

The Islamic State

AT A GLANCE

Overview

Organization

Strategy

Major Attacks

Interactions

Maps

HOW TO CITE

Mapping Militants Project (MMP). “The Islamic State.” Last modified April 2021.

<https://mappingmilitants.org/node/407>

SUMMARY

Formed: 1999

Disbanded: Group is active.

First Attack: October 28, 2002: Members of Jama'at al-Tawhid wa'l Jihad (which would later become AQI and then IS) assassinated U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) officer Laurence Foley outside his home in Jordan (1 killed, 0 wounded).¹

Last Attack: March 24, 2021 - April 4, 2021: An IS affiliate group, known as the Islamic State Central Africa Province or ISIS-Mozambique, took over the town of Palma in northern Mozambique.² Militants targeted government, military, and civilian personnel and buildings. On March 29, the Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack via a statement released through its Amaq News Network.³ However, the relationship between IS and IS-Central Africa has been described as “loose” and several observers doubt that IS was directly involved in the attacks.⁴ Government forces did not completely reclaim control of Palma until April 4, 2021.⁵ An estimated 40,000 people were displaced by the fighting, and the number of casualties is unknown (unknown killed, unknown wounded).⁶

OVERVIEW

The Islamic State (IS) – also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) – is a Salafi-Jihadist militant organization that seeks to establish an Islamic caliphate in Iraq and Syria and create a global Islamist movement. IS is known for its large contingent of foreign fighters, meticulous bureaucratic and financial system, and strong online media presence. IS developed in 1999 when Abu Musab al-Zarqawi began to train extremist militants in Afghanistan. During the U.S. occupation of Iraq, Zarqawi’s militants became a major participant in the

Iraqi insurgency, first under the name Jama'at al-Tawhid wa'al-Jihad (JTI) and then, after swearing fealty to Al Qaeda, as Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). The group declined in power until 2011 when the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq and the onset of the Syrian Civil War created a power vacuum, allowing the group to reemerge. In 2013, the group changed its name to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and captured extensive territory in Iraq and Syria. In 2014, ISIS officially declared the creation of a caliphate and changed its name to the Islamic State (IS). IS has fought Syrian government forces, Syrian rebel groups, the Iraqi military and militias, and Kurdish peshmerga groups. Between 2015 and 2019, a coalition of state and non-state forces slowly retook IS-held areas in Iraq and Syria. The last IS territory was seized in Syria in March 2019, and the group has transitioned its operations to a decentralized, guerilla-style insurgency. As of April 2021, IS continues to carry out attacks through sleeper cells in Iraq and Syria, though its capabilities to strike elsewhere across the world appears to have diminished significantly.

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

The Islamic State (IS) – also known as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) – is a Salafi-Jihadist militant organization that operates primarily in Syria and Iraq. The group's goal is to establish an Islamic caliphate in Iraq and Syria and eventually spread its influence globally.⁷ The foundations of IS were laid in the 1990s and early 2000s. During this time, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi founded IS' main predecessor group Jama'at al-Tawhid wa'al-Jihad (JTI) and began recruiting Jordanian criminals and training extremist militants at a camp in Herat, Afghanistan.

During the American occupation of Iraq, the group was a major participant in the Iraqi insurgency, first as JTI and then, after swearing fealty to Al Qaeda, as Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). Facing backlash from the community and increased pressure from American and Iraqi forces, the group declined in strength and influence. However, this downward trajectory reversed in 2011. The withdrawal of American troops from Iraq created a power vacuum. AQI stepped in to fill this vacuum, while the onset of the Syrian Civil War provided the group ample space to grow in both size and influence. In 2013, the group changed its name from AQI to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Throughout 2013 and 2014, the group seized territory in Syria and Iraq. ISIS changed its name to the Islamic State (IS) and declared the establishment of a caliphate in Iraq and Syria in June 2014.

IS was notable for its public beheadings of Western captives, its large contingent of foreign fighters, and its substantial media presence. On the ground, IS displayed brutal efficiency and violence in battles against the Assad regime and Syrian-allied Shia forces, Syrian opposition groups, the Iraqi military, and the Kurdish peshmerga. The United States, in conjunction with European and Arab allies, began airstrikes against the group in fall 2014. By 2017, IS had lost control of its largest population centers and began to revert to more traditional terrorist tactics, developing sleeper cells and assimilating into the broader population. On March 23, 2019, IS lost its final piece of territory in Baghuz, Syria. As of April 2021, the group still lacks control over large swaths of territory in Iraq

and Syria.⁸ However, IS remains highly active and continues to launch small- and large-scale terrorist attacks within the region.

This profile divides the Islamic State's history into five periods and follows the group through several name changes. It begins with Zarqawi's creation of the group through his death in 2006, which roughly coincides with the group being known as JTJ and becoming AQI. It continues with a period of setbacks from 2006 through 2011, the period of AQI's decline. The next section discusses developments between 2012 and 2014, during which the group expanded and fought in Syria and Iraq and changed its name to ISIS. The fourth section roughly coincides with the group's rebranding as IS and discusses the global response to IS's caliphate. The final section discusses the destruction of the caliphate and the groups transition to traditional terrorist tactics.

JTJ and AQI under Zarqawi: 1999-June 2006

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the founder of the Islamic State, was Jordanian national. He radicalized as a young man while in prison for drug possession and sexual assault. After he was released from prison, Zarqawi traveled to Afghanistan in the late 1980s with the intention of joining the fight against Soviet occupation.⁹ After returning to Jordan in 1992, Zarqawi founded a militant group named Bayat al-Imam with his mentor Sheikh Abu Muhammad al Maqdisi.¹⁰ During the 1990s, Zarqawi adopted a Salafi ideology and was arrested again following a police raid on his home.¹¹ Zarqawi developed a following of radicalized criminals while in prison and used sympathetic guards and visiting relatives to smuggle his messages out to be published on prominent Salafi websites.¹²

In 1999, Zarqawi was released and traveled to Afghanistan to meet with Al Qaeda (AQ) leader Osama bin Laden. The two distrusted one another immediately, and key ideological disagreements became apparent. Zarqawi preferred to target "near enemies," such as Israel and the Jordanian government, whereas the AQ leadership focused on the "far enemy" (i.e., the United States).¹³ Zarqawi also had a strong hatred for Shiites that bin Laden did not share.¹⁴ Despite these core ideological disagreements, bin Laden allegedly asked Zarqawi to join AQ.¹⁵ Zarqawi refused. After this rejection, bin Laden decided to provide Zarqawi with funding to set up a militant training camp in Herat, Afghanistan.¹⁶ By October 2001, Zarqawi had trained between 2,000 and 3,000 Salafi terrorists at the Herat camp.

Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the subsequent American invasion of Afghanistan, Western intelligence organizations began searching for Zarqawi.¹⁷ He and his followers spread throughout Iran, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq to evade U.S. intelligence while establishing new groups and building a network of foreign fighters.¹⁸ The U.S. State Department eventually classified all these groups under the name of the most prominent Zarqawi organization, Jama'at al-Tawhid wa'al-Jihad (JTJ, also sometimes referred to as Tawhid wal-Jihad or TwJ).¹⁹ The group had a strong foundation of foreign fighters, particularly from Jordan, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Kurdish regions while other militants from Ansar al-Islam joined the group as well.²⁰

AQ leadership urged Muslims to move to Iraq to fight the American invaders. Zarqawi became the default leader of Islamist terrorists in Iraq and concentrated his network of foreign fighters in the Sunni Triangle of Iraq.²¹ JTJ and Zarqawi grew to be among the most prominent actors in the insurgency. Zarqawi's group aimed to expel American and coalition forces and disrupt the governmental transition with its operations.²² JTJ quickly gained notoriety for its violent tactics and attacks on non-combatants, including aid workers and native Iraqis. JTJ carried out suicide bombings that killed civilians, while other insurgent groups used guerilla attacks that targeted American and coalition forces.²³ The group routinely conducted attacks on Shia targets to incite sectarian conflict and complicate the occupation and government transition.²⁴ JTJ also drew international attention for its assassinations and the gruesome videos of beheadings that it released on the internet.²⁵

In October 2004, Zarqawi formally joined Al Qaeda and renamed his organization Tanzim Qaidat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn Zarqawi, known as Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) in English.²⁶ Despite the official pledge of allegiance to Osama bin Laden, Zarqawi and Al Qaeda leadership still differed on some key strategic and tactical issues. Disagreements included AQ's willingness to cooperate with other opposition groups and its focus on the United States and the West rather than "near enemies." These differences between AQ and AQI created tensions that lasted for the duration of the affiliate relationship.²⁷

Initially, many Sunnis in Iraq were sympathetic to AQI. The group's goal of driving American and coalition forces from Iraq and preventing a Shia government takeover were appealing to the Sunni population. However, AQI's extreme tactics alienated potential supporters. Many Iraqis, including Sunnis, took issue with AQI's use of suicide bombings and other violent attacks, such as assassinations. Additionally, Iraqis disapproved of the group's willingness to target Iraqis and popular Sunni leaders; its perceived foreign membership and leadership; and its intentional incitement of sectarian violence.²⁸

AQI's increasingly violent attacks prompted AQ leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, bin Laden's second in command at the time, to send Zarqawi a letter urging him to foster better relations with Iraqi leaders.²⁹ However, Zarqawi often ignored AQ orders and continued to alienate potential supporters with his tactics. The bombing of a hotel in Amman that killed mostly civilians in November 2005 illustrates Zarqawi's disregard for AQ strategy and guidance.³⁰ Many Islamist groups also condemned Zarqawi's strategy of killing large numbers of Shiites and destroying Shia religious sites to incite sectarian violence.³¹ On February 22, 2006, AQI bombed the Askariyah Shrine in Samarra, also known as the Golden Mosque. The attack prompted at least 27 retaliatory strikes by Shia insurgents against Sunni mosques in Baghdad alone, all of which occurred the same day as the Golden Mosque bombing. As a result of these strikes, violence between Shiites and Sunnis escalated.³²

Facing local backlash, AQI joined an umbrella organization – Majlis Shura al-Mujahidin (MSC) – in an effort to present itself as more of an Iraqi group and demonstrate its

willingness to cooperate with other organizations.³³ The MSC was a collective of six jihadi groups in Iraq that sought to expel American and coalition forces from Iraq.³⁴ MSC, however, exercised little control over the actions of its constituent groups. MSC was a coordination body at most, a media front at worst, and had little to no control over what AQI did.³⁵

AQI decline: June 2006-December 2011

On June 7, 2006, Zarqawi was killed in a U.S. airstrike.³⁶ AQI announced that Zarqawi's successor would be Abu Ayub al-Masri, an Egyptian bombmaker who had trained in Afghanistan.³⁷ Despite some intelligence officials' assumptions that Zarqawi's death would cripple the organization, Masri initially managed to maintain much of the group's momentum, especially in carrying out attacks that encouraged sectarian violence.³⁸

However, many Iraqi Sunnis continued to criticize AQI for its foreign components, its attempts to impose its own radical brand of Islam on Iraqis, and its use of extreme violence. To brand AQI as more Iraqi, Masri convinced several other groups to merge into his and form the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI, although the group also continued to be known as AQI).³⁹ Masri installed an Iraqi, Abu Umar al-Baghdadi, as the head of ISI. Although the name and leadership changes were another attempt to rebrand the organization as more Iraqi ("Baghdadi" means "from Baghdad"), some sources questioned whether Baghdadi truly ran the organization or if he was just a figurehead.⁴⁰ In forming ISI, AQI aimed to unify the resistance against American and coalition forces, gain attention and support from the global jihadi community, and prepare governing structures to take control after foreign militaries withdrew from the country.⁴¹ This move was to be the first step toward creating a caliphate to rule in the Middle East.⁴²

The foreign presence in AQI's leadership and membership continued to alienate local Iraqis. By December 2007, local concerns forced Abu Umar al-Baghdadi to issue a public statement claiming that only 200 foreign fighters were members of AQI. It is true that the membership of AQI was majority Iraqi in 2006, but coalition forces captured records in 2007 that documented 700 foreign nationals joining AQI and its affiliates between August 2006 and August 2007.⁴³ While there is evidence that the pace of foreign recruitment was slowing, Baghdadi's declaration was not enough to convince many Iraqis to support AQI.⁴⁴

Local resistance to AQI contributed to the Anbar Awakening, a movement in which Sunni tribes in Anbar province began to cooperate with American forces against the insurgency.⁴⁵ The Awakening paved the way for increased U.S. and Iraqi military operations that would diminish AQI's capacity by the end of 2007. As a result, AQI was unable to provide security or enforce its extreme interpretations of Islamic law in the areas where it operated. Under this pressure, the group struggled to maintain control over territory in Iraq.⁴⁶

By early 2008, coalition and Iraqi security forces had killed 2,400 AQI members and taken 8,800 as prisoners.⁴⁷ By spring 2009, the U.S. was funding around 100,000 local

Sunnis to fight AQI.⁴⁸ The local fighters assassinated AQI members and warned other militants not to work with the group.⁴⁹ By June 2010, AQI had lost its ability to regularly communicate with AQ leadership, and 36 of AQI's 42 leaders had been killed or captured.⁵⁰ Through 2011, coalition forces continued to coordinate efforts with tribal security forces, killing the majority of AQI's leadership and leaving it in disarray.⁵¹

Both Masri and Baghdadi were killed in a joint U.S.-Iraqi raid on April 18, 2010. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (not to be confused with the deceased, Abu Umar al-Baghdadi) then assumed control of the organization.⁵² AQI continued to struggle to maintain relevance through 2011. Coalition forces withdrew later that year.⁵³

AQI and ISIS expansion under Baghdadi: January 2012-2014

The withdrawal of coalition forces in December 2011 effectively gave new life to AQI. The organization was no longer facing direct pressure from foreign military forces, allowing it room to recover and coordinate operations. Throughout 2012, the number of AQI attacks increased significantly.⁵⁴ In 2012 and 2013, Baghdadi led two separate terror campaigns in Iraq. In 2012, the "Breaking Walls" campaign targeted Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's government and prioritized freeing AQI members from prison. In 2013, the "Soldier's Harvest" campaign targeted Iraqi security forces.⁵⁵

The government's ostracization of Sunni communities and security failures expedited AQI's return to prominence. In December 2012, Sunnis in northern Iraq began protesting Maliki's heavy-handed and sectarian governance in Anbar province. When Iraqi security forces invaded protest camps, Sunni attacks against Shia targets increased. Casualties mounted, and the civilian death toll in 2013 grew to double that of 2012. When Iraqi security forces attempted to clear a protest camp in Ramadi at the end of 2013, a local uprising drove the security forces out of much of Anbar province, paving the way for later AQI expansion.⁵⁶ In 2013, AQI spread throughout the Anbar and Nineveh provinces, recruiting new members and developing alliances with preexisting local Sunni militias, including Army of the Men of the Naqshbandi Order (Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al-Naqshabandia, JRTN).⁵⁷ JRTN was largely composed of Ba'athists and was led by Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri, the former vice president of Saddam Hussein's regime.⁵⁸ The military expertise of these allies bolstered AQI's strength.

AQI also exploited the power vacuum created by the ongoing Syrian Civil War. In April 2013, Baghdadi moved into Syria and rapidly seized territory. During this time, Baghdadi changed the group's name to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). He also claimed that AQI had created Jabhat al-Nusra (Al-Nusra), a militant opposition group in Syria, and stated that the two groups had now merged. Both the Al-Nusra leadership and AQ leader Zawahiri disputed the merger.⁵⁹ Zawahiri dictated that ISIS should limit its operations to Iraq.⁶⁰ On June 14, Baghdadi publicly rejected Zawahiri's statement. ISIS continued to operate in Syria, clashing with other Islamist groups and taking additional territory.⁶¹ In January 2014, ISIS captured the strategic Syrian city of Raqqa against the commands of AQ leadership.⁶² AQ officially renounced connection with ISIS in February 2014.⁶³

After the split with AQ, ISIS continued to expand and carry out military offensives in Syria and Iraq. The group fought against the governments of Iraq and Syria, tribal groups and militias in Iraq, the Kurdish peshmerga, and various rebel groups in Syria. ISIS's strength came from its versatility: part terrorist group, part bureaucratic state, part light infantry. The group was able to seize territory quickly, incite global fear and panic, and establish a basic government in captured cities.⁶⁴ The group's strong media presence also allowed it to recruit members easily. Between 2011 and 2016, over 42,000 foreign fighters travelled to join IS from over 120 countries.⁶⁵

In the first half of 2014, ISIS made large territorial gains in Iraq. The group seized Fallujah in January and captured Mosul, Tikrit, and Tal Afar in June.⁶⁶ On June 29, 2014, the group again changed its name, this time to the Islamic State (IS). IS also declared a caliphate with its capital in Raqqa, Syria and named Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of IS, as caliph. The group called upon all Muslims to declare allegiance to the new caliphate.⁶⁷ By August 2014, IS had control over Iraq's Ain Zalah and Batma oil fields and the Mosul Dam, which provided the group with additional sources of wealth.⁶⁸

In Syria, IS benefited from the relatively ambivalent response of the Assad regime which used IS's presence in the north to force rebel groups into a two-front war.⁶⁹ In early 2014, IS suffered losses in northern Syria but retained its stronghold around Raqqa. In the second half of 2014, the group began using weaponry captured from victories in Iraq to gain new momentum in Syria.⁷⁰ IS retook territory in northern Syria and attacked a Kurdish militia around the border town of Kobane. The group benefited both from the Assad regime's use of IS to create a two-front war and from the regime's willingness to purchase oil from its territories. Turkey and the Free Syrian Army also acquired oil from IS, implicitly funding the organization.⁷¹

The IS caliphate peaked in size in late 2014. IS controlled 100,000 square kilometers of territory, which was home to more than 11 million people.⁷² The funds seized from occupied territories combined with natural resources sales, taxation of local communities, and criminal activities yielded IS an estimated \$2 billion in assets.⁷³ In September 2014, experts estimated that IS's oil revenues alone brought in between \$1 million and \$2 million per day, making IS the richest terrorist organization in the world.⁷⁴ For a more detailed description of IS's finances, see the resources section of this profile.

IS contraction under regional and global pressure: 2014-2018

The Islamic State's rapid territorial gains in 2013 and 2014 prompted a regional and international response. On August 7, 2014, U.S. President Barak Obama authorized limited air strikes to defend U.S. personnel in Erbil and Baghdad. The strikes were also directed to support the Yazidis, a religious minority stranded on a remote mountain in Iraq and under threat of massacre by IS.⁷⁵ Over time, an international coalition – including several European and Arab states, the United States, Turkey, and Iran – formed to support the Iraqi government, the Kurdish peshmerga, and Shia militias fighting

against IS.⁷⁶ Though there were few ideological similarities uniting the coalition, it rallied behind the shared goal of defeating IS.

In October 2014, the Iraqi army defended its positions to maintain control of Anbar province while the Kurdish peshmerga fought to impede IS's advancement towards Kobani in northern Syria.⁷⁷ In Iraq, IS's territorial gains slowed as it began to encounter non-Sunni towns, whose populations were more likely to resist IS occupation than Sunni-majority towns.⁷⁸ In Syria, IS continued to face hostile militant groups, and IS's formerly neutral relationship with the Assad regime turned hostile following the group's occupation of Raqqa.⁷⁹ After initial IS successes in the battle over the northern city of Kobani in November, Turkey opened its borders for Iraqi Kurdish militants to join the front in Syria. Additionally, the United States conducted airstrikes on IS bases in Kobani and provided weapons and ammunition to Kurdish groups.⁸⁰

In early 2015, Iraqi government forces, Iraqi tribesmen, and Shia militias continued their campaign against IS from the south and east. In the north, IS faced the Iraqi Kurdish peshmerga and the Kurdish-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). Pressures from all sides forced the group into a debilitating multifront war.⁸¹ Despite its strong military capabilities, IS began to weaken in 2015, losing much of its core revenue because of coalition airstrikes on oil fields and the destruction of agricultural commodities during the fighting.⁸² The group became increasingly reliant on criminal activities such as extortion, money laundering, and drug smuggling to generate wealth for its war efforts.⁸³ However, in May 2015, IS managed to achieve a breakthrough amid mounting pressure from its enemies. The group seized Ramadi, the capital of Iraq's Anbar province, and Palmyra, a historic Syrian city.⁸⁴ By late 2015, IS exercised control over a region home to 5 million people. Though this territory was roughly half of its peak size, the group still held several key cities in Iraq and Syria, including Mosul, Raqqa, Ramadi, and Palmyra.⁸⁵

Around this time, IS began expanding beyond its caliphate. The group established *Wilayat* - Arabic for "states" - abroad, developed alliances with other militant groups, and carried out terrorist attacks on a global scale. The group capitalized on domestic instability in Libya to spark a major insurgency in the country. Active Islamist militant groups in several countries declared allegiance to IS, including Boko Haram in Nigeria, the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Philippines, and Ansar Bayt al Maqdis in Egypt.⁸⁶ These groups' territories are considered the Islamic State's "provinces" – *wilayah* in the group's parlance. For more details on IS's international affiliates, see the relationships with other groups section in this profile. Also see each group's individual profile on the Mapping Militants website and the Global Islamic State map.

IS has also carried out numerous terrorist attacks outside of Iraq and Syria. In late 2015 and early 2016, IS militants shot down a Russian plane over the Sinai peninsula, detonated bombs throughout Paris in a series of coordinated attacks, and carried out major bombings at a Belgian airport and metro station.⁸⁷ IS's strong media presence (led by its Al Hayat Media Center) has also inspired individuals around the world to adopt the group's ideology and carry out attacks. Notable examples include two 2016 attacks in the United States, the first by a gunman at a holiday party in San Bernardino, California and

the second by a gunman at a nightclub in Orlando, Florida.⁸⁸ For a larger list of IS attacks, see the major attacks section.

In 2016, the anti-IS coalition achieved important victories in IS-controlled territories, recovering Ramadi in February and Falluja in June.⁸⁹ IS consistently surprised coalition forces with its fierce resistance and brutal urban fighting with high civilian casualties.⁹⁰ In Iraq, the Iraqi army and local Shia militias cooperated in an effort to take and hold IS territory. The Iraqi army focused on liberating an IS-controlled city, and local Shia militias held and protected the territory after the Iraqi military victory.⁹¹ This allowed the Iraqi army to move to the next battle without leaving recaptured areas unsecured and vulnerable. The Shia militia presence, however, also led to tensions with the mostly Sunni communities that they now patrolled.⁹²

IS faced additional setbacks in Syria. The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) led the fight against IS in Syria, cutting off IS supply routes to the Turkish border and consolidating territory seized from IS in the northeast.⁹³ As IS's defeat became inevitable, the war to defeat IS quickly became a race to dominate previously IS-controlled territory. The Assad regime and its Russian allies seized IS territory in the border region between Syria and Iraq, while Turkish forces targeted SDF bases with airstrikes and attempted to suppress Kurdish autonomy since it could lead to Kurdish uprisings in Turkey.⁹⁴

In late 2016, coalition forces began major offensives against IS's last major strongholds in Iraq and Syria: Mosul and Raqqa. The siege of Mosul lasted for nine months, culminating in IS' defeat on July 10, 2017.⁹⁵ The battle for Raqqa consisted of two preliminary phases: on November 6, 2016, SDF forces began seizing major roadways and rural villages to isolate Raqqa, while throughout June 2017, SDF closed in upon and fought for control of the city. On October 17, 2017, the last IS militants in Raqqa surrendered. IS had lost control of all its major cities and held only a small piece of territory in Abu Kamal District, Syria along the Euphrates river.⁹⁶

Death of the IS caliphate and return to insurgency: 2018-2021

Despite these losses, the U.S.-led joint task force against IS reported that IS fighters seemed unphased by airstrikes and continued to engage in counter offensives.⁹⁷ Throughout 2018, IS made up for its declining strength by reverting to more traditional terrorist tactics; the group developed a network of sleeper cells and engaged in guerilla warfare throughout Syria and Iraq.⁹⁸ The lack of a stable state presence in the region allowed IS to harass local populations and carry out small-scale terrorist attacks. From mid-2018 to March 2019, the group conducted 250 terrorist attacks against civilians.⁹⁹ Including its attacks on infrastructure and government forces, the group carried out an average of 127.1 attacks per month in 2018.¹⁰⁰

Though the group's ability to control territory had diminished, the Islamic State still retained extensive wealth and a strong media presence. In 2017, IS smuggled \$400 million out of its territory and began laundering money through front businesses in

Turkey to prepare for its eventual defeat.¹⁰¹ The group also invested \$250 million in Iraqi markets, partnering with legitimate businesses throughout the country.¹⁰²

IS lost its final piece of caliphate territory in Baghuz, Syria on March 23, 2019.¹⁰³ Remaining families of IS soldiers fled the territory and were taken captive. Anti-IS coalition leaders celebrated the supposed defeat of IS, but experts were wary of a possible resurgence. In March 2019, foreign policy analysts argued that the group was stronger than when the U.S. withdrew troops from Iraq in 2011.¹⁰⁴

As of August 2019, governments in Iraq and Syria have struggled to reintegrate the tens of thousands of IS affiliates held in prison and security camps.¹⁰⁵ Many of these affiliates are the families of IS militants, specifically women who renounced citizenship in their home countries and children born in Iraq and Syria with only IS birth documents.¹⁰⁶ Some observers argue existence of such a large, stateless population will prolong IS' influence in the region by prolonging the material suffering detainees endure and the requisite grievances such suffering generates while held in the camps.¹⁰⁷

On October 13, 2019, U.S. President Trump ordered a withdrawal of U.S. troops from northern Syria. Trump took this action ahead of a Turkish invasion of the "buffer zone" that separated Turkish-backed Syrian rebel groups and U.S.- backed Kurdish militias.¹⁰⁸ Analysts have argued that the withdrawal of U.S. troops provided an opening for IS. Without the backing of U.S. troops, the Kurds have faced pressure from the Turkish military and its allies which seek to push Kurdish militias away from the Syria-Turkey border. Reports argue that these Kurdish militias will struggle to balance this threat from Turkey with the need to contain a potential IS resurgence in SDF-controlled parts of Syria.¹⁰⁹

On October 13, 2019 – the day President Trump ordered the American withdrawal from Syria – Turkey began its long-threatened offensive into SDF-controlled Syrian territory. After losing its most significant strategic partner – the United States – the SDF was immediately forced to contend with a Turkish offensive against its territory on top of existing threats from the regime and its partners and its counter-IS duties. Shortly after the announcement of a U.S. withdrawal from Syria, signs of difficulties in containing IS and its remnants began to appear. Turkey's invasion forced the SDF to shift segments of its armed forces from counterinsurgency and prison management to frontline duty. On the same day Turkey's offensive began, more than 750 people with suspected links to IS, many of whom were wives and children of IS fighters, escaped the SDF-run Ain Issa detention camp in northeastern Syria.¹¹⁰ Residents of the camp reportedly began a riot and overpowered their Kurdish guards as Turkish artillery fire landed near the camp. Just one week later, roughly 100 IS prisoners, many of whom were reportedly foreign fighters, escaped from the SDF-run Al Hol prison camp in eastern Syria.¹¹¹

On October 27, 2019, the United States conducted a raid on the compound of IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Baghdadi detonated the suicide belt he was wearing as U.S. Special Forces closed in on his position outside of Barisha, Idlib province in northwestern

Syria.¹¹² The same day, a separate U.S. airstrike killed Abu al-Hassan al-Muhajir, a top spokesman for the group and, according to SDF intelligence, Baghdadi's likely successor.¹¹³ Several days thereafter, IS's central media outlet Al-Furqan Media confirmed the deaths of Baghdadi and Muhajir. Al-Furqan Media also announced the group's leadership council had named Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi to succeed Baghdadi as Caliph.¹¹⁴

There is evidence that IS shifted its organizational composition leading up to and in the wake of Baghdadi's death. An August 2020 report, based on observation and analysis of the group's communications, suggested that Iraqi members came to comprise the bulk of IS civil and military leadership.¹¹⁵ This nationality-based consolidation appears to have begun well before Baghdadi's death, as IS's enemies targeted members of its leadership with assassination. However, with the deaths of Baghdadi and several other major figures, Iraqis of all ethnic backgrounds have assumed positions in the group previously held by Sunni Arabs of other nationalities.¹¹⁶

Since losing its territory, IS has been forced to reconsider its strategy. The loss of the caliphate has deprived the group of a major recruitment tool, lucrative financial resources, and the physical space necessary to sustain a large-scale military campaign. As a result, IS has been forced to revert to traditional insurgency tactics to continue its mission.¹¹⁷ In this new role, IS continues to wage war with an increasing degree of ferocity and tactical sophistication against Iraqi and Syrian security forces – regular or otherwise.

