

T.C.
HASAN KALYONCU ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
SİYASET BİLİMİ VE ULUSLARARSI İLİŞKİLER ANABİLİM DALI
İNGLİZCE TEZLİ YÜKSEK LİSANS PROGRAMI

THE ISLAMIC STATE BETWEEN FACTS AND EXAGGERATION
&
THE ROLE OF U.S. INTELLIGENCE AND SECRETIVE AGENCIES IN THE WAR
AGAINST TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

HAZIRLYAN
JİHANE GHARYENİ

GAZİANTEP - 2023

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KABUL VE ONAY

.. Jihane GHARYENİ.. tarafından hazırlanan “The Islamic State Between Facts and Exaggeration: The Role of U.S. Intelligence and Secretive Agencies in the War Against Terrorist Organizations” başlıklı bu çalışma **10.01.2023** tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucu başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından **Yüksek Lisans / Doktora Tezi** olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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Yukarıdaki imzaların, adı geçen öğretim üyelerine ait olduğunu onaylarım.

...../...../.....

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TEZ ETİK VE BİLDİRİM SAYFASI (ETHICAL DECLARATION)

Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak sunduğum “**THE ISLAMIC STATE BETWEEN FACTS AND EXAGGERATION & THE ROLE OF U.S. INTELLIGENCE AND SECRETIVE AGENCIES IN THE WAR AGAINST TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS**” başlıklı çalışmanın tarafımca, bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı düşecek bir yardıma başvurmaksızın yazıldığını ve yaralandığım eserlerin kaynakçada gösterilenlerden oluştuğunu ve bunlara atıf yapılarak yararlanmış olduğumu belirtir ve onurumla doğrularım. **10/01/2023**

Jihane GHARYENI

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I would like to dedicate this work to my beloved mother for her continuous support throughout my life.

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Gaziantep, 2023

Jihane Gharyeni

ABSTRACT

The Islamic State (IS), The Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), or its most used version in English-speaking countries as The Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) is widely known for its barbaric and oppressive practices. Still, it is also known for promoting such practices in the media in general and on social media, which is mainly considered and used as a tool of psychological warfare against the enemy and as a source of funding.

This work deals with ISIS and its foundation. It examines the origins, background, ideology, and propaganda used and the cyber activities of this terrorist group. It also touches on the U.S. intelligence and secretive agencies and their way of handling the battle against these Jihadis. Therefore, this dissertation focuses on ISIS propaganda and the types of off-line and online activities (real space and cyberspace activities) conducted since its creation to examine the extent of its threat to the security services, governments, and international bodies, besides studying the level of severity of its offensive strategy and how security and intelligence agencies, governments and international bodies work to protect and safe the global information infrastructures before the cybernetic assaults, and the lives of civilians against terrorists' active targeting.

So, this work aims to understand and analyze the deep reasons behind the emergence of such a movement and to understand its nature and thus understand its structure and method of expansion. This work also discusses and re-analyses the missteps and moves of the American security servers in their dealings with Al-Qaeda, which caused the emergence of a more violent movement such as ISIS.

The dissertation uses a secondary research method, based on past data and longitudinal studies to review, re-analyze, and interpret events and facts spanning different periods, mainly between the 1980s and 2019, in addition to relying on historical references dating back to the 1200s. The data presented in this work are on an official and professional basis. Thus, it provides a large scope of expertly gathered and processed information. This research has represented conclusions that revolve mainly around these points; the ISIS ideology is not a spur of the moment, but it goes back to the era of the 1200s, and there is a clear gradation in violence and terrorism. International laws and American security services dealt with suspicious methods and double standards which worsened the security situation in the Middle East, specifically in Iraq and Syria, which contributed to the expansion and incursion of extremist terrorist ideology, and the phenomenon of ISIS.

This work contributes to understanding the roots, references, and backgrounds of Sunni terrorist movements, to avoid the birth of similar movements shortly or at least facilitate the understanding of its intellectual and field ideology.

Keywords: IS/ISIS/ISIL Propaganda, cyberterrorism, U.S. intelligence agents, IS/ISIS/ISIL, al-Qaeda as an inspiration to the global terrorist organizations.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ATAC	Antiterrorism Advisory Council
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
ECCHR	European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
IS	The Islamic State
ISIL	The Islamic State of Iraq and Levant
ISIS	The Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham
KSM	Khalid Sheikh Mohamed
NORAD	North American Aerospace Defense Command
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USS	United States Ship
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

The attacks of 9/11 brought the issue and dilemma of international intelligence liaison to the table and highlighted the importance of collaboration among intelligence agencies and security, on the national and international levels (*International Journal of intelligence and counterintelligence, 2011 p.527*), before September 11, 2001, ‘‘international intelligence cooperation did not exist’’ (*International Journal of intelligence and counterintelligence, 2011 p.527*). According to Stephane Lefebvre a former strategic analyst at the Canadian Department of National Defense and former Marcel Cadieux Policy planning Fellow at the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade: ‘‘Western security and intelligence agencies have long cooperated (and sometimes simultaneously completed), either bilaterally- the preferred way- or multilaterally. Their corporation is sometimes difficult, uneven, and haphazard, but when lives are believed to be at stake due to terrorists’ active targeting, efforts to make it work are certainly redoubled.’’ (*Lefebvre, Stephane. 2011. the difficulties and dilemmas of international intelligence cooperation, p. 527*).

As an impact of the 9/11 attacks, the US enhanced its foreign intelligence cooperation and asked to benefit from the knowledge and experience of its allies (*International Journal of intelligence and counterintelligence, 2011 p.527, p.528*). Many U.S. intelligence and security agencies, for instance; the central intelligence agency (CIA), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), both increased their overseas legal attaché offices, and reinforced them with special agents and support staff, for better cooperation and coordination facing the terrorism dilemma (*International Journal of intelligence and counterintelligence, 2011 p.527, p.528*). Another lesson that the U.S. has drawn from this painful experience was that counting only on foreign intelligence agencies instead of building and developing your human sources abroad, may cost you a lot as a hegemonic power. Cooperation is vital and productive, yet it cannot be counted on its own.

The dilemma here is that despite all these measures taken at the level of international security cooperation, the emergence and exacerbation of sectarian terrorism have not been prevented. Leaving the world face to face with a phenomenon of unparalleled contemporary terrorism and violence; ‘Islamic State savage terrorism’.

The Islamic State (IS), also known as ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and Levant) or ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham), is a militant organization listed as the top menacing

terrorist organization in the world. It is originally an affiliation of Al-Qaeda and mainly inspired by it, yet it was expelled from ‘the parent organization’, to create later a stand-alone entity.

The Islamic State is a militant group with a violent ideology and tutelary character which states itself as the guardian of the religious authority over Muslims. In a short period of its existence, this terrorist group expanded into several regions in both Iraq and Syria and declared the formation of a caliphate and the imposition of a strict Islamic ruling over the controlled areas. Despite the decline in its military, human capabilities, defense strength, and loss of control over several regions in Iraq and Syria, it still poses a security threat to nations' national and international security.

1.1. Research background

Under the surface calm of the region (Middle East), there was serious tension. The situation in many countries was reaching a boiling point. Freedom of speech, democracy, social justice, dignity, etc. were all confiscated by the repressive authorities. The conflictual situation in the region was not a spur of the moment, it was rather an explosion of decades of unsolved fundamental national and international issues.

One of the most critical details that fueled the conflict in the region, specifically in Iraq and Syria, and weakened the national security of these countries was the national authorities' convulsive relations with the global hegemon (the USA). The Syrian support of Iraqi insurgent groups during the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 shackled up the diplomatic relations between these entities (The US and Syria), resulting in an arbitrary American intervention in internal affairs in addition to field military intervention. All these factors have weakened the security forces in both Iraq and Syria, paving the way for many terrorist organizations to take control over many vital regions and penetrate national security.

Another key detail that causes the emergence of the phenomenon of terrorism in the region and the birth of the most violent terrorist organization (ISIS) in contemporary history, was the uprisings of 2011. In 2011, a Tunisian street vendor set himself on fire, when a policewoman seized his cart. WikiLeaks publication along with US criticism over the Tunisian oppressive regime and the extensive book ‘La Régente de Carthage’, detailing the corruption of Leila ben Ali (Former First Lady of Tunisia from 1987 to 2011) and her family. All of these incidents and more provoked young Tunisians to protest, sparking the so-called Arab Spring. A strong wave of rebellion swept across many countries in the Middle East. Iraq and Syria were not isolated from this civil disobedience. The situation became chaotic and ungovernable

soon, leaving mainly Iraq and Syria under a decade of civil war, economic downturns, fraud, inadequate and hackable national security, and above all under the grip of IS terrorism.

1.2. Problem Statement

In January 2014, a terrorist organization affiliated with Al-Qaeda called itself the Islamic State (IS), managed to exert firm control over a wide-ranging zone in the Eastern part of Syria along with Euphrates Valley and further into Iraq. It is worth mentioning that 'IS' is a militant group with a violent ideology and tutelary character which states itself as the guardian of the religious authority over the Sunni Muslims.

The phenomenon of contemporary terrorism (mainly represented by 'IS'), has not only affected Iraq and Syria as the two countries most damaged by this terrorism, but it has touched the Middle East and the entire world. This dangerous phenomenon has cost millions of innocent people their lives, their stability, and even the future of their children. Without mentioning the huge financial losses and the systematic demolition of the infrastructure at the hand of IS. But it should be noted here that the U.S. and its allies, under the pretext of combating terrorism and spreading democracy, have contributed greatly to deepening the crisis and exacerbating the damage.

The extent of the impact of this contemporary terrorism on all aspects of life for individuals, societies, nations, and the international system in general (in political, social, economic aspects, international interests, etc.) makes it an issue of the times and therefore it is impossible to turn a blind eye to it in the field of political science and international relations.

This work relies on a variety of intellectual references from Western and Eastern liberal sources, to conservative and radical authentic references. This study was not re-examined from one perspective, but it relied on different points of view to present a more in-depth, logical, and credible proposal, through objective analysis and interpretation of several secondary data sets, conclusions, and assaying of variables. So, the data were compiled, reformulated, and structured to provide a better understanding of the nature and ideology of the most dangerous contemporary terrorist organization (ISIS).

1.3. Research Questions

This work touches mainly on the following issues; what are the deep ideology and the intellectual roots of ISIS? How real is the ISIS threat? And how do the U.S. intelligence and security agencies deal with it?

It addresses the issue of contemporary terrorism from different sides and answers the following questions:

1. How did al-Qaeda and IS emerge?
2. What is the origin of the movement's name?
3. What is ISIS ideology and what does it have to do with al-Qaeda?
4. What and who are the spiritual and jurisprudence references and leaders of IS? and how did they affect the escalation of Sunni violence?
5. What are the methods the organization used in the recruitment stage? And which profiles were targeted?
6. What are the external causes that contributed to the emergence of ISIS and increased sectarian violence in the Middle East?
7. What was the impact of media on the spread of IS ideology worldwide?
8. How the American security services dealt with the phenomenon of terrorism?

1.4. Research objectives

This work aims to provide additional readings and conclusions by combining a variety of secondary data sets to add a more in-depth understanding of the emergence of such extremist movements in the Middle East (ME), and thus understand the way ISIS/ISIL/IS -like organizations (All abbreviations refer to the same terrorist organization. Mostly the abbreviation ISIS is used from this page on in this study) are structured and minimize the possibility of reorganizing ranks in such groups.

So, the main objectives of this study are:

- Explore the ideology and the intellectual roots of ISIS/ISIL/IS.
- Understand the direct and indirect factors that contributed to the emergence of such brutal terrorism in the region.
- Highlight the role of the U.S. intelligence and security agencies in dealing with the terror issue.

1.5. Research Hypotheses

This dissertation deals with the phenomenon of ISIS terrorism, by comparing certain variables, and by relying on a combination of several secondary data sets and research previously conducted over an extended period by experts in the field of political science and international relations and on the related subject (terrorism). It sheds light on the most threatening phenomenon at all, which is the systematic and studied religious

extremism of ISIS, which was fueled by internal and external factors, and it addresses the role of US security agencies in its war on terrorism.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Although there is a tremendous number of studies and research conducted on the subject of IS terrorism, most of these studies dealt with the issue from a biased point of view and from certain analytical standpoints with a lot of prejudices. Many factors that contributed to the emergence of such a violent ideology in the Middle East and its incursions in Iraq and Syria in particular, were ignored. Most studies, especially Western ones, have covered ISIS terrorism over a limited time frame (2011-2019) rather than over an extended period. The thing that hinders the correct understanding of the real reasons behind the emergence of such extremist movements as ISIS in contemporary history.

In recent decades, armed terrorist groups attributed to Salafist jihadism have attracted attention and succeeded in centralizing global affairs, and influencing the political map in the Middle East, especially in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen.

These groups have recently demonstrated the extent of their ability to influence individuals, especially young people from all over the world including Western youth, proving the strength of their propaganda. Among the most important elements that contributed to gaining people's trust towards them and facilitating the process of attracting recruits, is the sophisticated religious and political discourse that ISIS used, for example, by relying on reliable religious symbols and Qur'anic texts that have been reformulated and interpreted in a way that serves its agenda. In a short period, it was able to form a powerful military force and thus succeeded in imposing its political presence on the world. Therefore, all these reasons are important points for examining this phenomenon.

Another key point in this matter is the fact that there are many important similarities between the jihadi terrorist movements throughout history that they all claim affiliation with Salafism, thus presenting themselves as the only legitimate representative of the Islamic religion. They all reject any opinion contrary to their own and consider any sect that does not adapt their project and ideology as an enemy that must be disposed of, even if this sect is of the same religion (Islam) and doctrine (Sunni).

The controversial matter that prompts this research to delve deeper into the issue of IS terrorism is that despite the presence of similar armed movements in the world, extremist Islamic movements have always received the most international attention, in contemporary history. Some justify this by the extent of terrorism and violence used by these movements,

while some question the intention of the hegemonic powers led by the US to use the terrorism file as a pretext to interfere in the affairs of the Middle East and impose its control in the region.

Given the sheer scale of destruction caused by ISIS, and its ability to impose its military dominance despite the presence of the US-led coalition forces, it is not possible to overlook this phenomenon and not examine it further to better understand the ideology of this organization.

Among the conclusions that this study sought to highlight; is the fact that the ideology of ISIS is the result of old and modern extremist Salafi Jihadist movements, and gradual Takfiri thought dating back to the era of Ibn al-Qayyim and Ibn Taymiyyah, in addition to the violent thought that drives its roots from the Wahhabi movement and the thought of Sayyid Qutb.

