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SİYASET BİLİMİ VE ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER ANABİLİM DALI**



**THE FORMATION, DECLINE AND RESURGENCE POSSIBILITY
OF ISIS AS A VIOLENT EXTREMIST ORGANIZATION IN
NORTHEAST SYRIA**

Yamamah ELUBEYD SAMMAK

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

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Tarih: 09.11.2023

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ÖZET

Aşırılıkçı toplumların oluşumunu araştıran bu tez, Kuzeydoğu Suriye'deki IŞİD vakasına odaklanarak, IŞİD'in çöküşünün ardından önemli değişiklikler geçiren bölgenin gerçekliğini analiz etmeyi amaçlıyor ve uygun önlemler alınmadığı takdirde aşırılıkçılığın potansiyel olarak yeniden ortaya çıkmasının göstergelerini araştırıyor. Araştırma, aşırılıkçılığı sosyal bilimler perspektifinden ele alarak, aşırılıkçıların nasıl oluştuğunu ve aşırılık yanlısı toplumlar yaratmak için nasıl birleştiğini inceliyor.

Betimsel araştırma, Suriye'deki cihatçı örgütlerin mevcut ve gelecekteki eğilimlerini incelemek için kullanılmaktadır. Buna karşılık, tarihsel araştırmalar, Irak ve Suriye'de İslam Devleti'nin kurulmasına yol açan aşırılık yanlısı grupların tarihsel gelişimini bir vaka çalışması olarak izlemektedir. Ayrıca, Kuzeydoğu Suriye'nin gerçekliği ve bölgede aşırılıkçılığın yeniden ortaya çıkma potansiyeli hakkında ilk elden fikir edinmek için araştırmacılar, hukukçular ve Suriye toplumunun üyeleri, sahadaki çeşitli aktörler ve bireylerle bire bir görüşmeler yapıldı.

Sonuçlar ve bulgular bölümü, Kuzeydoğu Suriye'nin gerçekliğine kapsamlı bir genel bakış sunarak, aşırılık yanlısı toplumların oluşumuna katkıda bulunan faktörleri ve bunların yeniden ortaya çıkmasının potansiyel risklerini incelemektedir. Bulguların sonuçları ve önemi tartışılarak, bölgenin kritik durumunu ele almak ve aşırılıkçılığın yeniden canlanmasını önlemek için siyasi, insani ve insani düzeylerde uluslararası müdahaleye duyulan ihtiyaç vurgulanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Aşırılıkçı Gruplar, IŞİD, Kuzeydoğu Suriye, Bölgesel Güvenlik, Uluslararası Güvenlik.

**HASAN KALYONCU UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE EDUCATION INSTITUTE
DEPARTMENT of POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS**

**THE FORMATION, DECLINE AND RESURGENCE POSSIBILITY
OF ISIS AS A VIOLENT EXTREMIST ORGANIZATION IN
NORTHEAST SYRIA**

Yamamah ELUBEYD SAMMAK

MASTER THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the formation of extremist societies, focusing on the ISIS case in Northeast Syria. It aims to analyze the region's reality, which has undergone significant changes following the decline of ISIS, and explore indicators of the potential re-emergence of extremism if appropriate measures are not taken. The research delves into extremism from a social sciences perspective, examining how extremists are formed and merge to create extremist groups.

Descriptive research is used to study the current and future trends of jihadi organizations in Syria. In contrast, historical research traces the historical development of extremist groups leading to the establishment of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria as a case study. Furthermore, one-to-one interviews are conducted with various actors and individuals on the ground, including researchers, jurists, and members of the Syrian community, to gain firsthand insights into the reality of Northeast Syria and the potential for the re-emergence of extremism in the region.

The results and findings chapter presents a comprehensive overview of the reality of Northeast Syria, examining the factors contributing to the formation of extremist groups and the potential risks of their re-emergence.

The implications and significance of the findings are discussed, emphasizing the need for international intervention at political, human, and humanitarian levels to address the region's critical situation and prevent extremism's resurgence. The thesis concludes with recommendations for policymakers, international organizations, and relevant stakeholders to address the challenges posed by extremist societies in Northeast Syria.

These recommendations emphasize preventive measures to reduce the humanitarian catastrophe and combat the potential resurgence of extremism in the region.

Keywords: Extremist Groups, ISIS, Northeast Syria, Regional Security, International Security.

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Lastly, I acknowledge the victims of extremism in Syria and across the globe, especially the courageous women whose lives have been deeply affected. May this research serve as a small tribute to your resilience and an effort to bring attention to the urgent need for peace and stability in our world.

Yamamah ELUBEYD SAMMAK

Gaziantep - 2023

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ABBREVIATIONS

ISIS	: Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
ISIL	: Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
IS	: Islamic State
Daesh	: ISIS
LTTE	: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
SDF	: Syrian Democratic Forces
IDPs	: Internally Displaced Persons
KI	: Key Informant
FTFs	: Foreign Terrorist Fighters



1. INTRODUCTION

The emergence and the strengthening of extremist societies, exemplified by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Northeast Syria, have not just had far-reaching and devastating consequences for Syria, but also for regional and global stability and security. Despite numerous efforts by governments, international organizations, and local communities to combat extremism, we still lack a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contributed to the establishment of such organizations. The complexity of this issue requires comprehensive research to grasp the intricate interplay of various factors that fueled the growth and expansion of extremist societies, with a specific focus on the case of ISIS in this region.

Addressing this urgent problem is crucial for the main two reasons. Firstly, the continued presence of extremist societies poses a grave threat to the safety and well-being of local populations, resulting in violent conflicts, human rights violations, forced displacement, and instability. Secondly, the region's potential as a hub for global terrorism calls for a deeper understanding of the factors that allowed extremist ideologies to take root and flourish. To effectively counter extremism and foster lasting peace and stability, we need to uncover the underlying drivers that facilitated the rise of extremist societies in Northeast Syria. This entails a thorough examination of the historical context, social dynamics, political landscape, and economic factors that played a role in attracting and recruiting individuals into extremist organizations, especially concerning the influence of social media and online propaganda. Additionally, understanding the external and regional dynamics that influenced ISIS's expansion in Northeast Syria is essential in devising comprehensive strategies to dismantle these extremist networks. The involvement of foreign fighters, external support, and the porous nature of borders have all been critical in the growth and resilience of extremist societies in the region.

Thus, the main challenge at hand is to delve into and analyze the complex factors that led to the building of extremist groups in the society, with a special focus on ISIS in Northeast Syria. By gaining a profound understanding of these underlying factors, the research aims to provide valuable insights to policymakers, security forces, and humanitarian organizations, enabling them to develop targeted and effective interventions. Ultimately, the goal is to counter radicalization, prevent the spread of

extremist ideologies, and work towards a future of sustainable peace in Northeast Syria and beyond.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

This research aims to thoroughly analyze the emergence of ISIS in the northeastern part of Syria, as well as carefully assess any potential risks linked to a possible resurgence of extremist actions in the region.

This study explores the underlying factors that contributed to the emergence of ISIS in Northeast Syria and to assess the potential for its resurgence in the future. By examining these factors, this study aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics that allowed ISIS to thrive in this region and identify strategies to prevent its reemergence. Additionally, it analyzes the role of regional and international actors, socioeconomic conditions, ideological influences, and political instability in shaping the rise of ISIS and its potential. This study conducts a comprehensive historical review, digging into the growth path of ISIS groups, with a specific focus on diverse socioeconomic elements that contribute to the exposure of individuals within the sociopolitical context of northeastern Syria. An additional dimension of the research is to explain the multifarious roles undertaken by women and children within the organizational structure of ISIS. This endeavor seeks to unveil the complex nature of their involvement and recognize potential ramifications for forthcoming security challenges.

1.2. Research Hypotheses

H1: The emergence of ISIS can be explained by both local and regional dynamics.

H2: The emergence of ISIS should be taken into consideration not only political, social, ideological and economic factors, but also the historical evolution of the ideology on which it is based, its spread in the region and the external support factor.

H3: Unless local and regional comprehensive measures are taken, ISIS may reorganize.

1.3 Research Questions

The main research questions are following

1. What are the factors that contributed to the emergence of ISIS in the northeastern region of Syria?

2. To what extent is there a likelihood of a resurgence of ISIS, and what are the factors that can contribute to its reemergence?

This research is also trying to answer the following sub-question:

1. To what extent do women and children contribute to the establishment and functioning of ISIS?

2. How did social media affect the strengthening of ISIS?

3. How can collaboration and coordination among international stakeholders, local communities, and relevant actors be enhanced to effectively address the potential resurgence of extremism in northeastern Syria and reduce the risk of a humanitarian crisis?

4. What are the effects of ISIS on regional and international security?

1.4. Significance of the Study

The importance of this research lies in the highly sensitive nature of the situation in northeastern Syria and the imminent risk of it escalating into a full-blown humanitarian catastrophe, which poses a threat to regional security. It is worth noting that approximately 57 countries have thus far refused to repatriate their citizens who were associated with ISIS, including women and children. This has resulted in a complex and volatile environment in the region. One of the key factors contributing to the instability is the security threat faced by the governorates of Deir Ezzor, Hasaka, and Raqqa. These areas are susceptible to acts of violence, including assassinations and kidnappings targeting activists and local workers. ISIS cells are known to operate in the vast deserts of Deir-Ezzor and Al-Jazeera, exacerbating the security challenges in the region. Compounding the situation is the absence of a robust legal and judicial structure capable of safeguarding the rights of individuals and addressing their grievances. This legal void creates a sense of insecurity and leaves individuals vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Moreover, the region contends with local Arab-Kurdish conflicts that have a long-standing history. These conflicts often result in recurring tensions and hinder the process of social cohesion. Additionally, families associated with ISIS and other armed groups face societal stigma, further exacerbating social divisions. The absence of institutional programs for the integration and rehabilitation of these families into society only exacerbates the challenges faced by the region. Given these circumstances, conducting comprehensive research on the reality of northeastern Syria becomes paramount. It will

shed light on the complex dynamics at play and contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors that may contribute to the resurgence of extremism. By investigating these factors, policymakers and stakeholders can devise effective strategies to address the underlying causes, mitigate security threats, and promote social integration and rehabilitation. Ultimately, this research aims to pave the way for international political, humanitarian, and security interventions that can prevent a catastrophic outcome in the region and ensure the well-being and stability of its population.

On the other hand, this research offers a unique perspective by examining the impact of external factors that have not been explored before using the direct interview method with community members and activists from the same community who witness the formation and growth of extremist groups. By delving into the personal narratives and experiences of these individuals, the study aims to uncover the underlying factors that contribute to the rise of extremism in Northeast Syria and to shed light on the political and social factors involved. Additionally, it seeks to identify potential interventions and strategies that can effectively counteract this trend and promote long-term stability in the region. This study has the potential to produce valuable results that can contribute to the advancement of the academic community. Specifically, it can aid in the identification of potential interventions and preventative measures that can be effectively implemented to mitigate the rise of extremism in similar contexts.

The thesis comprises seven chapters, accompanied by an abstract, an acknowledgment section, a table of contents, and a list of abbreviations. The initial chapter of the study encompasses the introduction of the research subject matter, the delineation of the research objectives, the formulation of research questions, and hypotheses, an explanation of the research's significance, and acknowledgment of its limitations. The author conducts a comprehensive examination of relevant academic research in the second chapter, focusing on The Concept of Extremism, Jihadism, and Violent Extremism, its causes, and its impact on regional and international security while in the next chapter, the author focuses more on ISIS as a case study and present in the northeast of Syria region and the involvement of women and children in extremist groups highlighting the Effect of ISIS on regional and international security and addressing the The Future of ISIS.

The author clarifies the research methodology in the fourth chapter. This study is qualitative research as a whole. However, two different data collection techniques will be

used. The first part of the thesis will be based on qualitative research, conducted by examining books, articles and other academic sources in the literature on ISIS as a violent extremist organization. In this sense, document analysis will be made. In this respect, this study will have descriptive research characteristics. This study is also historical research. The research will examine the history of groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS, identifying pivotal moments, ideological foundations, and strategic shifts that have shaped the rise and spread of extremism in the area. To accomplish this, the researcher will conduct in-depth analyses of historical documents, archival records, news articles, and scholarly works that document the activities and evolution of jihadist organizations. The second part of the study will be based on semi-structured interviews, and the data will be analyzed qualitatively. Therefore, this study is qualitative research using two different data collection techniques.

In the fifth chapter, the author presents the outcomes and findings of the research, which offer a comprehensive picture of the real-life situation in Northeast Syria and examines the factors that contribute to the establishment of extremist societies and the potential risks associated with their resurgence. In the sixth chapter, the author examines the implications and significance of the findings, placing particular emphasis on the necessity of international intervention at political, social and economic levels to effectively address the precarious state of the region and mitigate the potential resurgence of extremism. In the sixth chapter, the author provides recommendations for policymakers, international organizations, and relevant stakeholders on how to effectively tackle the challenges presented by extremist groups in Northeast Syria.

The study highlights the importance of promoting inclusive governance and fostering social cohesion among different ethnic and religious groups in northeast Syria. This can be achieved through empowering local communities, promoting dialogue, and ensuring equal access to resources and opportunities. Additionally, this study suggests the need for international cooperation and support in providing humanitarian aid, strengthening security measures, and facilitating the return and reintegration of displaced populations. These comprehensive efforts are crucial for long-term stability and sustainable development in the region.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The current chapter of the research tends to provide insight into how well the previous studies have been carried out in a similar context. The main objective of this research is to examine the present conditions in northeastern Syria, which finds itself at a critical juncture following a significant reduction in the presence of ISIS. This significant accomplishment in the fight against terrorism has opened the door to a new chapter in the region's history. With ISIS on the decline, it becomes crucial to analyze the current realities and dynamics of northeastern Syria. By doing so, we can grasp the challenges, opportunities, and potential paths toward development and stability in the region. The research seeks to delve deep into the situation, shedding light on the key factors that are shaping the region's trajectory and exploring the implications for local and international stakeholders. By unraveling the complexities of northeastern Syria, the researcher can gain invaluable insights into the post-ISIS era and contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the region's current state.

2.1. The Concept of Extremism

Different viewpoints exist when it comes to defining extreme phenomena. Scientists, political authorities, and potential extremists often have their interpretations, influenced by various factors such as the type of political system, prevailing political culture, system of values, ideology, goals, personal characteristics, experiences, and ethnocentrism. Extremism encompasses a broad spectrum of manifestations, such as terrorism, racism, xenophobia, interethnic and inter-religious hatred, and both left- and right-wing political radicalism, including religious fundamentalism. It is primarily a political term that describes actions and behaviors that deviate from the accepted norms of a state, both those defined in laws and constitutions and those that are unwritten but widely acknowledged (Qadeem, 2020). Typically, extremist activities exhibit intolerance towards others, reject democracy as a method of governance and conflict resolution, and seek to disrupt the existing social order. However, this understanding of extremism is considered imprecise for legal effectiveness and may face criticism from philosophical, sociological, psychological, and political perspectives.

In a way, defining extremism is difficult to put into words, but it becomes recognizable when encountered. Hence, the aim of this thesis is not to provide a universal

definition of extremism but rather to examine the limitations involved in defining and perceiving it from semantic, political, and legal angles. Given the negative connotation associated with the term "extremism," let's focus on three key elements within the lexical paradigm of "extreme" as found in the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023). The adjective "extreme" describes "beliefs and political parties that most people consider unreasonable and unacceptable." The noun "extremism" refers to "political extremism (in terms of extreme political opinions)," while the noun "extremist" can refer to a "group of extremists (people with extreme opinions)," and the adjective "extremist" characterizes a group of individuals with "extremist tendencies" (Sotlar, 2004).

At first glance, one might question the usefulness of this semantic perspective in defining extremism. However, it holds significance. For instance, if it is considered the semantic content of the term "extreme," what better basis exists for politically and legally defining individuals and groups as extreme than the fact that their beliefs and actions are widely deemed "unacceptable" by the majority within their community? Applying common sense in addressing extremism offers two advantages. Firstly, it helps describe a phenomenon that has been recognized for centuries, leading to its inclusion in our vocabulary. Secondly, it serves as a solid starting point for political discussions aimed at establishing legal definitions for such phenomena. The prevailing values within society play a vital role in shaping how we perceive certain beliefs and actions as being more or less extreme. It is the responsibility of the political culture, through a process of social consensus, to establish a framework for defining extremism in terms of its political and legal implications. However, this task is not without its challenges, as even the fundamental human right of freedom of speech and expression can come into question when we try to determine the boundaries of acceptability for certain verbal and non-verbal behaviors exhibited by individuals and groups (Bjørge & Gjelsvik, 2017).

