

# THE DANGERS ISIS AND ITS PROGENY POSE TO REGIONAL AND GLOBAL PEACE\*

## INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

On 4 July 2014, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, newly proclaimed “Caliph Ibrahim” and leader of the so-called “Islamic State” (formerly known as ISIS<sup>1</sup> or ISIL<sup>2</sup>), delivered a sermon at the Grand Mosque in Mosul, Iraq. In his sermon, al-Baghdadi claimed the mantle of caliph—Allah’s vicegerent on Earth—and called on fellow Muslims to obey him as they would Allah and Muhammad. His sermon reads, in pertinent part, as follows:

Verily your brothers the Mujahidin, Allah Blessed and High be He, has favoured them with victory and conquest. And he established for them after long years of Jihad and patience, and meeting in combat with the enemies of Allah, he granted them success, empowered them in order to fulfill their purpose. *Verily they hastened to announce the Caliphate and appointing [sic] a leader*, and this is an obligation upon Muslims. An obligation which has been made lost for centuries and was absent upon earth’s existence, and so many Muslims were ignorant of it. And those who commit sin; where Muslims are sinning by abandoning and neglecting it, *for verily they have to always strive to establish it and here now they have established it*, praise and favour is due to Allah.

Verily I am in a trial by this great matter. I am in trial by this trust, a heavy-weighted trust. *And so I was put in authority over you*, and I am not the best of you nor am I better than you. If you see me upon truth, then support me; and if you see me upon falsehood, then advise me and guide me and obey me as long as I obey Allah in you. Verily if I disobey Him, then obey me not. I am not to promise you as how the kings and rulers promise their followers and their citizens from luxury, prosperity, security and wealth; but instead, I promise you by what Allah, Blessed and High be He, has promised His believing servants: Allah has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them. Just as He granted it to those before them and that He will surely substitute for them, after their fear, security, they worship Me, not associating anything with Me. But whoever disbelieves after that—then those are the defiantly disobedient [25:55]<sup>3</sup>.

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\*This paper is a revised version of a paper prepared and presented by Jay Alan Sekulow and Robert Weston Ash at Exeter College, University of Oxford summer programme in Middle East Studies.

<sup>1</sup>ISIS stands for Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. It can also mean Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria or Islamic State of Iraq and *Sham*.

<sup>2</sup>ISIL stands for Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

<sup>3</sup>See Amir Abdallah, *Urgent Video: Isis Releases Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi Sermon In Mosul Grand Mosque*, IRAQI NEWS (5 July 2014), <http://www.iraqinews.com/features/urgent-video-isis-releases-abu-bakr-al-baghdadi-sermon-mosul-grand-mosque/> (emphasis added). Note that the full-length video of the sermon had English subtitles. The language quoted above is directly transcribed from the video’s English subtitles. Grammatical and typographical errors have not been corrected. The numbers in brackets refer to verses in the Quran.

## WHO IS THE NEW CALIPH?

“Caliph Ibrahim” was born Abu Du’a in 1971<sup>4</sup>. His most recent *nom de guerre* is Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. He grew up in “a religious family in Samarra . . . . He studied Islamic history as a student and . . . gained a doctorate from Baghdad University in the late 1990s”<sup>5</sup>. “It is likely al-Baghdadi held a religious position in the Sunni community when the US invaded Iraq in 2003”<sup>6</sup>. Following the US invasion of Iraq, al-Baghdadi joined the armed resistance to coalition troops in Iraq, but he was captured and detained in a US-run Iraqi prison in 2006<sup>7</sup>. Following al-Baghdadi’s release in the late 2000s, he joined the predecessor to ISIS, the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI)<sup>8</sup>. In 2010, al-Baghdadi became the leader of ISI<sup>9</sup>. He changed the name of the organisation to ISIS in 2013. Al-Baghdadi is regarded as a battlefield commander and tactician<sup>10</sup>. His battle tactics and leadership skills appeal to young jihadists, to the extent that ISIS now threatens al-Qaeda’s dominant role in Muslim youth recruitment<sup>11</sup>.

Under al-Baghdadi’s leadership, ISIS gained considerable financial clout. ISIS previously relied on donations from wealthy individuals in the Gulf Arab states who were supporting ISIS in the Syrian conflict<sup>12</sup>. ISIS now has cash and assets of its own. Al-Baghdadi has secured two primary revenue streams: oil sales from ISIS-controlled oil fields in Syria and sales of antiquities from looted historical sites<sup>13</sup>. ISIS accumulated cash and assets worth an estimated two billion dollars<sup>14</sup>. When ISIS overran Mosul, Iraq, ISIS forces looted banks of cash and precious metals<sup>15</sup>.

On 29 June 2014, al-Baghdadi declared himself to be “Caliph Ibrahim”<sup>16</sup>. A statement published by ISIS to support al-Baghdadi’s designation as caliph listed his qualifications as follows: “The mujahid, the scholar who practices what he preaches, the worshipper, the leader, the warrior, the reviver, *the descendant from the family of the Prophet*, the slave of Allah”<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup>*Wanted Abu Du’a Up to \$10 Million*, REWARDS FOR JUSTICE, <http://www.webcitation.org/62Hxw9AqD>. He is known to have used a number of aliases, such as, Dr Ibrahim ‘Awwad Ibrahim ‘Ali al-Badri al-Samarrai’, Ibrahim ‘Awad Ibrahim al-Badri al-Samarrai, Abu Duaa’, Dr Ibrahim, and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. *Id.*

<sup>5</sup>Graeme Baker, *The Fierce Ambition Of ISIL’s Baghdadi*, AL JAZEERA (15 June 2014), <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/06/fierce-ambition-isil-baghdadi-2014612142242188464.html>.

<sup>6</sup>*Id.*

<sup>7</sup>*Id.*

<sup>8</sup>*Id.*

<sup>9</sup>*Profile: Islamic State In Iraq And The Levant (ISIS)*, BBC NEWS (16 June 2014), <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-24179084>.

<sup>10</sup>*Id.*

<sup>11</sup>*Id.*

<sup>12</sup>*Id.*

<sup>13</sup>*Id.*

<sup>14</sup>*Id.*

<sup>15</sup>Terrence McCoy, *ISIS Just Stole \$425 Million, Iraqi Governor Says, And Became The ‘World’s Richest Terrorist Group’*, WASH. POST (12 June 2014), <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/06/12/isis-just-stole-425-million-and-became-the-worlds-richest-terrorist-group/>.

<sup>16</sup>*Jordan’s Abu Qatada: Caliphate Declaration ‘Void’*, DAILY STAR (15 July 2014), <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Jul-15/263931-jordans-abu-qatada-caliphate-declaration-void.ashx#axzz37qB7TbEF>.