Colonialism had a significant impact on the birth of these terrorist religious movements, which began in the form of resistance movements (Taliban, al-Qaeda), specifically during the Soviet conquering of Afghanistan in the 80s, and then the American invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq at the beginning of the 2000s. All these reasons contributed greatly to the formation of religious militias and the escalation of violence policy. The 2011 uprisings, worsened the situation in the region and made way for terrorist groups to infiltrate into societies and spread their ideology. All these factors led to the birth of an ideology and doctrine that is considered the most violent in the history of the contemporary Takfiri jihadist militias. The ISIS movement relied on veterans of al-Qaeda militias who participated in the war in Afghanistan and gained great experience in fighting against powerful armies and difficult geographic and climatic conditions, in addition to receiving extensive training in Jihadist camps.

The study lists a set of facts and compares them to form conclusions about the reasons for the emergence of these extremist terrorist movements and organizations in the region by studying the reasons behind the birth of ISIS and the extent to which it is related to the international agenda that aims to control the wealth of the Middle East and exhaust it economically and politically by igniting sectarian wars.

This work provides an in-depth explanation of the reasons for the emergence of the IS movement by narrating and analyzing the historical background of this group and studying its intellectual and combative references, and thus presents a speculative idea on the nature of the extremist Sunni jihadist Salafi movements that may be born later from the ashes of ISIS.

Another aspect that adds value to this work is the study of a large scope of data and research that were conducted previously by experts in the related context over different periods mainly over the period between the 1980s to 2019. In addition to relying on historical

references dating back to the 1200s. This detail gives a better overview of the thesis on a larger time scale.



CHAPTER II THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Terrorism

It is difficult for many experts, even seasoned ones, to put a clear and precise definition to the concept of terrorism. This challenge is mainly due to the changing nature, form, and framework of terrorism over time. For instance, the concept of cyberterrorism was not included in the designation of terrorism before. In addition to mystifying terrorism with other similar but not identical notions and concepts. For example, with the concept of political violence, civil wars, conflicts, revolutionary movements, etc. Therefore, this concept undergoes many modifications and revisions. (*Alex Peter Schmid. Contemporary voices. 2020*).

Alex Peter Schmid describes terrorism as patterns of violence that are performed repeatedly by individuals, groups, or states for personal, criminal, or political motives. The nature of this act involves alarming and suspicious styles. In Peter Schmid's reading of the violence of terrorism, he says that terrorism deals with the main targets through the direct targets. In other words, it targets specific groups which Schmid divided into two components; Random targets, and chosen targets, to serve the main objective, which is to influence public opinion. Thus, the public becomes the main tool of terrorism, creating new equations in favor of these terrorist organizations. Therefore, propaganda is a vital tool in this process.

The other matter that increases the complexities and challenges to understanding the concept of terrorism and putting it in a precise framework, is the deliberate misuse of the term by politicians and international actors, which facilitates the violation of human rights. In addition to double standards of international laws in spelling out the concept of the term. Which has no international legal definition hitherto. According to the general definition of terrorism, which is mainly defined through acts, Israel should be considered a terrorist state, but it is not the case. On the other hand, countries like Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Yemen, etc. where international military interventions, policies, and agendas have been imposed, are considered among the countries that support and sponsor terrorism. The absence of international transparency in dealing with the concept of terrorism is evident. This, provides an opportunity for some actors, 'the great powers, led by the US, to use the phenomenon of terrorism with its local designation to serve their interests and as an opportunity to get rid of the entities that pose a threat to their interests.

Despite the absence of international consensus on the legal definition of the concept of terrorism. However, after rounds of consultation between academics and professors in 2011, the latter committee reached an Academic consensus by revising the previous designation. The amended academic consensus definition of terrorism revolves mainly around these points:

- Terrorism is a doctrine associated with specific entities that cause fear, coercive acts, and political violence. So, activities that result in acts of violence, intimidation, or confinement of civilians. On the other hand, it is a violent conspiratorial activity that is practiced directly and without legal or ethical restrictions and which targets civilians and defenseless people. The terrorist act is determined by its propaganda and psychological repercussions on the public and the parties involved in the conflict.
- Terrorism is used as a strategy in three prime situations: i) unlawful state repression. ii) propaganda incitement by non-governmental entities in times of order and peace or external conflict zones. iii) an unlawful tactic of irregular warfare that is employed by governmental and non-state parties.
- Terrorism involves activities that endanger the lives of humans or use physical violence on a large group of people on a single-stage plot, by the use of bombings, armed assaults, and mass destruction weapons. And threats, kidnappings, and assassinations are used for political purposes and as a means of pressure on local governments or international parties for coercive negotiation.
- Acts of brutal nature that ignore the rules of war and international sanctions.
- The origins of terrorist brutality can be practiced by criminals, cliques, pervasive transitional networks, government actors, or clandestine state-funded agents (e.g., death and hit squads).
- Activities that constitute a direct or indirect threat to national and international security.
- Activities that violate domestic and international criminal laws.
- Motives for engaging in terrorism cover a wide range, including compensation for collective punishment, revolution, national liberation, etc., and promotion of various ideological, political, social, national, and religious causes and goals.

According to the academic consensus definition of terrorism compiled by A.P. Schmid, ‘terrorist acts are really self-contained but are part of the campaign of violence that alone, due

to the sequential nature of the upcoming acts of violence and threats, can create a climate of fear that enables terrorists to manipulate politics.” (A.P Schmid (Ed.). *Handbook of Terrorism Research*. London, Routledge, 2011, pp.86-87)

2.2. The External Factors That Contributed to the Formation and Escalation of Violent Extremism in the Middle East

In the following three sub-headings (1) The American and Western Invasion of the Region: The Anti-Western Sentiment, (2) The Imprisonment Experience: Illegal Detentions, Unfair Trials & Guantánamo Bay & Abu Ghraib Torture and Abuse, and (3) Counter-Terrorism Framework and International Law are reviewed.

2.2.1. The American and Western Invasion of the Region: The Anti-Western Sentiment

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, left a great tragedy and a brutal Civil War in Afghanistan for nearly 10 years. During the colonial period, the Soviets used cruel and bloody means against those who confronted this invasion and suppressed all the resistance movements with extreme violence. As a result, nearly a million civilians were killed. Almost 10 years after the ruthless invasion, the Soviet forces withdrew, leaving behind the outbreak of the Taliban phenomenon that took control of Afghanistan in 1996.

A decade after the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the United States invaded it again, marking the longest war in American history (2001-2021). Under the pretext of the war against terrorism, with the help of NATO and more than 40 countries, the United States of America occupied Afghanistan for two decades. It launched an all-out war with horrific means and devastating weapons. After 20 years of a deadly war, the Taliban once again overthrew the government and took over the country.

When the Taliban refrained from handing over bin Laden and some leaders of Al-Qaeda after the September 11, 2001, attack. The U.S. government, led by President George W. Bush, declared a war on terrorism, and thus Afghanistan was the first target of this war, due to the extensive presence of Al-Qaeda in the Afghani land, in addition to the presence of bin Laden and some key figures as well, according to official US statements.

Iraq was also not spared from the American invasion. The United States of America occupied Iraq in 2003. Within twenty-one days, the US and its allies were able to occupy and overthrow the capital, Baghdad.

Under the pretext of the existence of weapons of mass destruction, Saddam Hussein's support for terrorism "Al-Qaeda", and the liberation of the Iraqi people from dictatorship, an international resolution was taken, led by then US president George W. Bush and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, to declare war against Iraq.

Despite the lack of sufficient evidence to condemn Saddam Hussein and the intense campaigns and protests of many in the streets around the world against the decision to war on Iraq, all this did not deter the international parties led by the United States and the UK from military intervention in Iraq.

The first intervention was by airstrikes on Baghdad on March 20, 2003. After around a month US president G.W. Bush declared the end of the major operations in Iraq. According to statistics published by the British company Opinion Research Business International, the repercussions of the American occupation of Iraq reached one million and two hundred thousand deaths by 2007, 40% of whom were women and children.

Despite the withdrawal of American forces from Iraq in 2011 and despite the American promises to build a new version of Iraq, the country is still floundering and suffering on all levels. Which made it an easy target for IS due to the deterioration and weaknesses of the Iraqi security system.

2.2.2. The Imprisonment Experience: Illegal Detentions, Unfair Trials & Guantánamo Bay & Abu Ghraib Torture and Abuse

Injustice, abuse, and torturing are three words that sum up the prison experience in Abu Gharib and Guantánamo Bay.

A pile of men stripped naked with their faces covered in black cloth, a handcuffed naked man being frightened by a dog, and hundreds of similar photos were published and grabbed the headlines. But what remained stuck in the memory of many the most was the detail of the American soldiers pausing and laughing in front of those prisoners, who were subjected to the worst forms of torture (moral, physical, mental, sexual, psychological torture, etc.,) in Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo Bay.

Numerous eyewitnesses and testimonies from the victims and their warders themselves, in addition to the photos that were publicly published by American soldiers; all these details and more, had indeed documented humanitarian crimes that were practiced and committed

publicly and purposely against everyone who was arrested, even without charges or a court verdict.

Most of the violations have been documented and submitted to international courts, but no firm penalties have been taken against the perpetrators of these massacres and genocides. It is a programmed failure in the International Justice mechanism and a victory for the hegemonic powers, despite all the violations and proven crimes. According to New York Times, “the Blackwater Shooting” report published on October 25, 2007, Blackwater has been involved in more than 200 shooting incidents, resulting in the deaths of many innocent civilians. But thanks to the immunity granted to the military, none of these contractors have been prosecuted.

All these facts and details provoked the feelings of Arabs and Muslims, but mostly agitated the feelings of the detainees and their families. Al-Qaeda used this cause in its propaganda as a recruitment tool. Then, IS exploited those feelings of anger and desire for revenge to attract recruits. They appointed a group of veteran fighters who participated in the Afghanistan war (2001) and Iraq war (2003).

The United States of America opened the Guantánamo prison in Cuba, on July 11, 2002, and the prison is still open to this day. Many human rights organizations and members of civil society, as well as lawyers and actors in the international community, have worked hard to expose and stop the attacks and violations of the rights of prisoners in Guantánamo Bay, the prison that is considered one of the most mysterious and terrifying in the world. According to official statistics provided by the United States of America specifically the reports from the department of defense, the office of the Director of National Intelligence, and Congress, the Guantánamo prison in Cuba has received 780 detainees since it was opened. Most of them were captured or kidnapped by Afghan and Kurdish militias operating for the United States in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq, and delivered to US intelligence.

Many tools of torture were practiced and the most horrific means were used. A large number of violations were recorded, such as deprivation of food, drink, and sleep, and the prohibition from practicing any religious bows such as prayer. In addition to psychological and physical torture, including rape, burning, electrocution, etc.

Extrajudicial killing, abuse, and torturing, all these terms are directly related to Abu Ghraib prison. The prison was famous since the fifties with a bad reputation, where extreme torture and executions were carried out regularly in it. The United States of America used this prison until it was closed completely in 2014. Numerous violations were recorded in this prison, from torture, murder, and illegal executions. The violations were not only at the level of torture and the killing of prisoners but were also at the federal level and logistics in running

the prison, as Israeli investigators were hired under the pretext of language. It was later revealed that they participated in the torture of detainees.

In 2004, Joe Darby an American soldier took pictures of the torture, intimidation, and sexual harassment that were practiced on detainees by the American military crew in Iraq. These pictures were first published on the CBS news TV show, and it was a scandal for the US military.

2.2.3. Counter-Terrorism Framework and International Law

Anti-Terror Laws are laws applied primarily and more stringent to foreigners of Muslim origins and those of Arab or Eastern descent. For example, UK anti-terror laws only apply to foreigners and not to British-native citizens. Whether this foreigner holds British citizenship or not. This law also allows the detention of any suspect without evidence for a period of six months, extendable to 60 years. Detaining an immigrant for nine hours at the airport to prevent terrorism is permitted under the same Act even if the justification for the suspicion is not based on logical or concrete shreds of evidence. So, the British Anti-Terror Act strengthened the executive branch associated with political power and bypassed the judiciary, to put more pressure on Muslim immigrants, especially those of Eastern origins.

2.2.4. Writings and Classifications in Takfiri Thought

There is a clear escalation in modern Islamic writings and classifications in the jurisprudence of jihad and takfiri thought. This gradation is evident from the writings and terminology used over time, which influenced modern takfiri groups, especially ISIS. This also seems clear with the beginning of the takfiri thought with Ahmed Ibn Hanbal, to extend and escalate with Ibn Taymiyyah, and become increasingly rigid with Muhammed Ibn Abd al-Wahab, to reach its climax with Abu Abdullah al-Muhajir. To result in a new barbaric Hanbali, Wahabi, and Daeshi doctrine based on takfir, abuse, and bloodshed.

2.3. The New Era of Terrorism

The emergence of Al-Qaeda, its attacks, and operations, and the anti-American Insurgency in Iraq and its Repercussions are discussed in this section under the following sub-headings.

2.3.1. The Emergence of Al-Qaeda

To understand the nature of ISIS, it is essential to dig into its history and analyze its

roots and the causes of its emergence, but it is also abundantly critical to open the archive of al-Qaeda, to get the whole picture accurately assembled, and to provide valid conclusions.

The events of September 11, 2001, were a cornerstone in the history of terrorism, and an important date for the extremist group 'Al-Qaeda'.

After hijacking four airplanes and committing suicide attacks against the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, more than 2,600 people died, 125 died at the Pentagon, 256 died on the four planes (*The 9/11 Commission Report; Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*).

Yet, it should be recalled that 'Al-Qaeda' was not the spur of the moment, the history of Al-Qaeda goes back to the late 1980s when Bin Laden the wealthy Saudi jihadist along with other young Muslims coming from several regions of the world gathered to form an organization in Afghanistan, following the defeat of the Soviets in 1980s (*The 9/11 Commission Report; Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*). Soon, however, the aim of the organization expanded to include other parts of the world in their jihadi mission.

Bin Ladin's ideology relies heavily on the Egyptian writer Sayyid Qutb, it is also based mainly on the rejection of the Western will, and the Western occupation of the Muslim territories, and he opposed globalization, besides considering himself the protector of the foreign masters' victims.

He was fiercely opposed to the American presence (U.S. troops) in Saudi Arabia, and the U.S. policies in the Middle East in general. Another key figure in the movement was Ayman al Zawahiri, an Egyptian physician. Both Bin Ladin and al Zawahiri were the mastermind of al-Qaeda and the role model of many young Muslims everywhere, they declared a Fatwa and 'called for the murder of any American, anywhere on earth, as the individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it' (*The 9/11 Commission Report; Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*, p. 47).

In an interview with ABC-TV in 1998 Bin-Ladin said that he believes that Americans are the worst thieves and terrorists in the world today, he explained this by the American attacks on Islam and the involvement of the U.S. in all conflicts in the Muslim world (e.g., The American support to Israel against Palestine, to Russia against Chechen, to Indian against Kashmiri Muslims and Philippine government against the ethnic Muslims in its southern

islands, in addition to the support provided by America to the oppressive rulers of the Arab world - which Al-Qaeda considers as 'the agents' of the USA).