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic has served as a particularly significant boon for the group's capabilities, as the virus has drawn governments' attention away from existing counterterrorism efforts and toward public health measures.¹¹⁸ With this shift in government focus, the group has been able to increase the pace of its insurgent campaign in 2020. In northern and central Iraq, IS fighters have carried out increasingly sophisticated attacks targeting military checkpoints and Iraqi military housing. Across eastern Syria, IS has conducted a steady campaign of assassinations, ambushes, and bombings. The group is also responsible for the deaths of an increasing number of regime and SDF forces.¹¹⁹

As of late 2020, the consensus among U.S. military strategists was that IS, even in its significantly reduced form, remains an issue of paramount importance. The group continues to pose a direct threat to regional governments already under considerable coronavirus- and economic downturn-induced stress.¹²⁰ Moreover, security officials and analysts have become increasingly concerned that a possible reduction of U.S. troop levels in Iraq will hinder the ability of the United States to maintain pressure against the group. A waning U.S. troop presence and commitment to the counter-IS mission may allow IS to reconstitute and reorganize unabated.¹²¹

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

A. LEADERSHIP

Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi (1999 to June 7, 2006): Zarqawi founded Jama'at al-Tawhid wa'al-Jihad (JTJ) and served as its first leader. In October 2004, Zarqawi formally swore allegiance to Al Qaeda (AQ) and renamed his group to Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI).¹²² Under Zarqawi, AQI targeted civilians in its attacks. Both the AQ leadership and the local Iraqi population grew frustrated with Zarqawi and AQI over its victimization of civilians.¹²³ Zarqawi largely ignored pressures from AQ to change the group's tactics and proceeded to use extremist violence. Zarqawi was a major figurehead in the Iraqi insurgency and became the United States' most wanted man in Iraq. In 2006, Zarqawi was killed in a U.S. airstrike.¹²⁴

Abu Ayub al-Masri (October 2006 to April 18, 2010): Masri, also known as Hamza al-Muhajir and Abu Hamza, became AQI's top commander after Zarqawi's death. A former member of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ), Masri had close ties to AQ leadership, particularly EIJ leader Ayman al-Zawahiri. After the establishment of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) in October 2006, Masri handed over the leadership of AQI/ISI to Abu Umar al-Baghdadi in an attempt to re-brand the group as more Iraqi.¹²⁵ Some reports indicate the leadership change was purely nominal and that Masri maintained control even after Baghdadi became the face of the organization.¹²⁶ Masri was killed during a joint raid by U.S. and Iraqi soldiers in April 2010.

Abu Umar al-Baghdadi (October 2006 to April 18, 2010): Baghdadi took over the leadership in October 2006 as part of an effort to rebrand the group as more Iraqi.¹²⁷ However, some sources reported that Baghdadi was not actually the true leader of AQI and that the leadership change was purely for show.¹²⁸ Baghdadi was killed in a joint U.S.-Iraq raid in 2010.

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (2010 to October 27, 2019): Baghdadi, also known as Abu Du'a, took control of AQI in 2010 and led its expansion into Syria. During this time, Baghdadi changed the group's name to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Baghdadi was a secretive figure; he did not appear in any videos until he delivered a July 2014 sermon at the An-Nuri Mosque in Mosul, wherein he declared himself Caliph.¹²⁹ In April 2019, Baghdadi appeared in another video to acknowledge a defeat at Baghuz, announce new global allies, and threaten future attacks.¹³⁰ Baghdadi killed himself to evade capture during a U.S.-led raid on his compound in Idlib province in northern Syria on October 27, 2019.¹³¹

Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi (October 2019 to Present): Qurashi, also known as Hajji Abdallah and Amir Muhammad Said 'Abd al-Rahman al-Mawla, assumed the position of Caliph after Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's death in October 2019.¹³² Qurashi, a Turkmen from Tal Afar, Iraq, was a top deputy under Baghdadi and is understood by U.S. intelligence agencies to have played a significant role in overseeing IS's genocidal campaign against Iraqi Yazidis in mid-2014.¹³³ Qurashi received pledges of *bay'ah* from IS' global affiliates throughout November and December 2019, cementing his authority as Caliph and reaffirming IS central's continued authority among its affiliates.¹³⁴

B. NAME CHANGES

- 1999: Jama'at Tawhid wal Jihad (JTJ). The group was formally established following a donation from Osama Bin Laden in 1999.¹³⁵ JTJ is the name that the U.S. State Department used to refer to Zarqawi's network of militants. JTJ was also known as Tawhid wal Jihad (TwJ).¹³⁶
- October 2004: Al Qaeda in the land of Two Rivers, more popularly known as Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). In Arabic, Tanzim Qaidat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn. This name change occurred when Zarqawi formally joined Al Qaeda.¹³⁷
- October 2006: Islamic State in Iraq (ISI). This name change was part of a rebranding attempt which aimed to consolidate support, stress the focus on governmental infrastructure, and gain a wider base of followers. Despite this name change, the group also continued to be known as AQI.¹³⁸
- April 2013: Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). ISI changed its name after the group's cooperation with AQ Central and Jabhat al-Nusra broke down and after it began to expand its operations into Syria. ISIS is sometimes translated as "the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant" (ISIL).¹³⁹ The variation in translation stems from the word al-Sham, which refers to an area spanning Southern Turkey through Syria to Egypt, which can be translated as "Greater Syria" or "the Levant."¹⁴⁰
- June 29, 2014: Islamic State (IS). The group changed its name after it declared the establishment of a caliphate under Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Many media sources have continued to refer to the group as ISIS/ISIL.

C. SIZE ESTIMATES

- October 2001: 2,000-3,000 (Center for Strategic and International Studies) This number is the total population of the JTJ training camp in Herat including family members of JTJ soldiers.¹⁴¹
- October 2004: A few hundred in JTJ (BBC)¹⁴²
- 2005: 1,000+, exact number unknown (U.S. Department of State)¹⁴³
- 2006: 1,000+ (U.S. Department of State)¹⁴⁴
- 2007: 5,000-10,000 (U.S. Department of State)¹⁴⁵
- 2011: 1,000-2,000 (U.S. Department of State)¹⁴⁶
- 2014: 20,000-31,500 (C.I.A.)¹⁴⁷
- 2016: 30,000 (U.S. Military via Council of Foreign Relations)¹⁴⁸
- 2018: 20,000-30,000 (United Nations Security Council) Pentagon leaders give these estimates low credibility.¹⁴⁹
- March 2019: 29,000 (SDF Officials) This is the number of IS members taken captive after the siege of Baghuz, although more IS members likely fled or assimilated into general population.¹⁵⁰
- April 2019: 4,000-5,000 active militants in Northeast Syria (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights)¹⁵¹
- June 2019: 14,000-18,000 including both members and fighters (CJTF-OIR). CJTF-OIR defines members as individuals who pledge allegiance to the Islamic State while fighters are individuals who take up arms to actively fight for the organization.¹⁵²

- August 2020: More than 10,000 active fighters in Iraq and Syria (Under-Secretary for the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office)¹⁵³

Foreign fighters have played a significant role in the Islamic State. Drawn to IS by its strong media presence and compelling propaganda, many IS fighters were radicalized online before traveling to Syria and Iraq to join the group. Below is a brief history of IS fighters from the group's beginnings until present.

JTJ and AQI under Zarqawi: 1999-June 2006

Zarqawi's initial training camps in Herat, Afghanistan were populated mainly by Levantine Arabs.¹⁵⁴ After leaving Afghanistan following the U.S. invasion in 2001, Zarqawi entered Iraq with a contingent of foreign fighters. These militants largely came from Jordan, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Kurdish regions.¹⁵⁵

AQI established a network in Syria that coordinated the arrival of foreign fighters in Iraq. This network reportedly grew from the preexisting smuggling groups that worked along the Syria-Iraq border and that did not necessarily have loyalties to AQI.¹⁵⁶

AQI decline: June 2006-December 2011

The Sinjar Records reveal that AQI had a large contingent of foreign fighters from countries throughout the Arabian Gulf and North Africa. Saudi Arabians and Libyans were the largest foreign elements in AQI. Algeria, Syria, Yemen, Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, and Egypt were also sources of recruits for AQI.¹⁵⁷ Between August 2006 and 2007, foreign fighters were responsible for three-quarters of suicide bombings in Iraq.¹⁵⁸

AQI membership was majority Iraqi by 2006.¹⁵⁹ By 2007, U.S. officials estimated that 90% of its members were Iraqi.¹⁶⁰ Records captured by coalition forces in October 2007 listed 700 foreign recruits who had joined AQI and its affiliate organizations August 2006 and August 2007. Most of these foreign fighters came from Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Syria. Many were students before they came to Iraq.¹⁶¹ The pace of foreign recruitment slowed. By 2008, the number of foreign fighters entering the country each month had decreased to between 40 and 50, while others attempted to leave the country.¹⁶²

Facing pressure from Sunni Iraqis who were opposed to the large contingent of foreign fighters, AQI leader Abu Umar al-Baghdadi made a public statement that AQI was almost entirely Iraqi. Soon after, Ayman al-Zawahiri, second-in-command of Al Qaeda at the time, also issued a public statement urging Sunnis to support AQI.¹⁶³

AQI and ISIS expansion under Baghdadi: January 2012-2014

Former Ba'athists from Saddam Hussein's ousted government played a vital role in the expansion of AQI and ISIS.¹⁶⁴ As the group swept across northern Iraq, partnerships with these Ba'athist leaders and preexisting Sunni militias was instrumental to the group's

success. For more detail on the influence of Jaysh Rijal al-Tariqa al-Naqshbandia (JRTN) and other Ba'athist groups, see the relationships with other groups section of this profile.

Escaped Iraqi prisoners also joined the group during its rapid expansion. A twelve-month campaign organized by ISIS called “Breaking the Walls” led to the escape of thousands of hardened militants who previously fought against coalition forces during the U.S. invasion of Iraq.¹⁶⁵ These individuals were given the choice to remain and fight in Iraq or join branches of the group as it moved into Syria.

Foreign recruits flocked to ISIS as it grew in strength and territorial holdings. In December 2013, the International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence estimated that up to 11,000 foreigners from seventy-four different countries were fighting in Syria.¹⁶⁶ One BBC reporter estimated in 2013 that at least 60-70% of ISIS's fighters in Syria were Syrian and noted that foreigners were disproportionately represented in IS leadership.¹⁶⁷ Foreign fighters had easy access to the group through the relatively porous border between Turkey and Syria where ISIS controlled some territory.¹⁶⁸

IS contraction under regional and global pressure: 2014-2018

IS stepped up its international recruitment efforts in June 2014, using social media and propaganda to recruit foreigners.¹⁶⁹ By August 2014, the FBI estimated that 100 Americans had gone to fight in Syria. One terrorism expert claimed that many of the foreign fighters were recent converts to Islam who had a history of trouble with the law.¹⁷⁰ In December 2014, the U.S. intelligence community estimated that since January 2012, over 16,000 foreign fighters had traveled to fight in Syria. Many of these foreigners joined the ranks of IS, although it is difficult to say exactly how many.¹⁷¹ The International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence claims that over two-thirds of these militants were affiliated with either IS or Al-Nusra, an AQ-linked militant group in Syria.¹⁷² By mid-2015, the overall number of IS foreign fighters was reported as 25,000.¹⁷³

In 2015, it was estimated that 6,000 IS militants were from Tunisia, the most from any one single country. IS members from Saudi Arabia, Russia, Turkey, and Jordan were the next most populous; about 2,000 militants hailed from each of those countries. Of militants from Western nations, French nationals were the most prevalent in the group and comprised 1,700 of IS's members.¹⁷⁴

Analysts argue there are two distinct patterns of radicalization that fuel foreign recruitment. The first is among poorer, disillusioned youth in politically unstable regions. Poverty and lack of opportunity explain radicalization in countries like Tunisia and Libya.¹⁷⁵ The second pattern emerged in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region, where radicalized individuals are almost exclusively Wahhabi and have more wealth and ties to political elites.¹⁷⁶

IS has also extensively recruited local civilians in Iraq and Syria, particularly children. IS child recruits undergo an organized training program and are used as spies to uphold strict Islamic laws and as operatives to carry out suicide bombings and terrorist attacks.¹⁷⁷

Death of the IS caliphate and return to insurgency: 2018-2021

IS was defeated in Iraq in December 2017 and Syria in March 2019.¹⁷⁸ However, as of early 2021, the group still operates sleeper cells throughout both countries.¹⁷⁹ These sleeper cells are composed of former IS fighters who assimilated into the general population to evade security forces.¹⁸⁰

Many people, including foreign fighters, with either proven or perceived links to IS remain imprisoned in government or militia-run prisons in Iraq and Syria. In December 2020, the U.S. special envoy to the global anti-IS coalition estimated that the SDF holds between 8,000-9,000 IS prisoners in its camps, while the Iraqi government holds roughly 2,000 (though the reported Iraqi figure has been questioned by observers).¹⁸¹ The Iraqi government and military's treatment of IS-affiliated detainees has drawn considerable scrutiny from human rights observers, as many detainees reportedly do not receive a fair trial or are summarily executed upon detention.¹⁸² The Iraqi government has been known to routinely issue mass death sentences following less-than-fair trials to prisoners with suspected links to IS.¹⁸³

IS affiliates have been imprisoned in Syria and Iraq for extended periods with no apparent plan for their release as the detainees' governments of origin do not wish to repatriate their nationals. The detainees, civilian and combatant alike, remain in prison on the grounds that they continue to pose a security risk owing to their ideological or personal ties to IS.¹⁸⁴

D. RESOURCES

The Islamic State has financed its operations through the sale of natural resources, the taxation of local communities in its territory, and criminal activities. In late 2015, shortly after the group reached its territorial peak, the Islamic State's assets (including oil and gas reserves, cash, minerals, and land) were valued at \$2.2 billion.¹⁸⁵ In late 2020, following IS's loss of its territory in Syria the previous year, the U.S. Treasury Department estimated that IS's remaining assets may exceed \$300 million.¹⁸⁶

IS's sources of revenue have changed throughout its history. Initially, it received funding from wealthy individuals in the Gulf region and foreign fighters joining the group.¹⁸⁷ During the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the theft and smuggling of oil also composed a large part of the group's income. This trend continued through the beginning of the Syrian Civil War, during which IS sold oil to many actors in the conflict.¹⁸⁸ Coalition airstrikes targeting oil refineries damaged the oil industry in the area, reducing the group's ability to profit from oil sales. However, IS made up for this loss by increasing its taxation of local communities and agricultural commodities, which grew to be the largest source of revenue for the group. As IS began to lose territory and power in 2016, the group turned to criminal activities to fund its operations, such as extortion, kidnappings, and theft.¹⁸⁹

IS leaders successfully smuggled large sums of money from former strongholds in Iraq and Syria as the group's caliphate disintegrated. In December 2018, it was estimated that more than \$400 million worth of currency and coins were transported out of former IS territory. Some IS funds were laundered by group members who invested sums in regional businesses, such as real estate and car dealerships, between 2017 and 2018.¹⁹⁰ By the end of 2018, tens of millions of dollars were believed to have been successfully laundered for the group.¹⁹¹ No new information has been made public about the group's money laundering activities since 2018.

Foreign Donors

Foreign donations were crucial in the initial development of the group, although their importance relative to other sources of income declined over time. Zarqawi's original training camp in Herat was funded by Osama bin Laden in 1999.¹⁹² In 2002, AQI relied on weapons and fighters smuggled across the border from supporters based in Syria and received logistical assistance from supporters throughout the Arabian Gulf.¹⁹³ Foreign fighters also provided significant funding for AQI's initial operations. Of the foreign fighter donors, Saudi Arabians provided the largest sums.¹⁹⁴ Prior to the group's rapid territorial gains and the creation of the caliphate, IS relied on monetary support from individual donors in Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Jordan.¹⁹⁵ The group received an estimated \$40 million from these donors between 2013 and 2014.¹⁹⁶

In recent years, IS has begun to experiment with the use of cryptocurrencies as a platform to facilitate foreign donations. Militant groups across the world have reportedly begun to utilize cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, Litecoin, and Ethereum. The benefits of such a mechanism are twofold: person-to-person transactions are completely anonymous and virtually untraceable, thus allowing donors to skirt sanctions and legal proscriptions levied by governments and international organizations against the groups.¹⁹⁷ IS' use of cryptocurrencies likely began around 2014-15.¹⁹⁸ While no estimates of IS' total uptake from the use of such currencies are publicly available, U.S. investigators have uncovered schemes involving cryptocurrency purchases made by sympathizers on the group's behalf of upwards of millions of dollars.¹⁹⁹

Oil

The Islamic State has financed itself through oil sales since the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, first stealing oil products to sell and then operating oil refineries that it had seized. In 2007, between \$1 and \$2 billion of oil products had disappeared from the Bayji oil refinery and been sold on the black market. IS was known to engage in both the theft and the smuggling of oil.²⁰⁰

During the expansion of IS's caliphate, oil sales were thought of as the group's main source of revenue. In September 2014, experts estimated that IS's oil revenues alone brought in between \$1 million and \$2 million per day.²⁰¹ Data from the U.S. Department of Treasury also claimed that IS's illicit oil sales accounted for two-thirds of its annual

revenue stream in 2015.²⁰² In October 2014, the Congressional Research Service reported that the U.S. and its allies had destroyed about half of the group's refineries with air strikes. The international coalition estimated that its campaign against IS had cut the group's monthly oil revenues by nearly 90% between 2015, when the group was at its territorial peak, and 2017, after the international coalition's campaign against the group's territorial holdings had been underway for nearly three years.²⁰³ Additionally, skilled engineers and technicians that worked on refineries were killed or fled the areas IS controlled.²⁰⁴ As more IS territory was seized by coalition forces, oil revenue fell and criminal activities and taxation of local communities began to constitute a much greater portion of revenue.

Criminal Activities and Taxation

After its split from AQ Central in 2013, IS funded itself by taxing the population in its territory and by committing criminal activities, such as kidnapping, extortion of local businesses, robberies, and smuggling.²⁰⁵

IS extracted considerable wealth from the 12 million people who lived in its caliphate. According to Reuters, IS extortion and taxes generated as much as \$360 million per year.²⁰⁶ Another 2015 report argues that taxation of local communities accounted for the majority of the group's revenue, dwarfing oil sales by a ratio of 6:1.²⁰⁷ Recently uncovered documents from recaptured IS territory suggest that the caliphate taxed every transaction and kept meticulous financial records. This evidence corroborates the claims that extortion and taxation of local communities formed the bulk of IS's income.²⁰⁸

Existing evidence suggests that IS bureaucrats levied immense taxes on local residents, especially minorities such as Christians who were forced to pay a special tax to avoid being crucified.²⁰⁹ IS also seized property of Shiites and non-Muslims before selling it to Sunni families at discounted prices.²¹⁰ IS also taxed up to 50% of government employees salaries.²¹¹ The group justified its taxes on income and personal wealth as a form of *zakat* (Islamic charity), but the rate of taxation was far higher than traditionally was normal. IS also used the revenue for the army as opposed to funding social and public goods.²¹²

Additionally, IS seized assets from areas under its control to finance its operations. For example, when the group captured Mosul, it stole the money of the Mosul Central bank. The *Washington Post* estimated that IS took around \$425 million from the bank, while the *New York Times* estimated that IS stole somewhere between \$65 million and \$400 million.²¹³

Coalition airstrikes and efforts to retake IS-held territory reduced the group's ability to exact revenue from oil and agriculture. Instead, IS began to rely more heavily on criminal activities to finance its operations.²¹⁴ Money from taxation, extortion, kidnappings, and theft constituted the majority of IS's income after 2014.²¹⁵ The group also engaged in other criminal activities, such as trafficking migrants from Libya into Europe, smuggling drugs throughout the Middle East, and illegally selling antiquities from archaeological sites in Iraq and Syria.²¹⁶

Agricultural commodities

The Islamic State inherited a robust agricultural economy. At its peak in 2015, IS territory included the majority of the “upper Mesopotamian region,” the primary grain-producing area in Syria and Iraq.²¹⁷ The territory under IS control had historically accounted for two-thirds of Syria’s grain production and one-third of Iraq’s grain production.²¹⁸ IS generated revenue by taxing agricultural activities, including land renting and the sale of crops. In 2015, researchers estimated that IS made \$56 million from its taxation of wheat and barley crops as they were distributed across domestic markets in Iraq and Syria.²¹⁹

Recently discovered documents detail how IS taxed every step of the agricultural process and profited immensely during its time in power. The group generated \$800 million each year in the taxation of civilians, most of which was from taxes on agriculture.²²⁰ IS relied on crops grown in its territories to sustain local populations without trading with surrounding communities or regions. The group also reportedly generated revenue by smuggling of a portion of its wheat, barley, and cotton into neighboring countries. Although this activity has not been confirmed, researchers using satellite imagery to map IS food production suspect it to be true.²²¹

E. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS

Disclaimer: This is a partial list of where the militant organization has bases and where it operates. This does not include information on where the group conducts major attacks or has external influences.

JTJ and AQI under Zarqawi: 1999-June 2006

JTJ’s original training camp was based in Herat, Afghanistan, but the group fled the country following US invasion in 2001.²²² JTJ operated in Jordan from 2002 until 2005 and has operated in Iraq continually since 2003.²²³

AQI decline: June 2006-December 2011

By late 2010, AQI was primarily located in northern Iraq but remained capable of conducting attacks across the entire country.²²⁴

AQI and ISIS expansion under Baghdadi: January 2012-2014

AQI captured territory in northern Iraq after the U.S. withdrew from the country in 2011. In 2013, the group expanded into Syria. By 2014, ISIS had control of strategic cities in both northern Syria and western Iraq, including Raqqa, Fallujah, and Mosul.²²⁵ The group’s strongest Syrian base was in Raqqa.²²⁶ ISIS also took control of nearly all official

border crossings between Iraq and Syria and the only border crossing between Iraq and Jordan.²²⁷

IS contraction under regional and global pressure: 2014-2018

In 2015, offensive efforts by Kurdish forces combined with air strikes from the U.S.-led coalition retook territory from IS in northern Syria. However, the group was still able to gain control of Palmyra, a historic and strategic city in Syria, and Ramadi, the capital of the Anbar province in Iraq.²²⁸ During the first nine months of 2016, IS lost 28% of its territory in Syria and Iraq, including its stronghold in Fallujah, which it lost in June 2016.²²⁹ In Iraq, Iraqi armed forces began a campaign to retake Mosul in October 2016. In Syria, the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces began a campaign to retake Raqqa in November 2016.²³⁰

In 2015, IS established a stronghold in Libya. The IS Libya colony carried out terrorist attacks at Western hotels, beheaded Coptic Egyptians, and seized territory.²³¹ In February 2016, the Pentagon estimated that the number of IS fighters in Libya had doubled to 5,000.²³² Despite losing its stronghold in Sirte to Libyan pro-government forces in December 2016, IS fighters still threatened the nation's oil reserves and gained access to neighboring states, such as Tunisia.²³³

Death of the IS caliphate and return to insurgency: 2018-2021

IS officially lost its last territory in Iraq in December 2017.²³⁴ By 2018, IS had lost all of its major strongholds in Syria and Iraq, only retaining a small piece of land along the Euphrates river. On March 23, 2019, anti-IS forces retook the group's final piece of territory in Baghuz, Syria, bringing an end to the caliphate's existence.²³⁵ An October 2020 report suggested that IS cells remain active in remote regions in northern and central Iraq and eastern Syria.²³⁶ As of April 2021, the group continues to operate sleeper cells in Iraq and Syria and retains a loose global network of jihadists.²³⁷

In addition to its presence in Iraq, Syria, and Libya, IS claimed that it has conducted operations in Egypt, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, East Asia (specifically the Philippines), Somalia, and West Africa (specifically Nigeria).²³⁸ IS also has a branch based in the Khorasan region, which covers areas of Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other Central Asian countries.²³⁹ In April 2019, IS claimed affiliation with militant groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.²⁴⁰ U.S. State Department officials have reported that IS has adopted Mozambican and Congolese Islamist groups as formal affiliates of IS' Central African Province and has provided these groups with training, munitions, and strategic guidance.²⁴¹ To this end, U.S. officials believe IS is looking to expand its footprint in southern and eastern Africa due in large part to the economic downturn and political turmoil states in the region face.