<sup>17</sup>ALHAYAT MEDIA CENTER, THIS IS THE PROMISE OF ALLAH 5 (2014) (emphasis added), *available at* [https://ia902505.us.archive.org/28/items/poa\\_25984/EN.pdf](https://ia902505.us.archive.org/28/items/poa_25984/EN.pdf). Al-Jazeera has reported the forgoing document to be

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ISLAMIC CALIPHATE

Muslims consider Islam to be a universal religion that encompasses all aspects of life, ultimately manifesting itself in the establishment of a universal Islamic state<sup>18</sup>. This political idea of Islam is embodied in the concept of the *ummah* (community), which is the idea that all Muslims, wherever they reside, are bound together through a common faith that transcends all geographical, political, or national boundaries<sup>19</sup>. This common bond is formed through Muslims' allegiance to Allah and to the Prophet Muhammad<sup>20</sup>. Because Allah revealed all laws concerning religious and secular matters through the Prophet Muhammad, the entire *ummah* is governed by the divine law, or *Sharia*<sup>21</sup>. *Sharia* is applicable to all times and places and, therefore, transcends geographical boundaries and supersedes all other laws<sup>22</sup>.

Accordingly, Islam divides the world into two spheres: the house of Islam (*dar-al-Islam*) and the house of war (*dar-al-harb*)<sup>23</sup>. The house of Islam includes nations and territories that are under the control of Muslims and where *Sharia* law is the highest authority<sup>24</sup>. The house of war includes nations and territories that are under the control of non-Muslims and that do not submit to *Sharia*<sup>25</sup>. Consequently, there is constant conflict between the house of Islam and the house of war until the house of war is transformed into the house of Islam<sup>26</sup>. The conflict will not end until all land is conquered for Allah<sup>27</sup>, thereby establishing a single, global, Islamic State, also known as the Caliphate<sup>28</sup>.

The Caliphate is envisioned to be a unified, transnational government ruling over the entire Muslim Community, *ummah*<sup>29</sup>. It is to be governed pursuant to *Sharia* and enforced by a supreme leader, the Caliph<sup>30</sup>. Because Allah alone is the lawgiver, there is no place for a legislator; in Islam, human government only exists to enforce Allah's law<sup>31</sup>.

The caliph's position is to administer and enforce the divine law<sup>32</sup>. The caliph is seen as the "vicegerent of Allah upon earth, charged with the duty of judging righteously, i.e., of applying [*Sharia*], between men"<sup>33</sup>. Accordingly, the "caliphate is the highest type of political

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an official ISIS publication. *Sunni Rebels Declare New 'Islamic Caliphate'*, AL JAZEERA (30 June 2014), <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/06/isil-declares-new-islamic-caliphate-201462917326669749.html>.

<sup>18</sup>MAJID KHADDURI, *WAR AND PEACE IN THE LAW OF ISLAM* 48 (Lawbook Exchange ed. 2010).

<sup>19</sup>*Id.* at 4, 17.

<sup>20</sup>*Id.* at 158.

<sup>21</sup>*Id.* at 16.

<sup>22</sup>*Id.* at 26.

<sup>23</sup>*Id.* at 156.

<sup>24</sup>*Id.* at 155.

<sup>25</sup>*Id.* at 170–71.

<sup>26</sup>*Id.* at 64.

<sup>27</sup>*Id.*

<sup>28</sup>*Id.* at 16–17.

<sup>29</sup>LAW IN THE MIDDLE EAST 3 (Majid Khadduri & Herbert J. Liebesny eds., Lawbook Exchange ed., 2009).

<sup>30</sup>*Id.* at 14.

<sup>31</sup>*Id.* at 3.

<sup>32</sup>KHADDURI, *supra* note 18, at 11.

<sup>33</sup>LAW IN THE MIDDLE EAST, *supra* note 29, at 5.

organization on earth” and its subjects can derive their highest welfare through “absolute obedience to its ordinances”<sup>34</sup>.

### ORIGIN & HISTORY OF THE CALIPHATE

Muslims believe that Allah had delegated to the Prophet Muhammad authority to rule the people with justice<sup>35</sup>. Yet, when Muhammad died, he had neither designated a successor nor provided guidance regarding how to choose a successor<sup>36</sup>. The lack of explicit guidance on how to determine Muhammad’s successor has been a source of the longstanding divide between Sunni and Shia Muslims<sup>37</sup>. Shias believe that the Caliph must come from the bloodline of the Prophet Muhammad, whereas Sunnis maintain that any believer may qualify for the office of Caliph, regardless of his lineage<sup>38</sup>.

The Sunnis had three caliphs before Ali (Muhammad’s son-in-law and cousin), who became the fourth caliph<sup>39</sup>. Contending that Ali was the first legitimate successor, Shias dispute the first three Sunni caliphs<sup>40</sup>. Most Shias “consider belief in Muhammad’s designation of Ali as his successor a religious duty alongside belief in the oneness of God”<sup>41</sup>. Shia believe that the Imam, which is the Shia version of the Caliph, must be a descendant of Ali<sup>42</sup>. Most Shias are “twelver Shia” who believe that there were twelve Imams. The last one is supposed to come back as “Mahdi”<sup>43</sup>. “Until the Mahdi returns many Shia[s] believe that there will be just ayatollas (a 20th century designation) and other levels of Shia scholars in hawzas (scholarly systems) to help explain the religion”<sup>44</sup>.

Beginning with the first Caliphate, the caliph would select a place to base the empire<sup>45</sup>. There were caliphates ruled from Damascus, Baghdad, and Istanbul<sup>46</sup>. The last Sunni caliphate existed during the Ottoman Empire, ruled by Ottoman sultans for 500 years<sup>47</sup>.

When the Ottoman Empire collapsed following the First World War<sup>48</sup>, the titles of sultan and caliph were rendered mere names with no real power<sup>49</sup>. “On 1 November 1922, under the

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<sup>34</sup>*Id.* at 14.

<sup>35</sup>KHADDURI, *supra* note 18, at 10.

<sup>36</sup>LAW IN THE MIDDLE EAST, *supra* note 29, at 4.

<sup>37</sup>*Id.* at 6.

<sup>38</sup>*Id.* at 6, 8.

<sup>39</sup>ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ISLAM 33 (Juan E. Campo ed. 2009).

<sup>40</sup>*Id.*

<sup>41</sup>*Id.*

<sup>42</sup>LAW IN THE MIDDLE EAST, *supra* note 29, at 114.

<sup>43</sup>*Id.*

<sup>44</sup>Paul Sullivan, *Why Should We Care About The Iraqi Shia?*, HISTORY NEWS NETWORK (13 April 2004), <http://hnn.us/article/1455>.

<sup>45</sup>Karl Vick, *What Is The Caliphate*, TIME (1 July 2014), <http://time.com/2942239/what-is-the-caliphate/>.

<sup>46</sup>*Id.*

<sup>47</sup>Juan Jose Valdes, et al., *Iraq: 1,200 Years Of Turbulent History In Five Maps*, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC (2 July 2014), <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/07/140702-iraq-history-maps/>.

<sup>48</sup>Vick, *supra* note 45.

<sup>49</sup>Omar Khalidi, *The Caliph’s Daughter*, CORNUCOPIA MAG., <http://www.cornucopia.net/magazine/articles/the-caliphs-daughter/>.

leadership of Mustafa Kemal (who later took the name of Atatürk), the newly formed Turkish Grand National Assembly abolished the sultanate, and the last sultan, Murad VI Vahdeddin, fled from Istanbul aboard a British battleship<sup>50</sup>. Atatürk ultimately convinced the Turkish Assembly to abolish the caliphate which they did on 24 March 1924<sup>51</sup>. Abolition of the caliphate removed a significant symbol of universal Islamic authority, a symbol many Sunni groups wish to restore.