As a solution to end the American-Islamic conflict (as described by Ben-Liden), Al-Qaeda suggested that U.S. should abandon the Middle East, convert to Islam, and end the immorality and godlessness of its society and culture. "It is saddening to tell you that you are the worst civilization witnessed by the history of mankind" Ben Liden addresses the US Based on this ideology and political point of view, Bin Ladin formed an organization and an infrastructure in Afghanistan, that was able to "attract, train and use recruits against ever more ambitious targets"(ABC-TV. 1998. Bin-Ladin), he succeeded to build a fatal and dynamic Organization and kept strong ties with Taliban, "a regime providing sanctuary for al Qaeda".

By September 11, 2001, and according to the 9/11 commission report, Al-Qaeda was able to:

- Assess, acclaim, and oversee the preparation and design of important plots;
- Sign up nominees, brainwash, assess, and give them the required coaching;
- Communicate sufficiently to authorize arrangements and commands of operatives with those who would be aiding them;
- Manifest a smart attempt to collect required data and create evaluations and analyses of the opponent's strengths and weaknesses, advantages, and drawbacks;
- Mobilize fighters' long distances;
- Collect and transfer cash needed to fund an attack.

2.3.2. The Fatal Operations of Al-Qaeda

The 9/11 attacks were not the only attacks that Al-Qaeda established against the U.S.. Back in 1998, Al-Qaeda bombarded the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. As a response to these attacks, the Clinton administration exercised pressure on the Taliban regime in Afghanistan to assassinate Bin Ladin or hand him over. CIA recruited foreign agents to arrest or kill Bin Ladin and his chief assistants. Yet, all these courses did not stop Ben Ladin or discourage al-Qaeda from moving toward its goal.

Khalid Sheikh Mohamed (KSM) was the principal architect of the 9/11 attacks (The 9/11 Commission Report). KSM is a Pakistani Islamist militant and the person who brought the idea to Bin Ladin and his advisers. During the investigations with him, KSM claimed that "his. The original plot was even grander than those carried out on 9/11-ten planes would attack

targets on both the East and West coast of the United States’’. But this plan was modified by Bin Ladin because of its scale and complexity, KSM added.

By 1999, the training for the attacks has started. Four new recruits from the Muslim extremists were included, and one of them became the tactical commander of the operation in the United States: Mohamed Atta. Meanwhile, U.S. intelligence was getting frequent reports about possible attacks from Al-Qaeda. By working with foreign security services, the CIA successfully split some Al-Qaeda cells. Yet, the core of Bin Ladin’s organization remained intact. By the summer of 2000, Hamburg salmon burgers had arrived on the east coast of the United States and had begun pilot training. President Bill Clinton put more diplomatic pressure to get Bin Ladin expelled from Afghanistan and enhanced the secret efforts with some of the Taliban’s opponents but to no avail. CIA did not stop working on improving its intelligence collection on Al-Qaeda, this time the CIA used a small, unmanned airplane with a video camera, known as the predator.

On October 12, 2000, Al-Qaeda committed a suicide attack against USS Cole in Yemen with a guided missile; 17 American sailors were killed, and 39 were injured. The U.S. government led by Clinton was waiting for the final report to take military action. Yet, a presidential transition took place in late 2000 and early 2001, and the Bush administration started to develop a new strategy with a stated goal of eliminating the Al-Qaeda threat within three to five years (*The 9/11 Commission report*).

In the summer of 2001, U.S. intelligence agents received a warning that Al-Qaeda plans for “something very, very, very big.” George Tenet the director of Central Intelligence said. He adds “The system was blinking red”.

During the summer of 2001, many warning incidents happened, yet the intelligence agencies did not doubt their connection with the big action plans of al-Qaeda; Moussaoui was arrested for violation of immigration regulations while he was seeking fast-track training on how to pilot large jet airliners. Some terrorists spotted in Southeast Asia in January 2000 had arrived in the United States. The lack of analytic work was the main cause of this huge security defeat.

2.3.3. The anti-American Insurgency in Iraq and its Repercussions

This invasion which lasted from 2003 until 2011, fueled wars, erupted violence, and increased instability in the whole Middle East and not only in Iraq. By 2003, al-Zarqawi became a leading figure of Al-Qaeda in the war against the U.S. in Iraq. The U.S. was the

militant's target, but it was not the only target; the Iraqi government which allied with the Americans was also the prey of these sectarian rebel groups.

The first civil war in Iraq continued from 2003, until mid-2008. A second Civil War erupted a couple of years after the American withdrawal in December 2011, from 2013 until 2017. During this lethal war, against the American-led military coalition, the sectarian violence of Jihadists, recorded a noticeable rise. Which led to a chaotic war on every entity which declares an alliance with America.

2.4. The Islamic State: Emergence, Name, and Ideology

Contrary to what many people believe, ISIS was not the product of the Syrian civil war. The first emergence of ISIS goes back to 1999. But it remained under the shadow of Al-Qaeda until the break out of the Syrian War in 2011, when the Islamic State reemerged, after several years of obscure absence.

What distinguishes ISIS from other terrorist groups, the fact that it is not only a religious movement but it is also a military and political one, with a clear target and patented strategical and tactical ability just like its predecessor and 'Parent Group' Al-Qaeda. The group decided on the name Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), in 2013. When Abu Bakr al Baghdadi announced the expansion of the caliphate from Aleppo in Syria to Diyala in Iraq.

ISIS was originally founded by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (Jordanian terrorist), the founder of al-Qaeda in Iraq. Yet, after his death in a U.S. strike in Iraq on June 7, 2006. "Most historians of the Islamic State agreed that the group emerged out of Al-Qaeda as a response to the US invasion in 2003. They also agreed that it was shaped primarily by a Jordanian jihadist and the eventual head of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi" (Hassan Hassan- 2018, co-author of ISIS: The True Origins of ISIS).

However, historians differed in determining the main goal of al-Zarqawi in forming such an organization, was it a war against the American 'Tyrants' and their allies, or was it a Sunnis and Shiites war for a caliphate? Or a mixture of both?

ISIS managed to overrun northern Iraq and eastern Syria (Figure 1) it held about a third of Syria and 40 percent of Iraq. Besides, pulling off a string of terrorist attacks across Europe.

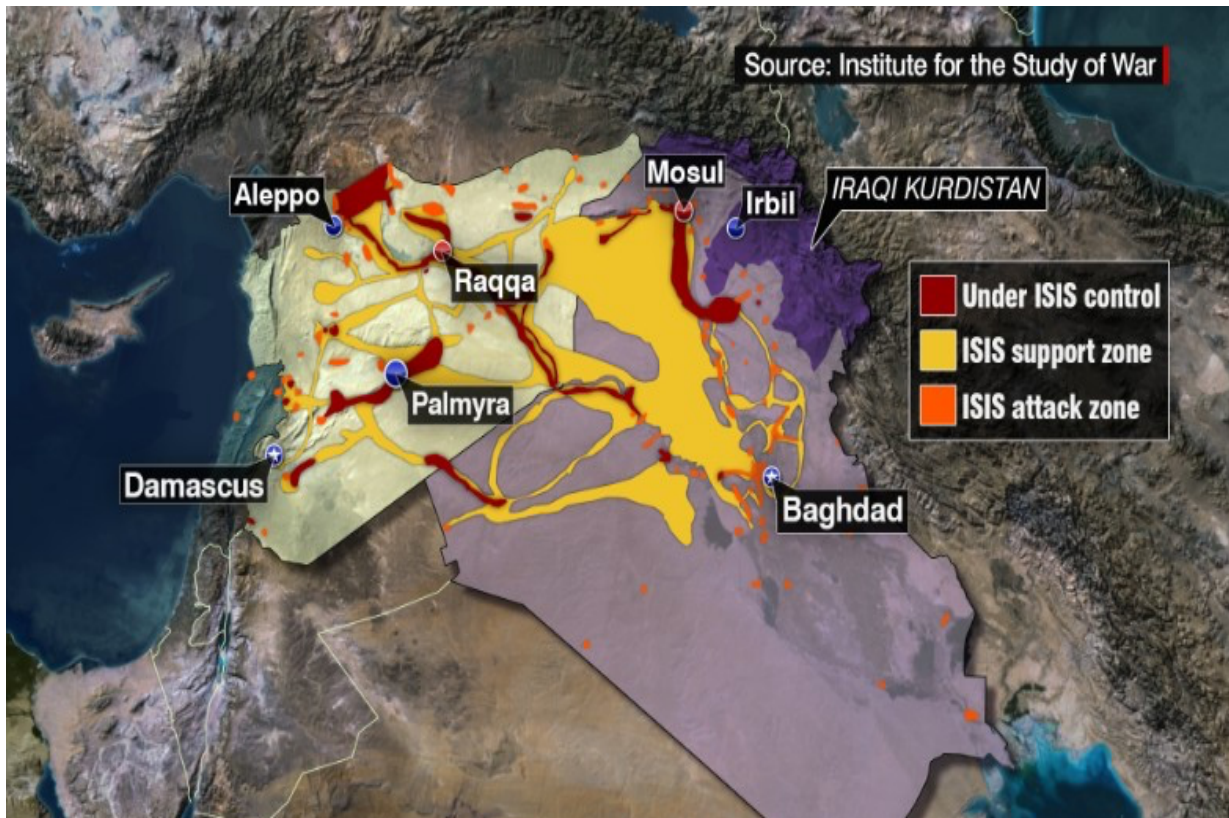


Figure 1: ISIS The expansion in Iraq and Syria.

2.4.1. Origin of the Name

IS is an Islamist group belonging to the Sunni sect. It claims to call for the so-called religion of truth, the establishment of a caliphate, and the supremacy of Islamic ‘Sharia’ or law. Thus, the choice of name was not a marginal or absurd decision. Rather, it is a name that was chosen with consciousness, knowledge, and conviction. The organization’s leaders were aware that this designation will give them religious credibility, which will lead to facilitating the mission of persuasion.

ISIS has several names, including IS referring to the Islamic State, ISIS as an acronym for Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, and its synonym in Arabic is Daesh, which is a term used extensively in the media, especially the Eastern one. Also, ISIL Islamic State of Iraq and Levant, and this term is used mainly by several politicians, led by Barack Obama, the former US president, for reasons that are mentioned in the following section.

In a radio interview conducted at Case Western Reserve University, Sandra L Hodgkinson (Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense and Chef for Staff to the Deputy Secretary of Defense) in a reply to the question “why all these names for ISIS?”, emphasizes on the fact that all these designations are due mainly to the geographical location of this group.

In other words, every designation for ISIS is essentially a term that is scrutinized to indicate which sect of this group is specially addressed. For instance, ISIL is a generalized designation since it covers more areas. It mainly belongs to Syria, Jordan, Israel, and Lebanon. So, it is a broader label and since the goal of this group is to expand and include Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, and the whole of Syria, or the Greater Syria as they refer to, to the areas they control and due to the huge effects of ISIS on the region "Levant". Therefore, the US authorities insist on using the term ISIL instead of IS or ISIS.

2.4.2. The ideology of Al-Qaeda and ISIS

The ideology of ISIS and Al-Qaeda is an ideology based primarily on the idea of demolishing and then constructing. It is a thought espoused by Abu Musab al Zarqawi, who was and remains, despite his physical departure, the moral and inspirational leader of this movement.

Although Al-Qaeda and ISIS agreed on the basic principles of the so-called Jihad, both organizations differed on the tactical level and planning. While Al-Qaeda believed that fighting the distant enemy represented in the USA in the first place and then fighting the near enemy represented by the regimes and those in charge of them and their defenders, its strategic and combat priority. ISIS saw that fighting the near enemy represented by the regimes and those in charge and defenders of them and then fighting the distant enemy represented essentially in the USA as its strategic and combat priority.

However, it did not take long for Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (the leader of IS from April 2004 until January 2006) and his mentor Abd Al-Rahman al-Ali to persuade Osama bin Laden and his followers to adopt their combative approach on the ground.

The difference in details is mainly due to the different references that both movements follow. While Sayyid Qutb had a huge influence on the founding fathers of Al-Qaeda., Abu Abdullah Al-Muhajir was the main source of inspiration for the prime movers of ISIS.

Another important point to make when comparing ISIS to Al-Qaeda is that both organizations share the same goals, but they have different objectives, namely the Al-Nusra Front, known as an affiliate of al-Qaeda, has a goal of broader its territory in Syria. On the other hand, ISIL has a broader goal of a wider conquest of countries that include the entire region.

With its tactics in the field, ISIS was able to accomplish what its predecessor ‘Al-Qaeda’ could not attain; it is the declaration of its state; the ‘Islamic Caliphate’ in some areas in both Iraq and Syria.

2.4.3. The References and Spiritual Leaders of the Islamic State

One of the most important things that IS have achieved is bringing the old and modern jurisprudential references out of the theory into practice and reformulating them to serve its ideology and goals.

After examining the background of the key leaders of IS it was found that the intellectual references of these figures revolve mainly around four names Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, Muhammed Ben Abd al-Wahab, and Sayyid Qutb. This work provided a detailed overview of all these references in the findings and discussions chapter under the same heading in this paragraph.

2.4.4. The jurisprudence and legitimate references of ISIS

To provide a better understanding of the ideological, combative, and legal references of ISIS, the symbols and backgrounds of these organizations were addressed.

The early leaders of the mother organization ‘Al-Qaeda’ were symbols who do not have a deep religious knowledge of the Islamic jurisprudence or ‘‘Fiqh’’ as mentioned by Kamal Habib, an expert in Islamic Movements, in an intervention on Al-Mayadeen TV. For instance, Osama bin Laden was a graduate of the faculty of business, Ayman Al-Zawahiri was a surgeon, Abu Omar al-Shishani served as a surgeon in the Georgian Army, etc. This point was a trump card for ISIS and was considered by many political analysts as an advantage that played in the favor of the organization. The organization deliberately took names with a conservative background, who studied Sharia and Hadith and marketed them in its propaganda.

These references revolve around four names, which are considered the cornerstones of the extremist ideology of this organization; Al-Makdisi, Abu Abdullah al-Muhajir, Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, and Abu Baker Al-Baghdadi.

This point is discussed with more details provided on these pivotal names in ISIS, in the chapter findings and discussions.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This research sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of the escalation of violent movements in the Middle East, which produced IS terrorism, through an in-depth reading of the history of the movement, references, and reasons for its emergence, in addition to covering the external factors that caused the escalation of terrorism in the region, weakening the local security services, which allowed the terrorist movement IS to control eminent positions in both Iraq and Syria and impose new equations in the region. And the way the American security services deal with the issue of terrorism.

This research initially dealt with a deep concept of terrorism in the international lexicon. Then, listed the preeminent external factors that caused the escalation of violence in the Middle East, following it with a coverage of the new era of terrorism and the emergence of Al-Qaeda and its important operations, and the insurgencies against the American presence in Iraq which resulted in the emergence of IS terrorism. Finally, it provided further details on the background of ISIS and the way American security forces deal with this phenomenon of terrorism.

