

**Forum:** Security Council

**Issue:** The Question of ISIS

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## **Introduction**

Within numerous terroristic attacks and acts of violence it is impossible to deny the threat that ISIS represents to the world community. According to the UN report, over 24,000 Iraqi civilians have been injured or killed by ISIS in the first eight months of 2014 only, notwithstanding the terroristic attacks in Europe and the USA, destruction of heritage sites, severe human rights violations, genocide committed against the Yazidi, conscription of children and sexual slavery. The threat that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant possesses to international security and global peace has been identified one of priorities for the Security Council. While many important steps have been taken to solve the problem, the issue remains an essential part of UN's agenda.

## **Definition of key terms**

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, ISIS, also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, Islamic State (IS), and by its Arabic acronym Daesh)

A Salafi jihadist unrecognized state and militant group that follows a Wahhabi doctrine of Sunni Islam

### The Syrian Civil War

An armed conflict that grew out of the 2011 Arab Spring and rapidly escalated after President Bashar al-Assad's government violently repressed protests calling for his removal

### Al-Qaeda

A militant Sunni Islamist multi-national terroristic organization founded by Osama bin Laden in 1988 and since that time has mounted attacks on civilian and military targets in various countries, including the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings, the September 11 attacks, and the 2002 Bali bombings

### Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF–OIR)

The Joint Task Force established by the international coalition against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, set up by the US Central Command to coordinate military efforts against ISIL, and is composed of military forces from over 30 countries

### Caliphate

A form of an Islamic government which is led by a Caliph (a person believed to be the successor of prophet Muhammed, thus a leader of the whole Muslim community)

### Sharia

The religious law governing the members of the Islamic faith

## **Background information**

### History

Jordanian radical Abu Musab al-Zarqawi founded Jamā'at al-Tawhīd wa-al-Jihad in 1999. In October 2004, a year after the US invasion of Iraq, al-Zarqawi pledged allegiance to Al-Qaeda and to Osama Bin Laden, forming al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). Al-Zarqawi's newly established terroristic organization grew popular in the Islamic world for its deadly suicide attacks on civilians and hostages. After Zarqawi's death, AQI was re-named into the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI). ISI was dramatically weakened by the US troop surge and Sunni Arab tribesmen who rejected its brutality. In 2010, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi became a new leader of the organizations and decided to rebuild ISI. By 2013, it was once again carrying out series of attacks every month in Iraq. It had also joined the rebellion against President Bashar al-Assad in Syria, setting up the al-Nusra Front. In April 2013, Baghdadi announced the merger of his forces in Iraq and Syria and the creation of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS). The leaders of al-Nusra and al-Qaeda denied the move, but fighters loyal to Baghdadi split from al-Nusra and helped ISIS remain in Syria, which is one of the main reasons why al-Nusra Front is currently opposing ISIS.

At the end of December 2013, ISIS decided to focus on Iraq using a political stand-off between the Shia government and the minority Sunni community. In June 2014, ISIS overran the northern city of Mosul. At the end of December, gaining several large cities, ISIS declared the creation of a caliphate and changed its name to Islamic State (IS).

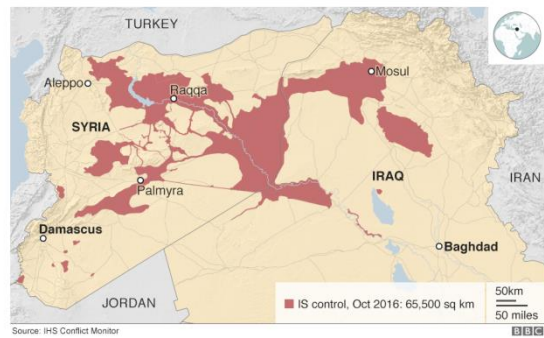
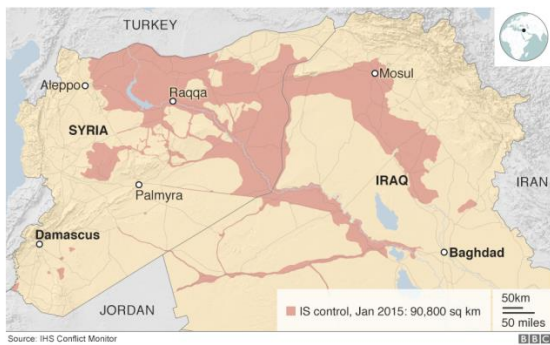
### Authority and leadership

ISIS, apart from most of other terroristic organizations, has a more centralized and elaborate governing system with almost all governing elements. ISIL is run by caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and his deputy leaders, who are responsible for governing the Syrian and Iraqi territory respectively. Twelve governors and thematic councils, including The Military Council, The Shura (Consultative) Council, The Judicial Authority, The Defense, Security and Intelligence Council, and The Islamic State Institution for Public Information, rule different regions in both countries.