Re-establishment of the caliphate has been a long-standing goal of Sunni Muslims<sup>52</sup>. The Muslim Brotherhood, for example, was founded in Egypt in 1928 with the goal of re-establishing the traditional caliphate<sup>53</sup>. Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and other Jihadist groups also seek to re-establish a new caliphate<sup>54</sup>.

### FORMATION OF ISIS AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH AL-QAEDA AND OTHER JIHADIST GROUPS

ISIS began its existence as al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). Al-Baghdadi ascended to leadership in AQI<sup>55</sup>. Before AQI became ISIS, and even before al-Baghdadi stepped into AQI leadership, Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri (i.e., the founder of Egyptian militant group Islamic Jihad<sup>56</sup>) had been criticising AQI<sup>57</sup>. Bin Laden and Zawahiri believed that AQI's attacks on fellow Muslims would erode public support for al-Qaeda in the region<sup>58</sup>. In July 2005, they questioned AQI's strategy in written correspondence<sup>59</sup>. AQI disregarded al-Qaeda's instruction to stop attacking Shia cultural sites, a move that ended AQI's relationship with al-Qaeda<sup>60</sup>. In June 2006, a US air strike killed AQI's former leader. "In its aftermath, Abu Ayyub al-Masri, an Egyptian-born explosives expert and former Zawahiri confidant, emerged as AQI's new leader"<sup>61</sup>.

In October 2006, al-Masri picked a new name for the militant organisation, the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), in order to "increase the group's local appeal," which had suffered precisely as al-Qaeda had predicted, and "to embody its territorial ambitions"<sup>62</sup>. After al-Baghdadi took leadership, the organisation claimed its current name, ISIS, to reflect its broadened ambitions to take over neighbouring Syria and the Levant region as a result of the 2011 uprising<sup>63</sup>. In April

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<sup>50</sup>*Id.*

<sup>51</sup>*Id.*

<sup>52</sup>Vick, *supra* note 45.

<sup>53</sup>BYLAWS OF THE INTERNATIONAL MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD ch. II, art. II § E, available at <http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/misc/673.pdf>.

<sup>54</sup>Tim Lister, *How ISIS Is Overshadowing Al Qaeda*, CNN NEWS (30 June 2014), <http://www.cnn.com/2014/06/30/world/meast/isis-overshadows-al-qaeda/>.

<sup>55</sup>Zachary Laub & Jonathan Masters, *Islamic State In Iraq And Greater Syria*, COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELS. (12 June 2014), <http://www.cfr.org/iraq/islamic-state-iraq-greater-syria/p14811>.

<sup>56</sup>*Al-Qaeda's Remaining Leaders*, BBC NEWS <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-11489337>.

<sup>57</sup>*English Translation Of Ayman Al-Zawahiri's Letter To Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi*, *The Weekly Standard* (12 Oct. 2005), <http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/006/203gpul.asp>.

<sup>58</sup>*Id.*

<sup>59</sup>*Id.*

<sup>60</sup>Laub, *supra* note 55.

<sup>61</sup>*Id.*

<sup>62</sup>*Id.*

<sup>63</sup>*Id.*

2013, another spat with al-Qaeda occurred. “ISIS declared a merger with Jabhat al-Nusra, a Syrian al-Qaeda affiliate that has greater indigenous legitimacy than ISIS”<sup>64</sup>. But Zawahiri, the current al-Qaeda leader, “annulled the merger, ruling that ISIS’s operations be limited to Iraq”<sup>65</sup>. Although al-Baghdadi, as ISIS’ leader, had pledged fealty to al-Qaeda, al-Baghdadi “rejected Zawahiri’s ruling and questioned his authority”<sup>66</sup>. Because al-Qaeda only committed terrorist attacks against Western and Arab governments, it condemned ISIS for killing Muslim civilians and “for waging war on other Muslims”<sup>67</sup>. Al-Qaeda, consequently, disclaimed all ties with ISIS, claiming ISIS actions were damaging to the revolution<sup>68</sup>. As a result, ISIS regularly attacks al-Nusra, as well as civilian supporters of al-Nusra<sup>69</sup>. Due to the infighting between the rebel groups, the death toll is estimated to be in the thousands<sup>70</sup>. Furthermore, the Syrian Revolutionary Front (SRF)—part of the Free Syrian Army that was formed to directly oppose ISIS—has declared war against ISIS<sup>71</sup>.

### WHY ISIS’ ACTIONS ARE SO DANGEROUS

ISIS has emerged as the most ruthless of the Sunni jihadist organisations in Iraq and Syria. ISIS is so extreme that other well-known, radical Islamist and jihadist groups have not only distanced themselves from ISIS but have also publicly condemned ISIS actions<sup>72</sup>. ISIS jihadists commit violence against fellow Muslims in violation of Islamic law; they routinely commit war crimes and engage in torture in violation of international law; and they also issue threats to Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities. What makes ISIS especially dangerous is that, not only are ISIS leaders and fighters ruthless, but they also have obtained sufficient material assets to support a standing military force and they possess the will to use weapons of mass destruction to carry out their fanatical aims.

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<sup>64</sup>*Id.*

<sup>65</sup>*Id.*

<sup>66</sup>*Id.*

<sup>67</sup>Ben Hubbard, *ISIS Threatens Al Qaeda As Flagship Movement Of Extremists*, N.Y. TIMES (30 June 2014), <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/01/world/middleeast/isis-threatens-al-Qaeda-as-flagship-movement-of-extremists.html>.

<sup>68</sup>*Al-Qaeda Disavows ISIS Militants In Syria*, BBC NEWS, (3 Feb. 2014), <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26016318>.

<sup>69</sup>*Profile: Islamic State In Iraq And The Levant (ISIS)*, *supra* note 9.

<sup>70</sup>*Id.*

<sup>71</sup>Rania Abouzeid, *Syria’s Uprising Within An Uprising*, EUROPEAN COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELS. (16 Jan. 2014), [http://www.ecfr.eu/content/entry/commentary\\_syrias\\_uprising\\_within\\_an\\_uprising238](http://www.ecfr.eu/content/entry/commentary_syrias_uprising_within_an_uprising238).

<sup>72</sup>Liz Sly, *Al-Qaeda Disavows Any Ties With Radical Islamist Isis Group In Syria, Iraq*, WASH. POST (3 Feb. 2013), [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\\_east/al-qaeda-disavows-any-ties-with-radical-islamist-isis-group-in-syria-iraq/2014/02/03/2c9afc3a-8cef-11e3-98ab-fe5228217bd1\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/al-qaeda-disavows-any-ties-with-radical-islamist-isis-group-in-syria-iraq/2014/02/03/2c9afc3a-8cef-11e3-98ab-fe5228217bd1_story.html); Elisa Odon, *Jordanian Jihadist Leader Condemns Isis Caliphate*, AL MONITOR (7 July 2014), <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/ru/originals/2014/07/jordan-maqdisi-jihad-iraq-isis-caliphate-qaeda.html>; Ellen Knickmeyer, *Al Qaeda ‘Disavows’ Syrian Terror Group For Being Too Terrorist*, WALL ST. J. (3 Feb. 2014), <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304851104579361041928884318>; *See also* Basma Atassi, *Qaeda Chief Annuls Syrian-Iraqi Jihad Merger*, AL JAZEERA (9 June 2013), <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/06/2013699425657882.html> (*follow* translated “here” imbedded link).