2.2. Definition of Violent Extremism

Violent extremism has become a significant global concern, drawing attention from researchers, policymakers, and security experts. Understanding its definition and historical context is crucial for developing effective strategies to address and prevent it. This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of existing research on

violent extremism, exploring its definition, key characteristics, and historical evolution to shed light on the factors contributing to extremist ideologies and actions.

The term "violent extremism" encompasses ideologies and beliefs adopted by non-state actors who seek radical change through the use of violence. Scholars have offered various definitions to capture its complexity. For instance, violent extremism has been defined as the pursuit of political, religious, or social objectives through extremist ideologies endorsing violence (USAID, 2011). Clark and Moskalenko (2008) emphasize the commitment to violence as the primary means of achieving goals, highlighting the role of ideology in motivating extremist behavior (Clark & Moskalenko, 2008).

These definitions underline the integral link between ideology, violence, and transformative objectives. Violent extremist groups share common characteristics that set them apart from other forms of violence. Kaplan (2021) identifies four waves of terrorism, each with distinct ideologies and goals, showcasing the evolution and adaptability of violent extremism over time. Additionally, these ideologies often arise from real or perceived grievances that resonate with vulnerable populations. The allure of extremist narratives lies in their ability to provide identity, belonging, and purpose to disaffected individuals (Kruglanski et al., 2014).

The historical evolution of violent extremism spans different periods and regions, revealing its dynamic nature. Notably, anarchism emerged as one of the earliest forms of violent extremism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Anarchists sought to challenge state authority through violent acts like bombings and assassinations. Revolutionary ideologies, such as Marxism-Leninism and Maoism, rose in the 20th century, aiming for radical societal changes through armed uprisings (Best, 2015). Anti-colonial movements emerged in the mid-20th century, employing violence to resist colonial rule and achieve self-determination (Grinin, 2022). Figures like Nelson Mandela and Ahmed Ben Bella symbolized the fight against colonial oppression. The late 20th and early 21st centuries witnessed the rise of jihadist movements, seeking to establish Islamic states based on their interpretation of Sharia law (Byman, 2015). Al-Qaeda and later, the Islamic State (IS), became prominent examples, orchestrating global terrorist attacks.

In recent times, far-right extremism gained prominence, promoting nativist and xenophobic ideologies, leading to attacks on minority groups and immigrants. The 2011 Norway attacks and the 2019 Christchurch Mosque shootings are examples of far-right extremist threats. By understanding the historical context of violent extremism, we can

better comprehend its patterns and drivers, informing more effective approaches to combat this complex and persistent phenomenon (Wright, 2017).

2.3. Violent Extremism and Jihadism

Jihadism addresses an extreme understanding of the Islamic idea of jihad, which initially connotes "battle" or "endeavoring." In this unique circumstance, it's critical to perceive that there is no single, generally acknowledged meaning of jihadism, and its translation can fluctuate among people and groups. Nonetheless, as a general rule, jihadism is related to militant and often violent ideology that tries to lay out an Islamic state or safeguard what adherents see as the interests of Muslims. This translation ordinarily depends on a severe, strict perusing of religious texts and tends to prioritize armed struggle over furnished battle as a way to accomplish these targets. The association between jihadism and violent extremism is multi-layered. Jihadist groups frequently utilize this extreme philosophy as a legitimization for demonstrations of acts against both non-Muslims and Muslims whom they view as deviating from their interpretation of Islam. The relationship between jihadism and violent extremism is additionally highlighted by political and social variables, as these developments tend to thrive in regions marked by political instability, conflict, and societal unrest. These circumstances can attract people to jihadism, as it offers a perceived solution for addressing grievances and injustices.

Jihadism has experienced several distinct phases of evolution since its emergence in the late 1970s. Initially, prominent figures such as Sayyid Qutb and his followers gained influence within the Egyptian prison system. While not all of them adhered to Salafi beliefs, they espoused the exclusive and violent ideology known as "takfirism," which involved excommunicating fellow Muslims. The second phase, known as cross-pollination, was characterized by two significant developments. Firstly, members of the Muslim Brotherhood were expelled from Arab states and found opportunities for employment or education in countries like Saudi Arabia or Kuwait. This process brought together the theological rigor of Salafism with the political activism of the Brotherhood's Islamism (Mudde, 2000).

However, it is essential to note that the mainstream Muslim Brotherhood has rejected Qutb's approach and is not currently associated with jihadism. Simultaneously, other ideological and movement-based forms of jihadism were increasingly influenced

by Salafism during the 1980s and 1990s. This convergence led to the fusion of violent tactics and religious ideology (Wright et al., 2017). Many jihadists began to argue that only Salafi theology held legitimacy, creating a rift with the Muslim Brotherhood. The third phase, referred to as causation, emerged as Salafist activism was influenced by significant historical events. These events included the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989 and the first Gulf War in 1990-91, which saw the deployment of non-Muslim forces in Muslim lands (Qadeem, 2020). The presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War, in particular, was seen as a betrayal of Islam, triggering the Awakening movement. The fourth phase, realization, marked a turning point with bold attacks such as the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center. These attacks were viewed by jihadists as a validation of their cause and a testament to the possibilities they could achieve. The fifth phase, crossroads, unfolded following the United States' entry into Iraq, resulting in significant shifts in strategy, purpose, and identity among jihadist groups. These transformations are still ongoing and continue to shape the landscape of jihadism (Wright et al., 2017).

Since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, jihadism has undergone significant and distressing changes. Diverse movements, leaders, targets, tactics, and operational theaters have all changed the landscape in ways that were previously unimaginable. Because of these turns of events, the worldwide local area has embraced broad and uncommon measures to stand up to the danger presented by Jihadis. However, these efforts have resulted in a mix of successes and failures. To combat the threat posed by jihadism, the United States has invested trillions of dollars in military campaigns, intelligence operations, law enforcement initiatives, homeland security measures, and diplomatic endeavors. Undoubtedly, progress has been made. The number of casualties inside the United States has significantly decreased since 2001, standing in stark contrast to the tragic death toll on 9/11 (Bergen & Sterman, 2021). However, the threat of jihadism persists. Its evolution took a dramatic turn with the rise of the Islamic State, also known as ISIS, ISIL, or Daesh. On the other hand, the capture of critical domains in Iraq and Syria by the Islamic State in 2014 drew the consideration of a different scope of people from abroad. Not only fighters but also professionals like teachers, accountants, engineers, and even teenage girls flocked to join their ranks. They all wanted to establish a new Islamic society and a modern caliphate (Bacon & Muibu, 2019).

The emergence of the Islamic State breathed new life into existing jihadist movements and ignited a fresh wave of support for jihadism globally. At that time, ISIS seemed to overshadow al-Qaeda, which had been the leading force in the global jihadist movement. However, al-Qaeda has not faded away. In its quest to regain influence, Al-Qaeda has been actively forging alliances with various jihadist groups in the Middle East, Africa, South Asia, and the Caucasus. While the core leadership still offers overarching guidance, they have strategically dispersed themselves among their affiliates. These alliances are supported by advisors who assist in shaping the local objectives and targets of these groups (Bjørge & Gjelsvik, 2017). Al-Qaeda's approach has been marked by patience and meticulous long-term planning, positioning it as a potentially more resilient model when compared to the Islamic State. In the context of global security, complementary threats are posed by both ISIS and al-Qaeda while constituting a significant challenge. However, it is important to recognize that the jihadist spectrum has become more diverse since 9/11. The danger no longer solely emanates from these two entities. Various other groups and actors have emerged, further complicating the global security landscape and posing additional threats. It is crucial to comprehensively understand the evolving nature of jihadism in order to effectively address the multifaceted challenges it presents. By staying informed and vigilant, the international community can continue to devise strategies to counter this persistent threat and safeguard global security (Watts, 2016). Over time, the motives and inspirations driving individuals to join jihadist movements have also diversified. The motivations that led individuals to join Osama bin Laden and the original Arab mujahideen in Afghanistan during the late twentieth century can vary greatly from the reasons that compel people to join groups like ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra in Syria or Iraq in the early twenty-first century (Brownstein & Wright, 2001). If we talk about the current generation of jihadists, then it represents a distinct third wave with its unique set of circumstances and motivations. It is important to better understand the complex evolution of jihadism to effectively address and counter this ongoing threat. By studying the various phases and their underlying dynamics, policymakers and security experts can gain valuable insights into the changing nature of jihadist movements and develop strategies to mitigate their impact on global security (Brownstein & Wright, 2001).

2.4. The Causes of Violent Extremism

Violent extremism remains a multifaceted and concerning global issue, drawing significant attention from scholars, policymakers, and security experts worldwide. Understanding the root causes of violent extremism is crucial for developing effective strategies to prevent and address this phenomenon. This research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the causes of violent extremism, with a particular focus on the impact of civil war, political violence, and political instability on the process of radicalization. Understanding the nature of violent extremism is crucial before delving into its causes and effects. Scholars and institutions have proposed various definitions to capture its complexity. The agenda of violent extremism has been narrated as using violence to pursue political, religious, or social objectives, driven by extremist ideologies that legitimize such actions (Kaplan, 2021). This definition sets the context for exploring the impact of civil war, political violence, and political instability on radicalization and violent extremism (USAID, 2011). Civil wars create fertile ground for violent extremist ideologies to flourish. Prolonged conflicts and the breakdown of state institutions provide an environment where extremist groups thrive (Clark & Moskalenko, 2008). Disillusioned individuals may turn to violent extremism as an alternative to address their grievances when legitimate governance is absent.

During civil wars, recruitment and radicalization into extremist groups became more accessible. Grievances stemming from the conflict, combined with the appeal of collective identity and purpose, draw vulnerable individuals toward extremist narratives (Bacon & Muibu, 2019). The fluid nature of conflict zones enables extremist groups to exploit porous borders and lawless areas for recruitment and training (Korteweg, 2008). The process of radicalization during civil wars involves social networks, charismatic leaders, and exposure to violent ideologies (Michael & Hassan, 2015). A poignant case study is the Syrian civil war, which attracted foreign fighters to join extremist groups like ISIS. The breakdown of governance and the resulting power vacuum allowed extremist ideologies to take root in Syria (Sotlar, 2002). This conflict became a magnet for radicalized individuals from around the world, underscoring the link between civil wars and the rise of violent extremism.

Political violence, whether by state or non-state actors, significantly contributes to the emergence and spread of violent extremism. Repressive state measures fuel grievances and resentment among marginalized populations (Sotlar, 2004), pushing some to seek radical alternatives in response to perceived injustices (Rumman, 2020). When

peaceful avenues for dissent are closed off, violence becomes an outlet for expressing grievances and asserting agency. Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict and the activities of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) exemplify the impact of political violence on radicalization. The LTTE's violence resonated with Tamil communities who felt marginalized by the government's policies (Karam, 2022). The protracted conflict and cycles of violence contributed to the radicalization of individuals into the ranks of the LTTE. Political instability, characterized by frequent governance changes and social unrest, provides an environment conducive to violent extremism (Bjørge & Gjelsvik, 2017). The uncertainty and disillusionment among the population can fuel a search for radical solutions.

Extremist groups exploit the chaos during political instability to advance their agendas (Lyall, 2009). As political institutions falter, extremist narratives promising stability and a return to an idealized past gain traction among disenchanting individuals. Afghanistan serves as an example of the nexus between political instability and violent extremism. Decades of instability allowed extremist groups like the Taliban to flourish (Abbas & Awan, 2015). The absence of stable governance enabled the exploitation of grievances and recruitment of individuals into the Taliban's ranks. In short, understanding the causes and effects of violent extremism requires a comprehensive approach. The interplay between civil war, political violence, and political instability contributes to radicalization. By comprehending these factors, policymakers and security experts can develop targeted strategies to mitigate the impact of violent extremism and foster long-term stability and peace (Kruglanski et al., 2014).

2.5. The Effects of Violent Extremism on Regional and International Security

The rise of violent extremism has become a major concern for both regional and international security. This part of the study explores the various effects of violent extremism on different levels, shedding light on its complex impacts. At the regional level, one significant consequence of violent extremism is the emergence of conflict zones (Bak, Tarp & Liang, 2019). Extremist groups often operate across borders, creating areas of instability that pose challenging security issues for states and international actors (Lyall, 2009). Moreover, the activities of these groups lead to forced displacement and humanitarian crises, burdening host regions with limited resources and services and increasing tensions in the area. The presence of violent extremist organizations can also

undermine state institutions by challenging their authority and legitimacy, potentially filling governance voids and further destabilizing regions (Zoubir, 2017).

Beyond regional borders, violent extremism has far-reaching effects on international security. Transnational threats and terrorism are major concerns, as extremist groups like ISIS and al-Qaeda operate globally, making it difficult for individual states to address the issue alone. This necessitates international cooperation and intelligence sharing to effectively combat global terrorism. Another concern is the phenomenon of foreign fighters joining extremist groups, as their movements create security risks for their countries of origin and other nations, where they might return to carry out attacks or spread extremist ideologies (UNDP, 2016). Furthermore, violent extremism can disrupt economic activities and international trade. Conflict zones become less attractive for investments, leading to economic downturns and hindering regional development. Attacks on critical infrastructure and trade routes also disrupt global commerce, affecting not only regional economies but also international trade networks (Wright et al., 2016).

In response to these challenges, international efforts have been marked by collaborative approaches and global partnerships. Organizations like the United Nations, the European Union, and regional bodies work together to share best practices, intelligence, and resources to collectively counter violent extremism. Capacity building and counterterrorism assistance have been crucial in supporting states in strengthening their security measures and addressing the root causes of extremism (UN Women, 2023). Additionally, information sharing, and intelligence cooperation play a significant role in combating violent extremism at the international level, helping identify and disrupt transnational terrorist networks and mitigating security threats.

To conclude, violent extremism has a wide range of effects on regional and international security, ranging from destabilizing conflict zones and humanitarian crises to presenting transnational threats and disrupting global trade. Tackling these challenges requires comprehensive and collaborative approaches involving multilateral efforts, capacity building, and intelligence cooperation. Understanding the effects of violent extremism is essential for policymakers and stakeholders to develop effective strategies and protect regional and international security.

3. ISIS AS A VIOLENT EXTREMIST ORGANIZATION IN NORTHEAST SYRIA

This chapter will focus mainly on the formation of ISIS and its effects on the region of northeast Syria. This review will examine the various factors that have played a role in the emergence and growth of ISIS in the region, including political instability, sectarian tensions, and the power vacuum resulting from the Syrian civil war. Furthermore, an analysis will be conducted to assess the impact of ISIS's presence in Northeast Syria on the surrounding communities, governance systems, and regional dynamics.

3.1. Northeastern Syria Context

Since the outbreak of the Syrian conflict in 2011, the northeastern region of Syria has emerged as a focal point of a multifaceted and turbulent sequence of occurrences. The historically significant region under consideration has been subject to a notable influence from a confluence of political, social, and military factors, resulting in significant consequences. This region is particularly noteworthy due to its diverse ethnic and religious makeup. The previously mentioned event has led to a dynamic and evolving environment that has garnered significant interest from the global community.

The conflict in Syria, which began as a part of the larger Arab Spring uprisings, quickly evolved into a multifaceted and protracted crisis with far-reaching implications. This crisis has been going on for quite some time now. As the unrest spread across the nation, the northeastern region emerged as a critical theater where various actors, both domestic and international, played pivotal roles in shaping the course of events. This region was a critical theater because it occurred as the unrest spread across the nation.

This introduction aims to provide an overview of the key developments and dynamics that have unfolded in northeastern Syria since 2011, setting the stage for a deeper exploration of subsequent topics. It encompasses the following key aspects: The northeastern region of Syria displays significant geographic heterogeneity, comprising various distinctive characteristics, including vast plains, fertile agricultural land, arid expanses, and the presence of the Euphrates River basin. The region's varied nature has been instrumental in establishing it as a prominent center for agricultural endeavors, commercial exchange, and the utilization of natural resources (FAO, 2010). Moreover,

the region of northeastern Syria showcases a diverse array of ethnic and cultural groups, including but not limited to Kurds, Arabs, Assyrians, and several other minority communities. The interplay among these diverse identities has exerted a significant influence on the course of events and the allocation of power within the region. The northeastern region has witnessed a notable surge in conflict and violence, marked by confrontations involving various armed factions, including the Syrian government forces, Kurdish militias, and rebel groups. The conflicts mentioned above have resulted in widespread displacement, extensive destruction, and considerable human suffering, while also witnessing the rise and subsequent fall of ISIS, an entity closely linked to extremist ideologies. The existence and actions of the extremist organization within the geographical area had substantial consequences, encompassing both the immediate vicinity and the broader international context. The situation in northeastern Syria has become increasingly complex due to the participation of various regional and international actors. The involvement of international powers, who have provided direct or indirect assistance to various parties involved, has increased the complexity of the conflict. The protracted conflict has given rise to a significant humanitarian emergency, requiring assistance for millions of individuals in Syria, including those living in the northeastern area. The present crisis encompasses a variety of issues, such as the forced relocation of individuals, restricted availability of crucial services, and the general well-being of marginalized communities (Humud and Blanchard, 2020).