STRATEGY

A. IDEOLOGY & GOALS

The Islamic State's ideology is rooted in Salafism – a fundamentalist movement within Sunni Islam – and Jihadism – a modern interpretation of the Islamic concept of struggle, often used in the context of defensive warfare. Salafis believe the most pure, virtuous form of Islam was practiced by the early generation of Muslims (known as Salaf) who lived around the lifetime of the prophet Muhammed.²⁴² While other conservative Islamist movements espouse similar ideas, Salafism separates itself by trying to recreate the actual lifestyle and behavior of these early Muslims instead of simply adhering to the same religious beliefs.²⁴³

Interpretations of Salafi philosophy differ widely, and the movement is not inherently violent. Scholars generally distinguish between three types of Salafism: (1) quietist Salafism that emphasizes conservative a lifestyle but lacks ambitions to change the trends of broader society; (2) political Salafism that seeks to replace secular regimes with conservative ones; and (3) jihadist Salafism that advocates violence to defend against the dangers of secularism.²⁴⁴ Jihadism is a modern interpretation of the Islamic concept of jihad, which is broadly used to justify defensive warfare against oppression in extreme circumstances.²⁴⁵ Modern jihadi groups have molded this philosophy to justify their terrorist activities as defense against attack by Western countries.²⁴⁶ Salafi jihadists emphasize the military history of early Muslims communities and view their actions as divinely justified continuations of this legacy.²⁴⁷ The Islamic State is considered a Salafi jihadist group.

Related to these beliefs is the Islamic concept of *takfir* – excommunicating another Muslim and declaring them a non-believer.²⁴⁸ IS applies takfir to Shias, secular Middle Eastern governments, governments partnered with the West, and Sunni communities that reject IS's extreme views and strict interpretation of Shariah law. Under takfir, these groups are now potentially enemies, and IS's use of defensive jihad against them is justified.²⁴⁹

Since its inception, the Islamic State has sought to establish an Islamic caliphate based on its Salafi philosophy and fundamentalist interpretation of Shariah law.²⁵⁰ Below is a chronological explanation of how the group's goals and ideology changed throughout its existence. In its earlier iterations as JTI and AQI, the group focused on achieving more concrete goals, such as driving foreign forces from Iraq. As the organization grew, it put more emphasis on the establishment of a caliphate and the creation of a global Salafi jihadist movement.

JTI and AQI under Zarqawi: 1999-June 2006

After the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, JTI sought to drive foreign forces out of the country and prevent Shia Muslims from taking over the Iraqi government.²⁵¹ This goal was shared by a number of nationalist, Ba'athist, and other Islamist forces in Iraq.²⁵² JTI also sought to impose its extreme interpretation of Shariah and eventually found an Islamic state.²⁵³

In October 2004, Zarqawi formally joined Al Qaeda and renamed his organization Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI).²⁵⁴ In March 2005, the group released an explanation of its ideology which largely deviated from the beliefs of AQ leadership. AQI regarded secularism, nationalism, tribalism, Ba'athism, and other beliefs and doctrines as violations of Islam. The group believed that all Sunni Muslims made up a single nation and considered Shias to be apostates. AQI committed itself to spreading its own extreme interpretation of Islam and ultimately eliminating other belief systems from the world.²⁵⁵

There were several points of disagreement between AQI and AQ. The two groups targeted different enemies with their terrorist attacks and warfare. Bin Laden and leaders of AQ directed their attacks against the “far enemy” (i.e., the United States and the West), while AQI leader Zarqawi preferred to fight the “near enemy” (i.e., secular regimes in the Middle East and Muslims who opposed the group’s views).²⁵⁶ Zarqawi did not have any reservations about targeting Muslims; he specifically disdained Shiites, a hatred that was not shared by AQ leadership.²⁵⁷ Bin Laden and AQ also criticized Zarqawi for his indiscriminate use of violence and extreme brutality. Bombings that deliberately targeted civilians and other Muslims made AQI extremely unpopular throughout the Middle East and damaged the image of Al Qaeda.²⁵⁸ These ideological differences introduced a growing tension in the AQ-AQI relationship.

AQI decline: June 2006-December 2011

After Zarqawi’s death, AQI still sought to drive U.S. forces out of Iraq. Additionally, AQI opposed Shia control of Iraq and aimed to undermine the transitional government. However, the group was weakened by a surge of U.S. troops in 2007 and waning support from its traditional areas of influence in the Sunni triangle.

After U.S. troops withdrew from Iraq in 2011, IS capitalized on the exclusion of Sunni communities by the Maliki government and began regaining power in northern Iraq. Its ultimate goal became the establishment of a caliphate within Iraq and the destruction of the secular, Shia-led government.

AQI and ISIS expansion under Baghdadi: January 2012-2014

Although AQI continued to oppose Iraqi security forces, the group failed to prevent a Shia government. After Nouri al-Maliki won the 2010 election and was re-elected as Iraq’s prime minister, he concentrated government power with other Shia Muslims.²⁵⁹ Aiming to collapse the Maliki government, AQI began attacking government targets more aggressively as part of Baghdadi’s 2012 “Breaking Walls” campaign.²⁶⁰

In 2013, Baghdadi announced AQI operations in Syria and emphasized the goal of establishing a fundamentalist Sunni Muslim state in Iraq and Greater Syria.²⁶¹ After finding some success, the group focused on capturing territory. It enforced its interpretation of Shariah law in areas under its control and changed its name to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).²⁶² In June 2014, Baghdadi formally declared a

caliphate and altered the group's name again to the Islamic State (IS). Baghdadi also demanded that Muslims and other jihadist groups declare allegiance to IS.

IS contraction under regional and global pressure: 2014-2018

IS activities within its caliphate mirrored its ideology and goals. IS implemented religious codes to emulate the lifestyle of the Prophet Muhammed and his early followers. The group promoted adherence to its codes by paying local children to patrol IS territory and monitor behavior. Violations of IS laws warranted immediate action, often in the form of public beatings or, in extreme cases, execution.²⁶³

As IS accumulated more territory, the creation of a bureaucracy and establishment of a functioning state became a central goal of the organization. IS created a complex taxation system to fund government programs and military campaigns, and the group used the threat of violence to ensure these state services functioned efficiently.²⁶⁴ For a more specific explanation of IS's bureaucracy and taxation system, please see the Resources and the Targets & Tactics sections of this profile.

After 2014, IS began developing a global jihad network with affiliates and colonies outside of the Middle East.²⁶⁵ Inspiring terrorist attacks in these new regions became a central goal of IS. For more information on Islamic State affiliates and colonies, please see the Geographic Locations and Relationships with Other Groups sections of this profile.

Death of the IS caliphate and return to insurgency: 2018-2021

By 2018, it was clear that IS had been defeated by the global coalition. Weakened militarily and without territory under its control, the group reverted to a rural insurgency in Iraq and Syria.²⁶⁶ In an April 2019 video, Baghdadi appeared for the first time in five years and addressed the recent destruction of the caliphate.²⁶⁷ He explained that the defeat of the caliphate was temporary and that the Islamic State would return to the region again.²⁶⁸ Baghdadi also accepted new alliances with groups in Mali and Burkina Faso, and he acknowledged IS's role in the April 21, 2019 bombings in Sri Lanka.²⁶⁹ The speech reaffirmed the centrality of IS's goal to lead a global jihad movement and build a caliphate under its control.

After Baghdadi's death in October 2019, IS's An-Naba newspaper released a list of "next steps" that the group's new leadership would take in pursuit of the long-term goal of re-establishing the physical caliphate. Such steps included: reaffirming the group's commitment to Zarqawi's determination to fight the "near enemy" while not overlooking the "far enemy;" increasing its anti-Semitic rhetoric and attacks against Israel; expanding its areas of operation outside of Iraq and Syria; reconciling with and continuing to develop political inroads within the Sunni communities of Iraq and Syria; rhetorically and militarily undermining the Iraqi state; re-imposing religious rule along its ideological lines in areas sympathetic to or controlled by IS; and beginning a more concerted

outreach effort through both traditional proselytizing and expanded social media activity.²⁷⁰

B. POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

The group never engaged in legal politics. Instead, it has sought to establish its own state in territories under its control. IS created a system of government and provided public services in IS-held areas of Iraq and Syria. After losing control of its territory to the international coalition, IS governmental structures largely dissolved. The development of the IS state is described chronologically below.

JTJ and AQI under Zarqawi: 1999-June 2006

The group never established a state under Zarqawi, but it did begin formulating its goals to establish a future caliphate. A letter intercepted in 2005 from Zawahiri (then an AQ leader, now the group's emir) to Zarqawi indicated detailed plans for the establishment of a caliphate in Iraq.²⁷¹ Public pronouncements from Zarqawi, including his 2004 pledge of loyalty to Osama Bin Laden, revealed his acceptance of AQ's goals and plan to create an Islamic homeland in Iraq.²⁷²

AQI decline: June 2006-December 2011

After October 2006, AQI focused on the creation of institutional infrastructure for a religious state. It formed the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) and attempted to rebrand itself as more Iraqi. Though AQI tried to impose order in the regions it controlled, it failed to establish an effective state structure and was becoming weaker due to Sunni resistance and increased American troop presence.²⁷³ By 2007, AQI was too weak to provide security or enforce its extreme interpretation of Sharia law.²⁷⁴

Despite having little real power, AQI had developed a sophisticated organizational structure by 2009, which laid the groundwork for future expansion following the withdrawal of U.S. troops in 2011. In Mosul, AQI had both a provincial emir and a deputy emir, as well as five emirs for each of the group's pillars: security, sharia law, military, administration, and media. Five more emirs served under each of the pillar emirs to oversee a specific section of Mosul relating to their pillar (e.g., South East Mosul – Military).²⁷⁵ This organizational structure was mimicked by the Islamic State's caliphate in 2014.

AQI and ISIS expansion, IS contraction: January 2012-2018

After expanding throughout Iraq and Syria, ISIS established a semi-federal government.²⁷⁶ Baghdadi stood at the top of ISIS hierarchy as Caliph.²⁷⁷ Alongside Baghdadi operated the Shura council, a group of advisors who oversaw the appointment of other government officials and checked the authority of Baghdadi.²⁷⁸

Below the Shura council and Baghdadi were 14 central government departments, known as diwans. The diwans managed the following 14 areas: education, public services,

precious resources (i.e., oil and antiquities), Da'wah activity and mosques, health, tribal outreach, public security, finances and currency, public morality (Islamic police), Islamic court (i.e., marriages and judicial matters), public relations, agriculture/environment, fatwas/recruitment, and military/defense.²⁷⁹ These government departments were replicated on a regional level where local authorities maintained some decision-making power.²⁸⁰

ISIS also established ground level control in new areas it conquered. After capturing a city, ISIS held outreach events and distributed reading material to introduce civilians to its religious interpretations and organization structure.²⁸¹ After securing the region, the group made the laws stricter, installed religious police, and took over the education system. These local religious police reported back to central IS commanders who kept meticulous records of interactions with local populations and infringements on ISIS laws.²⁸²

Death of the IS caliphate and return to insurgency: 2018-2021

The destruction of the caliphate resulted in the dismantlement of IS's government institutions. Globally, IS central command exerts some degree of control over its international provinces; however, the extent of communication between the center and these peripheral elements is unclear.²⁸³ In April 2019, Baghdadi pledged to continue its global jihad movement.²⁸⁴ Baghdadi's successor Qurashi and other senior members of the group have made similar promises to continue its global jihad and re-establish the physical caliphate.²⁸⁵

C. TARGETS & TACTICS

IS's targets have shifted throughout its existence. During the Iraq War, the Islamic State (then known as AQI) primarily targeted U.S. and coalition forces, as well as Shia civilians, Shia militias, and Sunni militias who resisted AQI's presence. In opposition to the commands of Al Qaeda Central leadership, AQI frequently targeted civilians and other Muslims in brutal suicide bombings and attacks.²⁸⁶ As U.S. and coalition forces withdrew from Iraq, the group began targeting the Maliki government and local Shia militias.²⁸⁷ IS expanded throughout northern Iraq in 2013 and began attacking rebel groups and local militias in Syria.²⁸⁸ The group eventually joined the broader civil war in Syria, targeting the forces of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and the Turkish government.²⁸⁹ Additionally, IS fought other rebel groups and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), an alliance of militant groups backed by the United States and some of its allies.²⁹⁰ In the territory under IS control, the group instituted oppressive laws against local communities. More specifically, the group persecuted non-Sunni religious groups – including Shias, Yazidis, and Christians – as well as homosexuals and secular leaders.²⁹¹

IS's tactics are multifaceted, reflecting the versatile nature of the group. IS functioned simultaneously as a state, an insurgency, and a terrorist organization. The group's strategy involved a complicated bureaucratic system to fund its war effort; a light, organized military; and a strong media presence to recruit new members and inspire

attacks abroad.²⁹² After the caliphate's defeat in 2019, IS has transitioned to a more traditional terrorist organization, developing a network of sleeper cells and maintaining its online presence.²⁹³ More detailed information regarding IS's targets and tactics is outlined below.

JTJ and AQI under Zarqawi: 1999-June 2006

Following the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, JTJ moved to Iraq and targeted U.S. forces and interests. The group attacked oil companies, the United States and its coalition partners, the Iraqi Police, the Iraqi National Guard, Iraqi politicians, and civilian and humanitarian aid workers.²⁹⁴ These attacks aimed to deter Iraqis and foreigners from aiding the U.S. occupation of Iraq or supporting U.S. plans for a new government. A number of these targets were also shared by nationalist and Ba'athist forces that participated in the insurgency. In addition to these attacks, JTJ attacked Shiite targets to provoke Shia-Sunni sectarian violence that would make it more difficult for the U.S. to carry out its mission.²⁹⁵

JTJ gained notoriety for its consistent use of suicide bombings, while other insurgent groups continued to use guerilla tactics that targeted the U.S. and coalition forces.²⁹⁶ JTJ also carried out a number of assassinations, beginning with the death of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) official Laurence Foley in Jordan in 2002. The group targeted Iraqi officials participating in the transitional government, including Izzedin Salim, the chairman of the Governing Council of Iraq.²⁹⁷

JTJ also abducted and executed foreign civilians.²⁹⁸ The first videotaped beheading – that of the American Nicholas Berg in 2004 – drew global publicity and condemnation. AQI leader Zarqawi claimed to be the executioner in the video, which was later verified by the CIA.²⁹⁹

AQI decline: June 2006-December 2011

AQI continued to target U.S. and coalition forces, as well as their allies and supporters. The group also attacked Iraqi government officials and forces, Shiite civilians and religious sites, and popular Sunni leaders who opposed them. AQI regularly used suicide bombings and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) to destroy targets.³⁰⁰ AQI began to compete with other Sunni groups for leadership of the insurgency in Iraq. In 2007, the group started to use chlorine gas in conjunction with conventional explosives to target civilians and other Sunni militants.³⁰¹ However, such tactics were criticized, and reports of chlorine attacks stopped around May 2007.³⁰²

Tensions arose between AQI and the Al Qaeda central leadership over the targeting of civilians. Both groups shared an ideological opposition to non-Sunnis, but Al Qaeda urged Zarqawi to focus his efforts on the “far enemy” (i.e., the United States and other Western countries) and minimize Muslim casualties.³⁰³ Zarqawi insisted that AQI should target “near enemies” who opposed AQI's presence, regardless of their religion and

nationality.³⁰⁴ This rift continued to grow and was a major factor leading to the split between AQ and IS in 2014.

AQI and ISIS expansion, IS contraction, and death of the IS caliphate: January 2012-2021

IS strategy since 2012 can be broken down into four main categories: military, bureaucracy, terrorism, and media.

Military

After the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq in 2011, AQI military goals centered around the expansion of territory in Iraq and Syria. Baghdadi began a new era of IS tactics in July 2012, announcing a campaign of “Breaking Walls” to free AQI militants from prison in an effort to provide IS with soldiers.³⁰⁵ This endeavor helped create a large fighting force for the group and give them momentum to seize territory in northern Iraq. In July 2013, the group targeted Iraqi security forces in a campaign called “Soldier’s Harvest.”³⁰⁶

These initial campaigns relied on guerilla tactics, including bombings, assassinations, and small-scale attacks. As ISIS expanded into a legitimate military force, it developed a “blitzkrieg” style strategy designed to strike fear into opposing armies and quickly seize territory.³⁰⁷ IS siege operations began with mortar strikes against enemy fortifications, followed by the rapid advancement of columns of pickup trucks mounted with machine guns and heavy weaponry.³⁰⁸ Small groups of infantry would then close in on urban areas and use the atmosphere of panic and surprise to overrun the town.³⁰⁹ Iraqi army troops often deserted and fled cities before ISIS even arrived.³¹⁰ The group transitioned to more complex military strategies as it captured larger swaths of territory, developing a mortar production initiative and a drone program.³¹¹

ISIS fighters mounted intense resistance against the coalition forces, using knowledge of local landscapes to identify weak points in enemy forces and delay coalition advancement with deadly counterattacks.³¹² The group also made extensive use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) to defend its positions.³¹³ Coalition leaders noted the effectiveness of ISIS strategies, specifically the group’s ability to out-maneuver enemy forces and resist coalition airstrikes and intelligence campaigns.³¹⁴

ISIS obtained most of its weapons from Iraqi army and the Syrian conflict zone. Early victories in northern Iraq provided the group with weaponry from Iraqi military bases.³¹⁵ Firearms and ammunition were also illegally obtained in Syria. Most of these weapons were donated to moderate Syrian rebels by the United States and Saudi Arabia but were later stolen by ISIS militants.³¹⁶ Evidence from the Conflict Armament Research group’s investigation in Iraq also indicates that ISIS militants produced their own weaponry and ammunition using materials smuggled across the Turkish border.³¹⁷ The group’s “Central Organization for Standardization and Quality Control” (COSQC) developed specific

procedures for the manufacture of weaponry, nearly identical to those of conventional state militaries.³¹⁸

ISIS's primary enemy during the expansion and defense of its caliphate was the coalition composed of U.S. forces, Kurdish rebel groups, Shia militias backed by Iran, and Iraqi security forces. ISIS initially enjoyed a neutral relationship with the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, which utilized IS's presence to force opposition groups into a two-front war; however, after ISIS captured Raqqa in 2014, the Assad regime began directly fighting against ISIS.³¹⁹

Since late 2019, attacks in Iraq and Syria attributed to IS have increased in complexity, frequency, and deadliness.³²⁰ This shift came in the wake of major territorial losses for IS and the group's transition to more traditional terrorist tactics. A U.S. government report found that beginning in the second quarter of 2020, the group began organizing larger, increasingly complex attacks that routinely killed more than 20 people.³²¹ In the third quarter of 2020, IS appeared to have shifted its focus to include attacking local security forces. IS-attributed attacks appeared to spike in mid-2020, when the group began its yearly offensive during the month of Ramadan.³²² However, IS was unable to sustain this pace for a significant period of time and attacks quickly reverted to pre-Ramadan rates shortly after the offensive concluded.

Bureaucracy

The group's bureaucratic strategy relied on the development of a functioning state with a diversified economy and efficient government. IS prioritized the seizure of municipal facilities, which it utilized to establish a legal system and bureaucracy in captured territory.³²³ Unlike most invading groups that dismantled the local government after capturing territory, IS chose to maintain and expand upon local institutions.³²⁴ This allowed the group to extort millions of dollars through complex tax policies imposed on local communities.

Shiite and non-Muslim civilians were specifically targeted by oppressive tax and property policies in Iraq and Syria.³²⁵ Thousands of recently recovered documents from IS territory chronicle how the group confiscated the property of Shiites, Christians, and Yazidis and gave it away to Sunni families at discounted prices.³²⁶ For a more detailed account of IS's taxation and interactions with local communities, please see the Resources and Community Relations sections of this profile. For information regarding the organizational structure of this bureaucracy, please see the Political Activities section.

Terrorism

IS is notable for its devastating terrorist attacks around the world. Though most international attention is centered around IS's violence against the West, IS carried out the majority of its attacks in the Middle East and North Africa. The Global Terrorism Database records 5,676 attacks by IS from 2013-2017. Of those 5,676 attacks, more than

97% (5,624 attacks) were carried out in the Middle East and North Africa.³²⁷ For a more comprehensive list of attacks, please see the Major Attacks section of this profile.

IS terrorist attacks are also notable for their decentralized nature. Although certain IS attacks were directly supervised by central leaders, others were carried by individuals inspired by IS or by groups that claim IS allegiance but had little direct communication with the group. This strategy allowed IS to maintain and expand global influence, even as the group faced the destruction of its caliphate and a contraction of regional strength.

A U.S. government report from February 2019 describes IS as retaining excellent control and command capability in Syria. The report suggested that the group had the capacity to carry out attacks and assassinations using small and heavy weaponry, as well as improvised explosives.³²⁸ In Syria, IS received widespread attention for kidnapping foreigners – often journalists and aid workers – and demanding ransom money from their home countries. These tactics served both as a form of revenue – some European countries paid these ransoms – and as a way to embarrass the U.S. and U.K., who refused to negotiate with terrorists. If the group did not gain money from a hostage, it used the captive for publicity.³²⁹ For example, in late August 2014, IS recorded the beheading of American journalist James Foley and published the video online, quickly gaining international attention.³³⁰

In Iraq, IS's strategy and tactics have shifted as the group's power expanded and contracted. During the growth of the caliphate, IS focused on controlling urban centers. After losing much of its territory, the group has pivoted to place greater emphasis on small-scale terrorist attacks in rural regions.³³¹ As of April 2021, IS does not formally control territory in either Iraq or Syria, nor does the group appear capable of striking outside of its traditional centers of operation in Iraq and Syria. However, IS continues to operate through sleeper cells in these countries.³³² With its reversion to insurgency, the group appears to be regaining its capabilities to carry out deadly terror attacks. For example, in January 2021, IS carried out a suicide bombing in a crowded marketplace in eastern Baghdad. 32 people were killed and 110 wounded, making this the group's deadliest attack in Iraq since 2018.³³³

Media

At the core of IS's strategy is its media presence. IS operates Al Hayat Media Center, a publishing house notable for releasing the group's monthly magazine "Dabiq." IS initially created other publications, including Islamic State News and Islamic State Report. However, the group ultimately decided to focus their efforts on Dabiq, which ran between 40 to 80 pages long each month.³³⁴ The magazine was named after a town in northern Syria where Muhammed predicted that a Muslim victory over Christians would initiate the end of times.³³⁵ 15 issues of Dabiq were released between July 2014 and July 2016. The group also runs Amaq News Agency, a news outlet featuring battlefield updates, propaganda videos, and information about IS's day-to-day activities.³³⁶ As of April 2021, IS continues to use Amaq News Agency to claim responsibility for its attacks and distribute updates about its operations.³³⁷ Both Al Hayat Media Center and Amaq

News Agency are designed to recruit foreign fighters and were designated as terrorist affiliates of IS in March 2019.³³⁸

Most IS propaganda fell into one of three categories: caliphate life, military activities, and victimhood. A 2015 study of IS propaganda determined these three categories accounted for 53%, 37%, and 7% of IS videos respectively.³³⁹ (The remaining 3% addressed other themes.) Caliphate life videos depict a peaceful and serene lifestyle enjoyed by residents of the Islamic State, showing children at schools, bustling markets, and beautiful landscapes. These videos marketed the caliphate as a homeland for Sunni Muslims.³⁴⁰ The military activities videos showcased the group's terrorist activities and its triumphant victories against the Western coalition. Victimhood videos depicted the West's violent actions toward Muslim communities (mostly air and drone strikes) and the hypocrisy of Western foreign policy.³⁴¹

The proliferation of propaganda videos created by IS soldiers drew thousands of foreign recruits to the group. IS deliberately targeted potential recruits from Western countries with its videos, where the traditional catalysts for radicalization were largely absent. For example, IS released a French language music video in 2016 to attract French-speaking Muslims. The video depicts children wearing camouflage and training for jihad against the West. Images of a young Syrian boy walking through a shelled city are juxtaposed with U.S. presidential speeches and images of "western hypocrisy."³⁴²

After IS's caliphate was dismantled, the group adapted its media strategy to explain its diminishing power. Traditionally, IS propaganda was centered around the existence of the caliphate as a paradise for Muslims and an escape from the vice and hypocrisy of the West.³⁴³ Now without a caliphate to showcase, IS emphasizes its terrorist attacks in its media messages. The group seeks to use videos of these attacks to illustrate that it still retains influence in the ongoing war of attrition against the West.³⁴⁴ Analysts believe that Telegram, a messaging service with strong end-to-end encryption and virtually no content regulation, has become IS' preferred media outlet for propaganda and recruitment precisely because of the relatively free nature of the platform.³⁴⁵ Following the recapture of IS' territory by Iraqi and Syrian forces, IS' presence on the platform has proliferated, with analysts noting a dramatic upsurge in IS-related content on the platform published in over 20 languages. Telegram's extreme level of user privacy also has allowed the group a space to plan attacks unencumbered by surveillance; for instance, Telegram was used to recruit for and coordinate the 2015 Paris attacks and 2016 Brussels bombings.³⁴⁶

MAJOR ATTACKS

Disclaimer: These are some selected major attacks in the militant organization's history. It is not a comprehensive listing but captures some of the most famous attacks or turning points during the campaign.