## Violations of Islamic Law

Claiming to uphold Allah's law, ISIS, in fact, routinely violates *Sharia* for its own purposes. *Sharia* law, for example, forbids a Muslim from killing another Muslim unless certain specific conditions are met. The Quran clearly states that "[i]f a man kills a Believer [Muslim] intentionally, his recompense is Hell, to abide therein (forever): and the wrath and the curse of Allah are upon him, and a dreadful penalty is prepared for him"<sup>73</sup>. It also states that a Muslim may not take "life, which Allah hath made sacred, except by way of justice and law"<sup>74</sup>.

Ahmad ibn Naqib al-Misri, in *Reliance of the Traveller* (a manual of Sunni *Sharia* law), quotes a hadith, which states:

The blood of a Muslim man who testifies that there is no god but Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah is not lawful to shed unless he be one of three: a married adulterer, someone killed in retaliation for killing another, or someone who abandons his religion and the Muslim community<sup>75</sup>.

Other applicable hadiths are as follows:

"The killing of a believer [Muslim] is more heinous in Allah's sight than doing away with all of this world"<sup>76</sup>.

"The Prophet said, 'A Muslim is the one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hands'<sup>77</sup>.

"Some people asked Allah's Apostle, 'Whose Islam is the best? i.e. (Who is a very good Muslim)?' He replied, 'One who avoids harming the Muslims with his tongue and hands'<sup>78</sup>.

"The Prophet said, 'Abusing a Muslim is Fusuq (an evil doing) and killing him is Kufr (disbelief)'<sup>79</sup>.

ISIS routinely kills its foes—*Muslims and non-Muslims alike*—even when they have not taken up arms against ISIS or have not acted on behalf of any other group and even when they are disarmed or wounded and wholly at ISIS' mercy. Such killings not only constitute violations of Islamic law and morality, they constitute war crimes as well (see next section).

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<sup>73</sup> ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI, THE MEANING OF THE HOLY QUR'AN 4:93 (Amana Publ'ns 10th ed. (1999) (reprint 2004)) [hereinafter QURAN].

<sup>74</sup> *Id.* at 6:151.

<sup>75</sup> AHMAD IBN NAQIB AL-MISRI, RELIANCE OF THE TRAVELLER 583 (Nuh Ha Mim Keller, trans., Amana Publications rev. ed. 2008) (1368).

<sup>76</sup> *Id.*

<sup>77</sup> Volume 1, Book 2, Number 9, SAHIH BUKHARI, available at [http://www.sahih-bukhari.com/Pages/Bukhari\\_1\\_02.php](http://www.sahih-bukhari.com/Pages/Bukhari_1_02.php).

<sup>78</sup> *Id.* at Number 10.

<sup>79</sup> *Id.* at Number 46.

## Violations of the International Law of Armed Conflict

### *Torture*

ISIS routinely tortures its enemies in violation of international law. ISIS operates a number of detention facilities within its territory, which it uses to punish those who break *Sharia* law or oppose ISIS. Many of its prisons are clandestine, but a few are known. Known detention centers in al-Raqqa, Syria, for example, include: the government building, Mabna al-Mohafaza; the Governor's Palace, Qasr al-Mohafez; an ex-Ministry of Transport building, Idarat al-Markabat; and a parking garage, al-Mer'ab<sup>80</sup>. A U-shaped building in Sadd al-Ba'ath, which was built in the late 1980's on the Euphrates River, exists as another known detention centre<sup>81</sup>. Others include an al-Akershi oil facility 20km east of al-Raqqa, a children's hospital in the Qadi Askar area, and Maqar Ahmed Qaddour in the al-Haidariya area<sup>82</sup>.

Individuals suspected of violating *Sharia* law or opposing ISIS, including children as young as 8 years old, have been abducted and transported to prisons, where they have been flogged, tortured, and summarily executed<sup>83</sup>. Other targets for abduction and imprisonment include: members of the media, local council members, members of rival rebel groups, members of international organisations, and foreign religious figures<sup>84</sup>. Reports from former detainees describe various modes of torture common in ISIS prisons: beating detainees with "generator belts, thick pieces of cable, sticks or other implements"<sup>85</sup>; forcing detainees to remain in "contorted stress position[s] ... for long periods, inducing severe pain and possible long-term muscular or other damage"<sup>86</sup>. One detainee reports being "tortured with electric shocks and beaten with a cable while suspended with only one foot touching the floor"<sup>87</sup>. Other detainees claimed that ISIS utilises solitary confinement<sup>88</sup> and electric shocks<sup>89</sup>. Still other reports indicate that ISIS members have flogged early-teenage prisoners anywhere from 30 to 94 lashes at a time<sup>90</sup>.

### *Intentionally Targeting Non-Combatants & Others Hors de Combat*

ISIS routinely targets civilians and soldiers rendered *hors de combat* and executes summary justice against civilians and soldiers in the most brutal, inhumane ways possible. ISIS' penchant for violent, public executions began in March 2014 when ISIS accused a shepherd of

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<sup>80</sup>AMNESTY INT'L, *Rule of Fear: ISIS Abuses In Detention In Northern Syria* 6–7 (19 Dec. 2013), available at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE24/063/2013/en/32d380a3-cc47-4cb6-869f-2628ca44cb99/mde240632013en.pdf>.

<sup>81</sup>*Id.*

<sup>82</sup>*Id.* at 7.

<sup>83</sup>*Abuse 'Rife In Secret Al-Qaeda Jails In Syria,'* BBC NEWS (19 Dec. 2013), <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-25440381>.

<sup>84</sup>AMNESTY INT'L, *supra* note 80, at 1.

<sup>85</sup>*Id.* at 7.

<sup>86</sup>*Id.*

<sup>87</sup>*Id.*

<sup>88</sup>*Id.*

<sup>89</sup>*Id.* at 9.

<sup>90</sup>*Id.* at 10.



murder and theft and summarily executed him by shooting him in the head<sup>91</sup>. In a grotesque, symbolic display of authority, ISIS fighters tied the lifeless body to a cross and displayed it in the public square<sup>92</sup>. Again, in May 2014, ISIS publicly executed seven men in al-Raqqa, Syria, hanging two of the bodies on crosses and leaving them there for over three days<sup>93</sup>. A bystander who witnessed the killings claimed that the other five bodies were not displayed because the victims were all “children under the age of 18, one of them a seventh-grade student”<sup>94</sup>. On 29 May 2014, militants from ISIS executed at least 15 civilians in northern Syria by shooting them in the head or chest<sup>95</sup>. Residents said that at least six children were among those killed<sup>96</sup>.