In northeastern Syria, the constrained migration of individuals is an immediate consequence of the drawn-out Syrian civil war, which has been progressing for several years. This enduring clash has prompted a huge number of people being driven away from their homes, frequently in profoundly upsetting and troublesome conditions. These migrations are because of dangers from armed groups, yet in addition the potentially negative results of the contention, for example, airstrikes and the boundless annihilation of whole areas. This has made families isolated, networks to be destroyed, and an unavoidable feeling of unsteadiness to flourish. Forced relocation doesn't simply mean losing one's home; it frequently brings about the deficiency of one's vocation and social associations. Therefore, many individuals tend to find themselves in weak circumstances, battling to meet their fundamental necessities like food and a safe house. In this condition of weakness, extremist groups, including remnants of ISIS, have taken advantage of the urgency of dislodged people to further their own plans. The conflict in northeastern Syria

has seriously affected the availability of important services. Healthcare facilities, schools, and access to clean water have been either damaged or closed down completely. This situation has created a severe humanitarian crisis, taking a toll on the well-being of the local people. Healthcare services have suffered, leaving people without basic medical care. This not only causes physical suffering but also emotional distress as loved ones can't get the help they need. The lack of functioning schools means children miss out on education and a chance for a better future. This not only impacts their individual growth but also hinders the region's potential for recovery with a well-educated workforce. Additionally, limited access to clean water is a daily struggle that poses health risks and adds to people's daily challenges (REACH, 2022). This situation breeds hopelessness as individuals grapple with their basic needs and become more vulnerable to extremist ideas while searching for solutions.

Marginalized communities in northeastern Syria have confronted a novel arrangement of difficulties all through the conflict. They frequently end up without a satisfactory portrayal of indecision-making processes, restricted financial opportunities, and limited admittance to fundamental assets like healthcare, schooling, and clean water. This marginalization brings about friendly prohibition as well as severely limits their economic prospects, leaving these networks in a vulnerable position, and making them more susceptible to enrollment by extremist groups. These marginalized communities are at a heightened risk of radicalization because they often feel abandoned by broader society and state institutions. Their grievances and frustrations may be exploited by extremist organizations like ISIS, who prey on the voteless. To forestall the resurgence of groups like ISIS, it is essential to address the main drivers of marginalization. This includes deliberate endeavors to decrease financial variations, advance social consideration, and engage these networks to have a voice in their administration and future. Encouraging a feeling of having a place and soundness within these marginalized communities is urgent and crucial for accomplishing enduring harmony and security in the locale. This can be achieved through designated improvement projects, local area commitment, and drives that address the particular requirements and concerns of these networks, at last coordinating them into the more extensive society and ultimately ensuring their voices are heard (Stein & Burchfield, 2019).

As will become clear in the following paragraphs, the context of northeastern Syria since 2011 has been marked by a complex and ever-evolving series of events that

have had implications not only locally but also regionally and internationally. In the following sections of this study, we will delve deeper into these dynamics, examining their impact on the sociopolitical landscape, security situation, and humanitarian situation of the region, as well as their reverberations on the larger Syrian conflict.

3.2. ISIS as a Violent Extremist Organization in the Middle East

There is a perception that the Muslim Ummah, despite its size, is relatively weak and under the control of foreign powers or their client states in the context of jihadist groups like ISIS. ISIS is regarded by many as an extremely violent Salafi Jihadist organization that adheres to the principles of Salafi Jihadism. This ideology encompasses four main objectives, namely the unification of the ummah (the global Muslim community), the removal of apostate regimes, the eradication of Western influence, and the subsequent establishment of a caliphate in accordance with these aspirations. The Islamic State fulfills all the necessary criteria to be classified as a Salafi Jihadist terrorist organization (Duman, 2015). The success of ISIS can be linked to several key factors. These factors include the presence of authoritarian rule and sectarianism, ineffective governance leading to political instability and chaos, the intervention of US forces, and the exploitation of natural resources in the region. On the contrary, the impact of ISIS's achievements has been identified in relation to various aspects, including but not limited to violations against human rights, the potential risks posed by the returning of fighters and refugees, the execution of organized acts of terrorism, the emergence of terrorism influenced by ISIS, and the potential escalation of sectarian tensions in the Middle Eastern region (Kamara, 2018). Furthermore, the combined efforts of various fundamentalist Islamist groups led to a significant and influential contribution to the formation of ISIS. According to numerous claims in the literature, ISIS has served as an exemplar and inspired other groups to emerge again in various forms. Certain groups in Africa and Asia began to exhibit behaviors resembling those of ISIS, despite lacking any formal affiliations with the organization. Notwithstanding the declaration of ISIS's defeat subsequent to the conclusion of military interventions, it remained widely acknowledged that the group's potential for resurgence was significant due to its robust network structure (Helvali, 2020).

ISIS's semi-conventional forces are armed with abandoned weapons from their adversaries because they lack heavy industry. ISIS uses guerrilla tactics throughout its

campaign in Syria and Iraq. They avoid direct conflict with larger forces and focus primarily on weak and isolated units. They frequently employ suicide bombers in the initial assault on an army installation or fortified area. ISIS shows their jihadist fighters speaking from large trucks loaded with explosives in videos, documenting their assault up until the truck explodes. The area or town is then cleared out by small guerrilla units, who try to avoid losing their own troops unless they think they can defeat a high-value target. In regions like Baghdad, ISIS resorts to psychological militant assaults to keep their adversaries involved, determined to deplete and dishearten restricting powers. Mosul and al-Raqqa have become symbolic strongholds for ISIS, addressing their progress in holding onto control. The influence of criminal networks, reminiscent of al-Zarqawi's time, is evident in these areas, particularly Mosul. These organizations participate in coercion, and at times, even complete agreement killings. Present-day ISIS features their execution of independent looters and street pharmacists as proof of their obligation to give security and safeguard individuals, though sticking to their severe organization of hostility. ISIS relies on tribal alliances and former Baathist soldiers to govern locally and garner armed support from the populace, or the "levée en masse" principle, as it gains control of cities and villages. Naji, a strategist within ISIS, advised urban jihadists to study tribal customs to effectively engage with tribes. He also anticipated that some members of the central government might be persuaded to support the jihadist cause. He drew comparisons to the period immediately following the U.S. invasion when former political and military leaders of Saddam Hussein's government joined the jihadists (Ryan, 2015).

Naji also emphasized that ordinary Muslims could not be trusted completely because they were frequently preoccupied with their day-to-day lives or had been coerced by the central government. To prepare the Muslim populace, jihadists are expected to utilize polarization strategies. Naji advocated using financial incentives to gain support, particularly with tribes. ISIS has made good use of this strategy. ISIS, following al-Zarqawi's lead, took advantage of sectarian conflict and the Sunni-Shia divide in Syria and Iraq to polarize the population. ISIS (previously al-Qaeda) relied on other polarizing issues like factional disputes or resentment against the government in places like the Sinai Peninsula and Libya where such sectarian divisions did not exist. Understanding ISIS's expansionist goals, which rely on recruiting and guiding individuals through a five-stage process, requires an understanding of this sequence. While ISIS is fighting to survive in

Syria and Iraq, where the process is more mature, groups are beginning to pledge allegiance to the self-proclaimed Caliph Ibrahim in Egypt and Libya. No matter what the area, a consistent convergence of enlisted people is important to renew misfortunes in their continuous furnished battle to lay out and extend their standard over new regions. At first, ISIS quickly spread throughout northern Iraq, capturing village after village with little opposition (Kaválek, 2015).

According to the research conducted by Awan (2017), it is reviewed and proposed in his article that, along with the booming of social media, ISIS is now progressively struggling with a war on the Internet. By using glossy videos, sending online posts of hatred, and also an application created to radicalize and build up a group of “cyber terrorists” who target the young generation. These up-to-date devices eventually support ISIS in spreading its propaganda, philosophy, and also their belief to huge numbers of online supporters all over the world. To be sure, ISIS has aggressively misused social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and even YouTube to target and recruit the young generations to be their new members. They influenced them with the pictures as well as the streaming of fierce viral video clips which were made and skillfully edited to impress the young and gullible generation. Representing an idealized and ‘cool’ vision, ISIS armed forces began to perform as the new artists of universal “cyber terrorism.” Therefore, the internet becomes the cybernetic play area for radical interpretations to be strengthened and performed as a resonance cavity (Awan, 2017).

According to the research conducted by Wiechert in her book published in 2017, universal “cyber terrorism,” ISIS uses cyber assets and social media platforms in their publicity of propaganda progress. YouTube videos were mainly being used for broadcasting definite philosophies and ideologies intended for recruiting new members as well as engaging them for ISIS. Twitter claimed to be the platform that considered ISIS-allied cyber terrorists to spread their online messages. The main objective of these actions is clearly to manage the group along with its membership and also subsidize the conservative strategies for example blasting, takeover, burning, beating, snatching, and also prisoner captivating. The publicity pays attention to logically dissimilar, but then again, every so often intersections in structural preparation and also practice with recruitment and funding. Thus, publicity assembles the prospective recruits in a people, despite the fact that it is also inspiring for financial backup as well. Moreover, ISIS has exposed an application that is free to download that reserves the users' latest updates with

the newest organization's news. The app titled 'The Dawn of Glad Tidings' has online promoting and was accessible in the Android system of Google, later on, the app was noticed and adjourned. Furthermost of the content inside that app was structured and controlled by social media support from ISIS (Wiechert, 2017).

According to the research conducted by Leih (2017), it is mentioned in his book about the tactical strategy of ISIS to use social media reveals the imagination of the "terrorist-cum-insurgent group" to the online public, which trained an appraised 40,000 overseas citizens belonging to 110 nations to enter the organization. The growing internet contact in both the Middle East as well as Africa defines the point that ISIS likewise has a fresh puddle of potential and prospective followers who, from side to side of social media, can be engaged to join in its struggle to recover the regulator of vanished territory. With the fact that the terrorization online propaganda from ISIS postures to local and global security, many policymakers along with political analysts might need to have better and proper knowledge about the exact purposes of the organization within the Information and Communication Technologies area. In a new announcement note for the "United Nations Development Program, RAND Europe" found the indication along with a number of evidence on how ISIS uses various platforms in social media Twitter, Telegram, and online propaganda magazines to apprentice, radicalize, and manage the terrorist attacks in all over the world (Leih, 2017).

According to the research conducted by Rowe and Saif (2016), it is reviewed that the actions and emergence of the Levant and Iraq's so-called Islamic State have acknowledged extensive news coverage all around the world because they imprisoned swathes of land across Iraq and Syria, and the publication of the propaganda and execution videos. Induced by these materials printed on social media and fascinated by the purpose of ISIS, there have been many reports about individuals from other countries in Europe (the United Kingdom and France in particular) joining ISIS and moving to Syria. In this article the main purpose is to understand what is happening to Twitter users in Europe during, after, and before, and the exhibition of pro-ISIS behavior (for example using pro-ISIS terms, and distribution content from the accounts of pro-ISIS), characterizing this kind of behavior as signals of the radicalization (Rowe & Saif, 2016).

To collect a Twitter user's dataset, along with the posts on social media, which exist in Europe and that contained neutral users anti-ISIS, and pro-ISIS. As a preliminary opinion, this article provides the user IDs of Twitter of around 652 users that were

included in previous pieces of literature - so it can be seen that they were used as seed financial records from Twitter lists relating to the conflict in Syria, so it might also comprise a mix of anti-ISIS, neutral users and pro-ISIS. It can begin by inspecting which users were still not deleted, active, and had visible timelines: there are around 512 still here on social media for use (Rowe & Saif, 2016).

According to the research conducted by Rothenberger (2012), it is reviewed that in recent times terrorism has been one of the major problems. Most normally, organizations of terrorists have their roots in movements in the social media that assume that they might not be able to reach their objectives of political change promotion through violence. In this article, the pieces of evidence about Internet use, and particularly terrorist groups using social media. Social media is a very important part of the groups' concepts of strategic communication. Terrorists do not just use internal organization groups but mostly for their ideas and ideologies distribution to a wider public. In case the government needs to respond to terrorist actions, it has to respond to their social media use. Consequently, terrorism theoretical perceptions as PR, propaganda, and communication will be accessible, as well as the results of many of the case studies to show the social media and terrorism interconnectedness. Terrorists need to gain quality in the public sphere and also even want to have their difficulties renowned by an audience globally. The messages reflect the ideology of the group and also their self-image. Consequently, relations with the public like communication appear to be a useful tool (Rothenberger, 2012).

According to the research conducted by Knox (2014), it is reviewed that recently, the Levant and Iraq have been using social media to advance their purpose, which also resulted in challenges to reduce the capacity of the social media group. As of August 2014, Levant and Iraq terrorist organizations controlled between 12,000 and 35,000 square miles of Syria and Iraq territory. At least some success groups can be connected to its huge campaign of public relations. Not only has the social media group used to update the pictures of the violent actions with Iraqi government soldiers killing but the terrorist organization in the Levant and Iraq formed a mobile application in Arabic language called "The Dawn of Glad Tidings." This Levant and Iraq terrorist organization application posts on the Twitter accounts of those who signed up, with the content uttered by the terrorist organization of the Levant and Iraq. 700 users bought the application via

the Google Play store, but this mobile application is just one indication of the Levant and Iraq terrorist organizations' online success (Knox, 2014).

According to the research conducted by Lindsay (2011), it is reviewed that social media's nasty use during an event could range from ill-behaved pranks to terrorist acts. One method that is to be used by terrorists includes the secondary attack used after a preliminary attack to injure and kill responders. So, it can be said that social media is said to be the tool for such determinations by issuing calls for support to an expanse or informing bureaucrats of a false danger or risk that needs a reaction. When social media is used for situational response efforts and awareness, first responders and officials have to be conscious of it being used for wicked determinations and grow actions to lessen those possibilities. In case malevolent social media use during disasters and emergencies becomes difficult, the Assembly could designate criminal sanctions or civil use against organizations and individuals that deliberately abuse social media with confusing information (Lindsay, 2011).

3.3. Women and Children's Role within ISIS

Women's roles in ISIS have been extremely diverse and intricate. While it's vital to abstain from making broad assumptions, there are sure examples that have arisen while analyzing the way of behaving of ladies related to ISIS. Women have been instrumental in the group's recruitment and support networks by participating in activities like propagandizing, radicalizing others, and assisting with logistics. Extremist ideologies that support violence, intolerance, and the establishment of an Islamic state based on strict interpretations of Sharia law are shared and promoted by many ISIS-affiliated women. While women's direct involvement in combat has generally been lower than that of men, there have been instances in which women have participated in acts of violence, including supporting violent activities in various roles and carrying out suicide bombings. Women have been expected to conform to strict gender roles and societal norms in ISIS-controlled areas. They have been in charge of running households, raising children, and making certain that all of the group's rules and regulations are strictly followed. Dress codes have been enforced, gender segregation has been maintained, and children's indoctrination into ISIS ideology has been promoted as part of this (Aoláin, 2022). Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge that not all ISIS-affiliated women actively or willingly participated in its activities. Some may have been coerced, forced, or manipulated into

joining the group, while others may have been trafficked or taken away and have been abused, exploited, or traumatized in a variety of ways (Perešin, 2018).

The gender policy of ISIS reveals distinct characteristics when compared to those of other extremist organizations, particularly in its recruitment efforts targeting female militants originating from Western nations. The organization demonstrates adherence to patriarchal dynamics within the Islamic framework, as women are motivated to join due to factors such as a sense of belonging, a desire to escape discrimination, and the fulfillment of religious obligations. This policy aims to counteract beliefs that portray women as passive or vulnerable by employing strategic measures to recruit and enforce moral regulations (Yılmaz, 2017).

ISIS fighters were apprehended and held after their final strongholds in Syria were destroyed in 2019; their families, primarily made up of women and children, were relocated to Al-Hol Camp in northeast Syria. The camp is right now home to roughly 62,000 people, with around 31,000 being Iraqis. 4,400 people from the Nineveh governorate, 18,000 people from Anbar, Baghdad, and Babylon governorates, and the remaining people from Saladin, Kirkuk, and Diyala governorates are thought to have family ties to ISIS. Iraq is taking steps to bring its citizens back from Al-Hol Camp because of concerns about human rights and humanitarian issues. However, this procedure is accompanied by security concerns and legal complexities. The Iraqi authorities have already made it possible for 450 Iraqi families to return to their homes in four distinct groups between May 2021 and January 2022 due to the established framework of cooperation that exists between Baghdad and the Syrian Democratic Forces, SDF. There were a total of 1,796 people in these families, mostly women and children with a few men. The arrangement is to proceed with this bringing home cycle in progressive bunches, moving people from Al-Hol Camp to the Al-Jada 1 Place for Psychosocial Recovery close to the town of Qayyarah, located south of Mosul Karen, (Sudkamp et al., 2023).