October 28, 2002: JTJ militants assassinated U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) officer Laurence Foley outside his home in Jordan (1 killed, 0 wounded).³⁴⁷

August 19, 2003: JTJ bombed the U.N. Headquarters in Baghdad (23 killed, 100+ wounded).³⁴⁸

August 28, 2003: JTJ bombed the Imam Ali Shrine in Najaf, Iraq (85 killed, unknown wounded).³⁴⁹

May 7, 2004: JTJ leader Zarqawi beheaded American civilian worker Nicholas Berg in Iraq (1 killed, 0 wounded).³⁵⁰

November 9, 2005: AQI bombed western hotels in Amman, Jordan (57 killed, unknown wounded).³⁵¹

February 22, 2006: AQI bombed the Shiite Golden Mosque in Samarra, Iraq, which is located 65 miles north of Baghdad. The attack sparked retaliation against 100 or more Sunni mosques (no reported casualties).³⁵²

August 2009: AQI claimed responsibility for the bombings of several government buildings in Baghdad (250 killed, 1000+ wounded).³⁵³

May 2010: AQI carried out attacks across Iraq in response to the killings of AQI leaders Masri and Baghdadi (85 killed, 300+ wounded).³⁵⁴

March 21, 2012: AQI claimed responsibility for attacks across eight cities carried out together in just under six hours. Shiite civilians and Iraqi police officers, security forces, and government officials were targeted in Karbala, Kirkuk, and Baghdad (46 killed, 200 wounded).³⁵⁵

July 22, 2013: AQI attacked Abu Ghraib and Taji prisons in Iraq, freeing approximately 800 prisoners with Al Qaeda affiliations (26 Killed, unknown wounded).³⁵⁶

June 10, 2014: ISIS took control of Mosul (unknown casualties).³⁵⁷

July - August 2014: ISIS took control of Raqqa, Syria (unknown casualties).³⁵⁸

August 2014: ISIS beheaded American captive James Foley and released a video of the murder. The video garnered international attention. ISIS proceeded to behead more British and American hostages in the coming months (1+ killed, 0 wounded).³⁵⁹

August 2014: Over a period of two weeks, ISIS executed 700 members of the al-Sheitaat tribe in the Deir al-Zor province of Syria, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The al-Sheitaat tribe and ISIS had begun fighting in July 2014 (700+ killed, unknown wounded).³⁶⁰

October 22, 2014: IS member Michael Zehaf-Bibeau opened fire at the Canadian National War Memorial, killing a Canadian soldier. He then stormed the Canadian parliament before being shot and killed by authorities. ISIS claimed that the attack was a direct call to action (2 killed, 3 wounded).³⁶¹

October 29, 2014: ISIS publicly executed several members of a Sunni tribe, the Abu Nimr, that had been resisting ISIS's advance in the Anbar province of western Iraq. Reports on the number of dead range from forty-six to over three hundred. The reports also differ on whether or not women and children were killed along with men (46+ killed, unknown wounded).³⁶²

May 15, 2015: ISIS seized Ramadi, the capital of Anbar province, from Iraqi security forces, which were supported by Shiite militias and American airstrikes. ISIS had controlled areas around Ramadi for almost a year and a half before taking the city (500+ killed, unknown wounded).³⁶³

November 13, 2015: Eleven IS members killed 130 civilians and injured 100 more in a series of attacks in Paris, France. Gunman and suicide bombers attacked a concert hall, a soccer stadium, restaurants, and bars in the French capital. Within the days following the attack, nine of the IS operatives were killed. One operative remained on the run until he was captured in Brussels on March 18, 2016.³⁶⁴ According to French President François Hollande, the attacks were planned in Syria and organized in Belgium (130 killed, 100 wounded).³⁶⁵

January 14, 2016: Five IS militants armed with suicide explosives and handguns attacked a Starbucks and a police station in Jakarta, Indonesia. One Canadian civilian, one Indonesian civilian, and five attackers were killed (7 killed, 23 wounded).³⁶⁶

March 22, 2016: Members of the Islamic State set off three nail bombs in Brussels, Belgium. Two bombs were detonated in the Brussels Airport, and one bomb exploded in the Maalbek Metro Station. In the two days following the bombings, European authorities arrested eleven Islamic State militants that have been linked to this attack and the November 2015 attack in Paris, France (31 killed, 340 wounded).³⁶⁷

May 23, 2017: ISIS operative Salman Abedi detonated a bomb at an Ariana Grande pop concert in Manchester, United Kingdom (23 killed, 250+ wounded).³⁶⁸

June 7, 2017: Eight gunmen and suicide bombers simultaneously attacked Iranian parliament and the tomb of Ayatollah Khomeini in Tehran, Iran. This was IS's first major attack within Iran (12 killed, 42 wounded).³⁶⁹

August 17, 2017: A van driver plowed through a crowded plaza in Barcelona, maiming dozens of pedestrians. IS claimed responsibility, but it is unclear if the attack was actually organized by IS or if it was merely inspired by the group's ideology. It was Spain's deadliest terrorist attack in over a decade (13 killed, 80 wounded).³⁷⁰

October 31, 2017: Sayfullo Habibullaevic Saipov, an Uzbek national with alleged ties to IS, drove a rented van through a crowded sidewalk in New York, maiming and killing more than a dozen individuals. He left a note at the scene stating that the attack was carried out in the name of IS (8 killed, 12 wounded).³⁷¹

November 24, 2017: IS-affiliated militants stormed a mosque in Bir al-Abed, Egypt and massacred hundreds of worshippers. The attack was revenge for the town's cooperation with the Egyptian government in identifying suspected IS militants. Bir al-Abedr was also targeted because many of its residents practiced Sufism, a mystical form of Islam that IS considers polytheistic and evil (311 killed, 128 wounded).³⁷²

January 15, 2018: Twin suicide bombers attacked Tayran square, a crowded plaza where day laborers go to find work. The bombings were the group's first major attack in Baghdad after the Iraqi government declared victory against IS in December 2017 (38 killed, 105 wounded).³⁷³

April 22, 2018: A suicide bomber attacked a voter registration center in a predominately Shia neighborhood of Kabul, Afghanistan. This was the fourth attack in a series of bombings leading up to Afghanistan's parliamentary elections in October (57 killed, 119 wounded).³⁷⁴

May 2, 2018: Suicide bombers attacked a United Nations-led electoral commission in Tripoli, Libya. The attack was intended to disrupt international efforts to stabilize Libya (12 killed, 7 wounded).³⁷⁵

May 13, 2018: A family of six simultaneously detonated suicide bombs at three churches in Surabaya, Indonesia. Another bomb from an affiliated militant family prematurely exploded at the house of the bomb maker, killing two members of the family. The next day another family detonated a suicide bomb on their motorbike while driving into police headquarters, killing all members of the family and injuring police and civilians. These attacks were the first successful IS mission in Indonesia since 2016 and the first suicide bombings involving women and children in Indonesia (20 killed, 41 wounded).³⁷⁶

July 13, 2018: Suicide bombers attacked the convoy of a politician campaigning for a legislative seat in the Pakistani province of Baluchistan. The candidate, Nawabzada Siraj Raisani, was killed in the attack. Hundreds of others were killed or wounded. The attack is the second deadliest in Pakistan's history (149 killed, 186 wounded).³⁷⁷

July 25, 2018: Islamic State militants attacked the city of Sweida in southwest Syria, detonating suicide bombs and using other weapons to kill large numbers of civilians. The region has a large Druze population and was nominally under government control throughout the civil war. IS militants reportedly woke up families in the hours before dawn and silently killed hundreds in their homes before detonating suicide bombs later in the day (215 killed, 200+ wounded).³⁷⁸

September 22, 2018: During a military parade in Ahvaz, Iran, four militants disguised in military uniforms opened fire on a crowd of soldiers and civilian onlookers. Iranian officials blamed the United States and its regional allies for the attacks; however, the Islamic State later took credit and vowed to undertake more attacks in Iran (25+ killed, 60 wounded).³⁷⁹

December 2018: Cherif Chekatt, a French national radicalized in prison, opened fire at a Christmas market in Strasbourg, France (5 killed, 11 wounded).³⁸⁰

January 27, 2019: IS-affiliated militants set off two bombs at a church in the southern Philippines. The bombing came a week after local voters rejected a referendum for inclusion in an autonomous Muslim region. Separatist Islamist groups in the Philippines had been demanding autonomy for years, and the attacks have been described as a form of revenge against the local population (20 killed, 81 wounded).³⁸¹

April 21, 2019: Suicide bombers and gunmen attacked three hotels and three Catholic churches in coordinated attacks in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The militants were from National Thowheed Jama'ath, a group with connections to IS. Photos showing National Thowheed Jama'ath group members pledging their allegiance to IS were released by Amaq News Agency after the attack occurred (300+ killed, 500+ wounded).³⁸²

August 17, 2019: A suicide bomber detonated an explosive belt at a Shiite wedding in western Kabul, Afghanistan. IS' Afghan affiliate claimed responsibility for the bombing (63+ killed, 180+ wounded).³⁸³

February 2, 2020: Sudesh Amman, a British national, stabbed and injured two people on the Streatham High Road in south London, United Kingdom. Armed police shot and killed Amman shortly after the attack began. Amman reportedly declared allegiance to IS in a video, and IS later claimed responsibility for Amman's attack. The group held that Amman was responding to IS' call for attacks on citizens of countries bombing IS territory in the Middle East (0 killed, 2 wounded).³⁸⁴

November 2, 2020: A lone gunman attacked several locations in downtown Vienna, Austria, including a plaza near the city's main synagogue. Armed police shot and killed the attacker. Police investigators later determined that the attacker, whose identity authorities have not disclosed, was an IS sympathizer. As of April 2021, it is the most recent major IS attack in Europe (4 killed, 13 wounded).³⁸⁵

January 21, 2021: Two suicide bombers detonated bombs in a crowded marketplace in eastern Baghdad. Iraqi Health and Interior Ministry spokespeople noted that the attack was the deadliest in Baghdad since 2018.³⁸⁶ IS claimed responsibility for the bombings via a statement released on the messaging app Telegram later that day, which stated they intended to kill Shiites (32 killed, 110 wounded).³⁸⁷

March 24, 2021 - April 4, 2021: An IS affiliate group, known as the Islamic State Central Africa Province or ISIS-Mozambique, took over the town of Palma in northern Mozambique.³⁸⁸ Militants targeted government, military, and civilian personnel and buildings. On March 29, IS claimed responsibility for the attack via a statement released through its Amaq News Network.³⁸⁹ However, the relationship between IS and IS-Central Africa has been described as “loose” and several observers doubt that IS was directly involved in the attacks.³⁹⁰ Government forces did not

completely reclaim control of Palma until April 4, 2021.³⁹¹ An estimated 40,000 people were displaced by the fighting, and the number of casualties is unknown (unknown killed, unknown wounded).³⁹²

INTERACTIONS

A. DESIGNATED/LISTED

- U.S. Department of State Terrorist Organizations List: December 2004 to Present³⁹³
 - Al Hayat Media Center and Amaq News Agency (IS's media wing) added to listing: March 2019 to Present.³⁹⁴
- United Nations Security Council Al Qaeda Sanctions List: October 18, 2004 to Present³⁹⁵

B. COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

The Islamic State has had extensive interactions with local communities. Below is a description of IS's changing civilian relations throughout its existence.

JTJ and AQI under Zarqawi: 1999-June 2006

Initially, many Sunnis were sympathetic to AQI. They supported the group's goals to drive U.S. forces from Iraq and prevent Shiites from taking over the government. However, AQI's use of suicide bombings, its willingness to target Iraqis and popular Sunni leaders, and its intentional incitement of sectarian violence began to alienate some Iraqis, including Sunnis and other jihadi groups.³⁹⁶

The most prominent example of AQI's brutality and its negative impact on the group's popularity was Zarqawi's 2005 bombing of three hotels in Amman, Jordan. The explosion killed 57 people, most of whom were Muslims celebrating a wedding at the hotel.³⁹⁷ The incident garnered massive protests throughout Jordan. Thousands took to the streets in Amman and called Zarqawi a coward for his violence and hypocrisy.³⁹⁸ After this incident, the organization grew increasingly unpopular throughout the Middle East, and Zarqawi's role in AQI gradually diminished until his death in 2006.

AQI decline: June 2006-December 2011

By 2006, AQI's indiscriminate violence had exasperated Iraqi communities. Frustrated Iraqis, many of them Sunni, began covertly killing AQI leaders and partnering with the American government to remove the group from power in the Sunni triangle.³⁹⁹ This movement, known as the Anbar Awakening, worked in conjunction with the surge of U.S. troops to bring about a major decline in violence in Iraq.⁴⁰⁰ On September 9, 2006, the U.S. government formally began paying Sunni militias, further decreasing local support for AQI.⁴⁰¹ AQI attempted to communicate with civilians from both its "ministry of information" and from its media production branch, Al-Furqan Media, but public support for the group remained low for the remainder of the U.S. war in Iraq.⁴⁰²

AQI and ISIS expansion, IS contraction: January 2012-2018

After U.S. troops withdrew from Iraq in 2011, AQI capitalized on growing dissatisfaction within Sunni communities towards the Maliki government. Prime Minister Maliki instituted a number of policies that excluded Sunnis from power in the central government to garner support among his Shia voter base. Maliki simultaneously used politically-loyal components of Iraq's security forces to violently suppress protests in Sunni-majority areas. AQI took advantage these heightened sectarian tensions to partner with local Sunni militias and former Ba'athist officers. These community alliances allowed AQI to quickly spread its influence throughout northern Iraq, eventually enabling the group's rapid and successful offensive into northern and central Iraq in 2014.

In addition to partnering with local communities, ISIS used multiple languages to recruit foreigners and spread its message online.⁴⁰³ The group produced sophisticated recruitment videos and an online magazine – named “Dabiq” – in English and other European languages.⁴⁰⁴ Dabiq was published from 2014 to 2016 and included battlefield updates, administrative information, and articles on the establishment of the caliphate and its religious foundations. Through media tools, ISIS encouraged emigration to its territory and global support for its organization.⁴⁰⁵

IS has had complex relationships with civilians residing within the territories it controlled. At its peak in 2015, IS territory was home to nearly 12 million people. Most of these civilians were not originally affiliated with IS, but local communities were significantly influenced by the presence of the group.⁴⁰⁶ Citizens in these regions lived in constant threat of violence and faced repressive laws that forced them to adopt a strict religious lifestyle. The group coerced Iraqi and Syrian government employees into continuing to work and taxed local communities immensely.⁴⁰⁷ The intense religious laws and regular violence, in addition to the widespread exploitation of minority women as sex slaves, led to a massive exodus of civilians from IS-controlled territories. IS displaced over 3.3 million people in Iraq and contributed to the growing refugee crisis in Syria.⁴⁰⁸

While these draconian measures and violent tactics created backlash in some areas, the group also served to improve certain aspects of governance and accountability. State services such as electricity, trash removal, and road maintenance were carried out effectively for the first time in decades.⁴⁰⁹ Birth and death records were kept meticulously.⁴¹⁰ IS even established a Department of Motor Vehicles, gave away free food to citizens, and operated an orphanage for children whose parents were killed in fighting.⁴¹¹ In a region that was historically plagued by weak institutions and a lack of central government oversight, local communities admitted that IS services were an improvement over previous state programs.⁴¹²

The caliphate operated with a social contract in the same way a modern state does, guaranteeing some degree of justice and accountability, protection, and state services in exchange for support through taxation or conscription into the military.⁴¹³ IS even drafted

“documents of the city” to codify its values and formally outline the relationship between itself and local citizens in Raqqa, Mosul, Tikrit, Hit, and Sirte.⁴¹⁴

Death of the IS caliphate and return to insurgency: 2018-2021

As of April 2021, IS does not formally control territory in Iraq and Syria. Without a space to directly govern civilians, the group’s relationship with communities has become much less direct. However, lingering issues remain for civilian populations. IS activity has generated massive stateless populations in Iraq and Syria, consisting of foreign fighters who moved to the IS caliphate, women who married IS soldiers, and children born under IS rule.⁴¹⁵

Thousands of IS affiliates have been imprisoned in Syria and Iraq for extended periods with no apparent plan for their release as the detainees’ governments of origin do not wish to repatriate their nationals. The detainees, civilian and combatant alike, remain in prison on the grounds that they continue to pose a security risk owing to their ideological or personal ties to IS.⁴¹⁶

C. RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER GROUPS

IS initially had a strong relationship with Al Qaeda. The group acted as an AQ affiliate in Iraq despite ideological differences. AQ eventually disowned IS for its disobedience and targeting choices. Regionally, IS had few allies in Iraq and Syria and fought against most organizations and governments with which it interacted. Globally, IS continues to lead a network of Islamic militant groups that declared allegiance to the group and its leadership.

JTJ and AQI under Zarqawi: 1999-June 2006

Tensions existed between Al Qaeda and JTJ since before the group officially became an AQ affiliate organization, largely due to several ideological differences.⁴¹⁷ The most significant of these disagreements concerned targets. While Zarqawi preferred to attack “heretical” regional actors and states (the “near enemy”), AQ leadership prioritized attacking the United States and other Western entities (the “far enemy”).⁴¹⁸ Nonetheless, AQ leader Osama bin Laden allegedly asked Zarqawi to join AQ and provided initial funding for JTJ’s training camp.⁴¹⁹

Zarqawi finally declared allegiance to bin Laden in October 2004 (the group renamed itself to AQI), but he continually disobeyed AQ leadership throughout his tenure.⁴²⁰ In July 2005, bin Laden and his second in command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, wrote to Zarqawi and criticized his brutal tactics. They complained about the beheadings he sanctioned and attacks carried out by AQI that consistently killed Muslims and alienated Iraqis. The letter also questioned the effectiveness of Zarqawi’s strategy of targeting Shiites to fuel a sectarian conflict. When AQ leadership commanded Zarqawi to stop attacking Shiite cultural sites, the AQI leader ignored these orders.⁴²¹

In January 2006, AQI joined the umbrella organization Majlis Shura al-Mujahidin (MSC). The MSC was a collective of six jihadi groups in Iraq that sought to consolidate jihadi efforts to expel U.S. and coalition forces from Iraq.⁴²² By joining the MSC, AQI attempted to prove that it was an Iraqi-based organization and demonstrate that it was willing to work with other groups.⁴²³ While AQI presented itself as a mere member of the MSC, it had significant influence in the group, which in many ways functioned as little more than a media front.⁴²⁴

AQI decline: June 2006-December 2011

Following Zarqawi's death, AQI attempted to extend its connections with other organizations. It became more integrated with AQ leadership.⁴²⁵ AQI also gathered several insurgent groups under its banner of the Islamic State of Iraq in 2006. However, many insurgents declined AQI's offers of cooperation and argued that the declaration of a state was illegal in Islamic law. Some voiced their concerns to bin Laden and others fought AQI members on the ground.⁴²⁶

AQI and ISIS expansion under Baghdadi: January 2012-2014

At the outset of the Syrian Civil War, AQI leader Baghdadi sent Abu Muhammad al-Julani to Syria to create a Salafi cell and carry out operations against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Julani established the militant group Jabhat al-Nusra (Al-Nusra, later known as Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham) and received funding and personnel from both AQI and AQ. In April 2013, Baghdadi declared that Al-Nusra and AQI would be merged under the name of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).⁴²⁷ Julani denied the merger and re-pledged allegiance to AQ emir Ayman al-Zawahiri.⁴²⁸

Zawahiri took several steps to attempt to mediate the conflict. Zawahiri ruled in favor of Julani and decreed that the two organizations would continue to operate independently of one another. He appointed AQ Central leader Abu Khalid al-Suri to mediate the conflict in Syria and ensure that his orders were followed.⁴²⁹ Zawahiri also dictated that ISIS should limit its operations to Iraq.⁴³⁰ In June 2013, Baghdadi publicly rejected Zawahiri's statement. ISIS continued to operate in Syria, clashing with other Islamist groups and taking additional territory.⁴³¹ Violence between ISIS and Al-Nusra militants had resulted in 3,000 casualties by March 2014.⁴³² In January 2014, ISIS captured the strategic Syrian city of Raqqa against the commands of AQ leadership.⁴³³ AQ officially renounced connection with ISIS in February 2014.⁴³⁴

Despite the ongoing disagreement between ISIS and Al-Nusra, there was evidence of some ground-level cooperation between the two groups in certain areas of Syria. For example, ISIS and Al-Nusra released an anti-Hezbollah video together in summer 2014 from the eastern mountains of Lebanon, where they had separately taken Lebanese soldiers hostage.⁴³⁵ Both facing U.S. airstrikes in 2014, al-Nusra and ISIS leadership reportedly began meeting to discuss coordination.⁴³⁶

Former Ba'athists provided critical assistance to ISIS operations in Iraq. The majority of Baath party support came from members of Jaysh Rijal at-Tariqa an-Naqshbandi (JRTN), an Iraqi militant group formed in December 2006 following Saddam Hussein's death.⁴³⁷ ISIS's success in capturing Iraqi cities depended on the military expertise and local connections of the Ba'athists. Without help from members of JRTN, many experts believe that ISIS would not have been nearly as effective.⁴³⁸ However, ISIS's goal of creating a caliphate was likely opposed by the Ba'athists, who are nationalists and supported ISIS only because of its anti-Maliki stance. There have been reports that ISIS killed Ba'athists in Mosul in order to consolidate its authority and discouraged sects that could negotiate with the government or oppose its vision for a caliphate.⁴³⁹

Tensions and skirmishes between ISIS and other Islamist groups on the ground escalated in 2013. Other groups, including some linked to Al Qaeda, found ISIS's interpretation of Islam too extreme and its tactics too violent. These groups also distrusted the amount of foreign fighters in ISIS.⁴⁴⁰ In early January 2014, ISIS clashed with the Islamist Mujahedeen Army and Free Syrian Army-linked units in a number of locations around Aleppo.⁴⁴¹ Meanwhile, Ahrar al-Sham, a Salafi militant group part of the Islamic Front (an umbrella group of Sunni Islamist groups operating in Syria), worked with Al-Nusra and other rebel groups to push ISIS out of Raqqa.⁴⁴² Later that month, a popular Saudi Cleric, Abdullah Muhammad al-Muhaysini, relocated to Syria and announced a reconciliation plan to end the infighting between Islamist groups in Syria. Al-Nusra and other Islamist groups quickly agreed to the plan, but ISIS rejected it.⁴⁴³

ISIS frequently targeted rival group leaders. In December 2013, ISIS militants tortured and killed senior Ahrar al-Sham commander Dr. Hussein Abu Rayyan. Group members shot him repeatedly, broke his bones, and amputated his ear. In response to Rayyan's death, protesters marched against ISIS's presence in Syria and Ahrar al-Sham leader Hassan Abboud publicly criticized the killing.⁴⁴⁴ Abboud later condemned ISIS for its practice of calling other Islamist rebels "infidels" and for refusing to submit to mediation.⁴⁴⁵ In February 2014, an ISIS suicide bombing killed Liwa al-Tawhid leader Adnan Bakour in Aleppo, along with twenty-five others. That same day, Suqour al-Sham commander Abu Hussein al-Dik was killed by ISIS in Hama, Syria. Both organizations were members of the Islamic Front.⁴⁴⁶ Later that month, Abu Khalid al-Suri, Zawahiri's delegate to Syria and a leader of Ahrar al-Sham, was killed in a suicide bombing. Ahrar al-Sham leader Hassan Abboud blamed ISIS.⁴⁴⁷ In addition to targeted attacks, ISIS also battled Islamist units on the ground. For example, Liwa al-Tawhid worked with Al-Nusra to expel ISIS from several areas near Aleppo and Latakia in March 2014.⁴⁴⁸

ISIS's relationships with different Free Syrian Army (FSA) factions varies. ISIS's ideology opposes a secular state, which is a goal of many FSA-linked brigades. The relationship between smaller FSA brigades and ISIS has included some cooperation, only when convenient for both sides.⁴⁴⁹ In September 2014, for example, ISIS and the Free Syrian Army signed a truce; they both agreed to release around 100 prisoners and to submit a border issue between Syria and Turkey to an Islamic court.⁴⁵⁰

In addition to its interactions with other rebel groups, ISIS also maintained connections to the Syrian government. The group's relationship with the Assad regime evolved throughout the Syrian Civil War. Initially, Assad utilized ISIS's presence to force the Free Syrian Army into a two-front war in northern Syria.⁴⁵¹ The Assad regime also purchased oil from ISIS, implicitly funding the organization.⁴⁵² However, this mutually beneficial partnership grew more hostile as ISIS increasingly targeted government forces and inevitably clashed with the Assad regime over territorial disputes.⁴⁵³