Since ISIS’ surge into Iraq, the group has escalated its violent shows of force. On 15 June 2014, ISIS released video footage of five unarmed Iraqi soldiers being taunted and forced to praise ISIS, before being summarily shot<sup>97</sup>. The ISIS soldier responsible for the execution then filmed himself saying, “Praise to Allah, whether he is a believer or not, I killed him. I killed a Shia! I killed a Shia!”<sup>98</sup> On that same day, ISIS used social media to spread photographs and videos depicting massacres at seven different sites in Iraq<sup>99</sup>. ISIS claimed to have killed over 1,700 Iraqi soldiers<sup>100</sup>. An ensuing analysis done by Human Rights Watch concluded that, in two mass graves near Tikrit, Iraq, ISIS left the bodies of between 160 and 190 men it had executed<sup>101</sup>.

On 16 June 2014, ISIS reportedly captured Judge Raouf Abdul Rahman, the judge who sentenced Saddam Hussein to death in 2006<sup>102</sup>. Although the Iraqi government did not confirm it at the time, it is believed that Judge Rahman was executed by ISIS militants two days after his capture, in apparent retaliation for his role in Hussein’s death<sup>103</sup>.

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<sup>91</sup>Salma Abdelaziz, *Death And Desecration In Syria: Jihadist Group ‘Crucifies’ Bodies To Send Message*, CNN (2 May 2014), <http://www.cnn.com/2014/05/01/world/meast/syria-bodies-crucifixions/>.

<sup>92</sup>*Id.*

<sup>93</sup>*Id.*

<sup>94</sup>*Id.*

<sup>95</sup>*Syria: ISIS Summarily Killed Civilians*, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH (14 June 2014), <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/06/14/syria-isis-summarily-killed-civilians>.

<sup>96</sup>*Id.*

<sup>97</sup>Adam Lusher, *Iraq Crisis: The Footage That Shows Isis Militants Taunting And Killing Shia Soldiers*, INDEP. (16 June 2014), <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/iraq-crisis-the-footage-that-shows-isis-militants-taunting-and-killing-shia-forces-9541929.html>.

<sup>98</sup>*Id.*

<sup>99</sup>Rod Nordland & Alissa J. Rubin, *Massacre Claim Shakes Iraq*, N.Y. TIMES (15 June 2014), [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/16/world/middleeast/iraq.html?\\_r=3](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/16/world/middleeast/iraq.html?_r=3); see also, *Militants Post Grisly Images Of Mass Killing In Iraq*, CBS NEWS (15 June 2014), <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/iraq-conflict-isis-militants-post-grisly-images-of-mass-killing/>.

<sup>100</sup>*Id.*

<sup>101</sup>Connor Simpson, *Rights Group Confirms ISIS Mass Grave Images*, THE WIRE (27 June 2014), <http://www.thewire.com/global/2014/06/rights-group-confirms-isis-mass-grave-images/373598/>.

<sup>102</sup>Vasudevan Sridharan, *Iraq Isis Crisis: Judge Who Sentenced Saddam Hussein To Death Executed By Rebels*, INT’L BUS. TIMES (24 June 2014), <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/iraq-isis-crisis-judge-who-sentenced-saddam-hussein-death-executed-by-rebels-1453975>; see also, Lucy Crossley, *Judge Who Sentenced Saddam Hussein To Death ‘Is Captured And Executed By Isis*, DAILY MAIL (22 June 2014), <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2665360/Judge-sentenced-Saddam-Hussein-death-captured-executed-ISIS.html>.

<sup>103</sup>*Id.*

ISIS has increasingly utilised decapitation to carry out its public executions, though it has also carried out executions in private and disseminated the execution videos through social media<sup>104</sup>. For instance, on 13 June 2014, ISIS posted a picture of a decapitated head on Twitter, along with the following text: “This is our football, it’s made of skin #WorldCup”<sup>105</sup>. By using the “WorldCup” hashtag, ISIS managed to expose the gruesome photograph to thousands of innocent Twitter users who were simply following the FIFA World Cup on the social networking site<sup>106</sup>. Desecrating a body is forbidden by the law of armed conflict<sup>107</sup>.

Throughout mid-June 2014, ISIS carried out numerous executions in Iraq. Witnesses have testified that ISIS has shot dozens of soldiers and policemen, concluding their gruesome killings by decapitating their victims and placing rows of decapitated heads along the road in Mosul<sup>108</sup>. A refugee woman said that placing decapitated heads in a row has become “a trademark, trophy-style execution favoured by ISIS militants”<sup>109</sup>. One ISIS militant tweeted a picture of his seven-year-old son holding the decapitated head of a Syrian soldier accompanied by the quote “That’s my boy!”<sup>110</sup>. Even more shocking, ISIS has published pictures of decapitated children, ISIS militants draining the blood from the slit throat of a naked woman into a large bowl, and ISIS militants holding guns to the head of a small child—reportedly before executing her<sup>111</sup>. ISIS’ brutality recognises no bounds.

Torture, intentionally targeting civilians, killing soldiers who are in custody and cannot defend themselves, desecrating bodies of the dead, genocide, and the like are commonplace with ISIS, and they all constitute war crimes<sup>112</sup>.

### **Threats to Muslim, Christian, and Jewish Communities**

ISIS continues to attack Shia Muslims and Christians wherever it finds them. In Mosul, Christians faced death unless they converted or paid a fine in accordance with *Shariah*<sup>113</sup>. The fine that Christians are required to pay is called the *Jizyah*. The Quran states:

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<sup>104</sup>Simon Tomlinson & Amy White, “*This Is Our Football, It’s Made Of Skin #World Cup*”: After Posting Sickening Beheading Video Of Iraqi Policeman, Isis Boast Of Slaughtering 1,700 Soldiers, DAILY MAIL (13 June 2014), <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2656905/ISIS-jihadists-seize-two-towns-bear-Baghdad-U-S-tanks-helicopters-stolen-fleeing-western-trained-Iraqi-forces.html>; see also, Chris Hughes et al., *Police Chief Beheaded By Jihadist Rebels Who Tweeted: “This Is Our Ball. It Is Made Of Skin. #WorldCup.”* MIRROR (14 June 2014), <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/police-chief-beheaded-jihadist-rebels-3690513>.

<sup>105</sup>*Id.*

<sup>106</sup>*Id.*

<sup>107</sup>Convention (IV) Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War art. 16, Aug. 12, 1949, 6 U.S.T. 3316, 75 U.N.T.S. 135 [hereinafter Geneva Convention].

<sup>108</sup>Sam Greenhill et al., *ISIS Butchers Leave ‘Roads Lined With Decapitated Police And Soldiers’: Battle For Baghdad Looms As Thousands Answer Iraqi Government’s Call To Arms And Jihadists Bear Down On Capital*, DAILY MAIL (12 June 2014), <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2655977/ISIS-militants-march-Baghdad-trademark-bullet-head-gets-way-control-north.html>.

<sup>109</sup>Tomlinson, *supra* note 104.

<sup>110</sup>*Photo Of Boy Holding Decapitated Syrian Soldier’s Head ‘Barbaric’ - Australia PM*, RT (11 Aug. 2014), <http://rt.com/news/179480-australia-decapitation-syria-abbott/>.

<sup>111</sup>*WARNING GRAPHIC PHOTOS (RAW) – ISIS Begins Killing Christians in Mosul, CHILDREN BEHEADED*, CATHOLIC ONLINE (8 Aug. 2014), [http://www.catholic.org/news/international/middle\\_east/story.php?id=56481](http://www.catholic.org/news/international/middle_east/story.php?id=56481).

