is an institutionally useful document in its factual elements -- common definition, organisational structure of the Muslim Brotherhood, CIIB alert -- but profoundly problematic in its analytical section.

Its principal failings are:

1. A systematic bias in the choice of sources: exclusively critics of the French report, no contradictors, with the uncontextualised citation of a former FEMYSO leader as a neutral "Islamologist".

2. The importation of an activist register ("policy of suspicion", "stigmatisation", "label-bogeyman") incompatible with the neutrality expected of a parliamentary oversight body.

3. The absence of point-by-point evaluation of the factual allegations of the French report concerning Belgium, replaced by a blanket position from the PFCECT that "diverges" without specifying on what precisely.

4. Unresolved internal contradictions between the qualification of "high and priority threat" (para. 26) and the systematic relativisation carried out in the analytical section.

5. The absence of new recommendations in the face of developments nonetheless noted (French withdrawal, online education, Hamas in Belgium).

6. Prolonged inaction on the integrity verification recommendation for sensitive public positions, five years after the Haouach affair.

The report reveals, between the lines, a Belgian institutional malaise in the face of the Brotherist question. The intelligence services (PFCECT) qualify Muslim Brotherhood ideology as extremist and the threat as priority. OCAM sees no concrete threat. The Comite R/I, rather than resolving this divergence, presents it without adjudicating and drowns it in a profusion of media reactions that serve as a substitute for analysis.

The fundamental question remains: should a parliamentary oversight body relay without critical distance the positions of engaged commentators -- some of whom are linked to the organisations under examination -- or should it produce its own independent evaluation of the facts?

9. CERIF Recommendations

In light of the foregoing analysis, CERIF makes the following recommendations to the Parliamentary Monitoring Committee and the competent Belgian authorities.

9.1. Adapt the Institutional Framework to the Specific Nature of the Threat

1. Create a non-violent threat assessment unit. OCAM is structurally designed for the terrorist threat. The Brotherist threat -- entryism, institutional influence, subversion of the democratic process -- falls outside its scope. It would be appropriate either to formally expand OCAM's mandate or to create a dedicated unit within the PFCECT, equipped with indicators specific to non-violent threats: capture of public funding, entryism in advisory bodies, influence in educational networks, networking strategies.

2. Establish a legislative framework for integrity verification. The Comite R/I recommendation of 2021, arising from the Haouach affair, has remained without effect for five years. Belgium should draw on existing European legislation (Switzerland, the Netherlands, France) to establish screening for candidates for certain exposed public functions: government commissioners, military chaplains, members of advisory bodies, heads of subsidised structures.

9.2. Strengthen Analytical Capabilities

3. Impose periodic methodological reassessment of the count. A figure of "approximately one hundred activists" frozen since 2020 cannot constitute a reliable indicator. The Parliamentary Committee should require from the PFCECT a transparent counting methodology, explicit identification criteria, and annual updating.

4. Develop intelligence on financial flows. The French report mentions funding of the LMB by Qatar and Kuwait to the tune of EUR 1.2 million. The Comite R/I does not evaluate this allegation. The PFCECT should have a dedicated financial analysis capability for tracing funds flowing through identified organisations.

5. Map online education. The development of new online educational offerings disseminating Muslim Brotherhood ideology is signalled by the PFCECT (para. 30) but is the subject of no recommendation. This vector, transfrontier by nature, requires European cooperation and specific monitoring work.

9.3. Guarantee the Analytical Independence of the Comite R/I

6. Diversify sources in oversight reports. A parliamentary oversight body's report cannot exclusively cite commentators critical of a foreign report, while systematically ignoring researchers and analysts who validated its findings. The Comite R/I should adhere to the principle of contradiction (audi alteram partem), presenting positions from across the academic spectrum and disclosing any conflicts of interest.

7. Separate the factual register and the media register. Press reactions and commentators' positions must not serve as intelligence analysis. When a factual allegation is made (such as the "control" of five Brussels municipalities), the Comite R/I should verify it

with the services it oversees, not reject it by citing a press article.

8. Individually evaluate factual allegations. The seven specific allegations of the French report concerning Belgium (funding, IESH graduates network, reconstitution of CCIF, schools, halal butchers, CIIB/MAGIC, controlled territories) should be the subject of a point-by-point response, indicating for each whether it is confirmed, refuted, or unverifiable.

9.4. Align Franco-Belgian Cooperation

9. Establish a specific bilateral exchange framework. The report notes the "relocation of French actors to Belgium" without drawing any operational consequence. French pressure on Brotherist structures mechanically produces a displacement towards Belgium. Dedicated Franco-Belgian bilateral cooperation, integrating intelligence, counter-financing, and surveillance of cross-border structures, should be formalised.

10. Document the Hamas network in Belgium. The existence of an informal Hamas network involved in charitable and lobbying organisations is mentioned in a footnote. It deserves full development and specific recommendations.

9.5. Rethink the Posture Towards Non-Violent Threats

The fundamental difficulty Belgium faces regarding the Brotherist threat is a problem of interpretive framework. The services have inherited an apparatus designed for the terrorist threat -- detection of violent intent, prevention of attacks, assessment of physical danger. Faced with a movement that precisely refuses physical violence but seeks to transform society from within, this apparatus is structurally inadequate.

The absence of violent Muslim Brotherhood actions in Belgium is not a sign of low threat: it is, on the contrary, their declared modus operandi, as defined by the services themselves. Invoking this absence of violence to relativise the threat amounts to confusing the symptom with the strategy.

The fundamental question remains: should a parliamentary oversight body relay without critical distance the positions of engaged commentators -- some of whom are linked to the organisations under examination -- or should it produce its own independent evaluation of the facts? The answer to this question will determine Belgium's ability to confront a threat it has itself defined, qualified, and classified as priority -- but which it still refuses, in practice, to treat as such.

CERIF -- European Centre for Research and Information on Broderism

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