The main objective of this work is to collect, discuss and compare the largest possible number of works of literature presented in this regard, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the movement's ideology and how it is structured.

This study provides a deep explanation in a holistic framework for the reasons behind the emergence of IS by narrating and analyzing the historical background of this organization and studying their intellectual and combative references and thus providing a speculative idea on the nature of the movements (Sunni, Jihadist, Salafist, Takfiri, extremist) that may be born later from the ashes of IS.

Thus, this thesis came to present a comprehensive view that collected almost all the intellectual references and the direct geopolitical reasons that resulted in the formation of such a violent ideology of IS. It thus provides a proactive reading of the nature of movements that may emerge in the future that adopt the same doctrine and references previously adopted by IS and other similar movements and militias that have appeared in the history of the Middle East.

This work covers events and facts extended over different periods and in different places, mainly over the period from the 1980s to 2019, and used historical references dating back to 1200, predominantly in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria.

This study relied on a set of sources of secondary data; listing, analyzing, and interpreting them objectively, without taking sides.

3.1. Scope of the Study

This work is based on focusing on defining extremist terrorism and violence of ideas, with a more precise focus on IS terrorism and the factors that contributed to its birth in a period extending mainly from 1980 to 2019. To immerse the study in the narrative and analysis of the ideas, references, and ideology of the movement. In addition to expanding the organization's propaganda strength, its cyber activities, and its military field capabilities. And the nature of its relationship with the parent organization Al-Qaeda. In addition to studying how the media and American security services deal with the IS terrorism issue.

This study also conducted a comprehensive and far-reaching, post-field defeat of the organization, and covered the facts in the prison camp of Al-Hawl and Al-Roj in northern Syria in the post-2019 period.

3.2. Research Design

This narrative descriptive study relies on secondary data sources based on qualitative methodology. The secondary data are mainly; books, studies, articles, local and international newspapers, interviews, terrorism laws, and official websites that dealt with the issue of IS terrorism, the escalation of violence, the extremist sectarian ideology in the Middle East, and the methods of dealing with this phenomenon (in the media and by the U.S. security agencies). Through this methodology, the theoretical framework of the study was presented.

The analysis of this secondary data was in-depth, providing details and information that had not previously been collected in a single work, by delving into the original references of this organization, listing, comparing, and interpreting them, and analyzing the legitimate jihadist thought in the field military work of ISIS and similar organizations (mainly Al-Qaeda).

This study aims to provide detailed information about the structure of ISIS, its background, and movements, and therefore this research may benefit future studies related to the context presented in this work, for instance, studies that aim to address terrorist movements that adopt the same ideology and background as ISIS or movements that may be born from its ashes.

3.3. Population and Sampling

To reduce bias, the researcher utilized a large secondary data based on a systematic sample method, of the population at regular intervals. It dealt with a vast and diverse population (women, criminals, local and foreign fighters, and young novices). Thus, created an accurate sample.

This work sought to diversify the secondary data used in the scope of the research, and accordingly, it relied on a variety of qualitative data from multiple sources, such as books, articles, interviews, laws, official websites, etc., and by relying on works that used purposive sampling method, resulting to a high data collection due to the use of an appropriate sample that represented the population addressed.

In-depth and reliable sources have been relied on to obtain a better understanding and a deeper contextual framework to explain the phenomenon of the escalation of intellectual violence and its connection to the new era of terrorism through the study of the terrorist organization (ISIS). Therefore, the data were carefully selected to increase the credibility and transparency of the results included in this work. Focusing on references with expertise in the field of terrorism, research on globalization and extremist movements, as well as expertise and politicians in the field of political science and international relations.

Care was also taken to include references with different backgrounds (religious, secular, Western, Eastern, old, modern, etc.) to raise the level of impartiality and transparency.

It is worth mentioning here that despite the researcher's keenness to provide a neutral and objective narrative. However, due to the failure to address some issues objectively and transparently with International public opinion and media, and to present genuine and rational conclusions to facts and events related to the escalation of the phenomenon of violence and the emergence of ISIS terrorism in the region, a personal point of view was established in linking some events with their results in the findings and discussion chapter.

3.4. Research Period

This research studies the references, backgrounds, and ideology of ISIS. Thus, the immediate events that led to the emergence of this organization, which extended over a period of time from the 1980s to 2019, were covered. In addition to relying on old references to analyze the intellectual background of ISIS, and to understand the phenomenon of the

escalation of violence in Sunni Takfiri groups. Therefore, the study relied also on references dating back to the era of Ibn Taymiyyah 1263 and after according to the chronological order.

3.5. Research Limits

Due to time constraints and security concerns, this work lacks field research and primary data. To make up for this deficiency, vast and diverse secondary data sets such as articles, books, studies, documentary films, reports, interviews, official websites, and newspapers, were consulted.

It is worth mentioning here that the interviews relied upon in this work were conducted with former IS fighters/members, relatives and/or friends of fighters/members of the organization, and eyewitnesses from Iraq and Syria. Which increases the value and credibility of this work. Thus, it fills the gap previously mentioned. The same applies to the rest of the secondary sources that have been relied upon, which were carefully selected and with great accuracy.

3.6. Data Analysis

This research is based on secondary data that relied on qualitative research methodologies that dealt with the issue of terrorism.

The researcher studied dozens of secondary sources and references, and then compared, analyzed, and re-interpreted them to provide a more objective and transparent understanding of the research topic related to the phenomenon of the escalation of violence in the Middle East and the emergence of terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS in the region.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

All ethical considerations have been taken into account in the collection and transmission of data based on secondary sources, and care is taken to mention the primary sources when used and/or in the list of references included at the end of this word.

No party or person has been offended. No false accusations have been attributed. All conclusions and accusations were supported by documents from official bodies and accurate and reliable references. The interviews used were based on the ethics of scientific and journalistic research. On this basis, all ethical considerations were taken into account at all stages of this work.

CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Graduation of Intellectual Violence in Islamic Reform Movements

There is an obvious graduation in the hardline ideology and rulings which were extracted from weak references, besides projecting these rulings on contradictory circumstances that are not comparable to those concurrent in the main events. For instance, Al-Shawkani was influenced by Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim. However, while he adhered to their ideology, he was intolerant and stricter than his predecessor so he became fanatical and hardline. Some of the rulings that he amended and published are based on weak texts though he became strict with these ideas.

Kamal Habib, an expert in Islamic movements, raised this point in an interview on Al-Mayadeen TV in 2021, saying: “If there were no books such as *Fiqh al-Jihad*, *Milestones*, and the *Neglected Duty*, a book like the *Management of Savagery* or ‘*Idarat al-Tawahhush*’, which is considered as the main reference for ISIS, would not have been written. There is graduation in writings, and each book derives its ideas and ideology from the previous one and adds to it, which led to an escalation in violence and violence of thoughts”.

The graduation is clear even in the size of the writings; most of the books that established and backed the ideology of violence were initially small letters such as *Milestones* written by Sayyid Qutb or *Four basic Qur’anic terms* of the Islamist ideologue and scholar Abul A’la Maududi. After the war in Afghanistan, a period the extremists called “Major Collections” began. Abd al-Rahman al-Ali wrote 600 pages in which he talks about bloodshed, extracted from a larger book titled ‘*The collection of Jurisdiction over Jihad*’. But the one who originally enacted this thought was Sayyid Imam Al-Sharif in his book ‘*The Whole in Seeking Honorable Knowledge*’; a book of a thousand pages. So, the phenomenon of producing influential writings started from writing a few pages to hundreds of pages and compiling them into a larger book; a book that includes different authors, sources, and archives. However, the significance of the message is not in the size of the book, but rather in the concept that Abd al-Rahman al-Ali imagines as ‘the concept of truth’ and with which he addresses the members of Al-Qaeda as he takes the place of the Prophet and delivers the message to those who believe in the same faith. (*Kamal Habib, 2017, Al Mayadeen*)

ISIS is a cognitive and ideological group; its rulings were based on specific intellectual figures and restricted references, and on politico-religious ideology, which represents its main pillar.

Concerning the importance of thoughts and the importance of books in attracting supporters and activating ideas, in reality, Habib Kamal says that these groups (the extremist groups such as ISIS) are ideologically intellectual groups and thought is their mainstay. He adds that the book ‘The Jurisprudence of Jihad’ or ‘The Jurisprudence of Blood’ was a means of persuasion and an intellectual weapon that Abu Musab al Zarqawi adapted for influence and persuasion.

The modern jihadist movement is mainly divided into three generations:

- The first generation (1950’s): are mainly Egyptians. A generation that was influenced by Sayyid Qutb and his writings. They did not study Sharia and Islamic jurisprudence. Their weapon was the word and exhortation.
- The second generation (1960’s): more brutal and tough. Mainly Jordanian generation (Essam Barqawi, Mohammed al-Makdisi). They studied Sharia and Islamic jurisprudence, which added credibility to what they were presenting. This generation relied mainly on the book ‘‘The Whole of Jurisprudence of Jihad’’ by Abu Abdullah al-Muhajir. They participated in the war in Afghanistan against the Soviets. Their weapon is murdering and slaughtering.
- The third and fourth generation (the 2000s–2010s): They basically adapted the methods and doctrine of the second generation and based on them they have created new concepts and methods that are more violent and brutal.

4.2. The References & Spiritual Leaders of the Islamic State

One of the most important things that ISIS have achieved is bringing the old and modern jurisprudential references out of the theory into practice and reformulating them to serve its ideology and goals.

After examining the background of the key leaders of ISIS it was found that the intellectual references of these figures revolve mainly around four names Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, Muhammed Ben Abd al-Wahab, and Sayyid Qutb.

4.2.1. Ibn Taymiyyah

Ibn Taymiyyah, nicknamed the Sheikh of Islam, was born in 1263 AD. He is one of the most important figures who stirred controversy on several levels, including political, intellectual, ideological, etc.

Many researchers consider him to be one of the imams of criticism and revival of the idea of *ijtihad* or independent reasoning “*ijtihad question*”. He was known for his strong personality and critical thought, as a preacher and reformer. Many of his contemporaries described him as an encyclopedia for his extensive knowledge of the acquaintances and sciences of his time.

Ibn Taymiyyah was interested in guiding the public and advising the rulers, which led him to many conflicts and disagreements with some rulers, causing his imprisonment on more than one occasion. However, he did not stop preaching during that time, describing that experience as one of the most important moments of his advocacy and intellectual life. He was against the idea of flexibility in addressing the opponents of God and The Sunnah.

Ibn Taymiyyah fought the Tatars and described them as the Kharijites because they permitted the shedding of Muslim blood, the theft of their money, and the enslavement of their women in Damascus. Ibn Taymiyyah spent his last days imprisoned in the Citadel of Damascus where he died of a disease that afflicted him.

The Hanbali and Shafi'i as branches of Sunni Islam and two of the four leading traditional schools of Islamic law. Those who belong to these two branches are among the most followers of Ibn Taymiyyah, due to the spread of these two schools in the Levant, Egypt, and Iraq. One of the most important points to mention here is that most of the modern Sunni reformists have been influenced by Ibn Taymiyyah, on top of which is the Wahhabi movement and contemporary Islamic movements and organizations.

4.2.2. Ibn Qayyim

Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya, meaning the son of the school's headmaster, was born in 1292 in Damascus. Ibn al-Qayyim was one of Ibn Taymiyyah's students and his shadow. Thus, he inherited his thoughts and methods. He excelled in many sciences, interpretation, hadith, jurisprudence, linguistics, etc. He was skilled in writing and was known for his knowledge and wisdom.

Ibn Al-Qayyim was imprisoned with his teacher, Ibn Taymiyyah, and the reason for his imprisonment was due to his writings and speeches, as he had a bold tongue.

Many scholars and thinkers such as Al-Suyuti and Al-Shawkani considered him “ one of the greatest imams in interpretation, hadith, origins, branches, and Arabic language”.

He was known for his commitment to the thought and knowledge of his teacher. So, he did not deviate from Ibn Taymiyyah’s template or method but merely mastered the reformulation of phrases without changing the meanings.

4.2.3. Muhammed ibn Abd al-Wahab

Muhammed Ibn Abd al-Wahab was influenced by the thought of Ibn Taymiyyah and his student Ibn al-Qayyim. So, he revived the thought of Ibn Taymiyyah not from a neutral perspective, but through his reading and from his perspective.

Muhammed Ibn Abd al-Wahab was born in Saudi Arabia in 1705, in a religious Hanbali family. He is the founder of Wahhabism. Many thinkers accused him of violence, fanaticism, and spreading the thought of contemporary Takfir. He was known for his extremism and atonement approach.

According to Adel Noaman, the Egyptian researcher, the starting point of Muhammed ibn Abd al-Wahab’s thought in takfir the non-Muslims and Muslims, was Ibn Qayyim’s work “Ahkam Ahl al-Dhimma al-Nasara” or the Regulations for the people of the covenant and Christians and what was mentioned in the Omari document, and he reflected this belief in his work, edited and published later by Salih al-Fawazan “Things that Nullify One’s Islam”. This book was approved, distributed, and included in the curriculum of ISIS in its controlled areas.

In an interview with him on the Hawamsh program or ‘In the Margins, the Jordanian researcher Ibrahim Alloush stated that even though Muhammed ibn Abd al-Wahab was influenced by the thought of Ahmad al-Hanbal, and Ibn Taymiyyah, the followers of these scholars attacked Wahhabism and disavowed it.

Abd al-Wahab was influenced specifically by Ibn Taymiyyah’s Takfiri thought of the Sufis. So, he followed the same approach against the Ottoman Sunni, Hanafi, and Sufi sects.

He considered Nafi bin Al-Azraq an intellectual reference and agreed with him on the basis of Takfir. They both see whoever opposes them as an infidel and a polytheist, even if that person is a Muslim. In this way, they allowed the permissibility of stealing money and killing those who were regarded as infidels or polytheists.

- The politico-religious reform movement in Saudi Arabia: The Treaty of Al-Diriyah:

Under the name of the Diriyah Charter in 1744, an agreement was concluded between Muhammed bin Abd al-Wahab and the Prince of Diriyah Muhammed bin Saud bin Muhammed al Muqrin or Al Saud, the founder of the Diriyah Emirate, the first Saudi state, and thus politics and religion were integrated into power for the first time.

This agreement was based mainly on the principle of the reform movement or reformist thought to adjust people's beliefs. Its founder, Muhammed bin Abd al-Wahab, claimed that the goal of the movement was to correct people's beliefs, which were marred by many polytheisms, myths, and heresies that spread with the expansion of the Ottoman Empire. Under this agreement, the massacres of Al-Saud took place, and Nasser Al-Saeed, The Saudi writer and founder of the Arabian Peninsula People's Union (APPU) and who was known for his severe critics of the practices of the royal family, mentioned in his book "The History of Al Saud" some of these massacres, for example:

- The massacre of Taif and Al-Houba: 15.000 men, women, children, and the elderly were killed.
- Qassim massacre: 37.000 were treacherously killed.