<sup>112</sup>Geneva Convention, *supra* note 107, arts. 16, 32, 47.

<sup>113</sup>Mariano Castillo, *ISIS Overtakes Iraq’s Largest Christian City*, CNN (Aug. 8, 2014, 10:51 PM),

Fight those who believe not In Allah nor the Last Day, Nor hold that forbidden Which hath been forbidden By Allah and His Messenger, Nor acknowledge the Religion Of Truth, from among The People of the Book, Until they pay the *Jizyah* With Willing Submission, And feel themselves subdued<sup>114</sup>.

In Mosul, ISIS militants had been seen tagging Christian houses with the letter “N” for *Nassarah*, a common term used for Christians in the Quran<sup>115</sup>, so that jihadist terrorists can subsequently attack and destroy them.

Nearly 50,000 Christians have been displaced from Qaraqosh, including those who had fled from neighboring Mosul<sup>116</sup>. The Christians were displaced because their water and electricity were cut off from ISIS-controlled Mosul<sup>117</sup>. Yet, cutting off water and electricity was not enough, the area was bombed and people were shot<sup>118</sup>. Christians were not the only ones affected by the attack: Yazidis, Shias, and liberal Muslims have also been displaced from the region<sup>119</sup>. ISIS views all four of these groups as “infidels without human rights”<sup>120</sup>.

Even more appalling is the first-hand account given by Canon Andrew White, the Vicar of the Anglican Church in Baghdad. He noted with horror that a Christian “child was cut in half” by ISIS “monsters”<sup>121</sup>. Canon White said, “I baptized [this] child in my church in Baghdad. This little boy, they named him after me – he was called Andrew”<sup>122</sup>.

In addition to Mosul and Qaraqosh, three other villages were attacked, two of which are predominantly Christian.<sup>123</sup> Archbishop Athanasius Toma Dawod of the Syriac Orthodox church called ISIS’ targeting of Christians a “genocide [or] ethnic cleansing”<sup>124</sup>. Speaking of the extensive destruction caused by ISIS, Archbishop Dawod stated, “[t]hey have burned churches; they have burned very old books. They have damaged our crosses and statues of the Virgin Mary. They are occupying our churches and converting them into mosques”<sup>125</sup>.

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<http://www.cnn.com/2014/08/07/world/meast/iraq-isis-christian-city/>.

<sup>114</sup>QURAN, *supra* note 73 at 9:29.

<sup>115</sup>*Iraqi Christians Flee After Isis Issue Mosul Ultimatum*, BBC NEWS (July 18, 2014, 18:56),

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28381455>; *see also* QURAN, *supra* note 73 at 5:14, 61:14. The Quran refers to Christians as *Nassarah*, which is understood to mean people from Nazareth.

<sup>116</sup>*Tens Of Thousands of Christians Flee ISIS Attack On Ninevah Town Of Qaraqosh (Hamdaniya)*, YAHOO! NEWS (26 June 2014), <http://news.yahoo.com/tens-thousands-christians-flee-isis-attack-nineveh-town-212600821.html>.

<sup>117</sup>*Id.*

<sup>118</sup>Onan Coca, *Horror – Anglican Vicar of Baghdad: ‘Child I Baptized Cut In Half By ISIS’*, EAGLE RISING (11 Aug. 2014), <http://eaglerising.com/7886/horror-anglican-vicar-baghdad-child-baptized-cut-half-isis/>.

<sup>119</sup>*Id.* *See also* Sophia Jones, *In Face of ISIS Advance, Many Iraqi Christians Insist On Staying Put*, HUFFINGTON POST (25 June 2014), [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/06/25/iraqi-christians-isis\\_n\\_5527266.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/06/25/iraqi-christians-isis_n_5527266.html).

<sup>120</sup>*Tens Of Thousands of Christians Flee*, *supra* note 116.

<sup>121</sup>Coca, *supra* note 118.

<sup>122</sup>*Id.*

<sup>123</sup>Castillo, *supra* note 113.

<sup>124</sup>Sam Jones & Owen Bowcott, *Religious Leaders Say Isis Persecution Of Iraqi Christians Has Become Genocide*, THE GUARDIAN (Aug. 8, 2014), <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/08/isis-persecution-iraqi-christians-genocide-asylum>.

<sup>125</sup>*Id.*

Currently, tens of thousands of members of the Kurdish minority Yazidi sect are stranded on the Iraqi mountain, Mount Sinjar, because ISIS militants are surrounding it<sup>126</sup>. They face death by slaughter if they descend and death by dehydration and starvation if they stay<sup>127</sup>. ISIS forces have already killed five hundred Yazidis, burying some alive<sup>128</sup>. A UNICEF spokesman noted that many of the children on the mountain were suffering from dehydration and at least forty had died<sup>129</sup>. Yazidis on Mount Sinjar have been ordered by ISIS to either convert or die; yet, converting is not as easy as it sounds. Reports state that for ISIS to accept a convert, the “convert” must participate in jihad and fight against his family<sup>130</sup>.

Not content with spreading death and destruction in the areas it physically controls, ISIS has turned its eyes elsewhere. ISIS has continued to threaten a number of religious communities outside currently ISIS-held territory. For example, ISIS has threatened to destroy the Kaaba in the Grand Mosque in Mecca<sup>131</sup>. A tweet reportedly posted by an ISIS fighter states: “If Allah wills, we will kill those who worship stones in Mecca and destroy the Kaaba. People go to Mecca to touch the stones, not for Allah”<sup>132</sup>. This is consistent with ISIS’ practice of destroying shrines, tombs, mosques, and other religious sites in territory controlled by ISIS<sup>133</sup>. ISIS believes that giving veneration to tombs or religious relics violates Islamic teachings<sup>134</sup>. ISIS also routinely threatens other Muslims who disagree with them, most notably Shia Muslims<sup>135</sup>.

On 25 June 2014, ISIS began a campaign to threaten the United States by using social media to post warnings and pictures of executed victims, accompanied with the hashtag

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<sup>126</sup>Martin Chulov, *40,000 Iraqis Stranded On Mountain As Isis Jihadists Threaten Death*, THE GUARDIAN (Aug. 6, 2014), <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/07/40000-iraqis-stranded-mountain-isis-death-threat>.

<sup>127</sup>*Id.*

<sup>128</sup>*ISIS Buries 500 Yazidis Alive, Orders Others to Convert to Islam or Die*, BREITBART (10 Aug. 2014), <http://www.breitbart.com/Big-Peace/2014/08/10/ISIS-Executes-at-Least-500-Yazidis-Burying-Many-Alive-Told-Others-to-Convert-to-Islam-or-Die/>.

<sup>129</sup>*Id.*

<sup>130</sup>*Id.*

<sup>131</sup>Yasmine Hafiz, *Reported ISIS Member Says They Will Destroy The Kaaba In Mecca, ‘Kill Those Who Worship Stones’*, HUFFINGTON POST (1 July 2014), [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/07/01/isis-destroy-kaaba-mecca\\_n\\_5547635.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/07/01/isis-destroy-kaaba-mecca_n_5547635.html).