IS contraction under regional and global pressure: 2014-2018

After IS gained global notoriety, many Islamist militant organizations across the world – particularly in the Middle East, Central Asia, and North Africa – began to declare allegiance to the group. Some of these groups appear to have been created in response to IS's success and Baghdadi's call for Muslim support, while others were already in existence. However, it is important to note that a declaration does not always indicate a working relationship. Many groups make pledges of allegiance in order to attach their name to the infamous IS brand without having any operational ties to the group.⁴⁵⁴ For example, a faction of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), an Islamist separatist organization in the Philippines, posted a video threatening to kill two German hostages if Germany did not stop supporting the U.S. airstrikes against IS. After Germany paid a ransom, ASG dropped their political demands and freed the hostages. Despite AS's supposed ties to IS, the Philippine military claimed that there was no evidence of any operational link between ASG and IS.⁴⁵⁵

Some pledges of allegiance from other militant groups have been publicly accepted by IS leader Baghdadi. In a November 2014 speech, Baghdadi appeared to accept a number of pledges of allegiance by referring to new "soldiers of the Islamic State" in Libya, Egypt, and Yemen.⁴⁵⁶ These groups included the Egyptian Islamic militant group Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, which changed its name to the Islamic State - Sinai Province (commonly known as Wilayat Sinai) after the speech.⁴⁵⁷ In March 2015, Baghdadi's acceptance of Nigerian Islamist group Boko Haram drew global attention because Boko Haram was already highly active before IS gained prominence.⁴⁵⁸

Other Islamist militant groups have declared allegiance but have not been publicly recognized by IS. In a 2014 issue of Dabiq published after Baghdadi had formally accepted a number of pledges but left out others, an IS representative claimed that some of the neglected groups would not be accepted until two conditions were met. These groups had to establish a direct line of communication to Baghdadi, and Baghdadi needed to appoint or formally recognize the group's leadership. Others speculated that Baghdadi may have been discriminating against non-Arab groups, such as the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters in the Philippines, which was among the groups that declared allegiance but were not formally accepted.⁴⁵⁹

Support for IS proved to be divisive for some groups, with some members or leaders announcing allegiance to Baghdadi while others maintained their own group's independence or upheld previous pledges of allegiance. In particular, some groups that

worked with or pledged allegiance to AQ were hesitant to break their pledges, as many Islamist militants consider such a break as a significant betrayal that reflects poorly on group credibility.⁴⁶⁰ For example, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) announced support for ISIS and offered advice to the group in a statement made on its website in August 2014.⁴⁶¹ In November 2014, however, AQAP declared Baghdadi's caliphate illegitimate and refuted him after he claimed that Yemen was a part of his caliphate. It is likely that not all AQAP members supported the decision to stand against IS.⁴⁶²

Some groups with ties to the Afghan Taliban were also hesitant to affiliate with IS.⁴⁶³ Reports of IS activity in Afghanistan began in January 2015, when rumors started to circulate in the country regarding Taliban fighters defecting from their organization to claim allegiance to IS. Some Afghans, including Taliban members, denied that any group had declared support for IS.⁴⁶⁴ In May 2015, Afghan officials announced that IS-trained forces were fighting alongside the Taliban against the government in some parts of the country.⁴⁶⁵ At the same time, however, other Afghan police officials claimed that IS and the Taliban were at war with each other. In short, the situation on the ground appeared fragmented and unclear.⁴⁶⁶ As of April 2021, the Islamic State in Khorasan Province (IS-KP) is the active affiliate of IS in Afghanistan and Central Asia.⁴⁶⁷

Death of the IS caliphate and return to insurgency: 2018-2021

Despite losing all its territory in Syria and Iraq, IS still maintains connections to a global network of jihadist groups. Since Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's death in 2019, IS's new leadership appeared to have begun looking for new allies to reconstitute its position among jihadist groups but have indicated that prospective partners must be ideologically comparable. IS leadership faced a challenge: it could either seek to build extensive alliances through rapprochement with other jihadist groups, or maintain its commitment to ideological purity by eschewing relationships with other groups altogether.⁴⁶⁸

IS's new leaders appear to have chosen the former option, opting to enhance the group's relationships with other segments of the Sunni community who had cooperated with segments of society the group may have previously derided as "apostates" – including the army, police, and the mainstream political parties. Another component of IS' effort to reconstitute its position among jihadists is its pursuit of reconciliation with Sunni communities in areas in which the group operates. This approach is reportedly in line with the views of the members of IS' new Delegated Committee - now the topmost executive committee in the IS organizational hierarchy.⁴⁶⁹

In addition to its presence in Iraq, Syria, IS claims to conduct operations in Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, East Asia (specifically the Philippines), Somalia, and West Africa (specifically Nigeria).⁴⁷⁰ IS also has a branch based in the Khorasan region, which covers areas of Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other Central Asian countries.⁴⁷¹ Additionally, IS has recently claimed affiliation with militant groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.⁴⁷² For more information on these organizations, see the Global Islamic State map on the Mapping Militants website.

D. STATE SPONSORS AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

JTJ and AQI under Zarqawi: 1999-June 2006

JTJ relied on Osama bin Laden's funding to create Zarqawi's training camps in Herat, Afghanistan.⁴⁷³ The group did not receive resources from any state or other external actor at this time.

AQI decline: June 2006-December 2011

In 2006, U.S. forces in Iraq found documents that proved that Iran provided AQI with funding and weapons, as well as negotiated the release of AQI prisoners. Because Iran is majority Shia and AQI had always been hostile toward Shiite Muslims, the state's support of the group was likely an attempt to sabotage the U.S. intervention in Iraq.⁴⁷⁴ In 2009, the Iraqi government accused the Syrian government of harboring terrorist cells, an allegation that Syrian officials denied.⁴⁷⁵

AQI and ISIS expansion under Baghdadi: January 2012-2014

Private donations from wealthy individuals in the Gulf region were vital in the early years of ISIS's resurgence. Qatar was criticized for being complacent in this process and not adjusting its laws to stop the flow of money to ISIS.⁴⁷⁶ While not an explicit endorsement, Qatar's lack of willingness to comply with international finance norms benefitted ISIS.

Meanwhile, Iran ceased its assistance to ISIS. The Iranian government reversed its policy of aiding the group in 2014. Instead, the country offered assistance to U.S. counterterrorism efforts against ISIS.⁴⁷⁷

IS contraction under regional and global pressure: 2014-2018

The Turkish government, Iraqi Kurdish militias, and the Assad regime purchased oil from IS during the Syrian civil war.⁴⁷⁸ These actions implicitly funded the group; however, they should not be considered as deliberate endorsements of IS. The deals were established through preexisting networks of oil smugglers, an example of wartime necessity rather than a purposeful decision of finance IS.

The Death of the Caliphate: 2018-2021

As of April 2021, IS is not receiving support from any known state sponsor or external actor.

MAPS

- Global al Qaeda
- Global Islamic State

- Syria
- North Africa
- Iraq
- Aleppo

¹ "Jamaat al-Tawhid wa'l-Jihad," GlobalSecurity.org, 6 Dec. 2006. Web. 26 Jan. 2010; "US Diplomat Shot Dead in Jordan." BBC News. BBC, 28 Oct. 2002. Web. 11 Nov. 2014.

² "Cabo Ligado Weekly: 29 March-4 April." Cabo Ligado Conflict Observatory, April 2021. <https://www.caboligado.com/reports/cabo-ligado-weekly-29-march-4-april-2021>

³ Christina Goldbaum. "ISIS Claims Responsibility for Mozambique Attack." The New York Times, March 30, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/30/world/africa/isis-mozambique-attack.html>; "Islamic State Claims Dayslong Attack on Mozambique Town." VOA News, March 29, 2021. <https://www.voanews.com/africa/islamic-state-claims-dayslong-attack-mozambique-town>; Emilia Columbo and Austin C. Doctor. "Foreign Fighters and the Trajectory of Violence in Northern Mozambique." War on the Rocks, April 13, 2021. <https://warontherocks.com/2021/04/foreign-fighters-and-the-trajectory-of-violence-in-northern-mozambique/>

⁴ Christina Goldbaum. "ISIS Claims Responsibility for Mozambique Attack." The New York Times, March 30, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/30/world/africa/isis-mozambique-attack.html>

⁵ "Cabo Ligado Weekly: 29 March-4 April." Cabo Ligado Conflict Observatory, April 2021. <https://www.caboligado.com/reports/cabo-ligado-weekly-29-march-4-april-2021>

⁶ Associated Press. "40,000 Displaced in North Mozambique After Assault on Palma." U.S. News and World Report, April 20, 2021. <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2021-04-20/40-000-displaced-in-north-mozambique-after-assault-on-palma>

⁷ Bunzel, Cole. "From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State." The Brookings Institution, March 9, 2015. 4.

⁸ In February 2021, a U.S. military official said that the Islamic State "remains a serious challenge" but that it "is no longer able to sustainably occupy any territory in Iraq and Syria." See Abdulla, Namu. "Kurds Warn of Growing Islamic State Capabilities in Iraq." VOA News, February 7, 2021.

<https://www.voanews.com/extremism-watch/kurds-warn-growing-islamic-state-capabilities-iraq>

⁹ Weaver, Mary Anne. "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi." The Atlantic, August 2006.

¹⁰ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. 2.

¹¹ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. 2.

¹² Weaver, Mary Anne. "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi." The Atlantic, August 2006.

¹³ Bergen, Peter, Joseph Felter, Vahid Brown, and Jacob Shapiro. Bombers, Bank Accounts, & Bleedout: Al-Qa'ida's Road In and Out of Iraq. Rep. Ed. Brian Fishman. Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, July 2008. Web. 22 Dec. 2014.

¹⁴ Iraqi police officer shot dead by sniper in Diyala," Aswat al-Iraq via BBC Monitoring Middle East, September 13, 2010, LexisNexis Academic; Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.; Cracks in the Foundation: Leadership Schisms in Al-Qa'ida from 1989-2006. Rep. West Point: Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, 2007. Pg 19. Print. Harmony Project.

¹⁵ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. 3.

¹⁶ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. 3.

¹⁷ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. 3

¹⁸ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. 3.

¹⁹ "Profile: Tawhid and Jihad Group." BBC News. 8 Oct. 2004. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.

-
- ²⁰ Laub, Zachary, and Jonathan Masters. "The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria." Backgrounders. Council on Foreign Relations, 8 Aug. 2014. Web. 28 Nov. 2014.
- Felter, Joseph, and Brian Fishman. Al-Qa'ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records. Rep. Harmony Project at the Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, 19 Dec. 2007. Web. Page 4. 9 Dec. 2014.
- ²¹ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. 3.
- ²² Felter, Joseph, and Fishman, Brian, "Al Qaeda's foreign fighters in Iraq: A first look at the Sinjar records," Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 19 Dec. 2007. Web. 24 Jan. 2010; Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.
- ²³ Hashim, Ahmed. "The Islamic State: From Al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate." Middle East Policy 21.4 (2014): 70. DOI: 10.1111/mepo.12096. Web. 17 Dec. 2014.
- ²⁴ "Al Qaeda, Iraq Partners in Terror -- Powell." CNN. 3 Feb. 2003. Web. 24 Nov. 2014; Boucher, Richard. "Foreign Terrorist Organization: Designation of Jama'at Al-Tawhid Wa'al-Jihad and Aliases." Archive. U.S. Department of State, 15 Oct. 2004. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.
- ²⁵ Jehl, Douglas. "C.I.A. Says Berg's Killer Was Very Probably Zarqawi." The New York Times. 13 May 2004. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.
- ²⁶ Felter, Joseph, and Fishman, Brian, "Al Qaeda's foreign fighters in Iraq: A first look at the Sinjar records," Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 19 Dec. 2007. Web. 24 Jan. 2010; Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.
- ²⁷ Felter, Joseph, and Brian Fishman. Al-Qa'ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records. Rep. Harmony Project at the Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, 19 Dec. 2007. Web. 9 Dec. 2014.
- ²⁸ Al-Jabouri, Najim Abed and Sterling Jensen. "The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening." National Defense University, Jan. 2010. Web. 7 Jul. 2014; Felter, Joseph, and Brian Fishman. Al-Qa'ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records. Rep. Harmony Project at the Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, 19 Dec. 2007. Web. 9 Dec. 2014.
- ²⁹ "Cracks in the Foundation: Leadership Schisms in al Qaeda from 1989-2006," Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 2007. Web. 24 Jan. 2010.
- ³⁰ Philips, James, "Zarqawi's Amman bombings: Jordan's 9/11," The Heritage Foundation, 18 Nov. 2005. Web. 26 Jan. 2010; Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, Jun. 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.
- ³¹ Hunt, Emily, "Zarqawi's 'Total War' on Iraqi Shiites exposes a divide among Sunni Jihadists," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 15 Nov. 2005. Web. 26 Jan. 2010.
- ³² Worth, Robert F. "Muslim Clerics Call for an End to Iraqi Rioting." New York Times, 25 Feb. 2006. 8, Jul. 2014; Worth, Robert F. "Blast at Shiite Shrine Sets Off Sectarian Fury in Iraq." The New York Times, 23 Feb. 2006. Web. 2 Jul. 2014.
- ³³ Felter, Joseph, and Brian Fishman. Al-Qa'ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records. Rep. Harmony Project at the Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, 19 Dec. 2007. Web. 9 Dec. 2014.
- ³⁴ "Terrorist Organization Profile: Mujahideen Shura Council." National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. University of Maryland, n.d. Web. 9 Dec. 2014.
- ³⁵ Bergen, Peter, Joseph Felter, Vahid Brown, and Jacob Shapiro. Bombers, Bank Accounts, & Bleedout: Al-Qa'ida's Road In and Out of Iraq. Rep. Ed. Brian Fishman. Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, July 2008. Web. 12. 22 Dec. 2014.
- ³⁶ Felter, Joseph, and Fishman, Brian, "Al Qaeda's foreign fighters in Iraq: A first look at the Sinjar records," Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 19 Dec. 2007. Web. 24 Jan. 2010.
- ³⁷ Kaplan, Eben. "Abu Hamza Al-Muhajir, Zarqawi's Mysterious Successor (aka Abu Ayub Al-Masri)." Council on Foreign Relations. 13 June 2006. Web. 26 Nov. 2014.
- ³⁸ DeYoung, Karen, and Walter Pincus. "Al-Qaeda in Iraq May Not Be Threat Here." Washington Post. 18 Mar. 2007. Web. 29 Nov. 2014. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/03/17/AR2007031701373.html>

-
- ³⁹ DeYoung, Karen, and Walter Pincus. "Al-Qaeda in Iraq May Not Be Threat Here." Washington Post. 18 Mar. 2007. Web. 29 Nov. 2014. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/03/17/AR2007031701373.html>
- ⁴⁰ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.; Felter, Joseph, and Brian Fishman. Al-Qai'da's Foreign Fighters in Iraq. Rep. Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, 2 Jan. 2007. Web. 26 Nov. 2014.
- ⁴¹ Felter, Joseph, and Brian Fishman. Al-Qai'da's Foreign Fighters in Iraq. Rep. Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, 2 Jan. 2007. Web. 26 Nov. 2014. 5.
- ⁴² Siegel, Pascal C. "Islamic State of Iraq Commemorates Its Two-Year Anniversary." Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. N.p., 15 Oct. 2008. Web. 22 Dec. 2014.
- ⁴³ Laub, Zachary, and Jonathan Masters. "The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria." Backgrounders. Council on Foreign Relations, 8 Aug. 2014. Web. 28 Nov. 2014; DeYoung, Karen, and Walter Pincus. "Al-Qaeda in Iraq May Not Be Threat Here." Washington Post. 18 Mar. 2007. Web. 29 Nov. 2014; Fishman, Brian, and Joseph Felter. "Al-Qa'ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq | Combating Terrorism Center at West Point." Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. 2 Jan. 2007. Web. 26 Nov. 2014.
- ⁴⁴ Bergen, Peter, Joseph Felter, Vahid Brown, and Jacob Shapiro. Bombers, Bank Accounts, & Bleedout: Al-Qa'ida's Road In and Out of Iraq. Rep. Ed. Brian Fishman. Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, July 2008. Web. 22 Dec. 2014.
- ⁴⁵ Hashim, Ahmed. "The Islamic State: From Al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate." Middle East Policy 21.4 (2014): 72. DOI: 10.1111/mepo.12096. Web. 17 Dec. 2014; Al-Jabouri, Najim Abed and Sterling Jensen. "The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening." National Defense University. Jan. 2010. Web. 7 Jul. 2014.
- ⁴⁶ Felter, Joseph, and Fishman, Brian, "Al Qaeda's foreign fighters in Iraq: A first look at the Sinjar records," Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 19 Dec. 2007. Web. 24, Jan. 2010.
- ⁴⁷ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. 3-5.
- ⁴⁸ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. 3-5.
- ⁴⁹ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. 3-5.
- ⁵⁰ Lewis, Jessica D. "Middle East Security Report 14: Al-Qaeda in Iraq Resurgent: The Breaking the Walls Campaign, Part I." Institute for the Study of War. September 2013.; Hashim, Ahmed. "The Islamic State: From Al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate." Middle East Policy 21.4 (2014): 73.
- ⁵¹ Lewis, Jessica D. "Middle East Security Report 14: Al-Qaeda in Iraq Resurgent: The Breaking the Walls Campaign, Part I." Institute for the Study of War, September 2013.
- ⁵² "Al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) - Terrorist Groups." National Counterterrorism Center Calendar 2014. National Counterterrorism Center, n.d. Web. 23 June 2014.
- ⁵³ "Al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) - Terrorist Groups." National Counterterrorism Center Calendar 2014. National Counterterrorism Center, n.d. Web. 23 June 2014.
- ⁵⁴ Hashim, Ahmed. "The Islamic State: From Al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate." Middle East Policy 21.4 (2014): 74. DOI: 10.1111/mepo.12096. Web. 17 Dec. 2014; Lewis, Jessica D. "Middle East Security Report 14: Al-Qaeda in Iraq Resurgent: The Breaking the Walls Campaign, Part I." Institute for the Study of War. Instituted for the Study of War, Sep. 2013. Web. 7 Jul. 2014.
- ⁵⁵ Hashim, Ahmed. "The Islamic State: From Al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate." Middle East Policy 21.4 (2014): 76. DOI: 10.1111/mepo.12096. Web. 17 Dec. 2014.; Hashim, Ahmed. "The Islamic State: From Al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate." Middle East Policy 21.4 (2014): 76. DOI: 10.1111/mepo.12096. Web. 17 Dec. 2014.
- ⁵⁶ Laub, Zachary, and Jonathan Masters. "The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria." Backgrounders. Council on Foreign Relations, 8 Aug. 2014. Web. 28 Nov. 2014.
- ⁵⁷ "The Islamic State: From Al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate." Middle East Policy Council. Accessed September 9, 2019. Hashim, Ahmed. "The Islamic State: From al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate." Middle East Policy Council, Volume XXI, Number 4 - Winter 2014..
- ⁵⁸ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, The Military Balance, 115:1, 303-362. 10 Feb. 2015, 304.
- ⁵⁹ "Al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) - Terrorist Groups." National Counterterrorism Center Calendar 2014. National Counterterrorism Center, n.d. Web. 23 June 2014; Joscelyn, Thomas. "Al Qaeda in Iraq, Al Nusrah Front

emerge as rebranded single entity." *The Long War Journal*. Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, 9 Apr. 2013. Web. 23 June 2014.

⁶⁰ Atassi, Basma. "Qaeda chief annuls Syrian-Iraqi jihad merger." *Al Jazeera America* 9 June 2013. Al Jazeera. Web. 24 June 2014.

⁶¹ "Will the jihadists overreach?." *The Economist* 12 Oct. 2013. *The Economist*. Web. 23 June 2014; Laub, Zachary and Jonathan Masters. "Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria." *The Council on Foreign Relations*. The Council on Foreign Relations, 12 Jun. .2014. Web. 23 Jun. 2014.

⁶² "Syria, Anti-Assad Rebel Infighting Leaves 700 Dead, Including Civilians." *Asia News*, January 13, 2014.

⁶³ Joscelyn, Thomas. "Al Qaeda's general command disowns the Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham." *The Long War Journal*. Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, 3 Feb. 2014. Web. 24 June 2014.

⁶⁴ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, *The Military Balance*, 115:1, 303-362. 10 Feb. 2015, 304.

⁶⁵ Radicalisation Awareness Network. "RAN Manual: Responses to returnees: Foreign terrorist fighters and their families." *Radicalisation Awareness Network: July 2017*, 17. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/ran_br_a4_m10_en.pdf#page=17.

⁶⁶ Semple, Kirk, and Eric Schmitt. "ISIS Keeps Up Pressure Near Baghdad as Iraqi Troops Hesitate." *The New York Times*. 17 Oct. 2014. Web. 11 Nov. 2014.; Chulov, Martin. "Isis insurgents seize control of Iraqi city of Mosul." *The Guardian*. *The Guardian*, 10 Jun. 2014. Web. 17 Mar. 2017.; "Iraq Conflict: Militants 'Seize' City of Tal Afar." *BBC News*. BBC, June 16, 2014.; "Iraq Crisis: Militants 'Seize Tikrit' after Taking Mosul." *BBC News*. BBC, June 11, 2014.

⁶⁷ Pizzi, Michael. "In declaring a caliphate, Islamic State draws a line in the sand." *Al Jazeera*. *Al Jazeera*, 30 Jun. 2014. Web. 3 Jul. 2014.

⁶⁸ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, *The Military Balance*, 115:1, 303-362. 10 Feb. 2015, 304.

⁶⁹ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, *The Military Balance*, 115:1, 303-362. 10 Feb. 2015, 303.

⁷⁰ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, *The Military Balance*, 115:1, 303-362. 10 Feb. 2015, 305.

⁷¹ Shekhani, Helbast. "Islamic State sold oil to Syrian regime and Turkey, commander says." *Kurdistan 24*. 02 Jul. 2018.

⁷² Jones, Seth G., James Dobbins, Daniel Byman, Christopher S. Chivvis, Ben Connable, Jeffrey Martini, Eric Robinson, and Nathan Chandler, *Rolling Back the Islamic State*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2017. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1912.html. xi.

⁷³ Zahiyyeh, Ehab. "How ISIL became a major force with only a few thousand fighters." 19 Jun. 2014. Web. 23 Jun. 2014.

⁷⁴ "How ISIS Works." *The New York Times*. 16 Sept. 2014. Web. 11 Nov. 2014.

⁷⁵ "President Obama Makes a Statement on the Crisis in Iraq." *National Archives and Records Administration*. 7 Aug 2014.; Barnard, Anne. "Opposition in Syria Is Skeptical of U.S. Airstrikes on ISIS." *The New York Times*. 29 Sept. 2014. Web. 13 Nov. 2014.

⁷⁶ "Statement by the President." *Office of the Press Secretary*. The White House, 7 Aug. 2014. Web. 30 Nov. 2014.

⁷⁷ Semple, Kirk, and Eric Schmitt. "ISIS Keeps Up Pressure Near Baghdad as Iraqi Troops Hesitate." *The New York Times*. 17 Oct. 2014. Web. 11 Nov. 2014.

⁷⁸ Hubbard, Ben. "ISIS Wave of Might Is Turning Into Ripple." *The New York Times*. 5 Nov. 2014. Web. 6 Nov. 2014; Cooper, Helene, and Eric Schmitt. "ISIS Official Killed in U.S. Raid in Syria, Pentagon Says." *The New York Times*. N.p., 16 May 2015. Web. 19 May 2015.

⁷⁹ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, *The Military Balance*, 115:1, 303-362. 10 Feb. 2015, 303.

⁸⁰ Kakol, Kamil, and Kareem Fahim. "Iraqi Kurds Are Joining Fight to Drive Islamic State From Kobani." *The New York Times*. 28 Oct. 2014. Web. 11 Nov. 2014.

⁸¹ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, *The Military Balance*, 116:1, 307-364, 09 Feb. 2016. 309-310.

⁸² "The Financing of the 'Islamic State' in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)." *European Parliament*, September 2017. 17-18.

⁸³ "The Financing of the 'Islamic State' in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)." *European Parliament*, September 2017. 17-18.

⁸⁴ Barnard, Anne, and Saad, Hwaida. "ISIS Fighters Seize Control of Syrian City of Palmyra, and Ancient Ruins." *The New York Times*, May 20, 2015.; Shoichet, Catherine E. "ISIS Takes Control of Ramadi, a Key Iraqi City." *CNN*, May 18, 2015.

⁸⁵ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, *The Military Balance*, 116:1, 307-364, 09 Feb. 2016. 309.