The repatriation of families from Al-Hol Camp gives rise to a range of political, security, and social concerns. Iraqi security authorities emphasize that all individuals returning in the initial phase have undergone comprehensive security screenings within Al-Hol Camp, as well as additional checks upon their arrival at the Al-Jada Centre. They affirm that these returnees are deemed "peaceful" and unrelated to ISIS. To support their reintegration, psychological support, rehabilitation, and specialized programs are

provided through collaborative efforts involving the Ministry of Migration and Displacement, the National Security Advisory, and international organizations with expertise in this field. However, there are apprehensions regarding the potential impact of family returns from Al-Hol Camp on the social fabric of the Mosul region, which is known for its diverse national, religious, and sectarian makeup (Awan, 2017). This concern arises because the returnees encompass families from various governorates, not just those internally displaced within Nineveh. There is a fear that a camp housing "ISIS families" could pose a threat to stability and contribute to the resurgence of ISIS cells in the area. It is important to acknowledge that absolute certainty cannot be achieved regarding the peacefulness and lack of association with ISIS for all Iraqi families in Al-Hol Camp. Some individuals within the camp escaped from ISIS atrocities back in 2014, while others were part of the first group repatriated by the Iraqi government. Additionally, a significant portion of the camp's population consists of families with close or distant kinship to ISIS members, who migrated to Syria alongside remaining ISIS militants when Iraq reclaimed its territories in 2017 (International Crisis Group, 2017).

The repatriation of families from Al-Hol Camp, incorporating those with no immediate relationship with ISIS, raises worries because of the potential dangers implied. These individuals have endured the hardships of war, displacement, and prolonged contact with active ISIS members and their families within the camp. There is a possibility that they may have been exposed to extremist ideologies or subjected to campaigns aimed at polarization and recruitment (Wilson Center, 2019). The consequences of these experiences might manifest in the future, particularly for the women and children who constitute a significant majority of Al-Hol's population. It is essential to challenge the normal suspicion that women are dependably serene or simple casualties, as this could create a security gap and potential risk. Families who escaped to Syria after ISIS's loss in 2017 present a much more serious gamble and require unmistakable strategies, including security checks and conditions for their return. They could greatly benefit from comprehensive programs that include efforts for social reintegration as well as psychological and intellectual rehabilitation (Graham, 2023).

In addition to this, families perceived as related to ISIS, there exists one more class of people connected to the extremist group. This classification contains women who have been demonstrated to have a contribution or connection with ISIS and are as of now carrying out punishments in Iraqi jails, including an obscure number of underage young

women. Because they may continue to propagate extremist ideologies and exert influence over others, these individuals pose a serious security risk both while they are incarcerated and after they have served their sentences (Sandi, 2022). It is crucial to implement measures that prevent female terrorism prisoners from exerting such influence and prioritize gender-responsive disengagement and rehabilitation programs within prisons, as well as social reintegration initiatives after their release. The underlying study focuses on the complex and diverse ways by which women and girls are associated with violent extremism. Women who join ISIS pose risks, and the Iraqi government and other relevant stakeholders involved in preventing extremist violence should acknowledge that they are not automatically "peaceful" or "victims." The government and other actors can benefit from a deeper comprehension of the gender dimensions of violent extremism in order to adapt existing policies and practices accordingly. There could be serious consequences if policies are not consistent and gender-responsive. Women have been largely ignored in research on terrorism and violent extremism for years. Numerous data-gathering endeavors and exploration subsidizing drives need far-reaching orientation investigations (Heideman, 2014). The return of women and children associated with ISIS introduces additional challenges. Restricted information exists with respect to whether women joined ISIS deliberately or under pressure, as well as their particular jobs, including the execution of brutality or principally filling in as supporters and collaborators. This lack of information makes it difficult to identify their specific needs and, consequently, design appropriate rehabilitation and reintegration policies (State, 2022).

The review underscores the urgent need to address what is happening to thousands of children who need legitimate recognizable proof papers. They are denied their fundamental rights to parental lineage, education, citizenship, and a decent living without these documents. These kids wind up in this dilemma just on the grounds that they naturally have a place with fathers who were affiliated with ISIS and are currently dying to be deceased or missing (Boston Children's Hospital, 2005). In the event that their lawful status stays unsettled, these children might actually turn into a danger later on. It is essential to pay attention to the terms used to describe children and women who are believed to be associated with ISIS. Terms, for example, "ISIS families" or "Daesh," normally utilized in official and public talk in Iraq, add to pre-disparagement and allegations that will keep on tormenting these ladies and kids for a critical period. They are at risk of harassment, exclusion, and marginalization as a result of such labels, which

have profound psychological effects. In addition, they may be subject to ongoing retaliation or vengeance as a result of false accusations made regarding personal or tribal disputes. To avoid further stigmatization and to recognize these individuals' right to a fair assessment of their circumstances, it is essential to approach them with empathy and fairness. Support, protection, and opportunities for these women and children to rebuild their lives and reintegrate into society should be the primary focus. We can contribute to the prevention of additional harm and foster a more inclusive and just environment for all parties involved by doing so (Boston Children's Hospital, 2005).

A comprehensive and multifaceted strategy is required to address the complex issue of women and children associated with ISIS. Prevention, early intervention, and rehabilitation should be the primary focus of efforts. This includes providing education, psychological support, and opportunities for social reintegration to help women disengage from extremist ideologies and rebuild their lives. It's crucial to understand that the experiences and motivations of women associated with ISIS can greatly vary. While some may have supported the group's activities and actively participated, others may have been coerced, exploited, or influenced by a variety of complicated factors. To effectively handle the intricacies encompassing women with regard to ISIS, embracing a methodology that considers the extraordinary conditions of every individual is essential (UNDP, 2022).

3.4. The Distinction Between ISIS and Al-Qaeda

In northeastern Syria, the complicated and fluid nature of the conflict has established a climate where extremist groups can flourish. Sharing ideal and precise data about these groups is vital for nearby and global actors engaged in fighting radicalism and extremism. The Syrian nationwide conflict has drawn in unfamiliar warriors from around the world, making it fundamental to track their developments and affiliations. Information sharing assists in developing an exhaustive image of the developing security landscape, empowering better planning and responses as well. It likewise supports understanding the strategies and systems utilized by extremist organizations, which is significant for counterterrorism endeavors. Besides, it works with the identification of key figures within these groups, assisting with focusing on and disrupting their initiative (Coolsaet, 2016). The presence of transnational terrorist networks in northeastern Syria presents a huge security challenge. Extremist groups like ISIS have demonstrated the

capability at enrolling foreign fighters and getting assets across borders. Knowledge collaboration is fundamental for mapping these organizations and comprehending how they function across international boundaries. Sharing knowledge on the development of foreign fighters and the monetary streams that support these groups is fundamental for cutting off their help. Successful participation and cooperation likewise assist countries with organizing endeavors to capture and prosecute people associated with terrorist activities. Disrupting these transnational organizations is fundamental in forestalling the resurgence of gatherings like ISIS, as it restricts their capacity to regroup and launch attacks (Dandurand et al., 2007).

On the other hand, in northeastern Syria, the protracted conflict has involved a multitude of local and international actors, often with competing interests. This complex landscape poses ongoing security threats, making cooperation in intelligence and information sharing a necessity. Regional powers, international organizations, and local authorities all play a role in addressing these security challenges. Effective collaboration and sharing of intelligence help in anticipating potential threats, whether from extremist groups, rival factions, or other sources of instability. By cooperating to survey and deal with these threats, international actors can together add to the strength and security of the underlying region. A definitive objective is to forestall the resurgence of extremist groups like ISIS and encourage a solid and secure climate where the nearby populace can rebuild their lives.

Many people believed that ISIS, like Al-Qaeda, was on its way to extinction following the territorial defeat of the caliphate in 2019. Even though the two groups share a common ideology, their practical theories and ideologies are vastly different. ISIS's practical theory is based on strict Salafi religious thought, which helped the group transform from an armed group into a formidable army in a short amount of time. ISIS follows a distinct long-term procedure that is continually surveyed and adjusted to changing neighborhood and local elements, aiming to better safeguard the association from collapse (Arosoaie, 2015). For instance, one of the most important aspects of their strategy is decentralization, which gives military commanders the freedom to carry out terrorist attacks in accordance with the particular circumstances they face. Field commanders can also use this strategy to raise money and recruit in the communities where they work. By adjusting to their environmental elements, forestalling breaking down, and working with enlistment, ISIS figures out how to work carefully by taking on

a "quiet and vanishing" technique at whatever point they face security tensions or enormous scope military missions (Wright et al., 2017).

ISIS's jihadi doctrine, in contrast to that of Al-Qaeda, is contemporary and unwritten. They vigorously depend on Abu Abdullah al-Muhajir's understanding, which takes into consideration the killing of anybody whenever and under any condition to accomplish their objective of laying out the caliphate they want. ISIS strategically targets the oppression and marginalization of Sunnis in Iraq and Syria in its political appeals and media statements. Dissimilar to its ancestors in Iraq, ISIS embraced a more comprehensive way to deal with enlistment, prompting a critical convergence of warriors. While their media creation has diminished, their talk figures out how to resound with a huge number of Muslims (International Crisis Group, 2017).

ISIS has been able to cultivate both direct supporters, primarily in Sunni areas that are marginalized, and potential indirect supporters from areas where it operates with a degree of freedom due to the underlying strategy. These constituents provide the organization with opportunities to implement its new strategy and serve as recruiting grounds. It is essential to appoint a new caliph to keep ISIS groups and formations united, prevent defections, and continue making political gains. Without a caliph, ISIS gambles, losing its local and global standing, perhaps prompting a re-arrangement with Al-Qaeda. Even though ISIS has found it difficult to put the caliphate into practice, the position of the caliph is used as a propaganda tool to promote the idea of the caliphate. It is critical to note that the choice of Quraishi as caliph was not in light of agreement among military and strict pioneers inside ISIS. It was instead imposed by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who appointed Quraishi as his successor prior to his death. This proposes that al-Baghdadi meant to forestall likely divisions inside the association in case of his death. Given the shortfall of a comparable designation by Quraishi during his lifetime, the chance of a delay in declaring another caliph and the rise of an initiative emergency inside ISIS has become more probable than in the past progression. It is also possible that the new caliph will be appointed by one of the remaining leaders of the Shura Council and the Delegated Committee. Conspicuous figures among these pioneers incorporate Jabbar Salman Al-Issawi, Juma Awad Al-Badri, Bashar Ghazal Al-Sumaida'i, Sami Jassim Muhammad Al-Jubouri, and Fayez Okal Al-Nuaimi Al-Quraishi (Rumman, 2020).

Above all, ISIS is actively seeking a caliph who possesses strong charisma and can trace their lineage back to the Quraishi tribe. The association wants a pioneer who

garners widespread agreement, like the consistent help delighted in by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. ISIS grew from a local Iraqi security group in 2014 to an international organization that controlled vast territories under al-Baghdadi's leadership. ISIS is dealing with a leadership crisis that has been exacerbated by the loss of numerous experienced first-generation leaders who were contemporaries of al-Zarqawi and al-Baghdadi. However, the current circumstances present challenges. Regardless, the selection of Quraishi's successor will probably take longer than in the past (Wilson Center, 2019). Regardless of whether a potential caliph was declared before very long, it would call for investment for security leaders inside ISIS and heads of the association's territories (wilayat) overall to recognize the newly appointed leader. ISIS-affiliated jihadi theorists' approval is also crucial. Concerns about appointing a caliph who is not of Iraqi nationality may arise from voices within ISIS-associated groups in Iraq and Syria. This issue may be taken seriously by the Shura Council and Delegated Committee, which is in charge of selecting caliphs, in order to prevent ISIS and its affiliated organizations from defecting to other countries. This time, the selection of a new ISIS leader will undoubtedly have significant repercussions. The actual eventual fate of ISIS in Iraq and Syria pivots upon the standing and impact of the new caliph. Any crisis or prolonged delay in choosing a caliph without consensus among the leadership could have far-reaching consequences for the organization's sustainability as ISIS attempts to rebuild its terrorist groups and regain influence in multiple territories and areas of Syria and Iraq (Karam, 2022).

The implementation of the Qaida (creed) by Al Qaeda and ISIS has been subject to analysis by several prominent ideologues, namely al Maqdisi, Abu Bakr Naji, Abu Musab al Suri, and Ayman al Zawahiri. These individuals have identified significant distinctions between the two groups in this regard. Al Qaeda emphasizes inflicting harm upon its adversaries, whereas ISIS prioritizes the consolidation of power. There exists a distinction in terms of enemy identification, wherein Al Qaeda directs its attention towards the far enemy, while ISIS concentrates on the near enemy. Moreover, Al Qaeda demonstrates the practice of *al-wala' wa al-bara'*, exhibiting caution and diligence, whereas ISIS promotes aggressive conduct and employs eschatological narratives as a means to garner backing from Muslim populations (Arosoaie, 2015).

In conclusion, the current situation in northeastern Syria is at a critical juncture. While progress has been made in significantly reducing the presence of ISIS, it is important to acknowledge the remaining signs of its impact and the potential for its

resurgence. Without taking coordinated and comprehensive measures, there is a real risk of extremism gaining control once again, jeopardizing the achievements thus far. Addressing this complex challenge requires a united effort at the global level. Political, humanitarian, and security stakeholders must join forces and prioritize the alleviation of the ongoing humanitarian crisis in northeastern Syria. This entails active international political engagement, increased humanitarian assistance, and strategic interventions to ensure lasting stability and security in the region. The gravity of the situation demands immediate attention and persistent dedication. Failing to take decisive action would undermine the hard-won progress made in countering ISIS and pose a significant threat to the well-being and safety of the affected communities. Only through international collaboration and a genuine commitment to addressing the underlying issues can the region be shielded from the resurgence of extremism and chart a path toward a more secure and prosperous future (Sudkamp et al., 2023).

3.5. The Effects of ISIS on Regional and International Security

Human security resembles the comprehensive guardian of our prosperity in the present complex world. It goes far past customary security, which for the most part focuses on safeguarding nations from outside threats. Rather, it checks out as an entire bundle of concerns. ISIS played a major role in the worsening of human insecurity in the regions it governs by employing a combination of both direct and indirect methods. The consequences have been realized through violations of fundamental human rights, deliberate destruction of critical infrastructure, disruption of individuals' livelihoods, and the cultivation of an environment characterized by violence and fear. Accordingly, it is evident that ISIS has significantly impacted various dimensions of human security, encompassing economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security. The adverse impacts of ISIS on a particular dimension of human security can have ramifications on other aspects as a result of their inherent interdependence (Al-Ghadhbawi, 2023). That implies managing stuff like financial imbalance, social injustices, and violations of human rights. Eventually, human security intends to make a reality where everybody can reside with dignity, without dread or need. Everything revolves around perceiving that the prosperity and freedoms of people are vital for making the world a more secure, more serene & peaceful, and more joyful place for all of us (Cordesman, 2020).

For the case of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), they are essentially people who've been driven away from their homes due to things like contentions, catastrophic events, or abuse, however, they haven't crossed any global lines. They wind up looking for security and assistance inside their own country, which can be quite difficult. Imagine this, you're in a spot where you know, however, everything's upset, and you need to track down shelter, security, and backing. It's difficult, particularly in light of the fact that you're not getting the very level of worldwide acknowledgment and help that outcasts do. IDPs frequently deal with issues like restricted admittance to medical care, training, and occupations, which are all fundamental for modifying their lives. While international migration is about individuals getting across borders between nations. They do this because of multiple factors, such as securing better positions as well as finding potential opportunities for the job, rejoining with family, or getting away from risky circumstances like conflicts or mistreatment. It's an impression of our world's interconnectedness, where individuals are searching for improved living conditions, fresh chances, or just safety in other parts of the world (International Crisis Group, 2023). This worldwide portability is about people and families looking for a superior life, and it accompanies the challenge of adjusting to new societies, conditions, and rules. On the other hand, a refugee crisis happens when a lot of people are forced to leave their home countries because of some terrible stuff like wars, persecution, or severe human rights abuses. This creates a huge strain on the resources and abilities of the countries where these refugees seek help and the international organizations trying to assist. Handling a refugee crisis is complicated and requires not just immediate relief but long-term solutions. It's all about providing things like safety, healthcare, education, and job opportunities to the displaced people. The international community plays a big role in helping these folks in need and also in addressing the reasons they had to leave their homes (Kagan et al., 2016).