<sup>132</sup>*Id.*

<sup>133</sup>Sophie Jane Evans, *Shocking Moment Isis Militants Take Sledgehammers To Mosul Tomb Of Prophet Jonah As More Than 50 Blindfolded Bodies Are Found Massacred South Of Baghdad*, DAILY MAIL (9 July 2014), <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2685923/Shocking-moment-ISIS-militants-sledgehammers-Mosul-tomb-Prophet-Jonah-50-blindfolded-bodies-massacred-south-Baghdad.html>.

<sup>134</sup>*Id.*

<sup>135</sup>Frances Martel, *Sunni Mufti: ISIS And Affiliates Have Killed over 300 Sunni Imams, Preachers*, BREITBART (3 July 2014), <http://www.breitbart.com/Big-Peace/2014/07/03/Sunni-Mufti-ISIS-and-Affiliates-Have-Killed-Over-300-Sunni-Imams-and-Preachers>; *Iraq: ISIS Kidnaps Shia Turkmen, Destroys Shrines*, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH (28 June 2014), <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/06/27/iraq-isis-kidnaps-shia-turkmen-destroys-shrines>; *Islamic State Claims Shia Mosque Destruction*, AL JAZEERA (5 July 2014), <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/07/islamic-state-claims-shia-mosque-destruction-20147414533266331.html>; *Jordan’s Abu Qatada: Caliphate Declaration ‘Void’*, DAILY STAR LEBANON (15 July 2014), <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Jul-15/263931-jordans-abu-qatada-caliphate-declaration-void.ashx#axzz3719q5wZI>.

“#CalamityWillBefallUS”<sup>136</sup>. ISIS circulated a picture of “a dozen armed masked-men standing around a body” while one ISIS fighter held the decapitated head of a Shia fighter<sup>137</sup>. Tweets accompanied by the #CalamityWillBefallUS stated: “We will kill your people and transform America to a river of blood :)!”; “EACH and EVERY #American is targeted, whether he lives in or outside the #US!”; accompanying a picture of the 9/11 World Trade Center terrorist attack “THIS SCENE WILL BE SEEN BY #AMERICANS BUT WHERE? UNEXPECTED PLACE”; and a picture stating “Every American doctor working in any country will be slaughtered if America attack (sic) Iraq”<sup>138</sup>. ISIS militants have pledged to “raise the flag of Allah in the White House”<sup>139</sup>. According to multiple U.S. intelligence sources, ISIS poses a major terror threat to U.S. targets<sup>140</sup>. In response to humanitarian crises created by Iraqis fleeing the rapid ISIS advances, President Obama has approved airstrikes near Sinjar<sup>141</sup>. In retaliation to U.S. airstrikes, ISIS has threatened the U.S. on Twitter with tweets accompanying the hashtag #AmessagefromISIS to US containing gruesome pictures of dead American soldiers, human heads on spikes, and the September 11 attack<sup>142</sup>. One said that every U.S. citizen is now a target<sup>143</sup>.

ISIS fighters have also declared their intention to destroy Israel and even to make Jerusalem the capital of the new caliphate<sup>144</sup>. ISIS militants and ISIS media have threatened Israel on multiple occasions. A 9 July 2014 tweet by an ISIS media wing posted a picture of the Dome of the Rock superimposed in front of a picture of ISIS fighters with the words “Patience, Jews, our appointment is at al-Quds [Jerusalem] tomorrow”<sup>145</sup>. Another ISIS twitter feed tweeted, “All our military operations till now are just [a] message for Israel”<sup>146</sup>. Even before its recent territorial gains, ISIS maps regularly included Israel as a part of the eventual caliphate<sup>147</sup>. A recent video posted by ISIS states that, “[w]herever our war goes, Jewish rabbis are humiliated”, and “[b]reak the crosses and destroy the lineage of the grandsons of monkeys”, commonly

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<sup>136</sup>Johnlee Varghese, *ISIS Issues Threat To US With Decapitated Head, Says Calamity Will Befall The Country*, INT’L BUS. TIMES (26 June 2014), <http://www.ibtimes.co.in/isis-issues-threat-us-decapitated-head-says-calamity-will-befall-country-603119>.

<sup>137</sup>*Id.*

<sup>138</sup>John Rossomando & Ravi Kumar, *Emboldened ISIS Threatens Americans*, INVESTIGATIVE PROJECT (26 June 2014), <http://www.investigativeproject.org/4440/emboldened-isis-threatens-americans>.

<sup>139</sup>Tera Dahl, *ISIS Threatens to Bring Jihad to White House While Kurds Fight Back Near Erbil*, BREITBART (8 Aug. 2014), <http://www.breitbart.com/Big-Peace/2014/08/08/ISIS-Threatens-to-Bring-Jihad-to-White-House-While-Kurds-Fight-Back-Near-Erbil>.

<sup>140</sup>Richard Esposito, et al., *ISIS Terror Threat to U.S. Targets ‘High,’ say Officials*, NBC NEWS (30 June 2014), <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/iraq-turmoil/isis-terror-threat-us-targets-high-say-officials-n144541>.

<sup>141</sup>*Barack Obama Authorizes U.S. Airstrikes in Iraq Against ISIS*, CBC NEWS (Aug. 7, 2014), <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/barack-obama-authorizes-u-s-airstrikes-in-iraq-against-isis-1.2729911>.

<sup>142</sup>David Martosko, *‘A Message From ISIS to the US’: Islamist Militants Tweet Gruesome Images of Dead American Soldiers and Vow to Blow Up Embassies as Terrorist Convoy is Wiped Out in SECOND Round of Airstrikes*, MAIL ONLINE (Aug. 8, 2014), <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2720309/AmessagefromISIS to US-Islamist-militants-tweet-gruesome-images-dead-American-soldiers-vow-blow-embassies-Obama-launches-airstrikes.html>.

<sup>143</sup>*Id.*

<sup>144</sup>See Dalit Halevy & Ari Yashar, *ISIS Parades Scud Missile ‘Heading Towards Israel’*, ARUTZ SHEVA (1 July 2014), <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/182409#.U7RnSLGf-ik>;

<sup>145</sup>*ISIS Weighs In On Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, THE YESHIVA WORLD (16 July 2014), <http://www.theyeshivaworld.com/news/headlines-breaking-stories/247816/isis-weighs-in-on-israeli-palestinian-conflict.html>.

<sup>146</sup>*Id.*

<sup>147</sup>*Id.*

used ISIS references to Christians and Jews<sup>148</sup>. In accordance with ISIS' threats against Israel, ISIS has reportedly sent fighters to fight Israel on behalf of Hamas within Gaza<sup>149</sup>. ISIS threats against Israel are not new. In 2008, al-Baghdadi proposed to use Iraq as a launching pad for missile attacks against Israel<sup>150</sup>.

ISIS is targeting other countries as well. In a video posted in early July 2014, two Spanish-speaking men state that Spain is the land of their forefathers and that they are willing to die for the newly established Islamic State<sup>151</sup>. One of the men stated, “[w]e are going to die for it until we liberate all the occupied lands, from Jakarta to Andalusia”<sup>152</sup>. Further, in an audio recording posted online, al-Baghdadi states:

So to arms, to arms, soldiers of Islam, fight, fight. Rush O Muslims to your state. It is your state. Syria is not for Syrians and Iraq is not for Iraqis. The land is for the Muslims, all Muslims. This is my advice to you. If you hold to it you will conquer Rome and own the world, if Allah wills<sup>153</sup>.