Alexei Vassiliev confirms these figures in his book "The History of Saudi Arabia from the 18th to the 20th Centuries".

The religious calling 'Da'wah' in Najad. Spreading the Da'wah in Najad was not difficult for Mohamed Ibn Abd al-Wahab, because the dominant madhab in the desert was the Hanbali school. It is worth noting that the Najadi tribes are tribes that were raised on cruelty, and violence and were narrow-minded "... but a little science can be expected among those, whose minds are constantly bent on war and depredation". (*J.L. Burckhardt 1831 Notes on Bedouins and Wahabys: Collected During His Travels in the Est page: 74*). The harsh nature of the desert affected the personality of those living in it, so invasion, murder, and money theft were the only way to survive in the desert of the Arabian Peninsula.

Muhammed Ibn Abd al-Wahab took advantage of the nature of Najadi tribes to spread his Da'wah there. So, he used the primitive simplicity of their minds and their tendency to violence to form an armed movement that later became the Wahabi movement.

The Egyptian academist Emna Nasir stated that Wahhabism is based on shallow and simplistic reading and not on the principle of using the text (Quran), and reason. In other words, that is a thought that used the superficial meaning of the text and does not delve into the analysis and interpretation and rejects ijtehad.

The Jordanian researcher in Islamic groups, Bassam Al-Jarayda, referred to the Wahabi movement in his book "The History of Mafia in Islam" as an armed movement and

Organization that was seeking to expand by force of arms. He added that there are many proofs that Britain provided the movement with weapons and money, so they were able to attack Kuwait in 1788 and besiege Baghdad, attack the Shiites in Qatif in 1792, demolish the cemeteries and the shrines of Sahaba, occupy Mecca in 1803 and Medina in 1804, and attack Damascus in 1810.

“Attiyah Allah” or “Obey God”, was the armed wing of the ‘Al Saud’ state at the time, led by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahab. The Wahhabi movement was considered an opportunity for England and France to fight the Ottoman Empire. Thus, fighting and eliminating the Empire was an ideological meeting point between the colonial powers and the Wahhabi movement.

According to the researcher, Ibrahim Alloush, the coordination between the British and the Wahhabis began in 1865, when the invasion of the Arabian Peninsula was provided to the movement under British auspices. Britain had been running training camps under the supervision of British leaders and providing the Wahhabis with weapons in Najad. In 1915, the Treaty of Darin was signed between Prince Abdul Aziz Bin Muhammed al-Rahman Al Saud and Britain. This treaty greatly served the British colonial powers in the region. The traveler and orientalist Johann Ludwig Burckhardt spoke about this suspicious relationship between British intelligence and the Wahhabis in his collection ‘Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys’.

4.2.4. Sayyid Qutb

Sayyid Qutb has had a big influence on Islamic Movements. The book Milestones “Ma’alim fi al Tariq” is considered a literary and intellectual masterwork due to its huge impact on Islamic movements and terrorist groups. But it is worth mentioning that the highly influential and inspirational style found in this book added to its value.

In his summary of Milestones, the expert in Islamic movements Kamal Habib stated that Ma’alim fi al Tariq talks about the Qur’anic generation, the nature of the Qur’anic curriculum, the emergence of the Muslim community, jihad for the sake of God, and Muslim nationality and faith as important milestones in the history of the Islamic nation for empowerment and world leadership.

Excerpts from the book Milestones ‘Ma’alim fi al Tariq’ which influenced the doctrine of Islamist terrorism:

- First excerpt: “ The Muslim Ummah is a group of human beings whose lives, perceptions, conditions, systems, values, and balances are all extracted from the Islamic approach. This nation with these characteristics has ceased to exist since the rule of

Allah's Sharia was cut off from the earth'' (Milestones/Ma'alim fi al Tariq, 1964). In other words, there is no Islamic nation existing on earth, because for Sayyid Qutb all the values and characteristics mentioned previously to hold the status of a Muslim are absent.

The takfiri ideology.

- Second excerpt: '' what is the pre-Islamic Society 'Jahiliya': the pre-Islamic society is every society other than the Muslim society, and if we define the term objectively, we say that it is every society that does not sincerely worship God alone, represented by this servitude and belief concept, and the devotional rituals, and in the legal laws. With this objective definition, all the societies existing today on earth literally enter the frame of the pre-Islamic Society'' . (Milestones/Ma'alim fi al Tariq, 1964; What Is the Pre-Islamic Society Chapter).

It is notable that Sayyid Qutb's point of view regarding contemporary societies with their different religions and beliefs. A point of view based on generalization and extremism. This seems clear through his classification of all societies on earth within the pre-Islamic societies 'Jahiliya'. According to Sayyid Qutb, all societies on earth with their beliefs, rituals, and laws enter under the umbrella of the modern Jahiliya.

- Third excerpt: Muslim societies have some characteristics of Jahiliya: Those societies that claim to be Muslims are included in the framework of the pre-Islamic society 'Jahiliya', and these societies do not fall within this framework because they believe in the divinity of anyone other than God, but because they do not owe servitude to God alone in their system of life.'' (Milestones/Ma'alim fi al Tariq, 1964. Muslim societies have some characteristics of Jahiliya Chapter).

In this section, there is a departure from generalization to specifications. In the opinion of Sayyid Qutb, all Muslim societies are also ignoring societies, and therefore they are infidel societies that must be fought and killed.

- Fourth excerpt: ''Characteristics of jihad in the Cause of God: Explanation and Movement: The Islamic movement should confront tyrannical regimes, through genuine calls and authentic statements to correct the beliefs and perceptions. This movement should use forced guidance and jihad to remove the systems and authorities.'' (Milestones/Ma'alim fi al Tariq, 1964. Characteristics of jihad in the Cause of God: Explanation and Movement Chapter).

Calling for revolution against regimes. The principle of fighting the near enemy represented by tyrannical regimes is an ideology adopted by ISIS.

4.3. The Jurisprudence and Legitimate References of ISIS

To understand the ideological, combative, and legal references of ISIS, the symbols and backgrounds of these organizations must be addressed.

It is important to state that the early leaders of the mother organization ‘Al-Qaeda’ are symbols who do not collect the signs of Islamic jurisprudence or ‘‘Fiqh’’ as mentioned by Kamal Habib, an expert in Islamic Movements, in an intervention on Al-Mayadeen TV. For instance, Osama bin Laden was a graduate of the faculty of business, Ayman Al-Zawahiri was a surgeon, Abu Omar al-Shishani served as a surgeon in the Georgian Army, etc. In contrast to ISIS, which deliberately took references with a conservative background, who studied Sharia and Hadith. These references revolve around four names, which are the cornerstone of the ideology of this organization; Al-Makdisi, Abu Abdullah al-Muhajir, Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, and Abu Baker Al-Baghdadi.

Here is Brief gist of the principal and influential figures of ISIS: Each Character is Unique.

4.3.1. Al-Makdisi: Zarqawi’s Mentor

The real name Essam Muhammad Tahir al-Barqawi alias Al-Makdisi is considered one of the most important intellectual references in the jihadist world, the Pentagon considered him in a study published in 2006 the most important jihadist thinker.

Thanks to his sharp tongue, quick wit, and in-depth knowledge of the Islamic religion, Al-Makdisi was considered one of the most influential leadership figures for his high knowledge and persuasiveness. His beautiful features added to his charisma. Thus, he became one of the most important references both in al-Jafr prison, where he spent around four years of his life detained and in modern jihadist thought. Back in the prison, the man did not stop producing and deepening his knowledge and continued preaching and interpreting events on his terms. He was the figure who controlled the prisoners’ minds and the one who told them how to think.

Al-Makdisi was adapting the idea of fighting and even killing the enemies, including the crooked Muslim rulers, and saw that correcting the wrong actions, even if by force, is an individual responsibility of Muslims.

Some researchers insist that there are no writings or speeches published by Al-Makdisi expressing his complete rejection of suicide operations (martyrdom operations in ISIS's terminology) during the existence of ISIS in Iraq, yet it is worth mentioning that Al-Makdisi touched on the duty to beware of the permissibility of this method. In a television interview with him on CNN Arabic, Al-Makdisi denied his acceptance of killing and slaughtering civilians in front of cameras and stated that he had advised his close student, Al-Zarqawi, not to follow this approach either. The Question here: Does Al-Makdisi completely reject martyrdom operations, or does he only refuse to record them in front of the camera lenses and broadcast them online? His mastery of verbal evasiveness sometimes makes it difficult to properly understand his intent.

One of the points of controversy about Al-Makdisi's personality is that his writings and rhetoric do not match his personality in reality. Some testimonies including that of the al-Jafr prison doctor mentioned that he was a smooth and resonant personality. He even greeted those he considered enemies with a smile and treated them nicely, among those the Human Rights Missions and the officials who were visiting the prison. This detail was an obstacle for him to lead in the field, especially with the presence of a figure like Al-Zarqawi as an alternative.

So, there was a clear rift on the ground between theory and practice in Makdisi's dealings. But this does not detract from his value as a thinker and theorist, as his writings were and still are a legitimate reference in the jurisprudence of jihad for ISIS and similar organizations.

4.3.2. Abu Abdullah Al-Muhajir: Different from the Rest of the Organization's Leaders

Abu Abdullah al-Muhajir; the Egyptian fanatic jihadi. Al-Muhajir is considered by many researchers and specialists in terrorism as one of the most important influential figures in contemporary extremist groups. Some even considered him the most important bloody-minded figure because of his extremist writings which legitimized violence, murder, and bloodshedding of Muslims and non-Muslims. His writings were even bloodier than those of his predecessors.

Some of the points that Abu Abdullah al-Muhajir relies on to justify killing Muslims and non-Muslims:

- Fighting is a way to call to God.
- He who believes shall be saved, but he who disbelieves will be killed.
- Anyone who is not a Muslim may be killed; young or old, male or female.
- If it is not permissible to kill a Muslim intentionally, it is permissible to kill him accordingly.

So, here is an indication that a Muslim can be killed in certain cases.

- The process of sabotage is from Islam and is always required, such as kidnapping and assassination, and it is a means of Jihad.

Abu Abdullah al-Muhajir differed from his predecessor in that he studied Islamic law or Sharia and obtained a master's degree in Pakistan, which added credibility to what he was presenting to his followers as a scholar and Emir.

According to many analysts and researchers such as Kemal Habib and Muhammed Elsayed Ali, Abu Abdullah al-Muhajir was an intelligent personality who was able, with his wit, to use the Sunnah and Quranic texts in a way that serves his plans and supports his methods and ideology. So, he forged and took the texts out of context to serve his goals.

4.3.3. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi: The Godfather of ISIS

Abou Musab al-Zarqawi, born Ahmed Fadil Nazal al-Khalayleh, also known as ‘‘Al-Gharib’’. A man of the tribe. ‘‘Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was born in October 1966, in Zarqa – an industrial city, in Jordan. A Bedouin from the Bani Hassan tribe. He was barely literate. (M.A. Weaver, 2006. *The short, and violent life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi*). He had the chance to meet Bin Ladin for the first time in the liberation war against the Soviets in Afghanistan. They fought together until the Soviets pulled out. During the Afghani war, al-Zarqawi had the opportunity to meet Huthaifa Azzam also, the son of Abdullah Azzam (the preacher and mentor of Bin Ladin). This ephemeral relationship was suspended with the end of the war, but only for a short stretch period. Their paths would once again cross in Iraq, with the U.S. invasion of 2003.

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was arrested as a political prisoner in Jordan, but during the amnesty of 1999, he was released along with other political prisoners. None of them are worth remembering, except for Al-Zarqawi and his mentor Essam Muhammad Tahir al-Barqawi alias Al-Makdisi. The experience of imprisonment added many to the personality of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, one of the most important of which is leadership abilities. His life took another turn, completely different from the leaders of similar organizations that preceded him or were

contemporaneous with him.

The meeting of Musab al-Zarqawi and Abu Abdullah al-Muhajir in Herat, Afghanistan at the end of the Afghan Mujahideen war was the watershed moment in the life of al-Zarqawi. (*Saud Sharafat, owner and general manager of the Sharafat Center for Study and Research on Globalization and Terrorism*). This meeting greatly affected the personality of Abu Musab al Zarqawi. As a character inclined by nature to violence; the ideas of Abu Abdullah al-Muhajir took him to another level of brutality and extremism. But this time the violence was codified and well-studied; where all means of abusing and killing were permitted under religious pretexts with the use of distorted religious justifications; books like the *Collection of Jurisdiction over Jihad* and *'The Whole in Seeking Honorable Knowledge'*, both represented the ideological and combative reference for ISIS.

Zarqawi adopted a general Takfiri approach, which allows the killing of anyone who disagrees with his perspective of Islam. Anyone who does not follow his theory and his own interpretation of religion is a target. So, the war of Zarqawi was a war that was not contained nor restrained by any religious or humanitarian standards at any level. Rather, it was a reflection of his unstable personality, inclined to violence and bloody thoughts, which he adopted mainly from his spiritual advisor Abu Abdullah al-Muhajir. Al-Zarqawi was a brutal leader with a plan that made him a threat to global security.

In November 2005, he proved his existence as a threat to international security, with the three fatal hotel bombings in Amman, in which he was their mastermind and architect. After this deadly incident, both Western and Middle Eastern intelligence officials began their investigations into the archive, background, and ideology of al-Zarqawi. Up to this point, the man's position in Al-Qaeda has not been revealed yet. Bush administration was arguing continuously, about whether he was Al-Qaeda's point man in Iraq or the staunch rival of Bin Ladin (*Israeli intelligence official*).

In 2006, the official US media announced the killing of Abu Musab al Zarqawi in an American airstrike in Iraq.

4.3.4. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi

Ibrahim Awad Ibrahim al-Badri known as Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was born in 1971, in a small village in Iraq where he grew up in a religious Sunni family.

Al-Baghdadi Studied sharia at the University of Baghdad and obtained a BA in Islamic theology. His academic career did not stop there. Rather, he obtained a master's in Qur'anic

recitation and a doctorate in Qur'anic sciences. So, this important detail added credibility to the content of his speeches and since he had a comprehensive knowledge of the Qur'anic text and sharia, the persuasion process was smooth and unchallenging for someone like al-Baghdadi.

He joined the resistance movement against the US and the coalition forces when Iraq was occupied in 2003. He was captured by the US forces and imprisoned. During the prison period, he got acquainted with some members of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, and since then the journey of jihadist extremism began for al-Baghdadi.

After the death of both key leaders of ISIS Abu Musab al Zarqawi and Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, Abu Bakr al Baghdadi was elected by the ISI's Shura Council as the new leader of the organization in 2010.

One of the most important moves of Abu Bakr al Baghdadi was to expand the geographic area of IS to include Syria by merging the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) with some of the defectors from the Al-Nusra Front or Jabhat Al-Nusra organization and forming (ISIS).