In the underlying context, food security is also a basic concept. It's about making sure that people always have access to good and healthy food that they need to stay well and nourished. But when you're a refugee or an IDP, displacement can mess with your access to food, leading to food crises. In these circumstances, humanitarian organizations and aid agencies step in to help. They give food help, set up shared kitchens, and run sustenance projects to ensure that those who've been dislodged have the food they need. The thought isn't simply to stop hunger but to enable outcasts and IDPs to revamp their

lives with pride and independence, in any event, when things are extreme (Louw & Lubbe, 2017).

In a similar context, the agenda of human trafficking can better be discussed. Human trafficking is a profoundly disturbing issue that includes the illegal exchange of people for purposes like constrained work, sexual exploitation, and compulsory subjugation. With regards to the association between illegal exploitation and ISIS, it's critical to comprehend that while ISIS has been engaged with different denials of basic freedoms, like the abduction and exploitation of women and children, it's just one part of the larger picture. ISIS, in its control of specific areas, has been known to take part in the trafficking of women and girls, frequently from weak networks in conflict zones, exposing them to sexual slavery and forced relationships. This is a type of illegal exploitation, and it's a disturbing aspect of their activities. Nonetheless, it's essential to remember that human trafficking is a worldwide issue, arriving far beyond the activities of any single association. Resolving this issue requires a unified exertion on an overall scale, focusing on combating human trafficking, safeguarding victims, and bringing those responsible to justice, regardless of their affiliations (Makinda, 2016).

In the light of above-given points, this is crucial to discuss the recruitment of children and women by ISIS. It is perceived to be a matter of utmost concern in the realm of human security. Children, in particular, find themselves in an extremely vulnerable position as they're often manipulated, coerced, or even forcibly drawn into becoming child soldiers or engaging in violent activities. This tragic situation deprives them of the simple, yet crucial right to a safe and nurturing childhood. Women, too, face significant risks as they are compelled into marriages with fighters or coerced into various roles that support the group's activities, including tasks related to logistics, propaganda, or even combat. The implications of these recruitment practices are profound. They not only harm individuals on a personal level but also wreak havoc on the communities and societies affected. Such practices perpetuate cycles of violence, as the recruitment of children and women not only bolsters the group's ranks but also influences and sustains extremist ideologies within younger generations. The social fabric of these communities is torn apart, giving rise to divisions and mistrust among community members. Furthermore, on a larger scale, this contributes to instability in the regions affected, thereby eroding human security. Human security, which includes defending people from different types of harm, is seriously undermined by the enlistment and hiring of youngsters and ladies by ISIS.

Handling this issue isn't just urgent for the government assistance of those straightforwardly involved but at the same time is vital for the overall security and dependability of districts influenced by these recruitment practices (Namakula, 2017).

At the point when we discuss the violation of fundamental rights, we're entering serious territory. These privileges are the bedrock of a fair and just society. We're discussing stuff like the right to life and opportunity, the independence from being oppressed or tormented, the opportunity to offer our viewpoints, and the option to work and get educated. These privileges are illuminated in peaceful accords and public regulations, and they're intended to safeguard our fundamental opportunities. At the point when these privileges are overlooked, individuals' lives get flipped around, and they lose the opportunities they ought to have. The subject at hand is of a serious nature and should not be treated lightly, it necessitates thoughtful deliberation and proactive measures from the international community to safeguard and uphold these fundamental liberties and entitlements. The right to life and freedom is a big deal. It's tied in with guaranteeing that nobody can simply end your life or your opportunity without a generally excellent explanation. This right is tied in with shielding you from being killed or secured without good cause (OECD, 2015).

It implies we can express our real thoughts, share our thoughts & ideas, and have open conversations without stressing over being censored or punished. Everything revolves around commending our disparities and allowing thoughts to stream freely. These freedoms are about the opportunities we as a whole ought to have. The option to work implies we ought to have the option to find a new line of work and make money. The right to instruction implies we ought to approach information and figure out how to develop and succeed. It's about reasonableness and offering everybody a chance at a good life. In short, it can be said that fundamental rights cover an entire pack of other significant things, and they're safeguarded by different peaceful accords and public regulations. These privileges address various parts of our lives, similar to one side to rehearse our religion, being treated equally under the law, and partaking in the way of life, society, and governmental issues of our networks. They're fundamental for treating individuals with nobility and guaranteeing equity in our social orders around the world (Ortuoste, 2012).

At the international level, ISIS had a significant impact on global security and geopolitics. Its establishment and rapid expansion in Iraq and Syria posed a serious threat to regional stability and attracted foreign fighters from around the world. The group's

brutal tactics, including mass killings, kidnappings, and terrorist attacks, further intensified concerns among nations about the spread of extremism and the need for collective action to combat terrorism. As an example, Türkiye has faced significant challenges in dealing with foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) affiliated with DAESH. This struggle has presented a threefold threat to Türkiye, as it serves as a transit, target, and host country for these individuals. Between the period of March 2014 and March 2016, Türkiye experienced a considerable number of casualties, with 163 fatalities and 766 individuals injured. FTFs possess the capacity to disseminate violence on a global scale, and the situation in Türkiye serves as a notable example of their potential impact. Likewise, it can be inferred that the resolution of this issue necessitates international collaboration and the implementation of de-radicalization measures (Yalçınkaya, 2016).

3.6. The Future of ISIS

On October 27, 2019, President Donald Trump made a declaration that Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of the self-proclaimed Islamic State, had been killed in an exceptional activity carried out by American forces in the Syrian governorate of Idlib. The world's largest and most reputable intelligence agencies had made extensive efforts to locate him for years. Al-Baghdadi escaped capture during this time, but his followers carried out the organization's goals by spreading terror across continents like America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Arab world. Al-Baghdadi was not at his most powerful at the time of his death. The caliphate that his organization had established in Iraq and Syria, where it had terrorized the world for nearly five years, had been destroyed. The Islamic State had been reduced to mobile groups of fighters engaged in guerrilla warfare in the desert region along the Iraqi and Syrian borders, despite its global ideological and political influence. In Iraq and Syria, a lot of ISIS followers have been killed or imprisoned in camps and prisons (Kube & Johnson, 2016).

The organization did not acknowledge its defeat or the end of its mission despite losing its state and its territorial project. Al-Baghdadi and Abu Ibrahim al-Qureshi, his successor, were of the opinion that, despite having lost a battle, the war was far from over. It is ironic that armed groups that had previously pledged their allegiance to the organization and regarded al-Baghdadi as their caliph continue to declare their loyalty to the Islamic State. On a financial level, on August 7, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres issued a warning stating that ISIS still had \$300 million in funds even after the

caliphate in Iraq and Syria collapsed. In a report on the organization's threat to the Security Council, Guterres expressed concern that the decrease in ISIS attacks might be temporary. He stressed that the association could utilize these excess assets to help fear-based oppressor exercises inside and beyond Iraq and Syria through casual cash move channels. Through a network of supporters and affiliated groups in other parts of the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, the group also has financial independence (Watts, 2016).

The emergence of ISIS is linked to various factors, The emergence of ISIS is linked to various factors. For example, the Arab Spring uprisings created a power vacuum in certain regions, which allowed ISIS to gain a foothold. Additionally, sectarian conflicts in Iraq and Syria provided fertile ground for ISIS to recruit members. Furthermore, an ideological conflict with Al Qaeda led to a split, with some members joining ISIS. However, ISIS failed to gain widespread support from the Muslim community and has further distanced itself from potential allies due to its authoritarian and strict policies. Nevertheless, ISIS has experienced significant setbacks in Syria and Iraq, particularly following Türkiye's intervention, and the restructuring of the Iraqi army. While it may appear that the sustainability of ISIS as a threat is questionable, it is important to consider the potential for its legacy and ideology to serve as a source of inspiration for future extremist groups (Biçer & Caşın, 2018). The potential threat of the Islamic State can be estimated by its resource mobilization capacity in different countries and counter the recruitment process encompasses various entities, including Muhajirun¹, recruiters, coordinators, accepters, temporary accepters, and disseminators. The effective functioning of these actors and their interconnections play an essential part in ensuring successful recruitment outcomes. The assessment of the potential danger posed by the Islamic State can be gauged through its ability to gather resources in various nations, and appropriate strategies should be tailored based on the specific roles and geographical positions of the entities involved. measures should differ according to the roles and locations of the actors involved (Takaoka, 2016).

¹ Muhajirun: : fellow emigrants who fled with Muhammad during the Hegira <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/muhajirun>

4. RESEARCH METHOD

This study is qualitative research as a whole. However, two different data collection techniques were used. The part of the research so far is qualitative research, conducted by examining books, articles and other academic sources in the literature on ISIS as a violent extremist organization. In this sense, document analysis was made. In this respect, this study has descriptive research characteristics. Descriptive research methodology aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of society's conditions and needs by collecting data from a variety of sources. In terms of focusing on radicalism in Northeast Syria, this research approach allows the researcher to gain important experience regarding the current situation of the region. To achieve this, the researcher conducted an extensive search of existing writings, including books, articles, official reports and discovery papers. This allowed the researcher to analyze these sources to establish a solid understanding of the historical background, contextual factors and key factors that contributed to the emergence and spread of extremism in the region.

This study is also historical research. Historical research methodology entails delving into past events and facts to gain insights into their significance and influence on the present. In the case of examining extremism in northeastern Syria, historical research allows us to trace the trajectory of jihadist organizations and their endeavors to establish an Islamic state in the region. This entails examining the history of groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS, identifying pivotal moments, ideological foundations, and strategic shifts that have shaped the rise and spread of extremism in the area. To accomplish this, the researcher has conducted in-depth analyses of historical documents, archival records, news articles, and scholarly works that document the activities and evolution of jihadist organizations. By critically evaluating these sources and considering multiple perspectives, the researcher has constructed a comprehensive narrative of the events, strategies, and underlying factors that have contributed to the growth and impact of extremist ideologies in northeastern Syria.

In the second part of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted and the data were analyzed qualitatively. These involve conducting in-depth interviews with participants to gather rich and nuanced information about their experiences and perspectives. People with first-hand knowledge of the subject, such as local community members, experts, policy makers and humanitarian workers, provide invaluable

perspectives and insights. These interviews are expected to help us better understand the complex dynamics and unique nuances surrounding extremism in Northeast Syria. By combining qualitative data collected from these interviews, important themes and patterns can be identified and a comprehensive understanding of the current reality can be provided. Therefore, this study is qualitative research using two different data collection techniques.

4.1. Scope of the Study

Research cover:

- The historical background of the emergence of ISIS,
- Factors contributing to the emergence and growth of ISIS,
- Local communities' approach to ISIS,
- Preventive factors against ISIS,
- Ideological difference of ISIS from other armed groups,
- The role of women in ISIS.

4.2. Study Limitations

Due to the US intervention in Iraq and the Syrian Civil War, a number of violent organizations have emerged in the region. In this study, only ISIS was focused on among these organizations. In addition, ISIS is geographically limited because it is active in a wide geography. In this sense, only the presence of ISIS in Northern Syria has been discussed. Finally, semi-structured interviews were conducted in northeast Syria and with Syrians living in the region.

4.3. Research Design

The primary purpose of this research is to delve into the current situation in northeastern Syria, specifically considering the diminished presence of ISIS and the potential risks of extremism reemerging in the region. By carefully examining the indicators of ISIS's impact and the lingering consequences it has left behind, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the factors that could contribute to the resurgence of extremism if appropriate measures are not taken. Moreover, it emphasizes the pressing need for international political, humanitarian, and security interventions to avert a potential humanitarian catastrophe in the area.

Exploring extremism's conceptualization within the social sciences is essential for gaining a comprehensive understanding. Extremism can be characterized as a radical belief system or ideology characterized by the pursuit of extreme goals, often accompanied by a willingness to employ violent means to achieve them. This study aims to learn more about how extremists come to be and the underlying factors that lead to an extremist society. This study aims to shed light on the intricate processes by which individuals become radicalized and communities adopt extremist ideologies, drawing on social identity theory and the influence of social networks. For contextualizing the emergence and development of extremism in northeastern Syria, it is essential to comprehend the historical stages of extremist Jihadi groups. Starting with their historical beginnings and tracing their development through various stages leading up to the Syrian context, this study will investigate the origins and development of such groups. By intently looking at huge achievements, like the development of Al-Qaeda and its philosophical underpinnings, the ascent of ISIS, and the announcement of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) with Raqqa as its capital, this study tries to give a far-reaching comprehension of the historical backdrop against which extremism has manifested in the region.

A significant focal point of this research is the al-Hol camp, where various ISIS women and their kids are housed. Because it provides a setting that encourages the spread and persistence of extremist ideologies, the camp is recognized as a potential breeding ground for extremism. The purpose of this study is to examine the camp's conditions and dynamics to learn what causes people, particularly women, and children, to become radicalized and indoctrinated. In addition, it investigates the potential long-term effects that the resurgence of extremism in northeastern Syria might have. An examination of religious and ideological indoctrination, the impact of camp social networks, and the difficulties associated with rehabilitation and reintegration efforts will all be part of this investigation. To successfully address the possible resurgence of radicalism in northeastern Syria, it is basic to distinguish the causes and ecological variables that might work with its reappearance. The disparities in socioeconomic status, political instability, historical grievances, and regional dynamics that may make it possible for extremist ideologies to thrive will all be examined in this study. Understanding these fundamental elements will empower policymakers, partners, and experts to foster designated

procedures and mediations pointed toward tending to the main drivers of fanaticism and forestalling its resurgence in the area.

In short, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the reality in northeastern Syria and the potential for the resurgence of extremism. By exploring the conceptualization of extremism within the social sciences, examining the historical stages of extremist Jihadi groups, analyzing the role of the al-Hol camp as an incubator of extremism, and identifying underlying causes and environmental factors, this study seeks to contribute to international efforts aimed at reducing the risk of extremism and mitigating the potential humanitarian crisis in the region. This is how it is tried to achieve the objectives of the current research work and answer the questions of the said research work so that it can provide the basis to determine if the hypotheses of this study are to be accepted or rejected.

The measurement tools to be used in the research study are based on the research objectives and the specific context of the study. Qualitative research is flexible and iterative, which allows the researcher to refine and adapt their interview protocols and question guides based on emerging findings and participant responses. progress with the research, making adjustments to ensure that the tools effectively capture the desired information and address the research objectives. Overall, by combining insights from existing literature, relevant research methodologies, and interviews develop robust and contextually appropriate measurement tools for your research study on the formation of extremist societies, specifically the ISIS case in Northeast Syria.

Some criteria were determined for the sample in the study. These are *inclusion criteria*:

- Victims and survivors: Individuals who have directly experienced the impact of ISIS, such as victims of violence, oppression, or human rights abuses.
- Local Syrian population: Individuals who lived in areas affected by ISIS rule or were exposed to ISIS's ideology, including individuals from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds.
- Local community leaders and activists: Individuals who played a significant role in responding to or resisting ISIS's influence, including community leaders, civil society activists, and individuals engaged in countering extremism or promoting peace and stability in Northeast Syria.

- Experts and researchers: Scholars, academics, and researchers with specific knowledge or expertise in studying terrorism, extremism, conflict resolution, or the dynamics of ISIS in Northeast Syria.

There are also *exclusion criteria*:

- Individuals currently affiliated with extremist groups: To ensure safety and ethical considerations.
- Individuals unable or unwilling to participate: Participants unable or unwilling to provide informed consent or engage in the research process would not be included.
- Individuals lacking relevant experiences or perspectives: specifically, the ISIS case in Northeast Syria, may be excluded to ensure the relevance and quality of the data collected.

4.4. Sampling Methodology

The research study on the formation of extremist societies, focusing on the ISIS case in Northeast Syria, included various groups and individuals directly or indirectly affected by the phenomenon. Key components of the target population include local communities, religious leaders, government officials, security experts, and humanitarian organizations. Displaced people and refugees are forced to flee their homes and seek refuge elsewhere due to ISIS's activities. Victims and survivors include those who directly experienced violence, oppression, or atrocities at the hands of ISIS, as well as those who managed to escape or were liberated from ISIS-controlled areas. Local community leaders and activists play a significant role in responding to and resisting ISIS's influence. Security and military experts, including international coalition forces, are also essential in combating ISIS in Northeast Syria. Experts, journalists, and researchers with expertise in terrorism, conflict resolution, and ISIS dynamics provided valuable insights and analysis based on their research and fieldwork. Finally, only both adult male and female participants were included in the interview.

By conducting qualitative research, specifically one-to-one interviews, the most appropriate sampling technique would typically be purposive sampling or, more specifically, purposeful sampling. This technique involves intentionally selecting individuals with specific knowledge, experiences, or perspectives relevant to the research topic. Given the focus of the research on the formation of extremist societies, particularly

the ISIS case in Northeast Syria, purposive sampling allows the researcher to target individuals who can provide valuable insights and firsthand accounts. This may include victims, community leaders, activists, experts, or individuals with specific knowledge or experiences related to the research topic. This allowed access to individuals with the desired knowledge or experiences, ensuring the depth and relevance of the qualitative data collected through one-to-one interviews.