Many interpret this statement to be a direct threat to Rome, the historical capital of Christianity<sup>154</sup>.

ISIS continues to issue threats across the globe. The Unity and Jihad Group, an ISIS-affiliated terrorist organisation has threatened death to the Moroccan Minister of Justice and Liberties if he did not cancel the sentences against members of dismantled terrorist cells in Morocco<sup>155</sup>. In June 2014, Lebanon suffered a series of attacks by suicide bombers thought to be associated with ISIS<sup>156</sup>.

Accordingly, ISIS openly threatens everyone it sees as an opponent to its version of Islam. What makes ISIS *especially* dangerous is its possession of both the means and will to use the means to carry out its threats.

### **ISIS Possesses the Means to Carry Out Its Threats**

Coupled with its fanatical ideology and willingness to violate religious and international norms of law and morality is the fact that ISIS has huge amounts of money, military equipment,

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<sup>148</sup>*New Terrorist Video Rails Against Jews*, ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE (3 June 2014), <http://blog.adl.org/international/new-terrorist-video-rails-against-jews>. See QURAN 7.166 (referring to Jews as apes).

<sup>149</sup>Ayman J Al-Tamimi, Twitter (11 Aug. 2014), <https://twitter.com/ajaltamimi/status/498797623806267392>.

<sup>150</sup>*ISIS Weighs In On Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, *supra* note 145.

<sup>151</sup>*ISIS Militants Threaten To Invade, Take Over Spain*, INFOWARS.COM (5 July 2014), <http://www.infowars.com/isis-militants-threaten-to-invade-take-over-spain/>.

<sup>152</sup>*'We'll Take Back Spain': Fighters Claim ISIS To Seize 'Occupied Lands'*, RT (4 July 2014), <http://rt.com/news/170480-spain-isis-invade-threat/>.

<sup>153</sup>Christopher Livesay, *Rome Is Not Intimidated By Isis Threats To Conquer It For The Caliphate*, VICE NEWS (11 July 2014), <https://news.vice.com/article/rome-is-not-intimidated-by-isis-threats-to-conquer-it-for-the-caliphate>.

<sup>154</sup>*Id.*

<sup>155</sup>Larbi Arbaoui, *ISIS-linked Jihadist Group Makes Death Threats Against Moroccan Minister of Justice*, MOROCCO WORLD NEWS (Aug. 10, 2014, 10:15), <http://www.morocoworldnews.com/2014/08/136356/isis-linked-jihadist-group-makes-death-threats-against-moroccan-minister-of-justice/>.

<sup>156</sup>Carine Torbey & Suzanne Kianpour, *Is Lebanon Next on ISIS Hit List?*, BBC NEWS (Jul. 15, 2014, 6:07 ET), <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28292345>.

and materials available to carry out its threats. ISIS has captured significant amounts of high-tech U.S. military equipment abandoned by the Iraqi armed forces. Over fifty 155mm M198 howitzers have been captured by ISIS<sup>157</sup>. These American-made weapons have a range of up to twenty miles and can incorporate GPS targeting systems<sup>158</sup>. In addition to the howitzers, ISIS has captured 1,500 humvees and 4,000 PKC machine guns that can fire close to 800 rounds per minute<sup>159</sup>. These weapons make ISIS a formidable foe in the region.

Yet, ISIS also has possession of radiological material that could be used to make dirty bombs. Dirty bombs are created by combining conventional explosives with low-level radioactive material<sup>160</sup>. ISIS is known to have stolen eighty-eight pounds of uranium compounds from Mosul University and has the capacity to gain even more radioactive material<sup>161</sup>. Waste recovered from universities and hospitals across northern Iraq has the potential to contribute radioactive material for a dirty bomb<sup>162</sup>. Further, it is not beyond imagination that ISIS could also obtain chemical weapons from Syrian depots for its arsenal. Were ISIS to obtain increasing numbers of weapons of mass destruction, the global danger of this group would increase exponentially.

With such weapons and funding, ISIS has been able to make strong advances across Syria and Iraq. ISIS forces have even expanded fighting into Lebanon<sup>163</sup>. ISIS militants were able to seize the Lebanese town of Aarsal<sup>164</sup>. On 3 August 2014, ISIS captured Mosul Dam in Iraq in a mere twenty-four hours<sup>165</sup>, thereby placing vast swathes of Iraq in danger, should the dam be destroyed. ISIS has also gained control of five oilfields, which will serve as a major funding source for their terrorist activities<sup>166</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

Western and moderate Muslim nations must come to terms with the threat posed by ISIS' actions over the past year. ISIS is acting in violation of Islamic law by killing other Muslims. Yet, Muslims are not the only people targeted by ISIS. Tragic human rights violations committed by ISIS against people of various religions are plentiful, well-documented, and barbaric. Additionally, ISIS has demonstrated its military effectiveness by achieving its short-term goals

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<sup>157</sup>Jeremy Bender, *ISIS Militants Captured 52 American-Made Artillery Weapons That Cost \$50,000 Each*, BUSINESS INSIDER (15 July 2014), <http://www.businessinsider.com/isis-has-52-american-weapons-that-can-hit-baghdad-2014-7>. See also Douglas Ernst, *ISIL Captured 52 U.S.-Made Howitzers; Artillery Weapons Cost 500K Each*, WASHINGTON TIMES (15 July 2014), <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/jul/15/isil-captured-52-us-made-howitzers-artillery-weapon/>.

<sup>158</sup>*Id.*

<sup>159</sup>Bender, *supra* note 157.

<sup>160</sup>Perry Chiaramonte, *Stolen Uranium Compounds Not Only Dirty Bomb Ingredients Within ISIS' Grasp, Say Experts*, FOX NEWS (15 July 2014), <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2014/07/15/stolen-uranium-compounds-not-only-dirty-bomb-ingredients-within-isis-grasp/>.

<sup>161</sup>*Id.*

<sup>162</sup>*Id.*

<sup>163</sup>Hwaida Saad & Rick Gladstone, *Border Fighting Intensifies Between ISIS and Lebanon*, NY TIMES (Aug. 4, 2014), <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/05/world/middleeast/isis-lebanon-syria.html>.

<sup>164</sup>*Id.*

<sup>165</sup>*Iraq Conflict: ISIS Fighters Seize Mosul Dam, Oilfield and 3 Towns*, CBC NEWS (Aug. 3, 2014), <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/iraq-conflict-isis-fighters-seize-mosul-dam-oilfield-and-3-towns-1.2726684>.

<sup>166</sup>*Id.*

in Syria and Iraq with speed and decisiveness. The ISIS threat is compounded by the group's preparation and planning. Significant holdings of monetary assets and sophisticated weapons provide ISIS with the capability to wage war around the world into the foreseeable future. ISIS' recent actions in Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon demonstrate a tangible, widespread threat to individual human rights, regional stability, and global peace, a threat that the world neglects at its peril.