Due to al-Baghdadi's adoption of a policy contrary to that of Al-Qaeda, al-Qaeda's leader then Ayman al-Zawahiri officially announced, in 2014, the separation of ISIS from Al-Qaeda. Soon, ISIS was able to control areas in Syria, at the expense of Jabhat al-Nusra and other Islamic jihadist organizations. Al-Baghdadi is considered one of the most influential figures in ISIS and among its most important spiritual leaders. In November 2014, he announced himself as the caliph of IS. On Sunday 27 October 2019, U.S. officials confirmed the death of al-Baghdadi in a raid led by U.S. special forces in northwestern Syria.

4.4. Similarities between ISIS Leaders and their Intellectual References

There is a similarity between the leading figures of ISIS and those scholars and thinkers by whom they were influenced. But this resemblance is superficial and is based mainly on broad goals and thoughts, not on details, facts, and methods. For instance, many leaders and affiliates of IS justify the war in Iraq and Syria as being similar to Ibn Taymiyyah's war against the Tatars in Damascus. Tatars were Muslims at that time, yet there were tyrants. IS relied on this incident and took it out of its context to justify the war on Muslims in Iraq and Syria, and the rest of the Muslim peoples and permitted the shedding of their blood and the theft of their money on the pretext that they are tyrants, infidels and out of Sharia. Accordingly, they have authorized the permissibility to fight and kill them. It is important to note that Ibn Taymiyyah's war against the Tatars was legitimate self-defense because the Tatars took the initiative to

attack the Muslims in Damascus, shed their blood, and enslave their women. But this was not the case in Iraq and Syria where ISIS applied the same pretext.

Despite the general similarities between the early reformists and the modern Sunni reformist movements, the difference in details exists. The extremist organizations, led by ISIS, have distorted and applied the ideas of the early Jihadi thinkers in incompatible equations. Strictly speaking, these ideas have been projected into a reality that does not correspond to the simultaneous reality of their original date of issuance. Therefore, it has become inadequate and limited to violence rather than a reformist mindset.

The combative doctrine of ISIS is close but not typical to the Wahabi movement. There are many points of similarity between the Wahabi movement and ISIS, both believe in the violence of ideas and actions to extract goals and set the agenda that drives results. Some researchers, such as Dr. Marwan Jahadeh, a researcher in Islamic and Global Affairs, have stated that the ideology of ISIS is based mainly on historical references; references back to the thought of Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Ibn Abd al-Wahab. However, there are some differences between ISIS and the Wahabi movement; the Wahabi movement, unlike ISIS, did not seek to overthrow the ruler or take authority, but instead, it was always part of the system and loyal to the rule of the Al Saud Family, while ISIS considers all Arab regimes to be apostates and infidels.

A small note on this point that has not caught the attention of many researchers is the fact that both ISIS key figures and their predecessors of the Sunni reformists were imprisoned, some of them were subjected to abuse, and most were subjected to harassment outside the prison.

A map of intellectual and ideological sequence: From the thought of Islamic reform and ijtihad to the Islamic State’s puritanism and takfir (Figure 2A, B, and C).

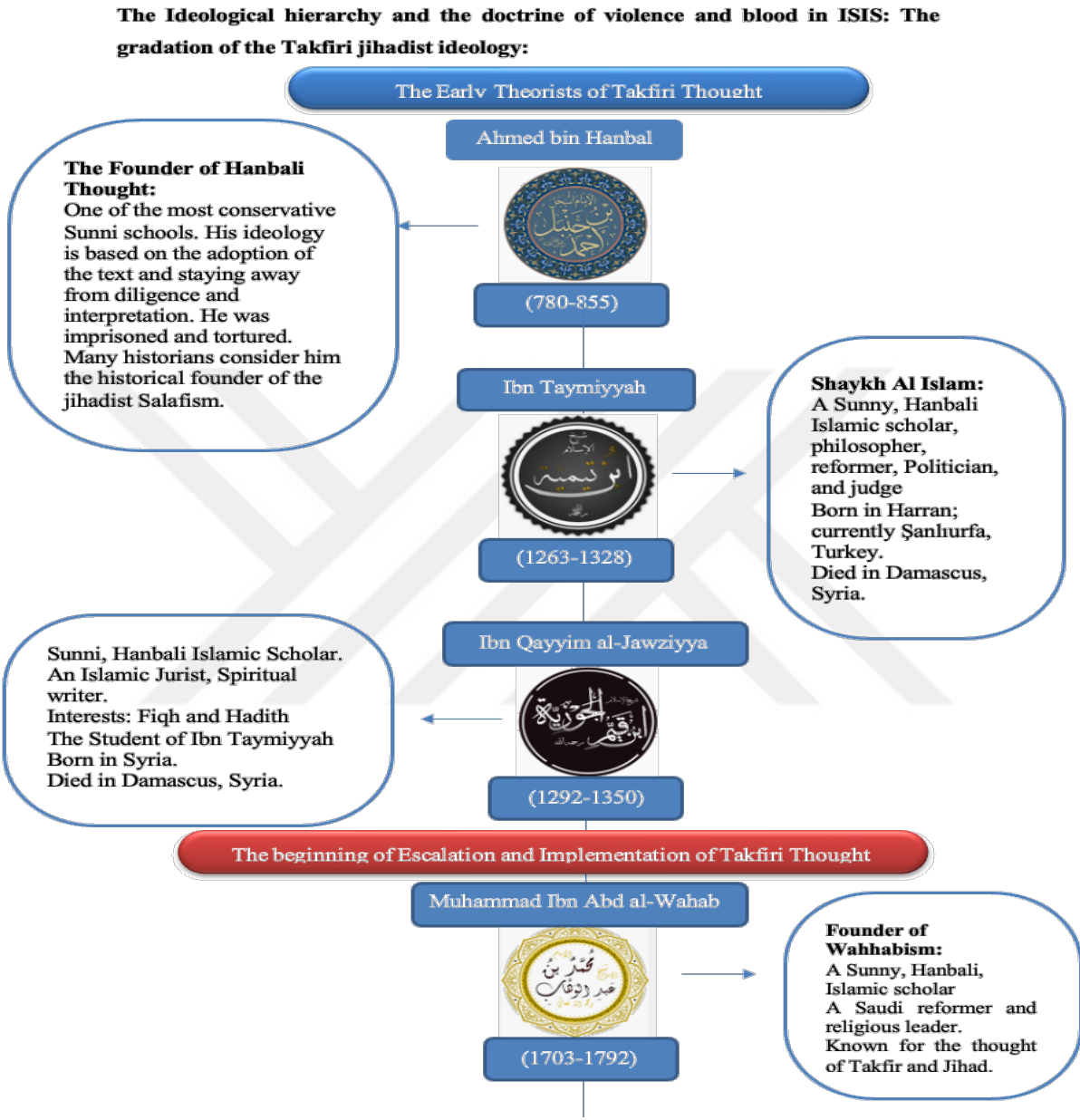


Figure 2A. A Map of Intellectual Ideological Sequence: From the thought of Islamic Reform and İjtihad to the Islamic State’s Puritanism and takfir

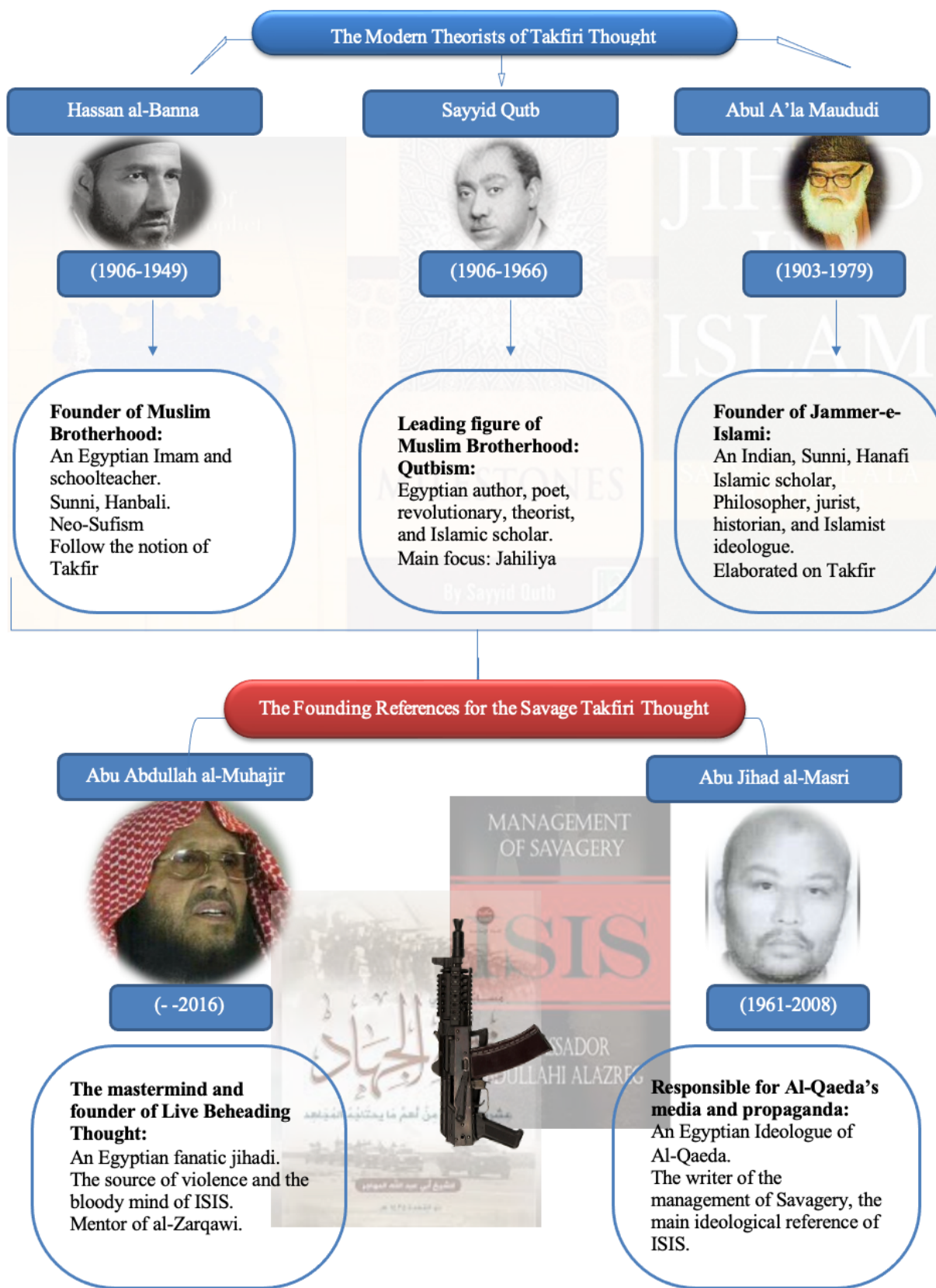


Figure 2B. A Map of Intellectual Ideological Sequence: From the thought of Islamic Reform and Ijtihad to the Islamic State's Puritanism and takfir



Figure 2C. A Map of Intellectual Ideological Sequence: From the thought of Islamic Reform and Ijtihad to the Islamic State's Puritanism and takfir

4.5. ISIS Approaches and Field Tactical Moves

To analyze and judge a group such as ISIS, it is necessary to look at its leaders and general approach, not only at secondary actors and theoretical laws because these laws can be changed or abandoned entirely in the implementation phase. As for secondary actors, they are a tool that leaders use to impose their methods and draw their general trends. For example, ISIS's field tactical movements are often carried out in this way; small groups (6 to 7 people) headed by a field commander equipped with fighters to ensure a smooth and speedy movement. Among these individuals are suicide bombers who are used to inflict a larger number of victims and facilitate penetration operations at points where there is a heavy security presence (Iraq witnessed a lot of this type of operation). This operation is broadly used for two reasons: to impose control and inflict the largest possible harm on the enemy. The second reason is to ensure the smooth movement of senior leaders to different safer areas.

But there is an important point to be mentioned at this level; the organization is based mainly on spiritual leaders whose books were printed and distributed to the members of the organization and their ideas were cultivated in the applied learning approach in the training camps before joining the battlefield. Therefore, when it comes to the point of the importance of leaders and their general trends in this organization, it is necessary to touch on thoughts, writings, and general approaches rather than focusing only on the real physical presence of individuals and theoretical laws.

ISIS's recruitment approach revolves around two main elements, financial seduction, and ideological affinity. ISIS used the money to attract young local recruits and the ideology to convince the veteran fighters.

4.6. The Fighters of ISIS & The Smart Recruitment Strategy

Dimitar Bogatinov the associated professor in Military Academy 'Gen. Mihailo Apostolski' and Aleksander Nacev the Director for Security of Classification Information, say "The recruitment strategy used by ISIS is one of its strongest points. It is its mainstay". (Aleksander Nacev & Dimitar Bogatinov. (2018). Understanding Terrorist Motivation with an Emphasis on ISIS Recruitment Methods. P: 84)

To simplify and decipher the mystery of the successful recruitment process, details must be seen from the perspective of the organization's leaders. The leaders assign each person who joins the organization to the appropriate position that suits their personality and capabilities. This stage is accomplished through a careful analysis of the needs of ISIS and a

careful reading of the expectations of the recruits. The reasons for individuals joining ISIS are many and different; some are joining for revenge, some for a desire to lead, some research for adventure or identity, or simply have been motivated by the desire to change the future and upset the balance of power and so on (Aleksander Nacev & Dimitar Bogatinov. (2018). Understanding Terrorist Motivation with an Emphasis on ISIS Recruitment Methods. P: 84).