In researching the formation of extremist societies, specifically the ISIS case in Northeast Syria, using qualitative data through one-to-one interviews, the most suitable sampling technique would still be purposive sampling. This approach allows the selection of individuals with the relevant knowledge, experiences, or perspectives to understand the research topic comprehensively.

Regarding the sample size for qualitative research, it is important to note that the emphasis is on the depth and richness of the data rather than the number of participants. The goal is to achieve data saturation, where new information or insights cease to emerge from additional interviews. Hence, the sample size is not determined through statistical calculations but rather through data saturation. In the case of the formation of extremist societies, the sample size for one-to-one interviews would likely involve a relatively small number of participants depending on the research question, the topic's complexity, the participants' diversity, and the available resources, among other factors. In this study, nine informants were interviewed using the Zoom application meeting tool, with an average interview duration ranging from 60 to 120 minutes.

The sampling methods utilized in this study were based on the snowball methodology, which allows participants to refer to additional potential participants who may possess similar characteristics or experiences related to extremist societies. This approach facilitates a more thorough comprehension of the subject matter by engaging individuals who may not be easily reachable through traditional sampling techniques. Moreover, the utilization of the snowball methodology can contribute to the identification of concealed networks and interconnections within extremist societies, thereby offering significant insights into their organizational framework and operational patterns.

The criteria for determining sample size and achieving data saturation are subjective and context-dependent. This has been done considering factors such as the richness and depth of the data collected, the diversity of perspectives, the level of

variation in experiences and knowledge, and the ability to address the research objectives effectively.



5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The case study presented in this research delves into the experiences and perspectives of individuals who witnessed the presence of ISIS in the northeast of Syria. It aims to give readers a thorough understanding of the situation on the ground and the difficulties of residing in a former stronghold of extremist societies through in-depth interviews with these first-hand witnesses. By adopting a descriptive and historical research approach, the case study situates these personal accounts within the broader context of the region's history and the evolution of extremist groups. While the qualitative nature of the case study allows for a comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted aspects of life in the region during the ISIS era narratives and insights shared by the interviewees offer a unique and nuanced perspective on the formation of extremist societies and the dynamics that influenced their presence. The historical analysis provides valuable context for understanding the factors that contributed to the emergence of ISIS in Syria and its subsequent impact on the region's sociopolitical landscape and sheds light on the impact of ISIS and the potential risks of an extremist resurgence in the region. Furthermore, the case study pays attention to any other relevant insights that would be shared by the interviewee to enhance the study such as the gender dynamics within extremist societies and the potential implications for future security challenges.

The results area of the research shows the findings and analysis of in-depth interviews with nine key informants of those who have witnessed the presence of ISIS in the north of Syria. Each Key Informant (KI) was interviewed using the Zoom application meeting tool, with an average interview duration ranging from 60 to 120 minutes.

5.1. Historical Background of the Emergence of ISIS

The first question asked to the participants in the interview was, "*How did ISIS emerge in the region?*". First, the 2003 Iraq War was pointed out. The instability created by the war in the region made it easier for ISIS to organize. Secondly, the role of the Syrian regime in this process is emphasized. When the war began in 2003, the Syrian regime facilitated the exit of young Syrians from the country to fight in Iraq. Many of these young people joined Islamic groups under the coordination of the Iraqi regime. When these young people returned to Syria in 2006, they were arrested and transferred to Sedyana Prison. These were uneducated, ignorant people who did not embrace Salafi

ideology and were neglected by the Syrian regime. However, many university students in Aleppo later joined this Al Qaeda-linked group. This was the first emergence of small jihadist groups in the region. The beginning of the revolution in Syria is the third factor that facilitated the organization of ISIS. After the outbreak of the revolution, the Syrian regime released the prisoners in Sednaya Prison. They were subjected to oppression, torture and cruelty. They also had a great sense of revenge. Jihadist groups began to form among them. In particular, Ibn Taymiyyah and Fecru'l Islam groups formed the basis of the group that would later be known as the Al Nusra Front.

It was pointed out that the absence of the government, political vacuum, inter-group conflicts and security problems caused the emergence of jihadist groups here. After the fall of the city of Raqqa in 2013, Syrian regime forces completely withdrew. In Raqqa, the city's security elements were completely evacuated overnight. Syrian regime forces suddenly withdrew from Raqqa, leaving the city defenseless and devoid of security. This sudden departure opened the door for various factions to fight for control of the city. On April 24, 2013, all groups were invited to join ISIS through Baghdadi, the first leader of ISIS. Political vacuum, conflict between different ideologies and financial groups, and domination of the strong over the weak enabled ISIS to become even stronger. ISIS pursued the tactic of increasing security chaos and terrorism in the region by taking advantage of the power vacuum and insecurity that emerged due to conflicts between Syrian government forces and various armed opposition groups and sectarian conflicts between powerful tribes in the region. The organization assassinated many important figures in Deir ez-Zor. This was a warning to civilians and soldiers in the area not to offer resistance. One of the important reasons why ISIS has expanded its dominance in the region is the confusion it creates through media propaganda. In addition, the assassinations and bombings carried out by sleeper cells in the region in 2013 were also effective. Joined by many rebels, Al Nusra emerged in Syria in 2013 and was later incorporated into Al Qaeda. Al Nusra is an offshoot of Al Qaeda and its roots date back to the Iraq War in 2003.

5.2. Factors Contributing to the Emergence of ISIS

The second question asked to the participants in the interview was, “*What are the factors contributing to the emergence of ISIS internally?*” When examining the factors that contribute to the emergence of ISIS, researchers have identified a range of factors

that can be categorized into major themes including social and economic factors, regional dynamics, ideological motivations, historical context, and external support.

Social and economic factors were identified by four participants as influential in the recruitment of individuals with vulnerable personalities and aspirations for power and financial prosperity into the ranks of ISIS. Socioeconomic factors, namely poverty and limited access to education, exerted influence in the recruitment process. Furthermore, the presence of chaos, poverty, and a deterioration in education has contributed to the growth of extremism. On the other hand, regional dynamics and alliances were identified by four participants. The early dissemination of ISIS was notably influenced by tribal alliances, The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) strategically established partnerships with indigenous troops, tribal communities, and tribal leaders in order to effectively administer and control valuable resources, such as oil. This strategic approach encompassed the utilization of regional dynamics and tribal conflicts for their own benefit.

Three respondents set the ideological motivations and contributing factor: It has been observed that certain individuals have chosen to affiliate themselves with ISIS as a result of ideological factors, participants emphasized ideological motivations, specifically Salafi ideology, and extremism, as influential factors that prompted of the individuals who choose to join ISIS. The emergence of ISIS was shaped by a confluence of factors, including extremist tendencies, ideological motivations, and the widespread propagation of Salafi ideology. The organization's religious affiliation and its objective of safeguarding Sunni Islam were acknowledged. The rationale behind the endorsement of ISIS was primarily rooted in the desire to protect the Sunni Islamic identity in contrast to competing ideological factions.

It is worth mentioning that one participant refers to historical context. A participant highlighted the historical backdrop concerning the existence of Salafi-jihadi organizations, particularly following the invasion of Iraq, as a significant element influencing the rise of ISIS. The rise of ISIS can be attributed to the presence of Salafi-jihadi factions in the area prior to 2011, particularly following the invasion of Iraq. The other one refers to external support. ISIS acquired assistance and resources from external entities, thereby facilitating its ascent.

5.3. Local Communities' Approach to ISIS

The third question asked to the participants in the interview was, “*What were local communities’ approach to ISIS emergence and existence?*”. Throughout the interviews, the respondents collectively discuss the response of the local community towards the presence of ISIS encompassing both resistance and acceptance.

Seven responses indicate that there was societal division regarding ISIS, with some individuals supporting the group out of anti-regime sentiment and religious considerations. A portion of the population initially avoided conflict out of a desire to live in peace and without taking a definite position. As time passed and ISIS continued to impose excessive violence and restrictions, public opinion began to turn against the group. The remaining two responses indicated that regional variations existed in terms of societal acceptance and rejection. Local leaders and tribes affiliated with ISIS for a variety of motives, including the defense of their interests. In general, however, eight out of nine responses explicitly acknowledge that intimidation and fear prevented individuals from openly opposing ISIS. For the purpose of intimidating and subjugating individuals, ISIS resorted to brutal torture, excessive force, and murder.

The community response to ISIS's presence in Al-Bab has been a topic of discussion. The siege and control of the city led to a significant portion of the population deciding to migrate to Türkiye, with 40% of the population deciding to migrate to Türkiye. The Free Army withdrew from the city, and ISIS forces began to break into the city from the far south, while the Free Army forces withdrew from the far north, particularly the Ahrar al-Sham forces. The Al-Bab city's importance as a road node and strategic location made it an attractive target for ISIS. The growth and conflicts of ISIS in northeastern Syria led to conflicts with other factions, including the Free Syrian Army and Jabhat al-Nusra. The geographical significance of Al-Bab comes to the forefront. Positioned strategically with access to crucial routes and in proximity to key areas, the city assumed a pivotal role in the unfolding dynamics of the conflict. Disagreements over allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) caused splits among fighters in the region. With the fall of Deir Ezzor and Mosul to ISIS, the group declared the caliphate and established itself as a state with Raqqa as its capital. Jabhat al-Nusra's social approach capitalized on the grievances of the people by treating them well and resolving their complaints. This helped them gain popularity among civilians, particularly given the religious and conservative nature of the people in Raqqa, Deir Ez-Zor, and Hasaka. Jabhat

al-Nusra's strategies included pulling popular support from other factions and resorting to assassinations of potential rival leaders.

ISIS's violent methods included eliminating other factions and leaders through kidnappings and assassinations, targeting influential activists and symbols in the region, and exploiting the entry of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) to market itself. This approach allowed ISIS to infiltrate and spread its influence. ISIS faced resistance in Deir Ezzor, especially from local people who rejected its control. Some individuals who initially pledged allegiance to Al-Nusra shifted their allegiance to ISIS and set up sleeper cells in the area, spreading a terrifying image of ISIS, which discouraged other factions from confronting them. Despite initial challenges, ISIS managed to gain a foothold in the region through internal conflicts, defections, and the support of certain local elements. This allowed the organization to establish itself and exert control, instilling fear and resistance among the local population and other factions in the region. ISIS exploited sectarian strife and tribal conflicts to extend their control and influence over various factions. The rise of ISIS in Deir Ezzor was not a result of a single factor but rather a combination of calculated actions. The interviewee emphasizes the strategic importance of the eastern region of Syria, particularly areas like Al-Shuhail and Al-Tayana, due to the presence of Salafi thought and jihadist elements. The religiously raw nature of the region made it receptive to ISIS's strong and explicit religiosity.

5.4. Favorable Conditions for the Growth of ISIS

The interviewee's story sheds light on the intricate interplay of historical events, local dynamics, and community responses that paved the way for the rise of ISIS in Syria. The recurring ideas emphasize the significance of background events, geographical factors, and ideological foundations in the rise and spread of ISIS in the region. ISIS's path in Syria and Iraq was significantly influenced by its interactions with other militant groups and subsequent conflicts. These groups' Syrian roots and Al Qaeda ties shed light on the convoluted history of the Syrian conflict and its ties to Iraq. There wasn't a single factor that led to the formation and growth of ISIS in northeast Syria; rather, it was the complex interplay of political, social, and ideological elements. To establish and maintain its stronghold in the face of opposition, the group cunningly took advantage of regional turmoil, societal vulnerabilities, and local conflicts. ISIS was able to gain influence and

power in the region as the focus shifted from economic interests to assertive control and ideology.

While talking about the factors contributing to the internal emergence of ISIS, the below-given can be considered:

One of the participants has provided the fact that “*after they took control of the country, many bandits who were in the ranks of the Free Syrian Army joined ISIS with the aim of power, influence and money, people known in the region for their weak personality and who do not have any sophisticated social role as well, a large number of them joined ISIS at the beginning of its inception, looking for power and prestige as well, while a few of those who joined were adherents of Salafi ideology and joined because of ideology. They took control of the country and targeted the main leaders of the Free Army, the Coordination of the Civil Revolutionary Forces, those known for their secularism, and civilian activists*”. The interviewee has given an insight into the motivations and consequences of bandits from the Free Syrian Army joining ISIS in Syria. Following ISIS's emergence, a significant number of bandits were enticed by the promise of power, influence, and financial gains, leading them to switch allegiances. Many of these individuals were known for their weak personalities and limited social roles in the region, making ISIS an attractive option to elevate their status and gain recognition. Concurrently, a few recruits were motivated by ideological adherence to Salafism, seeking a platform to advance their beliefs. Tragically, the aftermath of their affiliation shift led to severe repercussions. ISIS, now empowered by these recruits, targeted the main leaders of the Free Army and the Coordination of the Civil Revolutionary Forces, who were known for their secular stance and civilian activism. This targeting reflected the extremist group's brutal nature, silencing opposition and furthering the destabilization of the country.

Another participant has given valuable insights into the factors that contributed to the rise of jihadist groups in Syria, particularly Jabhat al-Nusra, and how they were able to expand their influence. One crucial factor is the region's oil wealth, which attracted various factions seeking power and resources. Interestingly, certain areas were overlooked by the Free Syrian Army and other groups, leaving their young populations feeling disoriented and vulnerable. This made them susceptible to extremist recruitment, especially among the sons of tribal communities known for their inclinations towards violence and weapon use. Jabhat al-Nusra, a prominent jihadist group, played a

significant role in critical military operations, solidifying its presence in the city. Notably, the group's affiliation with al-Qaeda is noteworthy, and it's believed that they might be the same as the State of Iraq but operating under a different name. This highlights the interconnected nature of extremist organizations and how they exploit regional instability to their advantage. Another important theme is the manipulative tactics employed by these extremist groups. For instance, Abu Maria al-Qahtani's alleged claim about adopting a child from a bereaved clan in Iraq shows how they use emotional connections to gain support and loyalty from tribal communities, further strengthening their influence in the region. He has claimed that *“Oil wealth, no clear religious identity of the region, a young human reservoir is not directed, and the factions of the Free Syrian Army and its bodies did not pay attention to the region, but directed their weight in the sectors of the coast, Aleppo, Idlib and Homs, the sons of tribal communities often tend towards violence, fighting and the use of weapons, conflicts between factions and the absence of the state apparatus”*.

The answer to the same question has been given by another participant in a different form i.e., “the local Syrian leaders were at the front, and the foreign leaders were hidden among the population, while they put Syrians in various areas of power from Syrians at the forefront of work, such as Abu Ali al-Sharai, a law student born in 88 or 89, who was a friend of a large number of activists, whom he knew well, after joining ISIS, he became threatening activists, killing and terrorizing people. The Syrians in the PA areas provided all the necessary guidance to foreign leaders because of their knowledge of the population and their ability to penetrate and know old problems and hatred, and how to exploit these hatreds to serve them by fueling them and attracting new elements to the organization, as many old issues were liquidated under the pretext of ISIS”. During the interview, the informant shared some essential insights into the early rise of ISIS in Raqqa. One of the crucial themes discussed was how ISIS formed significant alliances with local battalions like the Raqqa Revolutionaries Brigade and the Al-Muntasir Billah Brigade. These alliances were financially supported by the Military Council of the Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, which gave ISIS the opportunity to control the region's oil affairs. Unfortunately, the alliances turned against the non-Islamic civilian Raqqa Revolutionaries Brigade, driving them out of the area and consolidating ISIS's control over economic resources. Another significant theme touched upon during the interview was the role of extremism, ideology, and Salafi beliefs in providing a fertile

ground for ISIS's growth. The Al-Diab clan, one of the prominent families in Raqqa, experienced internal divisions, with different brothers seeking different paths—one focused on economic and financial matters, while another pursued political power. The marginalized son, belonging to the Al-Bureij clan, ended up joining ISIS, likely driven by the desire for power and influence. The presence of tribal members within ISIS also had a positive impact on their operations in Raqqa. Their involvement allowed ISIS to establish authority and influence without provoking major conflicts with the local community. The integration of Syrian leaders alongside foreign leaders who hid among the population played a crucial role. This strategic move enabled ISIS to exploit local knowledge, pre-existing issues, and tensions to manipulate and attract recruits to their cause.

The time when a similar question has been asked another participant then she answered “According to my observations as a civilian, in 2013 we needed to get rid of the Assad regime and we needed support and assistance and there were many calls to help us as Muslims directed to different places, but places of conflict such as swamps are able to penetrate society because of them, in addition to the fact that the areas that were controlled are Sunni Muslim areas as well as tribal tribes, the use of arguments such as the persecution of women and the killing of women and children left the impression in society that it is better to maintain its Sunni Islamic character to protect itself. From the rest of the sects and their attempts to control the Sunni component and persecute it, such as the Syrian regime supporting the Shiite and Alawite components at the expense of the Sunni component, in 2013 until mid-2014 there was fighting between Islamic parties such as ISIS and Al-Nusra and on the other hand the Free Army, in addition to the joining of numbers of members of the Free Army to the Front and ISIS”.