### Economic situation

According to the Center for the Analysis of Terrorism, ISIS is now experiencing lack of monetary resources; its total revenue has dropped from 2.9 billion \$ in 2014 to 2.4 billion \$ in 2015 and continues to decline. The main product of ISIS's distribution used to be oil and gas, but production has fallen since US-led coalition and Russian air strikes began targeting the oil infrastructure. Now the key role is played by extortions (taxes, fees, and fines), which were often claimed to be the primary source of funding for IS in 2015, followed by sale of phosphates. As well as charging for services like water and electricity, IS levies taxes on diverse products and makes money from confiscating property, which is then sold. The loss of territory and people under IS control means these sources of revenue are likely to continue decreasing. This poor economic situation supposedly led to the destruction and further trafficking of antiquities.

## Territory



ISIS releases map of 5-year plan to spread from Spain to China

ISIL primarily claimed territory in Syria and Iraq, subdividing each country into multiple provinces. Throughout the years 2014 and 2015, ISIS also announced that they plan to gain the territories of North Caucasus, Nigeria, Southern Afghanistan, and Yemen.

According to a study by the IHS, ISIS has lost 14% of the year 2015 and 16% of the land it held at the beginning of the year in 2016, approximately a quarter of the land controlled in January 2015. Its losses include the strategically important town of Tal Abyad on Syria's border with Turkey, the Iraq city of Tikrit, as well as a segment of highway between its Syrian city of Raqqa and Mosul in northern Iraq.

### **Major countries and organizations involved**

#### *State opponents*

- Syria
- Iraq
- Iran
- NATO Members
- Russia

#### *Non-state opponents*

- Al-Qaeda
- Al-Nusra front

- Taliban
- Al-Shabaab
- Hezbollah

## **UN Resolutions and relevant treaties**

Resolution 2199, adopted by UNSC on 12 February 2015, was on methods to counter ISIS's and Al-Nusra's funding via oil exports, traffic of cultural heritage, ransom payments and external donations.

Resolution 2249, adopted by UNSC on 20 November 2015, sets the main objective as enforcement of a framework to reveal and disrupt illegal financing of IS and groups related to it by means of trade in oil, artifacts, and other illegal sources.

By Resolution 2253, adopted by UNSC on 17 December 2015, Security Council imposes individual sanctions (assets freeze, travel ban, and weaponry embargo) upon individuals and entities designated on the ISIS & Al-Qaida Sanctions List. Together, The UNSC Resolutions 1267/1989/2253 make a set off Sanctions imposed on ISIS and other terroristic organizations, as well as measures taken to prevent economic collaboration with them.

Other important UN resolutions on the question of ISIS are Resolutions 2170 and 2258.

## **Previous attempts to solve the problem**

In response to rapid territorial gains made by ISIS militants during the first half of 2014 and its internationally condemned brutality many states began to intervene against ISIL in Syria and Iraq.

On September 10, 2014, President Obama announced the formation of a global coalition to "degrade and ultimately defeat" the Islamic State. According to the U.S. State Department, there are currently 66 participants in the coalition. Operation Inherent Resolve, the military component of the global coalition to defeat the Islamic State, began on August 8, 2014. Subsequently, according to United States Central Command and open source reporting, 27 nations have joined the military component of the coalition. The current objectives of the coalition campaign are "destroying ISIL's parent tumor in Iraq and Syria, combating its worldwide spread, and protecting all homelands." While the North Atlantic Treaty Organization itself is not a coalition member, many of its member states are active participants in the counter-IS military campaign. At the July 2016 Summit of Heads of State and Government in Warsaw, NATO reaffirmed its commitment to fighting terrorism and supporting the counter-IS coalition.

Although Russia is not the member of the US-led coalition against ISIS, it is conducting air-strikes and supplies some regions with humanitarian help. However, there have been claims that Russia was the responsible for numerous casualties among the civilians.

Since the summer of 2015, Turkey has allowed the members of anti-IS coalition to use Turkish airspace and bases to conduct strikes on the Islamic State. Turkey has also periodically carried out its own air- and artillery strikes in Syria against IS targets.

## **Possible solutions**

Taking into account the influence of ISIS, this is obvious that the global community has to eliminate both its military forces and ideology. It is offered to:

- 1) Conduct more operations by the coalition;
- 2) Encourage Arabic world to participate more actively in countering the issue;
- 3) Raise population's awareness on the topic of ISIS;
- 4) Create a negative image of ISIS in the regions under threat and promote peace and tolerance;
- 5) Assure that no nation collaborates with ISIS.