-
- ⁸⁶ “Boko Haram in Nigeria | Global Conflict Tracker.” Council on Foreign Relations, July 29, 2019.; Gomez, Alan. “Islamic State–Sinai Province: What Is the ISIS-Linked Terrorist Group?” USA Today. Gannett Satellite Information Network, November 24, 2017.; Beech, Hannah, and Jason Gutierrez. “How ISIS Is Rising in the Philippines as It Dwindles in the Middle East.” The New York Times. The New Times, March 9, 2019.
- ⁸⁷ “Russia Begins Withdrawal of Forces from Syria.” Al Jazeera. Al Jazeera, 15 Mar. 2016. Web. 17 Mar. 2017.; “Paris Attacks: Salah Abdeslam 'refused to Blow Himself Up' BBC News.” BBC News, 1 Apr. 2016. Web. 17 Mar. 2017.; “Brussels Attacks: Zaventem and Maelbeek bombs kill many.” BBC. BBC, 22 Mar. 2016. Web. 29 Mar. 2017
- ⁸⁸ “FBI Probes Islamic State, Terror Links to San Bernardino Massacre.” Los Angeles Times. Los Angeles Times. Web. 05 Apr. 2016.
- ⁸⁹ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, *The Military Balance*, 117:1, 351-416, February 13, 2017. 353.
- ⁹⁰ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, *The Military Balance*, 117:1, 351-416, February 13, 2017. 353.
- ⁹¹ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, *The Military Balance*, 117:1, 351-416, February 13, 2017. 353.
- ⁹² Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, *The Military Balance*, 117:1, 351-416, February 13, 2017. 353.
- ⁹³ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, *The Military Balance*, 117:1, 351-416, February 13, 2017. 353.
- ⁹⁴ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, *The Military Balance*, 118:1, 315-374, February 13, 2018. 316.; Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, *The Military Balance*, 117:1, 351-416, February 13, 2017. 353.
- ⁹⁵ “Battle for Mosul: Iraq PM Abadi Formally Declares Victory.” BBC News, July 10, 2017.; “How the Battle for Mosul Unfolded.” BBC News, July 10, 2017.
- ⁹⁶ Malsin, Jared. “Raqqa Lies in Ruins as ISIS Near Defeat as Military Force.” Time.
- ⁹⁷ Operation Inherent Resolve And Other Overseas Contingency Operations - Lead Inspector General Report To The United States Congress, October 1, 2018–December 31, 2018. 20-21.
- ⁹⁸ Callimachi, Rukmini, Jin Wu, and Derek Watkins. “ISIS Lost Its Last Territory in Syria. But the Attacks Continue.” *New York Times*, March 23, 2019.
- ⁹⁹ Callimachi, Rukmini, Jin Wu, and Derek Watkins. “ISIS Lost Its Last Territory in Syria. But the Attacks Continue.” *New York Times*, March 23, 2019.
- ¹⁰⁰ Knights, Michael. “The Islamic State Inside Iraq: Losing Power or Preserving Strength?” *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point: CTC Sentinel* 11, no. 11 (December 2018). 2.
- ¹⁰¹ Al-Hashimi, Hisham, and Renad Mansour. “ISIS Inc.” *Foreign Policy*. January 16, 2018.
- ¹⁰² Lister, Charles. “Trump Says ISIS Is Defeated. Reality Says Otherwise.” *Politico Magazine*, March 18, 2019.
- ¹⁰³ Callimachi, Rukmini. “ISIS Caliphate Crumbles as Last Village in Syria Falls.” *New York Times*, March 23, 2019.
- ¹⁰⁴ Lister, Charles. “Trump Says ISIS Is Defeated. Reality Says Otherwise.” *Politico Magazine*, March 18, 2019.
- ¹⁰⁵ Callimachi, Rukmini. “ISIS Caliphate Crumbles as Last Village in Syria Falls.” *New York Times*, March 23, 2019.
- ¹⁰⁶ Callimachi, Rukmini. “ISIS Caliphate Crumbles as Last Village in Syria Falls.” *New York Times*, March 23, 2019.
- ¹⁰⁷ Jeffrey, James F. “ISIS Prisoners and Families.” Wilson Center for International Scholars, December 22, 2020; Méheut, Constant. “Pressuring France to Bring Them Home, Women Who Joined ISIS Stage Hunger Strike.” *The New York Times*, February 21, 2021.
- ¹⁰⁸ Barnes, Julia and Eric Schmitt. “Trump Orders Withdrawal of U.S. Troops From Northern Syria.” *New York Times*, October 13, 2019.
- ¹⁰⁹ Clarke, Colin. “How the U.S. Withdrawal from Syria Provides a Boost to ISIS.” *RAND*, October 21, 2019.
- ¹¹⁰ McKernan, Bethan. “At least 750 Isis affiliates escape Syria camp after Turkish shelling.” *The Guardian*, October 13, 2019.
- ¹¹¹ Browne, Gareth. “Up to 100 ISIS members escape Al Hol camp.” *The National*, October 20, 2019.

-
- ¹¹² Swann, Glenn, Finbarr Sheehy, Cath Levett and Matt Fidler. "Visual guide to the raid that killed Isis leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi". The Guardian, October 31, 2019.
- ¹¹³ ABC News. "Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi given burial at sea, afforded religious rites, US officials say." ABC News, October 28, 2019.
- ¹¹⁴ ABC News. "Islamic State names new leader, confirms death of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in US raid." ABC News, October 31, 2019.
- ¹¹⁵ Husham al-Hashimi. "ISIS's New Leadership: Past Lessons in a New Strategic Environment." Center for Global Policy, August 4, 2020.
- ¹¹⁶ Husham al-Hashimi. "ISIS's New Leadership: Past Lessons in a New Strategic Environment." Center for Global Policy, August 4, 2020.
- ¹¹⁷ Husham al-Hashimi. "ISIS's New Leadership: Past Lessons in a New Strategic Environment." Center for Global Policy, August 4, 2020.
- ¹¹⁸ UNSC Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate. "The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on terrorism, counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism." Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, December 2020. 5.
- ¹¹⁹ Abdul-Zahra, Qassim, Bassem Mroue, and Samya Kullab, "IS Extremists Step Up as Iraq, Syria, Grapple With Virus." The Associated Press, May 3, 2020; Dent, Elizabeth. "US policy and the resurgence of ISIS in Iraq and Syria." The Middle East Institute, October 21, 2020. 14-16, 18.
- ¹²⁰ Burns, Robert. "Top US general in the Mideast says ISIS in Iraq and Syria still long-term threat." The Associated Press via Military Times, November 19, 2020; Operation Inherent Resolve And Other Overseas Contingency Operations - Lead Inspector General Report to the United States Congress, April 1, 2020-June 30, 2020. 18-20, 26-27.
- ¹²¹ Lubold, Gordon and Nancy A. Youssef. "U.S. Drawing Up Plans to Withdraw Troops From Iraq, Afghanistan." The Wall Street Journal, November 16, 2020.
- ¹²² Felter, Joseph, and Fishman, Brian, "Al Qaeda's foreign fighters in Iraq: A first look at the Sinjar records," Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 19 Dec. 2007. Web. 24 Jan. 2010; Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. 5.
- ¹²³ Al-Jabouri, Najim Abed and Sterling Jensen. "The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening." National Defense University, Jan. 2010. Web. 7 Jul. 2014; Felter, Joseph, and Brian Fishman. Al-Qa'ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records. Rep. Harmony Project at the Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, 19 Dec. 2007. Web. 9 Dec. 2014; "Cracks in the Foundation: Leadership Schisms in al Qaeda from 1989-2006," Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 2007. Web. 24 Jan. 2010.
- ¹²⁴ Knickmeyer, Ellen, and Jonathan Finer. "Insurgent Leader Al-Zarqawi Killed in Iraq." Washington Post. N.p., 08 June 2006. Web. 18 Dec. 2014.
- ¹²⁵ Felter, Joseph, and Fishman, Brian, "Al Qaeda's foreign fighters in Iraq: A first look at the Sinjar records," Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 19 Dec. 2007. Web. 24 Jan. 2010; Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. 5.
- ¹²⁶ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.; Philips, James, "Zarqawi's Amman bombings: Jordan's 9/11," The Heritage Foundation, 18, Nov. 2005. Web. 26, Jan. 2010.
- ¹²⁷ Felter, Joseph, and Fishman, Brian, "Al Qaeda's foreign fighters in Iraq: A first look at the Sinjar records," Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 19 Dec. 2007. Web. 24 Jan. 2010; Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. 5.
- ¹²⁸ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, Jun. 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.
- ¹²⁹ "Profile: Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi." BBC News. N.p., 5 Jul. 2014. Web. 16 Dec. 2014; Hunt, Emily, "Zarqawi's 'Total War' on Iraqi Shiites exposes a divide among Sunni Jihadists," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 15 Nov. 2005. 26 Jan. 2010; Strange, Hannah. "Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi addresses Muslims in Mosul." The Daily Telegraph, July 5, 2014.
- ¹³⁰ "Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi: IS Leader Appears in First Video in Five Years." BBC News, April 30, 2019.
- ¹³¹ Chulov, Martin. "Nowhere left to run: how the US finally caught up with Isis leader Baghdadi." The Guardian, October 27, 2019.

-
- ¹³² Seldin, Jeff. "US Officials Uncover True Identity of New Islamic State Leader." ABC News Australia, January 29, 2020; Husham al-Hashimi. "ISIS 2020: New Structures and Leaders in Iraq Revealed." Center for Global Policy, May 19, 2020.
- ¹³³ Seldin, Jeff. "US Officials Uncover True Identity of New Islamic State Leader." ABC News Australia, January 29, 2020; Chulov, Martin and Mohammad Rasool. "Isis founding member confirmed by spies as group's new leader." The Guardian, January 20, 2020.
- ¹³⁴ Seldin, Jeff. "US Officials Uncover True Identity of New Islamic State Leader." ABC News Australia, January 29, 2020; Seldin, Jeff. "US Takes Notice as More Islamic State Branches Back New Leader." VOA News, November 6, 2019.
- ¹³⁵ Weaver, Mary Anne. "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi." The Atlantic, August 2006.
- ¹³⁶ Bergen, Peter, Joseph Felter, Vahid Brown, and Jacob Shapiro. Bombers, Bank Accounts, & Bleedout: Al-Qa'ida's Road In and Out of Iraq. Rep. Ed. Brian Fishman. Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, Jul. 2008. Web. 22 Dec. 2014. 3
- ¹³⁷ Zelin, Aaron Y. "The War between ISIS and Al-Qaeda for Supremacy of the Global Jihadist Movement." The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Nov. 2013 – Jun. 2014. 1.
- ¹³⁸ Laub, Zachary, and Jonathan Masters. "The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria." Backgrounders. Council on Foreign Relations, 8 Aug. 2014. Web. 28 Nov. 2014
- ¹³⁹ The National Counterterrorism Center. "Al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI)." The National Counterterrorism Center. Retrieved June 23, 2014; Joscelyn, Thomas. "Al Qaeda in Iraq, Al Nusrah Front emerge as rebranded single entity." The Long War Journal. 9, Apr. 2013. Web. 23 Jun. 2014.
- ¹⁴⁰ Tharoor, Isham. "ISIS or ISIL? The debate over what to call Iraq's terror group." The Washington Post. Jun. 2014. Web. 3 Jul. 2014.
- ¹⁴¹ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. 3.
- ¹⁴² "Profile: Tawhid and Jihad Group." BBC News. 8 Oct. 2004. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.
- ¹⁴³ "Country Reports on Terrorism," United States Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Apr. 2006. Web. 4 Feb. 2010.
- ¹⁴⁴ Tilghman, Andrew, "The myth of AQI," Washington Monthly, Oct. 2007. Web. 26 Jan. 2010.
- ¹⁴⁵ Katzman, Kenneth. "Al Qaeda in Iraq: Assessment and Outside Links" Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, 15 Aug. 2008. 16.
- ¹⁴⁶ "Country Reports on Terrorism 2011." U.S. Department of State. Published July 31, 2012.
- ¹⁴⁷ Yeginsu, Ceylan. "ISIS Draws a Steady Stream of Recruits From Turkey." The New York Times. 15 Sept. 2014. Web. 11 Nov. 2014.
- ¹⁴⁸ Zenko, Micah. "How Many Bombs Did the United States Drop in 2015?" Council on Foreign Relations. Council on Foreign Relations, 2016. Web. 28 Feb. 2016.
- ¹⁴⁹ United Nations Security Council, UNSC S/2018/705, 7/25/2018.
- ¹⁵⁰ Rempfer, Kyle. "Low Aim or Intel Failure? ISIS' Last Stand Shows the Difficulty in Estimating Enemy Manpower." Military Times, March 27, 2019.
- ¹⁵¹ Van Wilgenburg, Wladimir. "Security Forces in Raqqa Bust ISIS Sleeper Cell." Kurdistan 24, April 8, 2019.
- ¹⁵² Operation Inherent Resolve - Lead Inspector General Report To The United States Congress, April 1, 2019–June 30, 2019. 15.
- ¹⁵³ Lederer, Edith M. "Over 10,000 Islamic State fighters active in Iraq, Syria as attacks 'significantly' increase: UN." The Associated Press via Military Times, August 25, 2020.
- ¹⁵⁴ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. 3.
- ¹⁵⁵ Felter, Joseph, and Brian Fishman. Al-Qa'ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records. Rep. Harmony Project at the Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, 19 Dec. 2007. Web. 9 Dec. 2014.
- ¹⁵⁶ Bergen, Peter, Joseph Felter, Vahid Brown, and Jacob Shapiro. Bombers, Bank Accounts, & Bleedout: Al-Qa'ida's Road In and Out of Iraq. Rep. Ed. Brian Fishman. Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, Jul. 2008. Web. 22 Dec. 2014.
- ¹⁵⁷ Felter, Joseph, and Fishman, Brian, "Al Qaeda's foreign fighters in Iraq: A first look at the Sinjar records," Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, December 19, 2007, retrieved on January 24, 2010 from <http://ctc.usma.edu/harmony/pdf/CTCForeignFighter.19.Dec07.pdf>, p. 8; Londoño, Ernesto, "Al-

-
- Qaeda in Iraq gaining in strength," Washington Post Foreign Service, N.p., 22 Nov. 2009. Web. 26 Jan. 2010.
- ¹⁵⁸ Bergen, Peter, Joseph Felter, Vahid Brown, and Jacob Shapiro. Bombers, Bank Accounts, & Bleedout: Al-Qa'ida's Road In and Out of Iraq. Rep. Ed. Brian Fishman. Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, Jul. 2008. Web. 6. 22 Dec. 2014.
- ¹⁵⁹ Laub, Zachary, and Jonathan Masters. "The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria." Backgrounders. Council on Foreign Relations, 8 Aug. 2014. Web. 28 Nov. 2014.
- ¹⁶⁰ DeYoung, Karen, and Walter Pincus. "Al-Qaeda in Iraq May Not Be Threat Here." Washington Post. 18 Mar. 2007. Web. 29 Nov. 2014.
- ¹⁶¹ Fishman, Brian, and Joseph Felter. "Al-Qa'ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq | Combating Terrorism Center at West Point." Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. 2 Jan. 2007. Web. 26 Nov. 2014.
- ¹⁶² Bergen, Peter, Joseph Felter, Vahid Brown, and Jacob Shapiro. Bombers, Bank Accounts, & Bleedout: Al-Qa'ida's Road In and Out of Iraq. Rep. Ed. Brian Fishman. Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, Jul. 2008. Web. 6. 22 Dec. 2014.
- ¹⁶³ Fishman, Brian, and Joseph Felter. "Al-Qa'ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq | Combating Terrorism Center at West Point." Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. 2 Jan. 2007. Web. 26 Nov. 2014.
- ¹⁶⁴ Coles, Isabel, and Ned Parker. "The Baathists: How Saddam's Men Help Islamic State Rule." *Reuters*, December 11, 2015.
- ¹⁶⁵ Arango, Tim, and Eric Schmitt. "Escaped Inmates From Iraq Fuel Syrian Insurgency." *New York Times*, February 12, 2014.
- ¹⁶⁶ Carter, Joseph A., Shiraz Maher, and Peter Neumann. #Greenbirds: Measuring Importance and Influence in Syrian Foreign Fighter Networks. Rep. The International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence, 2014. Web. 7. 15 Dec. 2014.
- ¹⁶⁷ Al-Tamimi, Aymenn J. "The Syrian Rebel Groups Pulling in Foreign Fighters." BBC News. N.p., 24 Dec. 2013. Web. 15 Dec. 2014.
- ¹⁶⁸ Ifill, Gwen. "Why Do Foreign Fighters Join the Islamic State?" PBS. N.p., 17 Aug. 2014. Web. 15 Dec. 2014.
- ¹⁶⁹ Karadshesh, Jomana, Jim Sciutto, and Laura Smith-Spark. "How Foreign Fighters Are Swelling ISIS Ranks in Startling Numbers." CNN. N.p., 14 Sept. 2014. Web. 14 Dec. 2014.
- ¹⁷⁰ Ifill, Gwen. "Why Do Foreign Fighters Join the Islamic State?" PBS. N.p., 17 Aug. 2014. Web. 15 Dec. 2014.
- ¹⁷¹ United States. House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Statement on Foreign Terrorist Fighters. By Robert Bradtke. N.p., 2 Dec. 2014. Web. 15 Dec. 2014.
- ¹⁷² Carter, Joseph A., Shiraz Maher, and Peter Neumann. #Greenbirds: Measuring Importance and Influence in Syrian Foreign Fighter Networks. Rep. The International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence, 2014. Web. 15 Dec. 2014.
- ¹⁷³ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, The Military Balance, 116:1, 307-364, 09 Feb. 2016. 309.
- ¹⁷⁴ Benmelech, Efraim, and Esteban F. Klor. "What Explains the Flow of Foreign Fighters to ISIS?" *Terrorism and Political Violence*, October 31, 2018. 6.
- ¹⁷⁵ Sterman, David and Nate Rosenblatt. "All Jihad is Local: ISIS in North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula." *New America: International Security*. April 2018.
- ¹⁷⁶ Sterman, David and Nate Rosenblatt. "All Jihad is Local: ISIS in North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula." *New America: International Security*. April 2018.
- ¹⁷⁷ Almoammad, Asaad. "ISIS Child Soldiers in Syria: The Structural and Predatory Recruitment, Enlistment, Pre-Training Indoctrination, Training and Deployment." *The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague* 8, no. 14. February 2018. 20-21.
- ¹⁷⁸ Levenson, Eric, and Jomana Karadshesh. "Iraq Is 'Fully Liberated' from ISIS, Its Military Says." CNN, December 9, 2017. Callimachi, Rukmini. "ISIS Caliphate Crumbles as Last Village in Syria Falls." *New York Times*, March 23, 2019
- ¹⁷⁹ Loveluck, Lousia, and Mustafa Salim. "Stalking ISIS." Washington Post, February 3, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/02/03/iraq-isis-american-troops-counterterrorism/>. "Iraq bombing: IS says it was behind deadly suicide attacks in Baghdad." BBC News, January 22, 2021. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-55760822>
- ¹⁸⁰ Van Wilgenburg, Wladimir. "Security Forces in Raqqa Bust ISIS Sleeper Cell." *Kurdistan* 24, April 8, 2019.

-
- ¹⁸¹ Jeffrey, James F. "ISIS Prisoners and Families." Wilson Center for International Scholars, December 22, 2020.
- ¹⁸² Mironova, Vera. "Iraq's Broken Justice System for Islamic State Fighters." Lawfare, July 24, 2020.
- ¹⁸³ Mironova, Vera. "Iraq's Broken Justice System for Islamic State Fighters." Lawfare, July 24, 2020.
- ¹⁸⁴ Jeffrey, James F. "ISIS Prisoners and Families." Wilson Center for International Scholars, December 22, 2020.
- ¹⁸⁵ Bindner, Laurence, and Gabriel Poirot. "ISIS Financing." Center for the Analysis of Terrorism. May 2016.
- ¹⁸⁶ Talley, Ian and Benoit Faucon. "Islamic State, Defeated U.S. Foe, Still Brims With Cash, Ambition." The Wall Street Journal, September 18, 2020.
- ¹⁸⁷ "ISIS: Portrait of a Jihadi Terrorist Organization." The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center. November 2014.151-52.
- ¹⁸⁸ Shekhani, Helbast. "Islamic State sold oil to Syrian regime and Turkey, commander says." Kurdistan 24. July 2, 2018.
- ¹⁸⁹ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, The Military Balance, 116:1, 307-364, 09 Feb. 2016. 311.
- ¹⁹⁰ Kenner, David. "All ISIS Has Left Is Money. Lots of It." The Atlantic, March 24, 2019, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/03/isis-caliphate-money-territory/584911/>.
- Warrick, Joby. "Retreating ISIS army smuggled a fortune in cash and gold out of Iraq and Syria." Washington Post, December 21, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/retreating-isis-army-smuggled-a-fortune-in-cash-and-gold-out-of-iraq-and-syria/2018/12/21/95087ffc-054b-11e9-9122-82e98f91ee6f_story.html
- ¹⁹¹ Warrick, Joby. "Retreating ISIS army smuggled a fortune in cash and gold out of Iraq and Syria." Washington Post, December 21, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/retreating-isis-army-smuggled-a-fortune-in-cash-and-gold-out-of-iraq-and-syria/2018/12/21/95087ffc-054b-11e9-9122-82e98f91ee6f_story.html
- ¹⁹² Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 3. 24 Nov. 2014.
- ¹⁹³ Londoño, Ernesto, "Al-Qaeda in Iraq gaining in strength," Washington Post Foreign Service, 22 Nov. 2009. Web. 26 Jan. 2010.
- ¹⁹⁴ Bergen, Peter, Joseph Felter, Vahid Brown, and Jacob Shapiro. Bombers, Bank Accounts, & Bleedout: Al-Qa'ida's Road In and Out of Iraq. Rep. Ed. Brian Fishman. Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, Jul. 2008. Web. 22 Dec. 2014.
- ¹⁹⁵ BBC. "Profile: Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS). BBC. BBC, 6 Jun. 2014. Web. 23, Jun. 2014
- ¹⁹⁶ "How the Islamic State Makes Its Money." Washington Post. The Washington Post. Web. 28 Feb. 2016; Dickinson, Elizabeth. "Why Private Gulf Financing for Syria's Extremist Rebels Risks Igniting Sectarian Conflict at Home." The Brookings Institution. 2013. Web. 28 Feb. 2016.
- ¹⁹⁷ Dion-Schwarz, Cynthia, David Manheim, and Patrick B. Johnston. "Terrorist Use of Cryptocurrencies: Technical and Organizational Barriers and Future Threats." RAND Corporation, 2019. 9.
- ¹⁹⁸ Harman, Danna. "U.S.-based ISIS Cell Fundraising on the Dark Web, New Evidence Suggests." Haaretz, January 28, 2015.
- ¹⁹⁹ Higgins, Stan. "DOJ Alleges Bitcoin Involved in Attempted ISIS Funding." Coindesk, December 14, 2017; Office of Public Affairs. "Global Disruption of Three Terror Finance Cyber-Enabled Campaigns." U.S. Department of Justice, August 13, 2020; "IntelBrief: Terrorists' Use of Cryptocurrency." The Soufan Center, December 10, 2020.
- ²⁰⁰ Bahney, Benjamin, Howard Shatz, Carroll Gainer, Renny McPherson, and Barbara Sude. An Economic Analysis of the Financial Records of Al-Qa'ida in Iraq. Rep. RAND Corporation, 2010. Web. 15. 22 Dec. 2014.
- ²⁰¹ "How ISIS Works." The New York Times. 16 Sep. 2014. Web. 11 Nov. 2014.
- ²⁰² McCarthy, N. "How Does ISIS Fund Itself?" Statista. December 7th, 2015.
- ²⁰³ RAND. "Oil, Extortion Still Paying Off for ISIS," RAND Corporation, October 27, 2017.
- ²⁰⁴ "How the Islamic State Makes Its Money." Washington Post. The Washington Post. Web. 28 Feb. 2016.
- ²⁰⁵ Nordland, Rod and Alissa J. Rubin. "Iraq Insurgents Reaping Wealth as They Advance." June 20, 2014, retrieved June 23, 2014 from http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/21/world/middleeast/isis-iraq-insurgents-reaping-wealth-as-they-advance.html?_r=0; Laub, Zachary and Jonathan Masters. "Islamic State in Iraq

-
- and Greater Syria.” The Council on Foreign Relations. June 12, 2014, retrieved June 23, 2014 from <http://www.cfr.org/iraq/islamic-state-iraq-greater-syria/p14811>.
- ²⁰⁶ Brisard, Jean-Charles, and Damien Martinez. "ISLAMIC STATE: THE ECONOMY-BASED TERRORIST FUNDING." Thomas Reuters Accelus. Web.
- ²⁰⁷ Almukhtar, Sarah. "ISIS Finances Are Strong." New York Times, May 19, 2015.
- ²⁰⁸ Callimachi, Rukmini, and Ivor Prickett. "The ISIS Files." New York Times, April 4, 2018.
- ²⁰⁹ Nordland, Rod, and Alissa J. Rubin. "Iraq Insurgents Reaping Wealth as They Advance." New York Times, June 20, 2014.
- ²¹⁰ Callimachi, Rukmini, and Ivor Prickett. "The ISIS Files." New York Times, April 4, 2018.
- ²¹¹ Almukhtar, Sarah. "ISIS Finances Are Strong." New York Times, May 19, 2015.
- ²¹² Blannin, Patrick. "Islamic State's Financing: Sources, Methods and Utilisation." Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses 9, no. 5 (2017): 13-22.
- ²¹³ McCoy, Terrence. "ISIS just stole \$425 million, Iraqi governor says, and becomes 'world's richest terrorist group.'" The Washington Post. The Washington Post, 12 Jun. 2014, Web. 23 Jun. 2014.; Nordland, Rod and Alissa J. Rubin. "Iraq Insurgents Reaping Wealth as They Advance." New York Times. New York Times, 20 Jun. 2014. Web. 23 Jun. 2014.
- ²¹⁴ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, The Military Balance, 116:1, 307-364, 09 Feb. 2016. 311.
- ²¹⁵ Almukhtar, Sarah. "ISIS Finances Are Strong." New York Times, May 19, 2015.
- ²¹⁶ Blannin, Patrick. "Islamic State's Financing: Sources, Methods and Utilisation." Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses 9, no. 5 (2017): 13-22.; Clarke, Colin "ISIS Is So Desperate It's Turning to the Drug Trade." RAND Corporation. July 25, 2017.
- ²¹⁷ Jaafar, Hadi H., and Eckart H. Woertz. "Agriculture as a Funding Source of ISIS: A GIS and Remote Sensing Analysis." Food Policy 64, September 14, 2016. 14-25. 16.
- ²¹⁸ Jaafar, Hadi H., and Eckart H. Woertz. "Agriculture as a Funding Source of ISIS: A GIS and Remote Sensing Analysis." Food Policy 64, September 14, 2016. 14-25. 17.
- ²¹⁹ Jaafar, Hadi H., and Eckart H. Woertz. "Agriculture as a Funding Source of ISIS: A GIS and Remote Sensing Analysis." Food Policy 64, September 14, 2016. 14-25. 23.
- ²²⁰ Callimachi, Rukmini, and Ivor Prickett. "The ISIS Files." New York Times, April 4, 2018.
- ²²¹ Jaafar, Hadi H., and Eckart H. Woertz. "Agriculture as a Funding Source of ISIS: A GIS and Remote Sensing Analysis." Food Policy 64, September 14, 2016. 14-25.
- ²²² Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. 3.
- ²²³ U.S. Department of State. "Iraq" Country Reports on Terrorism. UN Refugee Organization. 2010. Web. 12 Jul. 2012.
- ²²⁴ Bahney, Benjamin, Howard Shatz, Carroll Gainer, Renny McPherson, and Barbara Sude. An Economic Analysis of the Financial Records of Al-Qa'ida in Iraq. Rep. RAND Corporation, 2010. Web. 15. 22 Dec. 2014.
- ²²⁵ Almukhtar, Sarah, Natasha Perkel, Archie Tse, and Karen Yourish. "Where ISIS is Gaining Control in Iraq and Syria." The New York Times. The New York Times, 11 Jun. 2014. Web. 23 Jun. 2014.
- ²²⁶ Caris, Charles, and Samuel Reynolds. ISIS Governance in Syria. Middle East Security Report 22: 4. Institute for the Study of War, July 2014. Web. 18 Dec. 2014.
- ²²⁷ Arango, Tim and Michael R. Gordon. "Iraqi Insurgents Secure Control of Border Posts." The New York Times. The New York Times, 23 Jun. 2014. Web. 25 Jun. 2014.
- ²²⁸ Pecanha, Sergio, and Derek Watkins. "ISIS' Territory Shrank in Syria and Iraq This Year." The New York Times. The New York Times, 2015. Web. 28 Feb. 2016.
- ²²⁹ Mortimer, Caroline. "Isis loses a third of its territory in Syria and Iraq, analysts say." The Independent. The Independent, 9 Oct. 2016. Web. 28 Mar. 2017; McKirdy, Euan and Alkhshali Hamdi. "Iraqi general: 'The battle for Falluja is over.'" CNN. CNN, 26 Jun. 2016. Web. 28 Mar. 2017.
- ²³⁰ Torpey, Paul et al. "The battle for Mosul in map." The Guardian. The Guardian, 23 Feb. 2017. Web. 28 Mar. 2017; "US in 'close contact' with Turkey over Raqqa assault." Al Arabiya English. Al Arabiya, 6 Nov. 2016. Web. 28 Mar. 2017
- ²³¹ Robins-Early, Nick. "What We Know About ISIS In Libya." The World Post. Huffington Post. 26 Feb. 2016. Web. 17 Mar. 2017