The response from another participant gives insight into the factors that contributed to ISIS's emergence from within the region. One significant theme is how ISIS projected a deceptive image in its early days, presenting itself as the superior faction with a lineage connected to the generation of the Companions. By leveraging the region's religious character and appearing righteous, they gained credibility among certain segments of the population. The influence of immigrants is another crucial theme, shaping ISIS's ideology and approach. Their impact on the group influenced local perceptions and convinced many of the righteousness of ISIS's cause. Civilian despair resulting from the regime's oppressive actions, coupled with the perceived inaction of the international

community, played a pivotal role in fueling support for ISIS. Many lost faith in political solutions and believed that Islamic factions, with their military capabilities and experience, were the only ones capable of overthrowing the regime. Manipulative tactics, such as cultivating friendly relations with certain factions and deceiving parents and community members, helped bolster ISIS's internal influence. This manipulation earned them trust and support from various quarters. The presence of self-interested individuals, regardless of the governing faction, added complexity to the situation. These opportunistic actors supported different groups over time, and opposing their actions often led to severe consequences, fostering a climate of fear and silence within the community. Terror and intimidation were also potent factors in ISIS's internal rise. Fear of reprisals silenced many who were aware of the group's true nature, further reinforcing their grip on power. He has marked his response as “there are also some people who care about their interests regardless of the faction that governs them, and until now they are present and they were helping the regime during the period of its control and after the Free Army and then the Front and ISIS and now they support the SDF, while those who opposed their presence and revolted against them were kidnapped or killed, and there is a large number who knows their truth because of previous experiences, so he kept silent, which led to terror among the people of them”.

Similar and somewhat relevant factors are also provided by another participant. The participant offers valuable insights into the factors behind ISIS's emergence in Tal Abyad. One crucial aspect is the strong influence of powerful clans, represented by figures like Khalaf Al-Diab Al-Halous from the respected Al-Na'im clan, Faisal Al-Ballo from the Al-Baggara clan, and Abdul Aziz al-Omar from the Al-Bu Assaf clan. These individuals played pivotal roles in supporting ISIS in the region. Socioeconomic factors also played a significant role. Figures like Faisal Al-Ballo and Abdul Aziz al-Omar lacked formal education and faced social disparities, leading to feelings of exclusion and resentment. Their attraction to Salafi religiosity and past experiences fighting in Iraq further shaped their perspectives and drew them to ISIS. The group gained popularity by engaging with local spoilers and actively fighting against them, which won them the attention and support of the local community. Additionally, ISIS provided funding, salaries, and resources to impoverished and marginalized individuals, enticing them to join their ranks. Another notable factor was the vulnerability of the weak local religious structure, particularly in an area predominantly influenced by Sufi followers lacking a

firm religious ideology. ISIS capitalized on this weakness, gaining influence and recruiting individuals through financial incentives. It's worth mentioning that the primary leadership and fighters within ISIS were predominantly immigrants, indicating a hierarchical setup where local recruits served as foot soldiers while the top leadership comprised individuals from outside the region. Upon recruitment, local fighters underwent a three-week ideological course to ensure their loyalty and commitment to ISIS's extremist ideology. This indoctrination process played a pivotal role in solidifying their dedication to the group's cause. The respondent was of the view that “Faisal Al-Ballo from the Al-Baggara clan, was the first prince of the Tal Abyad area, he owns a small vegetable rug, he did not finish his primary school, he has a severe class hatred against his uncles who excluded him over the years, and they have a lot of money, unlike his father, who does not have anything, he resorted to Salafi religiosity, he also went to fight in Iraq, and also upon his return he was imprisoned in Sednaya”.

While analyzing the other interviews it can be seen that one participant has determined that “in Raqqa and then al-Deir fighting factions calling themselves the descendants of the Prophet led by Maher al-Nuaimi, ISIS accuses the descendants of the Prophet of French funding in order to fight ISIS and this before the battles and ISIS announced this thing in order to fight in Syria and Saddam Rakhita and Mahmoud Matar were the grandchildren of the Prophet and several other people”.

The interviewee's response provided valuable insights into the factors that influenced the resistance and eventual fall of Deir Ezzor to ISIS. The city's prolonged siege, lasting nearly seven months, had a devastating impact, leading to a scarcity of ammunition and making it challenging to defend against ISIS's advances. The presence of traitors within the local population and their collaboration with sleeper cells facilitated ISIS's entry into the city and subsequent control. Internal conflicts and factional fighting, even among groups claiming descent from the Prophet, further weakened the resistance effort. Defections of key figures added to the turmoil, making it difficult to maintain a united front against the growing threat of ISIS. The Free Syrian Army's struggle to acquire resources compelled them to buy ammunition from local merchants, not realizing that some of these supplies were coming from ISIS. This unwitting support undermined their ability to resist effectively. ISIS's use of media propaganda, particularly the dissemination of horrifying scenes depicting systematic killings and torture, played a significant role in sowing panic and terror among the population. This psychological warfare further

destabilized the city, making it more susceptible to the influence of ISIS. The infiltration of ISIS elements from Iraq after the fall of Mosul was another critical factor that contributed to their expansion in Deir Ezzor. These infiltrators added to the group's strength and capabilities, allowing them to exert even more control over the city. For the case of most influencing personalities of the period, a respondent has provided the fact that *“Abu Dujana al-Zar and also Amer al-Rafdan, Abu Rami (Abd al-Latif al-Thaliqi) and Abu Haroun (a defected lieutenant from the city of Mohassan) are those personalities who contributed to the organization's entry into Deir Ez-zor at that time.”*

It is uncertain if ISIS is able to regroup and restart in the region as it depends on a variety of factors.

ISIS began to re-establish its ranks and the organization again, transitioning from the stage of the state and caliphate to the stage of the secret organization again. The organization means ISIS is a military group that does not have an apparent geographical authority and fights in guerrilla warfare, penetrating with secret groups within local communities to carry out qualitative operations and assassinations, in addition to the sleeper cells that carry out specific functions and can operate very efficiently as acts of sabotage and bombings. Still, it is difficult for them to regain control of the territories. Because they lost most of their fighters and cannot return with the rest, they are present as cells in various regions of Syria, from north to south. Many of them are present today in Idlib under the surveillance of Tahrir al-Sham. Still, they are disarmed and monitored in their homes, having their movements recorded, among other things.

ISIS operates decentralized, making it difficult for traditional military forces to combat it effectively. The most significant influence in the desert is between the countryside of Deir Ezzor and Palmyra and hiding in it due to the presence of mountain ranges, units, and small villages scattered there; right now, in some areas in Deir Ezzor, ISIS has been in control at night. Some people forcibly pay Zakat, a "Muslim charity," to ISIS in those areas. This is how ISIS has been working since the fall of Baghouz in 2019 and the loss of the last geographical point controlled by ISIS. The upcoming attack on cities may be slower than the previous one, but it will strike more violently and not consider local community considerations.

"ISIS returned, began to regroup, and began the second resurgence phase of the organization, that is, after its elimination by the international coalition, and this stage is called the fifth generation of jihadists."

In contrast, ISIS still has a chance to regroup again; as long as there are camps in northeast Syria and ISIS cells in the area carrying out various ISIS operations in the region, ISIS has not yet been defeated.

The absence of safety, the spread of thefts, hostile practices against the people by the SDF, the significant spread of drugs in the area, and the deterioration of the economic situation. So the people—not all of them—wished the days of ISIS would return, despite their hatred for them. The factors contributing to the existence of ISIS are still present today, even though access to weapons and the financial cycle around them have been restricted. ISIS has planted a seed of extremism and Salafism in the local community to affect and control it. The attraction has also increased because those in the "De facto forces" on the ground are committing clear violations, meaning the SDF. People's fear of the regime's return to control their villages and cities increases the attraction of new members to the organization's ranks, especially during the bad management of the SDF in northeast Syria, which does not support the population. They fueled the rhetoric of nationalism, imposed the teaching of the Kurdish language, entered villages and areas that did not have a previous Kurdish presence in the region, and practiced systematic violence against the indigenous population.

"I believe that we are helping ISIS to return if the SDF continues with the management method it is currently carrying out in the areas under its control and the Iranian militias in Deir Ezzor. Also, the Salafi ideology spread by ISIS has not faded in the region, as a large number of women are still today in northeastern Syria wearing the Niqab that ISIS imposed. With the fact that until today there is a female accountability system, all traces of ISIS in the region have not been erased and have not been effectively treated, but rather differences and sectarian tendencies are fueled by the Kurdish tide towards the Arab regions. The Iranian tide is also controlled by the regime. A military victory over the group does not necessarily mean its end".

Factors supporting the return of ISIS to the region include the humiliation, oppression, and long history of the brutal regime, systematic rape, murder, and ethnic cleansing. The return of the Syrian regime may increase civilian anger and despair, leading many to join extremist groups like ISIS. The state of sectarian division in Iraq and Syria may inflame Sunni groups in Iraq and Syria to support extremist jihadist groups like ISIS. The failure of the Syrian revolution and the inability to obtain political gain or alleged reforms may also lead to the return of ISIS.

The failure to rehabilitate and reintegrate ISIS families and children in the region may create a time bomb of extremism, which may explode if other contributing factors, such as the detention of families in closed camps, reinforce the state of hatred and socially outcast and isolated children. Women and children in northeast Syria without trials, rehabilitation, or integration into society, hatred against the world and others, and the failure to decide the fate of ISIS detainees and their children may be solid factors for their return.

The continuation of security chaos, lack of trust between local authorities and the local community due to corruption and nepotism, lack of participation in decision-making, and control over society's wealth are also factors conducive to the return of ISIS. Factors conducive to the recovery include the poor and weak management of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in controlling the situation and securing safety for the population, as well as the economic stability that ISIS has succeeded in achieving. Discrimination in opportunities between Kurds and Arabs with the support of the SDF, the desire to take revenge on the Syrian regime, and the control of Iranian militias over large areas of Deir Ezzor may also contribute to tensions and problems that may lead to the return of extremism in the region. Feelings of isolation and insufficient economic or social opportunities can also drive women to return to the ranks of ISIS. Extremist ideas and ideological aspirations can also attract women who previously joined ISIS, in addition to the influence of the family or community of the region to which ISIS women return.

5.5. Preventing Factors of the Resurgence of ISIS

The fourth question asked to the participants in the interview was, “*What are the factors that might prevent their return?*”. The respondents had provided valuable inputs in terms of factors that may prevent ISIS from returning which had been grouped into the following themes: focuses on the importance of military and security measures, legal and judicial actions, social and economic development.

1. Military and Security Measures (5 respondents): Respondents emphasized the importance of military and security measures to prevent the return of ISIS. These measures include targeting ISIS fighters and resources and conducting counter-terrorism operations.

2. Legal and Judicial Actions (4 respondents): Legal and judicial actions were mentioned, such as conducting fair trials for detainees, finding political solutions that ensure justice, and addressing legal consequences for former ISIS members.

3. Social and Economic Development (3 respondents): Respondents highlighted the importance of social and economic development, including education, rehabilitation, job opportunities, and improving the economic situation. Protection of women and addressing economic challenges were also mentioned.

4. International Cooperation and De-radicalization (2 respondents): International cooperation was mentioned as crucial for dismantling camps, repatriating foreign fighters, and implementing de-radicalization programs. Preventing extremism through religious awareness and clarifying religion was also emphasized.

5. Religious Awareness and Extremism Prevention (1 respondent): Raising religious awareness and educating people in a non-extremist way were seen as important measures to prevent the resurgence of ISIS.

Factors that may prevent the return of ISIS include the loss of fighters, weapons, and a mass base, the improvement of the leading military apparatus in central countries like Iraq, Syria, and other parties, and the decline of the organization's ability to attract new participants. The chaos of weapons in the region has decreased, and the presence of firearms has become limited to specific forces.

The experience of ISIS has harmed the region, and Islamic regimes will not be allowed to rule. ISIS, north and south of the Euphrates River, has lost centrality due to the separation of ISIS groups, losing direct contact between the elements. The Badia groups, divided into Jabal al-Bishri groups, are the most significant and coordinated, working in separate groups rather than striking forces. The Aljazira (north of the Euphrates River) groups are the most minor.

"The organization no longer has the previous tools of attraction it had. The chaos of weapons in the region has decreased, and the smuggling of weapons to and from neighboring countries has reduced too. The presence of firearms in the area has become limited to specific forces. The decline of the Islamic tide, whether within the local community or the countries that have experienced the Arab Spring, even political Islam has declined; the experience of ISIS has been very harmful to the region. Islamic regimes will not be allowed to rule; the transition towards a civil and democratic state is based on Development, and political assistance programs and projects are the only solutions".

5.6. Ideological Differences of ISIS from Other Armed Groups

The interviewee discusses the crucial role of Syrian fighters who participated in conflicts in Iraq and their arrest and detention in Sednaya prison. Their desire for revenge became a powerful force that contributed to the emergence of jihadist groups within Syria itself. The formation and growth of jihadist groups, particularly Al-Nusra Front and ISIS, are discussed, highlighting the dynamics between local and immigrant fighters. Initially, ISIS sent elite soldiers to Syria to collaborate with Jabhat al-Nusra, the al-Qaeda-affiliated group operating in Syria. The leader of al-Qaeda, al-Baghdadi, played a crucial role in the emergence of ISIS, calling for all factions to unite under the banner of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. This call significantly contributed to ISIS's rise to power and influence in the region. The conflict between Al-Nusra Front and ISIS, both of which had affiliations with Al-Qaeda, further complicated the dynamics of the Syrian conflict. The attraction of rebels to ISIS increased, and the appeal of ISIS to certain rebel factions added to the complexity of the situation. The emergence of ISIS and its competing ideologies created divisions among activists and revolutionaries. Some believed that the solution lay with Islamic factions, while others were disillusioned with ISIS and Ahrar al-Sham's actions. ISIS presented itself as a more organized and appealing option, while Jabhat al-Nusra emphasized jihad and fighting the Crusaders. After the liberation of Raqqa and Tabqa from regime forces, various factions vied for control, but some factions angered the people, leading to a shift in support towards Jabhat al-Nusra. Ideological differences were observed among individuals stationed at a small health clinic, with some posing beliefs that aligned with ISIS's later ideology. ISIS seized the opportunity presented by the security chaos in Deir Ezzor to spread fear and terror throughout the region, using assassinations, bombings, and targeting prominent individuals and Free Army battalions' headquarters. These divisions within the region deepened as ISIS clashed fiercely with Jabhat al-Nusra and other supporting factions.

5.7. Role of Women in ISIS

Women and ISIS remain one of the most complex files, and it has not been addressed and dealt with seriously enough, as no one loses sight of the suspicious role that women played in the ranks of ISIS and, at the same time, the significant harm that women suffered as a result of ISIS. In ISIS, a women's accountability system was formed, similar to the women's police. It has many tasks, such as monitoring markets, people, and

women, inspecting and punishing women, and attracting recruits through advocacy, social media, and forums. They also participated in several military actions, which were not as strong and ferocious as men's military actions, but they were done. Today, after the military elimination of ISIS and the retreat of the areas of control, there is a significant presence of women in the camps scattered in northeastern Syria, such as Al-Hol camp, Al-Roj, and Tal-Al-Samen camp.

Thousands of women live in these camps with their children; many of them are civilian women who fled during the coalition operations in their areas and were detained in these camps. On the other hand, these camps contain a large number of wives and women of the organization who contributed to most of the activities of ISIS in the region, a large number of immigrant women accompanied by their children from Arab and European countries, and every place from which ISIS was able to attract women who were recruited and actively involved in promoting the extremist ideology and carrying out terrorist acts.

ISIS women play a significant role in the possibility of the return of ISIS, as they are often unable to be arrested and interrogated due to societal customs that prevent exposure to women. They can be a liaison, information transfers, and recruitment factors in the region, especially with many accompanied children inside the camps. However, there are many obstacles to getting rid of these camps scattered in the area, such as the Iraqi side not recovering its nationals from the families of the organization and the children of fighters in the camps in northeastern Syria. As other countries refuse to take back their nationals from Syria, there are women and children in camps belonging to 57 different countries. For example, the Al-Roj camp has no locals; most families are foreigners and immigrants from the women of ISIS.