In the recruitment phase, as given in Figure 3, IS focuses on people who live in a vacuum, isolation, rejection, or need; emotional or moral vacuum, social isolation, familial or societal rejection, and financial or moral need. IS exploits this gap to attract quick and easy-to-convince targets. (Aleksander Nacev & Dimitar Bogatinov. (2018). Understanding Terrorist Motivation with an Emphasis on ISIS Recruitment Methods. P: 86)

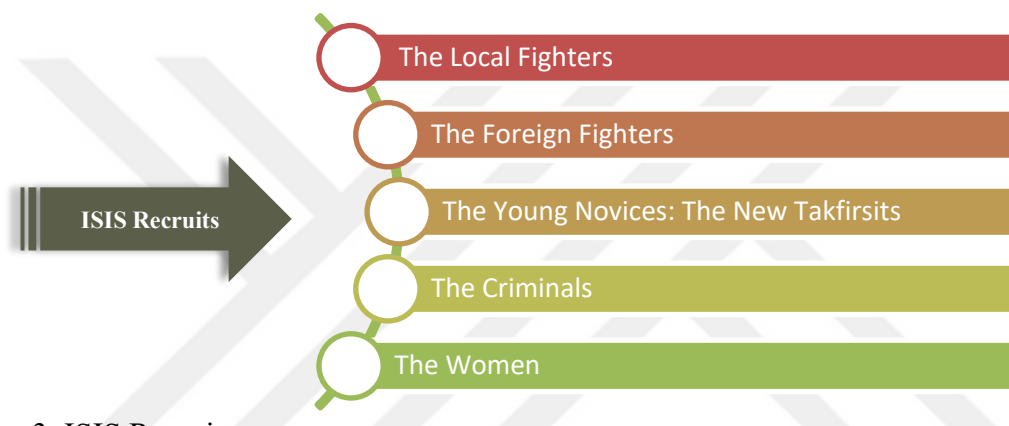


Figure 3. ISIS Recruits

4.6.1. The Local Fighters

This category is the least immunized and most vulnerable of the others. Recruits in this category are local individuals that are easy to reach. The persuasion process is done either through temptation or threat. Young people are enticed by salaries that are higher than those offered in their home countries (in this case; Iraq and Syria). In the event of refusal, families are threatened and urged to persuade their sons to join the organization. (Aleksander Nacev & Dimitar Bogatinov. (2018). Understanding Terrorist Motivation with an Emphasis on ISIS Recruitment Methods. P:87). According to the Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Centre, more than 6.300 fighters joined ISIS's war in Iraq and Syria in July 2014. Most of these fighters are Syrians. (Aleksander Nacev & Dimitar Bogatinov. (2018). Understanding Terrorist Motivation with an Emphasis on ISIS Recruitment Methods. P: 87)

- This category is subdivided into three main branches, the old hand, the apprentice, and the jobless and hopeless young men as given in Figure 4:

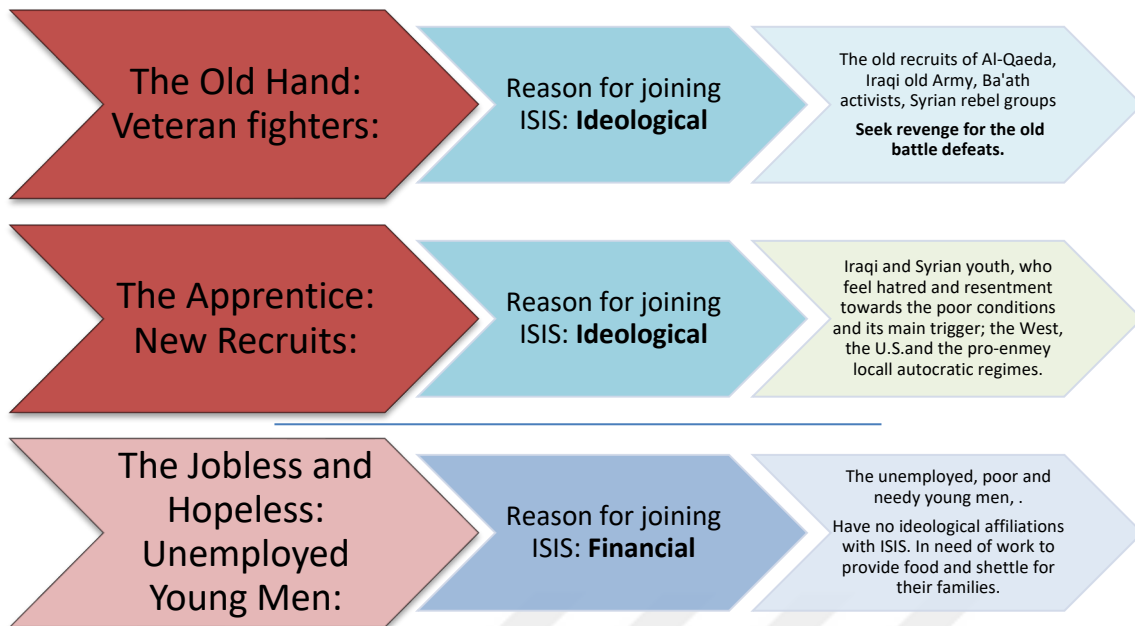


Figure.4 The Local Fighters Category in ISIS

ISIS took advantage of the circumstances and emotions of all these people to persuade them to join its ranks. Whereas the veterans aspired to revenge and rehabilitate themselves after the loss. The young new recruits dreamed of restoring the nation's dignity and Sunni supremacy. As for the young unemployed men's main goals revolved around housing, food, and providing better conditions for their families.

4.6.2. The Foreign Fighters

According to the international competent official bodies, ISIS had huge fighting troops, including fighters from at least fifty countries, including Europeans and Westerners.

What attracted the Europeans and Westerners to this extremist organization?

As strange as this presumption is, the reason somehow explains this illogicality. Simply, the caliphate appears attractive especially with the growing gain of power, to those ‘‘New Western Muslims’’ or ‘‘ New Jihadis’’. For instance, foreign soldiers have published many videos on social media, calling for their followers to join the fight in Syria. These videos were designed specially and smartly, using a high-resolution technique to add a graphic aesthetic. They were recorded in affluent neighborhoods and places, such as five stars hotels and luxury homes that the organization has taken over. The choice of the soldier who appears in the video is a careful and thoughtful one also. The soldiers in such videos, which are programmed to persuade the new young Muslims to join them, are often Westerners in feature, with decent looks and smiling

faces. The videographer seduces his viewers by assuring them that everyone who joins them will be received in such worthy conditions and free of charge.

As an eyewitness to what was happening on the ground, Nadia says ‘ ‘ The Islamic State’s religious propaganda was a strong lure for potential jihadists, but militants from all over the world were also enticed with the promise of money, and when they came into Mosul, they occupied the nicest homes first and looted the rest of anything they wanted’’ (*Nadia Murad, 2017. Chapter 6. The Last Girl: My Story of Captivity, and My Fight Against the Islamic State*). Aleksander Nacev and Dimitar Bogatinov in their article, ‘ ‘ *Understanding Terrorist Motivation with an Emphasis on ISIS Recruitment Methods*’, touched on ‘ ‘the overreaching patterns in why individuals are susceptible to terrorist recruitment’’; highlighting the fact that ‘ ‘there is no unified background to explain the phenomenon of polarization and recruitment of individuals in ISIS. But it was noticed that ISIS is focusing on weak targets and targets without ambitions or will and has nothing to lose. It lures them with offers, promises, and conditions that are better than their current situation. It also concentrates on the psychological aspect, specifically on the feeling of loneliness, so it zeroes in on people who feel lonely; by enhancing the sense of belonging and unity and thus the feeling of loyalty and attachment to the ISIS community. This way attracts mainly unsuccessful individuals and those who are unable to achieve success on their own. All these recruitment methods are vital to persuade the maximum number of individuals to join the organization but also to make them engaged and ready to pledge allegiance to ISIS’’. (*Nadia Murad, 2017. Chapter 6. The Last Girl: My Story of Captivity, and My Fight Against the Islamic State. p:81-82*).

As another method of polarization to draw more fighters to the battlefield in Iraq and Syria, ISIS used Sabaya ‘captive women’ from Yazidi and the ones who are considered infidel ‘kafir’, as a propaganda sexual tool in its magazine ‘Dabiq’, to seduce young men with these girls. Sexual trafficking of Yazidi girls witnessed its peak with ISIS, especially under the authority of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

These methods were never been used before by any terrorist organization. It is a diabolical way to persuade and lure those who are hesitant or afraid of the living conditions in Iraq or Syria under war, through the method of seduction, sexual attraction, and rosy promises. However, ISIS also used intimidation and harsh punishment methods to ensure that its foreign fighters would not withdraw or escape.

It is worth mentioning at this point that these methods were used deliberately and systematically. But the most important question is not why, but how was ISIS able to recruit and integrate all these foreign fighters into its organization so easily and without drawing

attention to it, despite all the advanced technology used by the U.S. intelligence and other secretive agencies that had previously declared war on terror.

4.6.3. The Young Novices: The new Takfirists

Many fighters who joined ISIS were young, novices, and newly converted to Islam. This is a factor that added to the brutality of this group, due to their ignorance of the rules of war in Islamic law and their lack of knowledge of Islamic regulations.

The mentor of the most famous figures of the organization, Al-Zarqawi's teacher: Al-Makdisi, spoke about them in some of his writings, describing them as impulsive and hasty young men, due to their rush in issuing the ruling of blasphemy 'Takfir' without the right understanding of 'Sharia' or returning to the Islamic legal references.

Many ISIS fighters have embraced the idea of Takfir without restrictions to legalize bloodshed, money theft, and rape. The field violation of the Islamic law of war was evident from the testimonies of many victims of this organization, from families who were abused to girls who were raped.

Nadia Murad in her book 'The last girl: My Story of Captivity, and My Fight Against the Islamic State' cited many vivid examples of violations committed by ISIS fighters, including the killing of men, the elderly, and the disabled, the kidnapping of children, and the rape and abuse of captive women. The official figures talked about the abduction of more than 6000 women and girls in 2014 in Iraq, forcing their displacement and using them as sex slaves 'Sabaya'.

Criticizing the ideology of extremism, Al-Makdisi says "the rulings based on the permissibility of blood, money, and rape and the corruption that we are witnessing today in various arenas are evidence of the immorality, ignorance, and deviation of the leaders who sign these fatwas". So, the moral corruption of the assets represented by field commanders and legislators for fatwas of killing, abuse, and rape led to the moral decadence and corruption of the branches represented by the fighters. This thought extended and became a mentality for those young novices; the new takfirists. Even the modern intellectual references of this organization denounce the use of this amount of violence, brutality, and exaggerated generalization of the thought of Takfir.

4.6.4. The Criminals

Starting with the mastermind and the most influential spiritual figure of ISIS, Abu Musab al Zarqawi, a remarkable presence of criminal record holders appears in the lines of this terrorist organization.

Leaving school at an early age, Zarqawi was known for his extreme tendency to violence and was notorious for his crimes since he was a teenager. The former director of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency Lieutenant General Mike Flynn described him as a “Hitler-like” and “incredibly brutal” character. He had tattoos all over his body and was known locally for his thuggery and illegal acts.

This category also includes another category aforementioned; the desperate unemployed youth. However, this section deals more with the desperate unemployed who have tended towards delinquency and criminality. The unemployment rates recorded higher levels after the war in Iraq and Syria, which was reflected in the crime rates in both countries, creating new challenges for the Iraqi and Syrian citizens but especially for the unemployed youth. ISIS has exploited this weak economic situation to lure these young deviants, with money to attract and recruit them.

4.6.5. The Women

Many studies overlooked, or addressed modestly and ineffectively, the female component of ISIS and its long-term danger. The main focus revolved around numbers, nationalities, and reasons rather than on the coming significant impact of these women on the future of ISIS and thus international security and stability in the region.

While analyzing the role of women in this type of organization, as a violent and brutal terrorist entity, in International Relations (IR) it is visible that the process of dealing with the role of women in IR and political science (PS) is always either diminished, not addressed carefully and meticulously, or completely ignored. The main reason for this issue is the misinterpretation and underestimation of women's intellectual capabilities.

Most studies and research dealt with woman's presence in such extremist groups from a social point of view and not from the political and social aspects; from a gender-based perspective rather than seeing her as independent rational beings. A woman is often referred to as a social entity (The mother, the wife, the daughter, etc.) more than as a political entity; an individual with free thought, will, and political-ideological tendencies. The woman is a combination of social, political, emotional, intellectual, etc., capabilities and structures, just like the man. However, slight differences between the two genders must be taken into account;

given that the woman is the most important factor in the social life of every society, Her role as a mother is vital; raising and instilling doctrine and morals and passing down her intellectual beliefs to her children. Therefore, this social role is not limited to bringing children and nurturing them only but is an intellectual and spiritual role at the same time. As an independent entity with free will, the mother inculcates concepts that she considers true in her child's mind. A child is primarily a reflection of his mother's beliefs and thoughts, and then family, society, culture, traditions, etc.

When ISIS recruited the female component, they were aware of its value in the future of the organization. So, they implanted the doctrine of reconciliation and redemption in the minds of these women, by relying on female recruiters who have the power of persuasion, to build a relationship based on a sense of belonging, trust, and sisterhood, and so to engage them in all stages of operations from design to implementation.

According to a report published by the International Center for the Study of Radicalization (ICSR), 4,761 female recruits joined ISIS in Iraq and Syria during the period between 2013 and 2018. Many of these female recruits were Western women and minors.

To understand this paradoxical phenomenon further empirical research is needed to understand the rationale behind the woman's attraction to violent extremism and terrorism and her use of aggressive masculinity.

4.7. The External Factors that Triggered Violence and Extremism in the Region

Terrorism is a result of Western intervention in the region. The philosopher and thinker Abed al-Jabri says that what is happening in the world today is not a clash of civilizations, but rather a conflict between the Western civilization and its products and that the imperialist capitalist globalization concept which is run by a junta of extremists and ambitious dreamers led to the emergence of its opposite and raised its voice (referring to the phenomenon of globalization of terrorism).

4.7.1. War of Afghanistan

The war against terrorism did not end with eliminating terrorism but exacerbated it further and added another dimension of violence.

In Afghanistan, civilians were also deliberately or recklessly targeted in raids and air strikes launched by the US and coalition forces on locations where terrorists were suspected. According to some official statistics, 14,000 Afghan civilians were killed between 2006 and

2013. According to the data released by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the annual number of death of civilians in 2018 increased to 3800 deaths.

Michelle Bachelet the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights mentioned in February 2020 that innocent civilians were exposed to extreme forms of violence, and the number of civilian casualties has increased in the third quarter of 2019, adding ‘‘countless individuals, families, and communities suffer physical, mental, social and economic harm due to the violence.’’ (*Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 2019, United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, Feb 2020*).

The United States war in Afghanistan which is the longest war in American history cost heavy casualties among civilians, physical and health losses, and most importantly psychological losses. In 2009, the Ministry of Public Health of Afghanistan published a report proving that two-thirds of Afghans suffer from mental and psychological issues. (Watson Institute, International Public Affairs, Brown University. Afghan Civilians, April 2022).

The National Library of Medicine surveyed 2006-2009, more than 2380 Afghan children, teachers, and caregivers, in 25 different public schools within three municipalities, Bamyan, Kabul, and Mazar e-Sharif. Founded on a range type of questioners (depression self-rating scale, the impact of events scale, symptom checklist, self-reporting, etc.).