-
- "ISIS Video Claims Beheadings of Egyptian Christians." CNN. Cable News Network. Web. 28 Feb. 2016; Stephen, Chris. "Egyptian Air Strikes in Libya Kill Dozens of Isis Militants." The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, 2015. Web. 28 Feb. 2016.
- ²³² Robins-Early, Nick. "What We Know About ISIS In Libya." The World Post. Huffington Post. 26 Feb. 2016. Web. 17 Mar. 2017
- ²³³ Withnall, Adam. "Isis 'loses control of Sirte' as Libyan pro-government forces say battle is over." The Independent. The Independent, 5 Dec. 2016. Web. 17 Mar. 2017; Robins-Early, Nick. "What We Know About ISIS In Libya." The World Post. Huffington Post. 26 Feb. 2016. Web. 17 Mar. 2017
- ²³⁴ Knights, Michael. "The Islamic State Inside Iraq: Losing Power or Preserving Strength?" Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point: CTC Sentinel 11, no. 11, December 2018. 1.
- ²³⁵ Callimachi, Rukmini. "ISIS Caliphate Crumbles as Last Village in Syria Falls." New York Times, March 23, 2019.
- ²³⁶ Dent, Elizabeth. "US policy and the resurgence of ISIS in Iraq and Syria." The Middle East Institute, October 21, 2020. 4-6.
- ²³⁷ Callimachi, Rukmini, Jin Wu, and Derek Watkins. "ISIS Lost Its Last Territory in Syria. But the Attacks Continue." New York Times, March 23, 2019. Loveluck, Lousia, and Mustafa Salim. "Stalking ISIS." Washington Post, February 3, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/02/03/iraq-isis-american-troops-counterterrorism/>. "Iraq bombing: IS says it was behind deadly suicide attacks in Baghdad." BBC News, January 22, 2021. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-55760822>
- ²³⁸ Al-Lami, Mina. "Where is the Islamic State Group Still Active in the World." BBC News. 27 Mar. 2019.
- ²³⁹ Al-Lami, Mina. "Where is the Islamic State Group Still Active in the World." BBC News. 27 Mar. 2019.; "Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K)." Center for Strategic and International Studies. Last updated November 9, 2018.
- ²⁴⁰ Wembi, Steve, and Joseph Goldstein. "ISIS Claims First Attack in the Democratic Republic of Congo." New York Times, April 19, 2019.
- ²⁴¹ Lee, Matthew. "US hits IS groups in Mozambique, Congo with terror sanctions." The Associated Press, March 10, 2021; "Digital Briefing on U.S. Efforts to Combat Terrorism in Africa during COVID." U.S. Department of State, August 4, 2020.
- ²⁴² Hamid, Shadi, and Rashid Dar. "Islamism, Salafism, and jihadism: A primer." Brookings Institution. July 15, 2016.
- ²⁴³ Wood, Graeme. "What ISIS Really Wants." The Atlantic. March 2015.
- ²⁴⁴ Erasmus. "How to Understand Salafism in America." The Economist. October 24, 2018.
- ²⁴⁵ Lahoud, Nelly. "The Strengths and Weaknesses of Jihadist Ideology." Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point - CTC Sentinel 3, no. 10, October 2010.
- ²⁴⁶ Lahoud, Nelly. "The Strengths and Weaknesses of Jihadist Ideology." Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point - CTC Sentinel 3, no. 10, October 2010.
- ²⁴⁷ Hamid, Shadi, and Rashid Dar. "Islamism, Salafism, and jihadism: A primer." Brookings Institution. July 15, 2016.
- ²⁴⁸ Lahoud, Nelly. "The Strengths and Weaknesses of Jihadist Ideology." Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point - CTC Sentinel 3, no. 10, October 2010.
- ²⁴⁹ Hamid, Shadi, and Rashid Dar. "Islamism, Salafism, and jihadism: A primer." Brookings Institution. July 15, 2016.
- ²⁵⁰ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014; Hashim, Ahmed. "The Islamic State: From Al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate." Middle East Policy 21.4, 2014. 70.
- ²⁵¹ Jehl, Douglas. "C.I.A. Says Berg's Killer Was Very Probably Zarqawi." The New York Times. 13 May Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.
- ²⁵² Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.
- ²⁵³ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.; Hashim, Ahmed. "The Islamic State: From Al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate." Middle East Policy 21.4 (2014): 70. DOI: 10.1111/mepo.12096. Web. 17 Dec. 2014.

-
- ²⁵⁴ Felter, Joseph, and Fishman, Brian, "Al Qaeda's foreign fighters in Iraq: A first look at the Sinjar records," Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 19 Dec. 2007. Web. 24 Jan. 2010; Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/al-qaeda-iraq>.
- ²⁵⁵ Hashim, Ahmed. "The Islamic State: From Al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate." Middle East Policy 21.4 (2014): 71. DOI: 10.1111/mepo.12096. Web. 17 Dec. 2014.
- ²⁵⁶ Byman, Daniel. "Comparing Al Qaeda and ISIS: Different Goals, Different Targets." Brookings Institution. April 29, 2015.
- ²⁵⁷ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.
- ²⁵⁸ Byman, Daniel. "Comparing Al Qaeda and ISIS: Different Goals, Different Targets." Brookings Institution. April 29, 2015.
- ²⁵⁹ Profile: Nouri Maliki." BBC News. 12 Aug. 2014. Web. 5 Dec. 2014.
- ²⁶⁰ Lewis, Jessica D. "Middle East Security Report 14: Al-Qaeda in Iraq Resurgent: The Breaking the Walls Campaign, Part I." Institute for the Study of War. Sep. 2013. Web. 7 Jul. 2014.
- ²⁶¹ BBC. "Profile: Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS). The BBC. 6 Jun. 2014. Web. 23 June. 2014; Laub, Zachary and Jonathan Masters. "Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria." The Council on Foreign Relations. The Council on Foreign Relations, 12 Jun. 2014. 23 Jun. 2014
- ²⁶² BBC. "Profile: Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS). The BBC. 6 Jun. 2014. Web. 23 June. 2014.
- ²⁶³ "Islamist Extremist Strategy: Executions." Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, September 13, 2018.
- ²⁶⁴ Callimachi, Rukmini, and Ivor Prickett. "The ISIS Files." New York Times, April 4, 2018.
- ²⁶⁵ Lister et al. "ISIS goes global: 143 attacks in 29 countries have killed 2,043." CNN. February 12, 2018.
- ²⁶⁶ Operation Inherent Resolve And Other Overseas Contingency Operations - Lead Inspector General Report To The United States Congress, October 1, 2018–December 31, 2018. 20.
- ²⁶⁷ Clarke, Colin. "What the Baghdadi Video Means." RAND Corporation. April 30, 2019.
- ²⁶⁸ Clarke, Colin. "What the Baghdadi Video Means." RAND Corporation. April 30, 2019.
- ²⁶⁹ Clarke, Colin. "What the Baghdadi Video Means." RAND Corporation. April 30, 2019.
- ²⁷⁰ Husham al-Hashimi. "ISIS's New Leadership: Past Lessons in a New Strategic Environment." Center for Global Policy, August 4, 2020; Husham al-Hashimi. "Interview: ISIS's Abdul Nasser Qardash." Center for Global Policy, June 4, 2020; Husham al-Hashimi. "ISIS 2020: New Structures and Leaders in Iraq Revealed." Center for Global Policy, May 19, 2020.
- ²⁷¹ Bunzel, Cole. "From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State." Brookings, March 9, 2015. 15
- ²⁷² Bunzel, Cole. "From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State." Brookings, March 9, 2015. 15
- ²⁷³ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. 5.
- ²⁷⁴ Felter, Joseph, and Fishman, Brian, "Al Qaeda's foreign fighters in Iraq: A first look at the Sinjar records," Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 19 Dec. 2007. Web. 24, Jan. 2010.
- ²⁷⁵ Shatz, Howard J. and Erin-Elizabeth Johnson. "The Islamic State We Knew: Insights Before the Resurgence and Their Implications." RAND Corporation. 2015.
- ²⁷⁶ Jefferis, Jennifer. "ISIS Administrative and Territorial Organization." European Institute of the Mediterranean - Security and Politics. 2016. 3
- ²⁷⁷ Hashim, Ahmed. "The Islamic State: From al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate." Middle East Policy Council, Volume XXI, Number 4 - Winter 2014.
- ²⁷⁸ Hashim, Ahmed. "The Islamic State: From al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate." Middle East Policy Council, Volume XXI, Number 4 - Winter 2014.
- ²⁷⁹ Al-Tamimi, Aymenn. "The Evolution in the Islamic State Administration The Documentary Evidence." Perspectives on Terrorism, Vol. 9, No. 4, Special Issue on the Islamic State. August 2015. 124.
- ²⁸⁰ Jefferis, Jennifer. "ISIS Administrative and Territorial Organization." European Institute of the Mediterranean - Security and Politics. 2016. 3
- ²⁸¹ Jefferis, Jennifer. "ISIS Administrative and Territorial Organization." European Institute of the Mediterranean - Security and Politics. 2016. 3
- ²⁸² Jefferis, Jennifer. "ISIS Administrative and Territorial Organization." European Institute of the Mediterranean - Security and Politics. 2016. 3

-
- ²⁸³ Wright, Robin, et al. "The Jihadi Threat: ISIS, Al Qaeda, and Beyond." US Institute of Peace and Wilson Center. December 12, 2016. 16-17.; Al-Tamimi, Aymenn. "Islamic State Shifts From Provinces and Governance to Global Insurgency." IPI Global Observatory. September 26, 2018.
- ²⁸⁴ Wright, Robin. "Baghdadi Is Back—and Vows That ISIS Will Be, Too." *The New Yorker*. April 29, 2019.
- ²⁸⁵ Husham al-Hashimi. "ISIS's New Leadership: Past Lessons in a New Strategic Environment." Center for Global Policy, August 4, 2020; Husham al-Hashimi. "Interview: ISIS's Abdul Nasser Qardash." Center for Global Policy, June 4, 2020; Husham al-Hashimi. "ISIS 2020: New Structures and Leaders in Iraq Revealed." Center for Global Policy, May 19, 2020.
- ²⁸⁶ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. 4.
- ²⁸⁷ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, *The Military Balance*, 115:1, 303-362. February 10, 2015, 305.
- ²⁸⁸ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, *The Military Balance*, 115:1, 303-362. February 10, 2015, 305.
- ²⁸⁹ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, *The Military Balance*, 116:1, 307-364, 09 Feb. 2016. 311.
- ²⁹⁰ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, *The Military Balance*, 117:1, 351-416, February 13, 2017. 353.
- ²⁹¹ Berlinger, Joshua. "Who are the religious and ethnic groups under threat from ISIS?" CNN. August 8, 2014.
- ²⁹² Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, *The Military Balance*, 115:1, 303-362. February 10, 2015, 305.
- ²⁹³ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, *The Military Balance*, 118:1, 315-374, February 13, 2018. 316.; Munoz, Michael. "Selling the Long War: Islamic State Propaganda after the Caliphate." *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point - CTC Sentinel* 11, no. 10. November 2018. 32.
- ²⁹⁴ "Profile: Tawhid and Jihad Group." BBC News. 8 Oct. 2004. Web. 24 Nov. 2014; Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.
- ²⁹⁵ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.
- ²⁹⁶ Hashim, Ahmed. "The Islamic State: From Al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate." *Middle East Policy* 21.4 (2014): 70.
- ²⁹⁷ "Profile: Tawhid and Jihad Group." BBC. BBC, 8 Oct. 2004. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.
- ²⁹⁸ Boucher, Richard. "Foreign Terrorist Organization: Designation of Jama'at Al-Tawhid Wa'al-Jihad and Aliases." Archive. U.S. Department of State, 15 Oct. 2004. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.
- ²⁹⁹ Jehl, Douglas. "C.I.A. Says Berg's Killer Was Very Probably Zarqawi." *The New York Times*. 13 May 2004. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.
- ³⁰⁰ Wilson, Clay, "Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in Iraq and Afghanistan: Effects and countermeasures," Congressional Research Service, 28 Aug. 2007. Web. 5 Feb. 2010.
- ³⁰¹ Rubin, Alissa J., "Chlorine gas attack by truck bomber kills up to 30 in Iraq," *The New York Times*, April 7, 2007, p. A6, LexisNexis Academic; Gardham, Duncan, "Risk of terrorist nuclear attack 'has increased'; Theft of materials and internet helping extremists," *The Daily Telegraph*, March 25, 2009, p. 6, LexisNexis Academic.
- ³⁰² "'Iraqi Scholars Council' urges Bin-Ladin to explain Al Qaedah practices," Doha Al-Jazeera Satellite Channel Television via BBC Monitoring Middle East, May 24, 2007, LexisNexis Academic.
- ³⁰³ Glenn, Cameron. "Al Qaeda v ISIS: Ideology & Strategy." Wilson Center. September 28, 2015.
- ³⁰⁴ Glenn, Cameron. "Al Qaeda v ISIS: Ideology & Strategy." Wilson Center. September 28, 2015.
- ³⁰⁵ Hashim, Ahmed. "The Islamic State: From Al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate." *Middle East Policy* 21.4 (2014): 76.
- ³⁰⁶ Lewis, Jessica. "AQI's 'Soldiers' Harvest' Campaign." Institute for the Study of War, October 9, 2013.
- ³⁰⁷ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, *The Military Balance*, 115:1, 303-362. February 10, 2015. 305.
- ³⁰⁸ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, *The Military Balance*, 115:1, 303-362. February 10, 2015. 305.

-
- ³⁰⁹ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, The Military Balance, 115:1, 303-362. February 10, 2015. 305.
- ³¹⁰ Carter, Chelsea, Salma Abdelaziz, and Mohammed Tawfeeq. "Iraqi Soldiers, Police Drop Weapons, Flee Posts in Portions of Mosul." CNN, June 13, 2014.
- ³¹¹ Schmitt, Eric. "Papers Offer a Peek at ISIS' Drones, Lethal and Largely Off-the-Shelf." New York Times, January 31, 2017. ; Ismay, John, Thomas Gibbons-Neff, and C. J. Chivers. "How ISIS Produced Its Cruel Arsenal on an Industrial Scale." New York Times, December 10, 2017.
- ³¹² Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, The Military Balance, 116:1, 307-364, 09 Feb. 2016. 310.
- ³¹³ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, The Military Balance, 116:1, 307-364, 09 Feb. 2016. 310.
- ³¹⁴ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, The Military Balance, 115:1, 303-362. February 10, 2015. 309.
- ³¹⁵ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, The Military Balance, 115:1, 303-362. February 10, 2015. 309.
- ³¹⁶ "Weapons of the Islamic State: A Three-Year Investigation in Iraq and Syria" Conflict Armament Research, December 2017. 8.
- ³¹⁷ "Standardisation and Quality Control in Islamic State's Military Production: Weapon Manufacturing in the East Mosul Sector." Conflict Armament Research, December 2016. 7-8.
- ³¹⁸ "Standardisation and Quality Control in Islamic State's Military Production: Weapon Manufacturing in the East Mosul Sector." Conflict Armament Research, December 2016. 7.
- ³¹⁹ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, The Military Balance, 115:1, 303-362. February 10, 2015. 303
- ³²⁰ Dent, Elizabeth. "US policy and the resurgence of ISIS in Iraq and Syria." The Middle East Institute, October 21, 2020. 4; Nada, Garrett. "The U.S. and the Aftermath of ISIS." The Wilson Center, December 17, 2020.
- ³²¹ Nada, Garrett. "The U.S. and the Aftermath of ISIS." The Wilson Center, December 17, 2020.
- ³²² Operation Inherent Resolve And Other Overseas Contingency Operations - Lead Inspector General Report to the United States Congress, April 1, 2020-June 30, 2020. 18-21.
- ³²³ Hashim, Ahmed. "The Islamic State: From Al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate." Middle East Policy 21.4 (2014): 78. DOI: 10.1111/mepo.12096. Web. 17 Dec. 2014.
- ³²⁴ Callimachi, Rukmini, and Ivor Prickett. "The ISIS Files." New York Times, April 4, 2018.
- ³²⁵ Evers, Erin. "Iraq at the Abyss." Human Rights Watch. 20 Jun. 2014. Web. 25 Jun. 2014; Tayler, Letta. "Iraq's Minorities Caught Between Scorpions and a Hard Place." Human Rights Watch. 24 Jun. 2014. Web. 25 Jun. 2014.
- ³²⁶ Callimachi, Rukmini, and Ivor Prickett. "The ISIS Files." New York Times, April 4, 2018.
- ³²⁷ National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). Global Terrorism Database [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant]. 2018. <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>
- ³²⁸ Operation Inherent Resolve And Other Overseas Contingency Operations - Lead Inspector General Report To The United States Congress, October 1, 2018–December 31, 2018. 20.
- ³²⁹ Callimachi, Rukmini. "The Horror Before the Beheadings." The New York Times. N.p., 25 Oct. 2014. Web. 9 Jan. 2015.
- ³³⁰ Callimachi, Rukmini. "Before Killing James Foley, ISIS Demanded Ransom From U.S." The New York Times. N.p., 20 Aug. 2014. Web. 09 Jan. 2015.
- ³³¹ Operation Inherent Resolve And Other Overseas Contingency Operations - Lead Inspector General Report To The United States Congress, October 1, 2018–December 31, 2018. 20.
- ³³² Operation Inherent Resolve And Other Overseas Contingency Operations - Lead Inspector General Report To The United States Congress, October 1, 2018–December 31, 2018. 20.; Hubbard, Ben. "ISIS Wave of Might Is Turning Into Ripple." The New York Times. 5 Nov. 2014. Web. 6 Nov. 2014; Semple, Kirk, and Eric Schmitt. "ISIS Keeps Up Pressure Near Baghdad as Iraqi Troops Hesitate." The New York Times. 17 Oct. 2014. Web. 11 Nov. 2014. Loveluck, Lousia, and Mustafa Salim. "Stalking ISIS." Washington Post, February 3, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/02/03/iraq-isis-american-troops-counterterrorism/>. "Iraq bombing: IS says it was behind deadly suicide attacks in Baghdad." BBC News, January 22, 2021. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-55760822>; Operation Inherent Resolve And Other Overseas Contingency Operations - Lead Inspector General Report to the United States Congress, April 1, 2020-June 30, 2020.

-
- ³³³ Arraf, Jane. "Suicide Bombings in Crowded Baghdad Market Kill at Least 32." The New York Times, January 21, 2021.
- ³³⁴ Ingram, Haroro. "An Analysis of Islamic State's *Dabiq* Magazine." Australian Journal of Political Science, 51:3, 458-477, June 13, 2016.
- ³³⁵ "Dabiq; Why is Syrian town so important for IS?" BBC News. October 4, 2016.
- ³³⁶ Callimachi, Rukmini. "A News Agency With Scoops Directly From ISIS, and a Veneer of Objectivity." New York Times, January 14, 2016.
- ³³⁷ For example, see reports of how IS used Amaq to claim responsibility for attacks in Mozambique in March 2021. "Islamic State Claims Dayslong Attack on Mozambique Town," VOA News, March 29, 2021, <https://www.voanews.com/africa/islamic-state-claims-dayslong-attack-mozambique-town>
- ³³⁸ U.S. Department of State - Office of the Spokesperson, Amendments to the Terrorist Designations of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, 21 Mar. 2019.
- ³³⁹ Winter, Charlie. "The Islamic State Brand: Marketing and Communicating the New Jihadism." European Institute of the Mediterranean - Culture & Society, 2016. 307.
- ³⁴⁰ Winter, Charlie. "The Islamic State Brand: Marketing and Communicating the New Jihadism." European Institute of the Mediterranean - Culture & Society, 2016. 307.
- ³⁴¹ Winter, Charlie. "The Islamic State Brand: Marketing and Communicating the New Jihadism." European Institute of the Mediterranean - Culture & Society, 2016. 307.
- ³⁴² "ISIS Music Video In French Featuring Children: Your Roads Will Be Rigged By Mines, Our Swords Are Sharpened To Slice Necks." Middle East Media Research Institute TV Monitor Project. April 29, 2016.
- ³⁴³ Winter, Charlie. "The Islamic State Brand: Marketing and Communicating the New Jihadism." European Institute of the Mediterranean - Culture & Society, 2016. 307.
- ³⁴⁴ Munoz, Michael. "Selling the Long War: Islamic State Propaganda after the Caliphate." Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point - CTC Sentinel 11, no. 10. November 2018. 32.
- ³⁴⁵ Bloom, Mia. Telegram and Online Addiction to Terrorist Propaganda." Minerva Research Initiative, U.S. Department of Defense, May 29, 2019.
- ³⁴⁶ Bloom, Mia. Telegram and Online Addiction to Terrorist Propaganda." Minerva Research Initiative, U.S. Department of Defense, May 29, 2019.
- ³⁴⁷ "Jamaat al-Tawhid wa'l-Jihad," GlobalSecurity.org, 6 Dec. 2006. Web. 26 Jan. 2010; "US Diplomat Shot Dead in Jordan." BBC News. BBC, 28 Oct. 2002. Web. 11 Nov. 2014.
- ³⁴⁸ "Paris Attacks: Islamic State Group 'releases Video of Attackers' - BBC News." BBC News. Web. 28 Feb. 2016.
- ³⁴⁹ "Paris Attacks: What Happened on the Night - BBC News." BBC News. Web. 28 Feb. 2016.
- ³⁵⁰ "ISIS 'minister of War' Likely Killed in US Airstrike in Syria, Defense Official Says | Fox News." Fox News. FOX News Network, 2016. Web. 17 Mar. 2017
- ³⁵¹ Schmidt, Michael S., and Mark Mazzetti. "A Top ISIS Leader Is Killed in an Airstrike, the Pentagon Says." The New York Times. The New York Times, 2016. Web. 7 Mar. 2017
- ³⁵² "Brussels Attacks: Zaventem and Maelbeek bombs kill many." BBC. BBC, 22 Mar. 2016. Web. 29 Mar. 2017
- ³⁵³ "Brussels Attacks Death Toll Lowered to 32." The World Post. Huffington Post, 29 Mar. 2016. Web. 29 Mar. 2017.
- ³⁵⁴ Sawyer, Patrick and Chazan, David. "British victim of Brussels attack confirmed dead as slow identification of bodies continues." The Telegraph. The Telegraph, 25 Mar. 2016. Web. 29 Mar. 2017.
- ³⁵⁵ Paravicini, Giulia. "Brussels ISIL cell 'initially' planned to 'strike France again.'" Politico, 10 Apr. 2016. Web. 29 Mar. 2017.
- ³⁵⁶ "Attentats du 13 novembre: Osama Krayem soupçonné d'avoir fréquenté l'atelier de confection des bombes." Le Monde. Le Monde, 19 Apr. 2016. Web. 29 Mar. 2017.
- ³⁵⁷ Abbit, Beth. "The number of people injured in Manchester Arena terror rises to 250." Manchester Evening News. MEN Media, 22 Jun. 2017. Web. 8 Oct. 2017.
- ³⁵⁸ White, Jeffery. "Military Implications of the Syrian Regime's Defeat in Raqqa." The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. 27 Aug. 2014. Web. 11 Nov. 2014.
- ³⁵⁹ Yourish, Karen. "The Fates of 23 ISIS Hostages in Syria." The New York Times. N.p., 23 Oct. 2014. Web. 09 Jan. 2015.
- ³⁶⁰ Holmes, Oliver, and Suleiman Al-Khalidi. "Islamic State Executed 700 People from Syrian Tribe: Monitoring Group." Reuters. 16 Aug. 2014. Web. 6 Nov. 2014.