"They have a major role in the possibility of return, especially with the presence of a large number of accompanied children inside the camps; if these women and children are not properly integrated into society, it will certainly be the basis for return, and there are many obstacles in the process of getting rid of these camps scattered in the region, for example, the Iraqi side does not recover its nationals from the families of the organization and the children of fighters in the camps in northeastern Syria. Also, more than fifty foreign countries have nationals and citizens in the camps who are not doing serious work toward their recovery and trial in their countries of origin. Their presence in northeast Syria within camps of this density poses a great danger."

Today, the camps remain in Raqqa and Hasakah, and five years after the liberation process, women and children have not been rehabilitated. Local authorities are not doing any work to redress the grievances of these women, and they face stigma and societal exclusion. They suffer from the worst forms of treatment: no legal rights, no job opportunities, and no one to care for them. Al-Hol camp is a time bomb and a terrifying place for children who have been there for several years. Some women have joined and believed in the ISIS project because of the organization's care and the lack of rehabilitation mechanisms. The cases of societal oppression and neglect over the years have inspired some women to search for influence, power, and control.

When male children reach the age of 13, they move to men's prisons, which means throwing them directly into hotbeds of extremism, making it difficult for them to rehabilitate and integrate properly into society. Women play a significant role in the life of ISIS in eastern Syria, as they are now mainly in control of the financial network and work to increase the number of recruits in the ranks of ISIS. Also, they are the most influential element in the organization regarding the delivery of funds, communications, and recruitment. Many ideological widows of the organization use social media and other platforms to witness the organization's movement in the region. They are less subject to prosecution and search, and children who lived in the camp for many years have not been dealt with specially, rehabilitated, or integrated into society properly. On the other hand, the ISIS orphan share association, which cares for the widows of ISIS men and their children, sends money and support to the women and children of the organization in various ways.

We delve deep into the core of our study's findings, aiming to comprehensively evaluate the insights garnered from our extensive case study and analysis. The preceding chapters have meticulously laid the groundwork for this evaluation, defining our objectives and research questions, and grounding our study in a relevant literature review. Now is the ideal time to blend the abundance of information and viewpoints accumulated through interviews and investigation to reach significant inferences and perceive the ramifications of the elements adding to the internal emergence of ISIS. Our investigation of the interplay between research objectives, research questions, and empirical findings is intended to enlighten the degree to which our research objectives have been accomplished and the way that these results can add to a superior comprehension of this

complex issue. With an eye on the prevention and relief of future threats, this part holds the way to unraveling the lessons learned from the underlying case study.

In the underlying research work, the researcher has effectively covered several key aspects related to the emergence and potential resurgence of ISIS in northeast Syria. The research objectives and questions are well-structured and align with the content presented. Here's an evaluation of how the content relates to the research objectives and questions:

Research Objective 1 is about analyzing the decline of ISIS in the northeastern part of Syria, as well as carefully assessing any potential risks linked to a possible resurgence of extremist actions in the region. The content includes extensive information about the decline of ISIS in the northeastern part of Syria. It discusses the internal dynamics of ISIS, its tactics, and how it has transformed into a secret organization. This directly addresses the objective of analyzing the decline. The content also mentions potential factors contributing to the resurgence of ISIS, such as the presence of sleeper cells, the absence of safety, and deteriorating economic conditions. These points relate to assessing potential risks linked to resurgence.

Research Objective 2 is related to a specific focus on diverse socioeconomic elements that contribute to the exposure of individuals within the sociopolitical context of northeastern Syria. The content touches on various socioeconomic factors contributing to the exposure of individuals to extremist groups like ISIS. It discusses the impact of the economic situation, the role of tribal communities, and the manipulation of social and political tensions. This aligns with the second research objective.

Research Objective 3 is helpful in explaining the multifarious roles undertaken by women and children within the organizational structure of ISIS. This endeavor seeks to unveil the complex nature of their involvement and recognize potential ramifications for forthcoming security challenges. The content related to the said objective provides insights into the roles of women in ISIS, such as their involvement in monitoring, recruitment, and military actions. It also highlights the presence of women in camps and the potential security challenges they pose. This directly addresses the third research objective.

For the case of research questions, the below can better be considered in the context of literature review findings and evaluations.

Research Questions tend to deal with the fact that what are the factors that contributed to the emergence of ISIS in the northeastern region of Syria? The content extensively discusses various factors contributing to the emergence of ISIS in northeastern Syria, such as historical background, the nature of Jihadism, causes of violent extremism, and regional context. This information directly addresses the research question. The researcher has covered a wide range of relevant topics, and the content aligns well with the research objectives and questions.

The introduction serves as a crucial backdrop to the current research work, offering a detailed comprehension of the historical context of northeast Syria since 2011. This locale settled in the northeastern part of Syria, has arisen as a critical point of convergence of mind-boggling and diverse events. This conspicuousness emerges from a one-of-a-kind interchange of political, social, and military factors that have flowed into significant outcomes. One of the most distinctive features of this region is its exceptional variety concerning its ethnic and religious composition. The commencement of the Syrian conflict in 2011, brought into the world as a feature of the more extensive broader Arab Spring uprisings, denoted the start of a turbulent and extended emergency that keeps rippling through the said region. What at first began as a progression of uprisings immediately developed into a multi-layered struggle with broad ramifications and implications. The turmoil, set apart by its span and intricacy, immediately spread across the whole country, however, it is in the northeastern district where it took on a particularly pivotal role. The justification for this region's critical importance lies in its extraordinary situation as a theater where a large number of entertainers, both domestic and international, played characterizing roles in molding the course of occasions. As the conflict unfolded and gained momentum, northeast Syria became a hotbed of significant developments. Here the intricacies of the contention have been amplified, where the social and political battles have been articulated, and where the impact of both nearby and global players has been intensely felt and discussed the same as well. The introduction effectively highlights how this region has seen a conversion of political, social, and military elements, hence giving a fundamental setting to the current research on the development and expected resurgence of extremist groups like ISIS.

The case of literature review, dives into the perplexing idea of extremism, especially its connection to Jihadism, which is portrayed by militant and often violent ideologies. Jihadism, while not having an all-around acknowledged definition, is for the

most part connected with philosophies that focus on equipped battle to lay out an Islamic state or safeguard perceived Muslim interests. This survey features how Jihadism much of the time fills in as a defense for demonstrations of brutality against both non-Muslims and Muslims who are viewed as deviating from these extremist interpretations of Islam. Additionally, the association among Jihadism and violent extremism is diverse. Notwithstanding the philosophical perspective, political and social elements assume a huge part in the multiplication of these developments. Regions portrayed by political instability, conflict, and cultural distress become prolific ground for these fanatic gatherings. The shortfall of successful administration and the presence of extended clashes establish conditions where such groups can flourish. This aspect is crucial in understanding the roots of violent extremism. The concepts related to Jihadism and Violent Extremism (ISIS case), Causes of Violent Extremism (ISIS case), and Women and Children's Role within ISIS are effectively discussed and supported by the already existing research work which has ultimately proved the rationale of carrying out the current research work. The review also underlines the historical background of ISIS in the Middle East, emphasizing the group's strategic approach. ISIS implements a three-stage strategy that culminates in the establishment of its control over liberated areas using semi-conventional forces. During this third stage, ISIS focuses on consolidating power in rural areas and cities it captures. The group relies on tactics like guerrilla warfare and suicide bombings to further its objectives. This historical context provides essential insights into the organization's evolution and its current status in the region.

At the time of supporting the current study model with the respondent's reviews, the well-drafted questions were given to interviewees, and their views were effectively recorded to support the findings of the study. For the case study and analysis, the content covers a few significant areas. The investigation presents a top-to-bottom assessment of the internal dynamics of ISIS, its shift toward covert tasks, and how it has changed into a mysterious association. It examines the downfall of the association and the catch of basic areas in Iraq and Syria in 2014. This lines up with the exploration objective of breaking down the decline of ISIS. Moreover, the investigation features potential risks connected with the resurgence of ISIS, like the presence of sleeper cells, deteriorating economic conditions, and the absence of safety. These elements straightforwardly connect with the research objective of surveying the risks associated with resurgence. The content in the analysis also addresses the impact of socioeconomic factors, specifically the economic

situation, the role of tribal communities, and the manipulation of social and political tensions. This discussion aligns with the research objective of focusing on diverse socioeconomic elements that contribute to the exposure of individuals to extremist groups.

Additionally, the contextual investigation and examination give experiences into the multifarious roles undertaken by women within the organizational structure of ISIS. It talks about their contribution to checking, enrollment, and military activities, as well as their presence in camps and the potential security challenges they present. This examination straightforwardly addresses the exploration objective connected with women's roles in ISIS. The same has been considered for the case of children, and the way the role of women has been discussed in the context of ISIS. The analysis goes a step further in helping us grasp the factors that led to the emergence of ISIS. It provides a deeper look into various critical aspects of this issue. It takes us back in time to understand the historical backdrop, revealing the circumstances that allowed ISIS to take shape in the Middle East. This includes considering the influence of regional conflicts, political instability, and social unrest on the group's formation. Moreover, the analysis dives into the nature of Jihadism and its links to violent extremism, emphasizing the militant ideologies that often underlie these movements. It also delves into the root causes of violent extremism, particularly focusing on how prolonged conflicts and the breakdown of state institutions create environments that nurture radicalization. This thorough exploration of historical events, ideological aspects, and the broader context aligns with our research question, which is all about identifying the many interconnected elements that played a role in ISIS emerging in northeastern Syria. This is how enough support has been provided for the research objectives and questions of the current research work and the varying theories and aspects have better been discussed in the context of the topic of the current research work. This way the objectives of the current research work are achieved and the answers to the questions of the study are provided by supporting it with the findings of the previously carried out research work and the respondents of the interviewees.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Conclusion

The research presented in this thesis has provided a comprehensive analysis of the formation of extremist societies, focusing on the ISIS case in Northeast Syria. Using descriptive, historical, and case study research methodologies, we have gained valuable insights into the region's realities during the ISIS era and the potential risks of extremism resurgence.

The analysis of the historical stages of extremist Salafi groups has revealed the complex evolution that led to the establishment of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. The emergence of ISIS in Northeast Syria had far-reaching consequences, challenging the region's social fabric, political stability, and human security. The decline of ISIS marked an important milestone, but indicators of potential extremism resurgence linger, emphasizing the need for proactive measures to address the lingering challenges.

The qualitative interviews conducted with individuals, men and women, researchers, journalists, and human rights activists, who witnessed ISIS in the north of Syria have offered firsthand accounts of the impact of extremist societies. The narratives shared by these witnesses provide a unique and nuanced perspective on the formation of extremist ideologies, the motivations of individuals involved in extremist activities, and the dynamics that shaped the presence of extremist groups in societies in the region.

Throughout the case study, we have highlighted the role of women and children within ISIS and their experiences in the extremist environment. Examining gender dynamics within extremist societies has revealed the complex and varied roles women and children play, underscoring the need for a gender-sensitive approach to addressing extremism and its potential resurgence.

The significance of international interventions and political measures has been emphasized throughout the research. The humanitarian catastrophe in Northeast Syria requires urgent attention at the international level. Collaborative efforts and preventive measures are essential to mitigate the risks of extremism resurgence and promote sustainable stability in the region.

In conclusion, this thesis has contributed to the knowledge of extremist societies in Northeast Syria. The comprehensive analysis of the realities on the ground, the

historical trajectory of extremist Salafi groups, and the personal narratives of witnesses have provided a deeper understanding of the formation and impact of extremist societies.

The implications of this research extend beyond academia, offering valuable insights for policymakers, international organizations, and practitioners working towards countering extremism and promoting peace and stability in the region. By building on the lessons learned from the past and recognizing the potential risks for the future, we can pave the way for a more secure and prosperous Northeast Syria. We hope that this research will inspire proactive and collaborative efforts to address the challenges posed by extremist societies and create a safer future for the region and its people.

6.2. Recommendations

Political Solution and Civil Society Engagement: A comprehensive political solution that is fair and inclusive to all Syrians, without discrimination, should be actively pursued. It is crucial to engage civil society organizations to address the problems with extremist groups and prevent an environment that fosters their growth. These organizations can play a vital role in countering extremist narratives and promoting peacebuilding initiatives.

Education and Rehabilitation Programs: Investing in education and rehabilitation programs is essential to prevent or mitigate the effects of the return of former ISIS members. Providing opportunities for education and social rehabilitation for children and adults can help steer them away from extremist ideologies and reintegrate them into society.

Employment and Economic Opportunities: Securing employment opportunities for individuals vulnerable to radicalization can reduce their susceptibility to extremist recruitment. Addressing economic disparities and offering viable livelihood options, especially in conflict-affected areas, may diminish the appeal of extremist ideologies.

Protection of Women and Gender-Sensitive Approaches: Protecting and empowering women is vital in countering extremism. Gender-sensitive approaches should be incorporated into rehabilitation and social programs, recognizing women's unique roles, experiences, and needs affected by extremism.

Addressing the Kurdish-Arab Conflict: Addressing the longstanding Kurdish-Arab conflict is essential for promoting stability in Northeast Syria. Resolving this conflict can help reduce tensions and grievances that extremist groups have exploited.

Religious and Awareness Factors: Promoting religious tolerance, interfaith dialogue, and awareness campaigns can counter extremist ideologies and foster a sense of community cohesion. Religious leaders, educators, and influencers should be involved in promoting messages of peace, understanding, and inclusivity.

Legal Framework and International Mechanisms: Strengthening the legal framework and international cooperation is crucial to address the challenges posed by extremism in Northeast Syria. Nations should work together to prosecute and rehabilitate individuals associated with extremist groups.

Social Reintegration and Rejection of Extremism: Communities should be engaged in efforts to reintegrate individuals who have disengaged from extremist groups socially. Social rejection and marginalization should be addressed to prevent former members from joining extremist activities.

De-radicalization Programs: Implementing de-radicalization programs within detention centers and camps can allow individuals to disengage from extremist ideologies and develop alternative worldviews.

Inclusive Rehabilitation for Foreign Returnees: Nations with citizens who join extremist groups should provide inclusive rehabilitation and reintegration programs, regardless of the individual's citizenship status. This approach will help address the humanitarian and security challenges associated with foreign returnees.

By implementing these recommendations, policymakers, international organizations, and local communities can work collaboratively to mitigate the risks of extremism resurgence in Northeast Syria. Proactive and comprehensive approaches, grounded in the lessons learned from the past, are essential to promoting the region's peace, stability, and security. We can create a safer and more prosperous future for Northeast Syria and beyond through concerted efforts.

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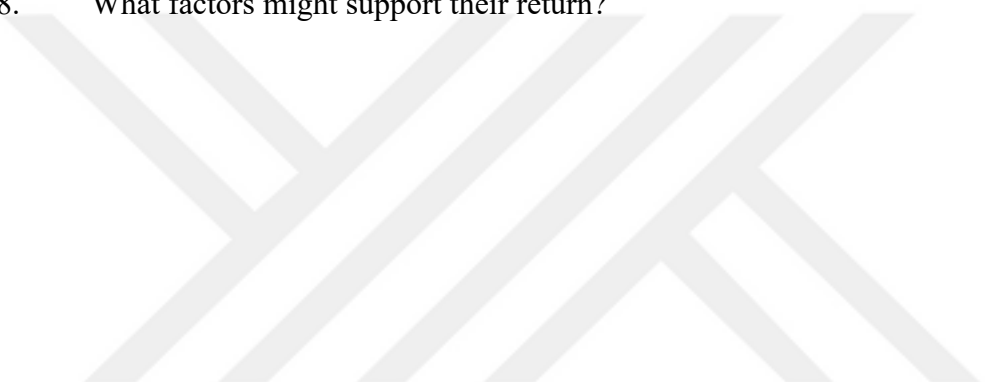
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ANNEXES

ANNEX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did ISIS emerge in the region?
 2. What are the factors contributing to the emergence of ISIS internally?
 3. What were local communities' reaction to ISIS emergence and existence?
 4. What are the ideological differences of ISIS from other armed groups?
 5. What is the role of women and children in ISIS?
 6. Can ISIS regroup and launch again in the region?
 7. What are the factors that might prevent their return?
 8. What factors might support their return?
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ÖZGEÇMİŞ

KİŞİSEL BİLGİLER

Adı Soyadı : Yamamah ELUBEYD SAMMAK

Uyruğu : Syrian- Turkish

EĞİTİM

Derece:	Adı	Bitirme Yılı
Üniversite	: Al Furat University bachelor of Agricultural Engineering	2015
Yüksek Lisans	: Hasan Kalyoncu University	2023
Doktora	: -	

İŞ DENEYİMLERİ

Yıl	Kurum	Görevi
2016-2013	Different NGOs	Humanitarian and Development projects
2023-2024	Women Now for Development	Humanitarian and Development projects

UZMANLIK ALANI: Civil Society Work

YABANCI DİLLER: English- Arabic- Turkish

BELİRTMEK İSTEĞİNİZ DİĞER ÖZELLİKLER: -

YAYINLAR: -