-
- ³⁶¹ "ISIS Goes Global: Over 60 Attacks in 20 Countries." Fox News. 2016. Web. 28 Feb. 2016; "Ottawa shooting: A day of chaos leaves soldier, gunman dead." CBC News. October 22, 2014.
- ³⁶² Stout, David. "ISIS Massacres Sunni Tribe in Iraq." Time. 4 Nov. 2014. Web. 6 Nov. 2014; Morris, Loveday, and Mustafa Salim. "Islamic State Publicly Kills at Least 46 Sunni Opponents in Captured Iraqi City." Washington Post. The Washington Post, 29 Oct. 2014. Web. 6 Nov. 2014.
- ³⁶³ Arango, Tim. "Key Iraqi City Falls to ISIS as Last of Security Forces Flee." The New York Times. N.p., 17 May 2015. Web. 18 May 2015.
- ³⁶⁴ "Paris Attacks: Salah Abdeslam 'refused to Blow Himself Up' - BBC News." BBC News. Web.
- ³⁶⁵ "Paris Attacks: Islamic State Group 'releases Video of Attackers' - BBC News." BBC News. Web. 28 Feb. 2016; "Paris Attacks: What Happened on the Night - BBC News." BBC News. Web. 28 Feb. 2016.
- ³⁶⁶ Cochrane, Joe, and Thomas Fuller. "Jakarta Attack Raises Fears of ISIS' Spread in Southeast Asia." The New York Times. The New York Times, 2016. Web; "Indonesia: ISIS's New Battlefield." Time. Time. Web.
- ³⁶⁷ Graham-Harrison, Emma, Arthur Neslen, and Patrick Greenfield. "Brussels Attacks: Last Gasp of Isis Terror in Europe, or Sign of Growing Threat?" The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, 2016. Web. 04 Apr. 2016; "Three More Arrested in Brussels Police Operation over Attacks." Reuters. Thomson Reuters, 2016. Web. 04 Apr. 2016; Rubin, Alissa J., Aurelien Breeden, and Anita Raghavan. "Strikes Claimed by ISIS Shut Brussels and Shake European Security." The New York Times. The New York Times, 2016. Web. 04 Apr. 2016.
- ³⁶⁸ Kalamachi, Rukmini and Schmitt, Eric. "Manchester Bomber Met With ISIS Unit in Libya, Officials Say." The New York Times. The New York Times, 3 Jun. 2017. Web. 8 Oct. 2017; Abbit, Beth. "The number of people injured in Manchester Arena terror attack rises to 250." Manchester Evening News. MEN Media, 22 Jun. 2017. Web. 8 Oct. 2017.
- ³⁶⁹ McKernan, Bethan. "Tehran attacks: ISIS claims responsibility for 'first major attack on Iran.'" The Independent, June 7, 2015.
- ³⁷⁰ Bolon, Anne-Sophie, Palko Karasz, and Kames C. McKinley Jr. "Van Hits Pedestrians in Deadly Barcelona Terror Attack." New York Times, August 17, 2017.
- ³⁷¹ Prokupecz, Shimon, Eric Levenson, Brynn Gingras, and Steve Almasy. "Note found near truck claims Manhattan attack done for ISIS, source says." CNN. November 6, 2017.
- ³⁷² Youssef, Nour. "Motives in Egypt's Deadliest Terrorist Attack: Religion and Revenge." New York Times, December 2017.
- ³⁷³ Shaheen, Kareem. "Suicide attack in Baghdad kills at least 38." The Guardian. January 15, 2018.
- ³⁷⁴ "Afghanistan: Kabul voter centre suicide attack kills 57." BBC News. April 22, 2018.
- ³⁷⁵ Elumami, Ahmed. "Suicide attackers storm HQ of Libya's election commission, 12 dead." Reuters, May 2, 2018.
- ³⁷⁶ Schulze, Kirsten. "The Surabaya Bombings and the Evolution of the Jihadi Treat in Indonesia." Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point - CTC Sentinel 11, no. 6 June/July 2018. 1.
- ³⁷⁷ Ali Shah, Syed, Sophia Saifi, and Judith Vonberg. "At least 149 killed in Pakistan terror strike targeting political rally." CNN. July 16, 2018.
- ³⁷⁸ "Syria war: More than 200 dead in suicide attacks." BBC News. July 25, 2018.
- ³⁷⁹ Sulaivany, Karzan. "Islamic State warns Iran more to follow after Ahvaz attack: report." Kurdistan 24, September 26, 2018.; Pérez-Peña, Richard. "Attack on Military Parade in Iran Kills at Least 25." New York Times, September 22, 2018.
- ³⁸⁰ "Strasbourg shooting: What we know." BBC News, December 16, 2018.
- ³⁸¹ Gutierrez, Jason. "Philippines Cathedral Bombing Kills 20." New York Times, January 27, 2019.
- ³⁸² Dearden, Lizzie. "Isis Claims Responsibility for Sri Lanka Easter Massacre." The Independent, April 23, 2019.; Withnall, Adam. "Sri Lanka Government Reveals Suicide Bombers Responsible for Deadly Blasts That Killed Hundreds." The Independent. Independent Digital News and Media, April 22, 2019.
- ³⁸³ Constable, Pamela and Sharif Hassan. "Islamic State claims suicide attack on Kabul wedding that killed 63." The Washington Post, August 18, 2019.
- ³⁸⁴ Dearden, Lizzie. "Streatham terror attack: Isis claims responsibility for stabbing by supporter Sudesh Amman." The Independent, February 3, 2020; Davies, Caroline and Simon Murphy. "Sudesh Amman: how did science student become Streatham jihadist?" The Guardian, February 3, 2020.
- ³⁸⁵ BBC News. "Vienna shooting: What we know about 'Islamist terror' attack." BBC, November 4, 2020.; Pancevski, Bojan, Ruth Bender, and William Boston. "Vienna Shooting Kills Four, Injures Several in Terrorist Act." The Wall Street Journal, November 3, 2020.

-
- ³⁸⁶ Arraf, Jane. "Suicide Bombings in Crowded Baghdad Market Kill at Least 32." The New York Times, January 21, 2021.
- ³⁸⁷ Al-Araby. "IS claims Baghdad twin bombing that killed 32, wounded 110." Al-Araby, January 21, 2021.
- ³⁸⁸ "Cabo Ligado Weekly: 29 March-4 April." Cabo Ligado Conflict Observatory, April 2021. <https://www.caboligado.com/reports/cabo-ligado-weekly-29-march-4-april-2021>
- ³⁸⁹ Christina Goldbaum. "ISIS Claims Responsibility for Mozambique Attack." The New York Times, March 30, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/30/world/africa/isis-mozambique-attack.html>; "Islamic State Claims Dayslong Attack on Mozambique Town." VOA News, March 29, 2021. <https://www.voanews.com/africa/islamic-state-claims-dayslong-attack-mozambique-town>; Emilia Columbo and Austin C. Doctor. "Foreign Fighters and the Trajectory of Violence in Northern Mozambique." War on the Rocks, April 13, 2021. <https://warontherocks.com/2021/04/foreign-fighters-and-the-trajectory-of-violence-in-northern-mozambique/>
- ³⁹⁰ Christina Goldbaum. "ISIS Claims Responsibility for Mozambique Attack." The New York Times, March 30, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/30/world/africa/isis-mozambique-attack.html>
- ³⁹¹ "Cabo Ligado Weekly: 29 March-4 April." Cabo Ligado Conflict Observatory, April 2021. <https://www.caboligado.com/reports/cabo-ligado-weekly-29-march-4-april-2021>
- ³⁹² Associated Press. "40,000 Displaced in North Mozambique After Assault on Palma." U.S. News and Word Report, April 20, 2021. <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2021-04-20/40-000-displaced-in-north-mozambique-after-assault-on-palma>
- ³⁹³ US Department of State. "Individuals and Entities Designated by the State Department Under E.O. 13224: Bureau of Counterterrorism." The U.S. Department of State. 17 Jun. 2014. Web. 23 Jun. 2014.
- ³⁹⁴ U.S. Department of State - Office of the Spokesperson, *Amendments to the Terrorist Designations of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria*, 21 Mar. 2019.
- ³⁹⁵ Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee. "The List established and maintained by the Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee with respect to individuals, groups, undertakings and other entities associated with Al-Qaida." The United Nations. 2 Jun. 2014. Web. 25 Jun. 2014; Department of Public Information. "Security Council Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee Amends Entry of One Entity on its Sanctions List." The United Nations, 30, May. 2013. Web. 25 Jun. 2014.
- ³⁹⁶ Al-Jabouri, Najim Abed and Sterling Jensen. "The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening." National Defense University. N.p, Jan.2010. Web. 7 Jul. 2014.
- ³⁹⁷ Fattah, Hassan and Michael Slackman. "3 Hotels Bombed in Jordan; At Least 57 Die." New York Times, November 10, 2005.
- ³⁹⁸ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. 4-5.
- ³⁹⁹ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.
- ⁴⁰⁰ Biddle, Stephen, Jeffrey A. Friedman, and Jacob N. Shapiro. "Testing the Surge: Why Did Violence Decline in Iraq in 2007?" International Security 37, no. 1 (2012): 7-40.
- ⁴⁰¹ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.
- ⁴⁰² Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.
- ⁴⁰³ Barrett, Richard. Foreign Fighters in Syria. Rep. The Soufan Group, June 2014. Web. 15 Dec. 2014.
- ⁴⁰⁴ Ifill, Gwen. "Why Do Foreign Fighters Join the Islamic State?" PBS. N.p., 17 Aug. 2014. Web. 15 Dec. 2014; McCants, William. "ISIS Fantasies of an Apocalyptic Showdown in Northern Syria." Markaz: Middle East Politics and Policy. The Brookings Institution, 03 Oct. 2014. Web. 15 Dec. 2014.
- ⁴⁰⁵ Dabiq: The Strategic Messaging of the Islamic State. Rep. Institute for the Study of War, 15 Aug. 2014. Web. 15 Dec. 2014.
- ⁴⁰⁶ Callimachi, Rukmini. "ISIS Caliphate Crumbles as Last Village in Syria Falls." New York Times, March 23, 2019.
- ⁴⁰⁷ Callimachi, Rukmini, and Ivor Prickett. "The ISIS Files." New York Times, April 4, 2018.; "Isis: Worst Refugee Crisis in a Generation as Millions Flee Islamic State in Iraq and Syria." International Business Times RSS. 2015. Web.
- ⁴⁰⁸ Callimachi, Rukmini. "To Maintain Supply of Sex Slaves, ISIS Pushes Birth Control." The New York Times. The New York Times, 2016. Web.
- ⁴⁰⁹ Callimachi, Rukmini, and Ivor Prickett. "The ISIS Files." New York Times, April 4, 2018.

-
- ⁴¹⁰ Callimachi, Rukmini, and Ivor Prickett. "The ISIS Files." New York Times, April 4, 2018.
- ⁴¹¹ Callimachi, Rukmini, and Ivor Prickett. "The ISIS Files." New York Times, April 4, 2018.; Barnard, Anne and Hwaida Saad. "ISIS Alternates Stick and Carrot to Control Palmyra." New York Times, May 28, 2015; Revkin, Mara. "ISIS' Social Contract: What the Islamic State Offers Civilians." Foreign Affairs, January 10, 2016.
- ⁴¹² Callimachi, Rukmini, and Ivor Prickett. "The ISIS Files." New York Times, April 4, 2018.
- ⁴¹³ Revkin, Mara. "ISIS' Social Contract: What the Islamic State Offers Civilians." Foreign Affairs, January 10, 2016.
- ⁴¹⁴ Revkin, Mara. "ISIS' Social Contract: What the Islamic State Offers Civilians." Foreign Affairs, January 10, 2016.
- ⁴¹⁵ Hubbard, Ben. "In a Crowded Syria Tent Camp, the Women and Children of ISIS Wait in Limbo." New York Times, March 29, 2019; Callimachi, Rukmini. "ISIS Caliphate Crumbles as Last Village in Syria Falls." New York Times, March 23, 2019.
- ⁴¹⁶ Jeffrey, James F. "ISIS Prisoners and Families." Wilson Center for International Scholars, December 22, 2020.
- ⁴¹⁷ Cracks in the Foundation: Leadership Schisms in Al-Qa'ida from 1989-2006. Rep. West Point: Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, 2007. Pg 19. Print. Harmony Project.
- ⁴¹⁸ Bergen, Peter, Joseph Felter, Vahid Brown, and Jacob Shapiro. Bombers, Bank Accounts, & Bleedout: Al-Qa'ida's Road In and Out of Iraq. Rep. Ed. Brian Fishman. Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, July 2008. Web. 22 Dec. 2014.
- ⁴¹⁹ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/al-qaeda-iraq>. 3.
- ⁴²⁰ Bergen, Peter, Joseph Felter, Vahid Brown, and Jacob Shapiro. Bombers, Bank Accounts, & Bleedout: Al-Qa'ida's Road In and Out of Iraq. Rep. Ed. Brian Fishman. Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, July 2008. Web. 22 Dec. 2014.
- ⁴²¹ Laub, Zachary, and Jonathan Masters. "The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria." Backgrounders. Council on Foreign Relations, 8 Aug. 2014. Web. 28 Nov. 2014; Cracks in the Foundation: Leadership Schisms in Al-Qa'ida from 1989-2006. Rep. West Point: Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, 2007. Print. 20. Harmony Project.
- ⁴²² "Terrorist Organization Profile: Mujahideen Shura Council." National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. University of Maryland, n.d. Web. 9 Dec. 2014.
- ⁴²³ Felter, Joseph, and Brian Fishman. Al-Qa'ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records. Rep. Harmony Project at the Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, 19 Dec. 2007. Web, 5. 9 Dec. 2014.
- ⁴²⁴ Bergen, Peter, Joseph Felter, Vahid Brown, and Jacob Shapiro. Bombers, Bank Accounts, & Bleedout: Al-Qa'ida's Road In and Out of Iraq. Rep. Ed. Brian Fishman. Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, July 2008. Web. 12. 22 Dec. 2014
- ⁴²⁵ Bergen, Peter, Joseph Felter, Vahid Brown, and Jacob Shapiro. Bombers, Bank Accounts, & Bleedout: Al-Qa'ida's Road In and Out of Iraq. Rep. Ed. Brian Fishman. Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, July 2008. Web, 9. 22 Dec. 2014.
- ⁴²⁶ Siegel, Pascal C. "Islamic State of Iraq Commemorates Its Two-Year Anniversary." Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. N.p., 15 Oct. 2008. Web. 22 Dec. 2014.
- ⁴²⁷ Joscelyn, Thomas. "Al Qaeda in Iraq, Al Nusrah Front Emerge as Rebranded Single Entity." Long War Journal. Foundation for Defense of Democracies, 9 Apr. 2013. Web. 01 July 2014.
- ⁴²⁸ "Al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI)." Terrorist Groups. National Counterterrorism Center. Web. 13 Nov. 2014. }
- ⁴²⁹ Joscelyn, Thomas. "Analysis: Zawahiri's Letter to Al Qaeda Branches in Syria, Iraq." Long War Journal. Foundation for the Defense of Democracy, 10 June 2013. Web. 13 Nov. 2014.
- ⁴³⁰ Atassi, Basma. "Qaeda chief annuls Syrian-Iraqi jihad merger." Al Jazeera America 9 June 2013. Al Jazeera. Web. 24 June 2014.
- ⁴³¹ "Will the jihadists overreach?." The Economist 12 Oct. 2013. The Economist. Web. 23 June 2014; Laub, Zachary and Jonathan Masters. "Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria." The Council on Foreign Relations. The Council on Foreign Relations, 12 Jun. .2014. Web. 23 Jun. 2014.
- ⁴³² Associated Press. "ISIL says it faces war with Nusra in Syria." Al Jazeera. N.p., 8 Mar. 2014. Web. 25 June 2014.

-
- ⁴³³ "Syria, Anti-Assad Rebel Infighting Leaves 700 Dead, Including Civilians." Asia News, January 13, 2014.
- ⁴³⁴ Joscelyn, Thomas. "Al Qaeda's general command disowns the Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham." The Long War Journal. Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, 3 Feb. 2014. Web. 24 June 2014.
- ⁴³⁵ Branford, Nicholas. "After Foley murder, more jihadi threats to murder hostages." The Christian Science Monitor. N.p., 24 Aug. 2014. Web. 25 Sept. 2014.
- ⁴³⁶ Chulov, Martin. "Isis Reconciles with Al-Qaida Group as Syria Air Strikes Continue." The Guardian, September 28, 2014.
- ⁴³⁷ Arango, Tim. "Uneasy Alliance Gives Insurgents an Edge in Iraq." New York Times. New York Times, June 18, 2014.
- ⁴³⁸ Al-Salhy, Suadad and Tim Arango. "Iraq Militants, Pushing South, Aim at Capital." New York Times. New York Times, June 11, 2014.
- ⁴³⁹ Fick, Maggie and Ahmed Rasheed. "Islamic State rounds up ex-Baathists to eliminate potential rivals in Iraq's Mosul." Reuters. Thomson Reuters, July 8, 2014.
- ⁴⁴⁰ Barnard, Anne, and Rick Gladstone. "Rebel Infighting Spreads to an Eastern Syrian City." The New York Times. N.p., 6 Jan. 2014. Web. 13 Nov. 2014; Mourta, Hania. "The Islamist Enemy of Our Islamist Enemy." Foreign Policy. N.p., 31 Dec. 2013. Web. 13 Nov. 2014.
- ⁴⁴¹ Landis, Joshua. "The Battle between ISIS and Syria's Rebel Militias." Syria Comment. N.p., 4 Jan. 2014. Web. 13 Nov. 2014.
- ⁴⁴² Barnard, Anne, and Rick Gladstone. "Rebel Infighting Spreads to an Eastern Syrian City." The New York Times. N.p., 06 Jan. 2014. Web. 13 Nov. 2014.
- ⁴⁴³ Joscelyn, Thomas. "Saudi Cleric's Reconciliation Initiative for Jihadists Draws Wide Support, Then a Rejection." Long War Journal. Foundation for the Defense of Democracy, 27 Jan. 2014. Web. 13 Nov. 2014.
- ⁴⁴⁴ Berger, Miriam. "Syrian Rebels Wage New Battle Against Al-Qaeda Affiliate." Buzzfeed News. 13 January 2014.; "Islamic State Torture is Destroying Syrian Society." Atlantic Council. 13 July 2016.; Lund, Aron. "Pushing Back Against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant: The Path to Conflict." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. N.p., 6 Jan. 2014. Web. 13 Nov. 2014
- ⁴⁴⁵ Joscelyn, Thomas. "Ahrar Al Sham Leader Criticizes Head of Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham." Long War Journal. Foundation for the Defense of Democracy, 29 Jan. 2014. Web. 13 Nov. 2014.
- ⁴⁴⁶ "Al-Qaeda Fighters Kill Syrian Rebel Leaders." Al Jazeera. N.p., 2 Feb. 2014. Web. 13 Nov. 2014.
- ⁴⁴⁷ Lund, Aron. "Who and What Was Abu Khalid Al-Suri? Part I." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. N.p., 24 Feb. 2014. Web. 13 Nov. 2014.
- ⁴⁴⁸ "Al Qaeda Splinter Group in Syria Leaves Two Provinces - Activists." Reuters. N.p., 14 Mar. 2014. Web. 13 Nov. 2014.
- ⁴⁴⁹ Pizzi, Michael. "Syrian Rebels Turn on Each Other as 'big Tent' Strategy Collapses | Al Jazeera America." Syrian Rebels Turn on Each Other as 'big Tent' Strategy Collapses | Al Jazeera America. Al Jazeera, 20 Sept. 2013. Web. 11 Nov. 2014.
- ⁴⁵⁰ Pizzi, Michael. "Syrian rebels turn on each other as 'big tent' strategy collapses." Al Jazeera America 20 Sept. 2013. Al Jazeera. Web. 23 June 2014.
- ⁴⁵¹ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, The Military Balance, 115:1, 303-362. February 10, 2015, 303.
- ⁴⁵² Shekhani, Helbast. "Islamic State sold oil to Syrian regime and Turkey, commander says." Kurdistan 24. 02 Jul. 2018.
- ⁴⁵³ Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, The Military Balance, 118:1, 315-374, February 13, 2018. 316.
- ⁴⁵⁴ Milton, Dan, and Muhammad Al-'Ubaydi. "Pledging Bay'a: Benefit or Burden to the Islamic State?" CTC Sentinel. Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, 19 Mar. 2015. Web. 8 May 2015.
- ⁴⁵⁵ Whaley, Floyd. "Philippines Says Local Terrorist Group Is Not Linked to ISIS." The New York Times. N.p., 25 Sept. 2014. Web. 12 May 2015.
- ⁴⁵⁶ "Islamic State: 'Baghdadi Message' Issued by Jihadists - BBC News." BBC News. N.p., 13 Nov. 2014. Web. 18 May 2015.
- ⁴⁵⁷ Hashem, Mostafa. "Islamic State Leader Urges Attacks in Saudi Arabia: Speech." Reuters. N.p., 13 Nov. 2014. Web. 18 May 2015.
- ⁴⁵⁸ Reuters. "ISIS Accepts Boko Haram Allegiance Pledge." CBS News. N.p., 13 Mar. 2013. Web. 07 May 2015.

-
- ⁴⁵⁹ Milton, Dan, and Muhammad Al-Ubaydi. "Pledging Bay`a: A Benefit or Burden to the Islamic State? | Combating Terrorism Center at West Point." Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. N.p., 19 Mar. 2015. Web. 12 May 2015; Agence France Presse. "Philippine Militants Pledge Allegiance to ISIS." The Daily Star Newspaper. N.p., 15 Aug. 2014. Web. 12 May 2015.
- ⁴⁶⁰ Milton, Dan, and Muhammad Al-Ubaydi. "Pledging Bay`a: A Benefit or Burden to the Islamic State? | Combating Terrorism Center at West Point." Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. N.p., 19 Mar. 2015. Web. 12 May 2015.
- ⁴⁶¹ Al-Moshki, Ali Ibrahim. "AQAP Announces Support for ISIL." Yemen Times. N.p., 19 Aug. 2014. Web. 30 Apr. 2015.
- ⁴⁶² Cruickshank, Paul. "Al Qaeda in Yemen Rebukes ISIS." CNN. N.p., 21 Nov. 2014. Web. 30 Apr. 2015.
- ⁴⁶³ Khan, Dera Ismail. "Pakistan Taliban Splinter Group Vows Allegiance to Islamic State." Reuters. N.p., 18 Nov. 2014. Web. 12 May 2015.
- ⁴⁶⁴ Shah, Taimoor, and Joseph Goldstein. "Taliban Fissures in Afghanistan Are Seen as an Opening for ISIS." The New York Times. N.p., 21 Jan. 2015. Web. 07 May 2015.
- ⁴⁶⁵ Afghanistan Forces Defend Kunduz from Taliban - BBC News." BBC News. N.p., 7 May 2015. Web. 07 May 2015.
- ⁴⁶⁶ "Taliban, ISIS Announce War against Each Other in Afghanistan." The Oslo Times. N.p., 20 Apr. 2015. Web. 13 May 2015.
- ⁴⁶⁷ "Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K)." Center for Strategic and International Studies. Last updated November 9, 2018.
- ⁴⁶⁸ Husham al-Hashimi. "ISIS's New Leadership: Past Lessons in a New Strategic Environment." Center for Global Policy, August 4, 2020; Husham al-Hashimi. "ISIS 2020: New Structures and Leaders in Iraq Revealed." Center for Global Policy, May 19, 2020.
- ⁴⁶⁹ Husham al-Hashimi. "ISIS 2020: New Structures and Leaders in Iraq Revealed." Center for Global Policy, May 19, 2020.
- ⁴⁷⁰ Al-Lami, Mina. "Where is the Islamic State Group Still Active in the World." BBC News. 27 Mar. 2019.
- ⁴⁷¹ Al-Lami, Mina. "Where is the Islamic State Group Still Active in the World." BBC News. 27 Mar. 2019.; "Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K)." Center for Strategic and International Studies. Last updated November 9, 2018.
- ⁴⁷² Wembi, Steve, and Joseph Goldstein. "ISIS Claims First Attack in the Democratic Republic of Congo." New York Times, April 19, 2019.
- ⁴⁷³ Kirdar, MJ. AQAM Futures Project Case Studies Series: Al Qaeda in Iraq. Publication. Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2014. 3.
- ⁴⁷⁴ "Treasury Designates Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security for Human Rights Abuses and Support for Terrorism." Press Center. U.S. Department of the Treasury, 16 Feb. 2012. Web. 28 Nov. 2014.
- ⁴⁷⁵ Londoño, Ernesto, "Al-Qaeda in Iraq gaining in strength," Washington Post Foreign Service., The Washington Post, 22 Nov. 2009. Web. 26 Jan. 2010.
- ⁴⁷⁶ Boghardt, Lori. "Qatar and ISIS Funding: The U.S. Approach." The Washington Institute, August 2014.
- ⁴⁷⁷ Laub, Zachary and Jonathan Masters. "Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria." The Council on Foreign Relations.. The Council on Foreign Relations, 12 Jun. 2014. Web. 23 Jun. 2014; Laub, Zachary, and Jonathan Masters. "The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria." Backgrounders. Council on Foreign Relations, 8 Aug. 2014. Web. 28 Nov. 2014.
- ⁴⁷⁸ Di Giovanni, Janine, Leah McGrath Goodman, and Damien Sharkov. "How Does ISIS Fund Its Reign of Terror?" Newsweek, November 6, 2014.