Following those qualitative and quantitative research, the team reached the following conclusions:

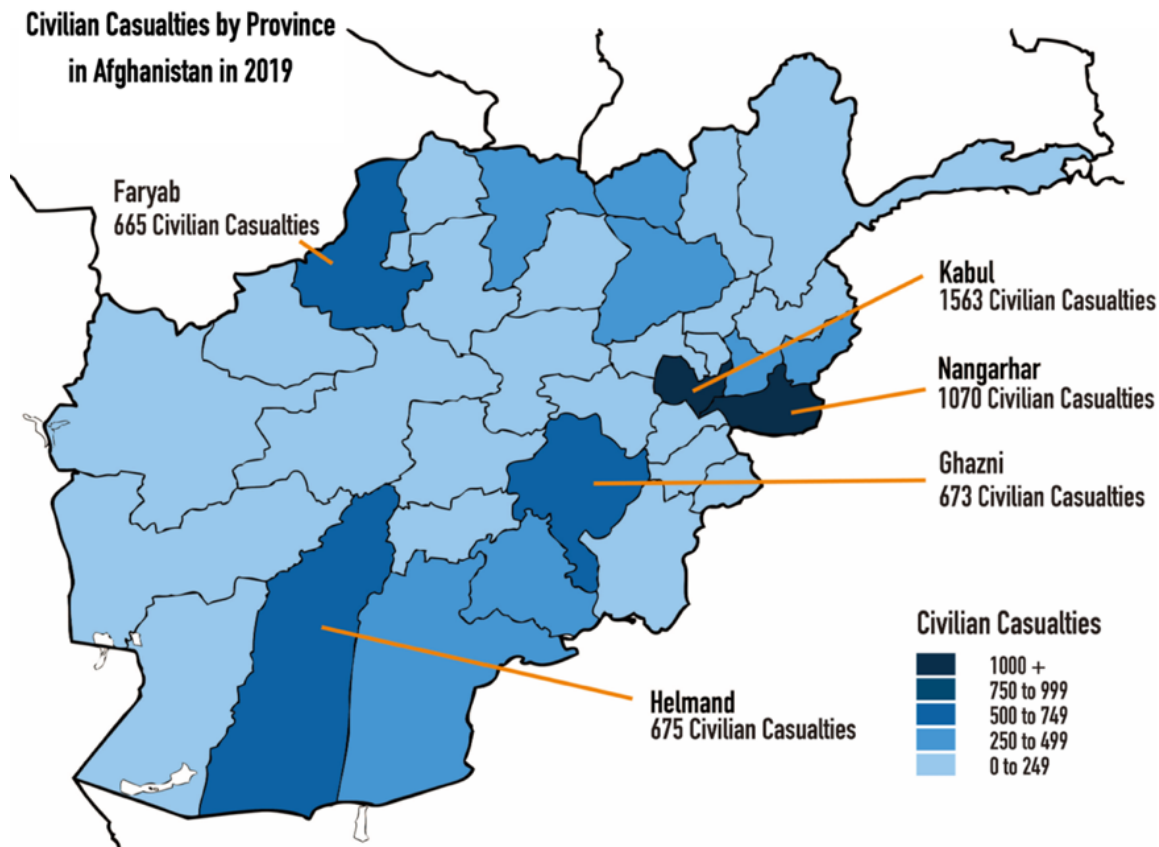
The main reasons for the mental health decline among Afghans are:

- Death or loss of a relative (14%)
- Forced displacement (8.6%)
- Living in a combat zone (12.8%)
- Witnessing severe violence to another person (13.9%)
- Severe physical injury (12.7%)

People who have witnessed armed conflicts, barren battles, deaths, severe injuries, forced displacement, etc., are more vulnerable to developing a mental disorder. These traumas can be inherited and passed down through several generations in the absence of appropriate treatment and ongoing care led by mental health specialists.

The map in Figure 5 shows the number of civilian casualties in the province of Afghanistan in 2019. (Watson Institute, International Public Affairs, Brown University. Afghan Civilians, April 2022).

: III)



Civilian Casualties in the Province of Afghanistan in 2019.

4.7.2. War of Iraq

The lives of thousands of civilians were in jeopardy as a result of the US war against Iraq.

Reports submitted by international entities acknowledged the existence of a large number of war casualties, and some reports stated that the US forces and their allies committed war crimes, most of which were not disclosed.

Former US soldiers who returned from Iraq revealed some of these crimes, admitting to committing crimes of genocide and immorality.

On 12 July 2007, WikiLeaks leaked a video of US forces shooting Iraqi civilians in Baghdad, leaving dozens dead.

Human war violations were not only practiced by US forces, but UK forces also committed war crimes in Iraq. The European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights

(ECCHR) proved the presence of violence, sexual abuse, religious humiliation, etc. by UK forces in Iraq.

Iraqis submitted many testimonies to the UK High Court against the UK forces. Among the war objectives that were announced by the US government then, was the liberation of Iraq and its wealth and handing them over to the Iraqi citizens, but what happened on the ground was contrary to these statements. Approximately 60 American security companies were used to acquire oil fields and industrial centers. Blackwater was one of these PMCs that operated in Iraq and was implicated in several war crimes, Nisour Square massacre on September 16, 2007, is one of the documented examples of crimes committed by this company.

4.7.3. General Points that Exacerbated the Crisis and the Phenomenon of Violence in the Middle East

- The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan sparked a barbaric civil war.
- The Western and American presence in the region unleashed a wave of violence in the Middle East.
- The principles of *jus in Bellum* were violated in Afghanistan and the war became a war of annihilation rather than an anti-terrorism war. “The United States of America did not consider the culture and religious composition of Afghan society when it occupied the country, which led to the creation of an atmosphere of continuous and permanent confrontations” (Misra, 2002: 17).
- People who have witnessed armed conflicts, barren battles, deaths, severe injuries, forced displacement, etc., are more vulnerable to developing a mental disorder. These traumas can be inherited and passed down through several generations in the absence of appropriate treatment and ongoing care led by mental health specialists. The war in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria has caused an increase in the incidence of psychological, physical, and economic harm to individuals, which caused a rise in violence and religious extremism.
- The policies of most countries and governments nowadays are based on the principle of common interests. The ideological background is sometimes abandoned in favor of political interests. For instance, despite the conflicting interests between Tehran, Al-Doha, and ISIS and their different ideological affiliations, there was cooperation between these entities on the ground.

- There is a link between moral decadence, degeneration of the intelligence system, backwardness, and the increase of violence in the Arab world.

The American and Western invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, the imprisonment experience, the illegal detentions, the unfair trials, the counter-terrorism laws, the writings and classifications in Takfiri thought, all these reasons, in addition to several other factors such as:

- The post-colonial stage: The national failure of Arab and Islamic countries in the post-colonial stage at all levels,
- The reductionist, radical, defensive, and Islamophobic approach from the Western governments,
- The sectarianism: Fueled Mainly by Iran and the Gulf States,
- The coup against legitimacy in the post-Arab spring era: (The case of the Egyptian coup d'état), etc.

All these factors contributed to the formation and escalation of terrorism out in the region and enhanced the possibility of the emergence of extremist groups such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS.

4.8. Media and Politics

How the reality is constructed by mass media, and the effect of the Motion-Picture Industry on the Popularity of the Organization are investigated under the following sub-headings.

4.8.1. The Mass Media and the Construction of Reality

The media in the West, in its various types and forms (audio, written, visual/traditional or modern/ earned or shared, etc.) is considered a means of pressure and guidance at the same time. It is a means of pressure on the authority and its system, and thus on governments, and a means of shaping and influencing public opinion.

Therefore, this important element and this dual relationship between the media and the authority cannot be ignored. The authority uses the media to mobilize and shape public opinion, and the media pressures the authority to direct it into a certain course according to the editorial line and the general direction of the media.

The American media has always made attempts to obscure the facts that would affect its image in the world and sought to hide the extent of the human casualties, the systematic

killing, and the great losses it caused in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The matter came to head with the classification of WikiLeaks as a threat to American national security, and serious charges were brought against the owner of the magazine, Assange, and all those who dealt with him. It is worth noting here that Wikileaks leaked a video of the helicopter attack in Baghdad known as ‘collateral murder’, resulting in a scandal for the US government and its forces, but they quickly evaded the charges and no one was held accountable for the crime.

The second point of controversy in this matter is the statements made by the former US Army soldier, Chelsea Elizabeth Manning, who leaked the ‘collateral murder’ video to WikiLeaks, in addition to a host of other classified information. Manning admitted in the investigation that she proposed these sensitive files to Washington Post and New York Times, but they showed no interest. The question that arises here is how such important names reject such huge and sensitive content.

The answer can be embedded in the fact that 90% of the media in the United States of America is controlled by six corporations also called the big 6 or six media giants, focusing mainly on the entertainment, filming, news, and games sectors. It should also be noted here that most of the information content circulating on the Internet is under the control of one of these six giants, which is Comcast.

Despite its adoption of the media blackout approach to the crimes committed by the American forces and their allies in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the American media provided free propaganda for Al-Qaeda and then for IS through its media. IS videos were published on its private channels and devoted many episodes to the crimes of the organization, which made the organization more famous and aroused the curiosity of viewers, especially teenagers. This is what IS used to its advantage as a means of attracting young recruits.

Thus, these American, Western, and international channels participated in two main points that served IS’s interest, namely intimidation and enticement through programmed media propaganda.

4.8.2. The effect of the Motion-Picture Industry on the Popularity of the Organization

Not only news channels participated in making ISIS more famous worldwide but also Netflix the American streaming service and production company along with the American multinational mass media company Walt Disney, have also contributed to facilitating the spread of IS’s propaganda, by highlighting the organization excessively and paying too much attention to it (more than its real size), which made ISIS attract the attention of many around the world and become the most powerful and popular terrorist organization in the modern era.

Prison Break 2017, Held for Ransom 2019, Mosul 2019, City of Ghosts 2017, Layla M 2016, and the list goes on. All these titles are the names of films that were produced approximately in the same period; between 2016 and 2019, by international production companies, and most of them dealt with the issue of terrorism from the same editorial angle. It should be noted here that all these movies have been published by Netflix.

4.9. Social Media ISIS's Propaganda Pipeline & the Cyberterrorism

ISIS has taken advantage of the opportunities provided by the internet mainly and social media especially. For instance, a large fraction of the appointments was conducted online (e.g., The plot of Hyderabad, India; According to the interrogation records " ISIS's virtual plotters organized the delivery of weapons as well as the precursor chemicals used to make explosives, directing the Indian men to hidden pickup spots. The directives came from Syria." (Rukmini Callimachi. Feb 4, 2017. Not 'Lone Wolves' After All: How ISIS Guides World's Terror Plots from Afar - The New York Times-) and intensive content sharing that promotes the group's ideology in the virtual environment, plays a major role in the propaganda process.

4.9.1. Online Magazines

Dabiq: Dabiq was an online magazine that ISIL used for propaganda, recruitment, and as a space to spread their radical ideology and strong opposition to the social, political, and religious status quo. It was published via the Dark Web. So, the website of the magazine was encrypted, and it was difficult to track, which prevented the authorities from following their online activities.

The first print of Dabiq goes back to July 2014. The magazine was published in Arabic, English, German, and French. It aimed to spread the ideology of al-Qaeda and declare the return and resurrection of the caliphate. Some experts emphasized that the magazine was primarily seeking to persuade and invite the readers to carry out "lone-wolf" attacks.

After two years of publication, the magazine was soon replaced with another one. In September 2016, Rumiya published its first issue. Used the same editorial line and ideological goal as its predecessors. The final issue was published on September 9, 2017.

Dabiq and Rumiya were not the only online magazines that ISIS/ISIL released; Dar al-Islam (French language) and Kostantiniyye (Turkish language) were also online magazines belonging to the group.

4.9.2. End-to-end Encrypted Apps and Lone Wolf Attacks

ISIS benefitted also from the most popular end-to-end encrypted apps, such as WhatsApp and Telegram, which provided a free and unmonitored space for both members and sympathizers of the group. (Rukmini Callimachi. 2017. Not ‘Lone Wolves’ After All: How ISIS Guides World’s Terror Plots from Afar. P:105). Some reports mentioned about immediate use of encrypted apps, before or during the attacks in Europe. The apps are used to communicate the ‘handlers abroad’ with the ‘remotely-controlled operative’.

Counterterrorism officials confirm that many of the plots were planned online, or through what experts call ‘Remote-controlled attacks’, where the operatives give their guidance to the would-be attacker’, to do the implementation process. According to Nathaniel Barr, a terrorism analyst at Valens Global for Defense of Democracies in Washington, ‘there are virtual coaches who are providing guidance and encouragement throughout the process from radicalization to recruitment into a specific plot’. He added that ‘if you look at the communications between the attackers and the virtual plotters, you will see that there is a direct line of communication to the point where they are egging them on minutes, even seconds before the individual carries out an attack.’

To analyze the types of attacks, counterterrorism officials have divided ISIS’s attacks into three broad categories: directed, enabled, and inspired or unclear (Figure 6).

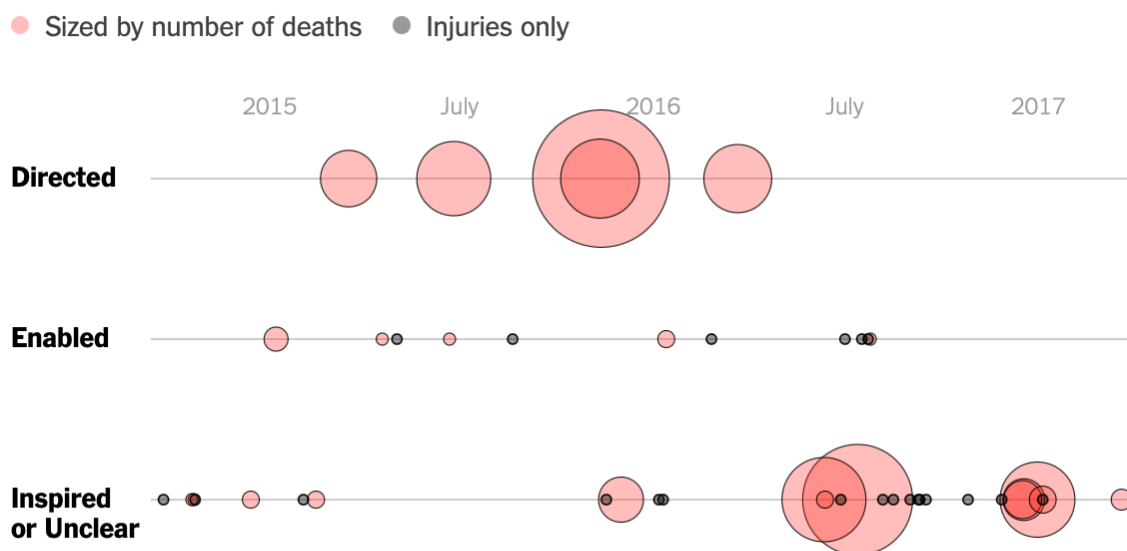


Figure 6. ISIS's Types of Attacks

Source: The New York Times 2017

What officials concluded from this scheme is that the operations conducted in Europe, Asia, and the U.S. recently, are “lone wolves” ones, the communication with the operatives was immediately after the implementation of the plot. These lone-wolf attacks explain the existence of the group’s terror in places where they don’t exist.

What has been concluded from this information is that the movement is carrying out a process that is evasively and innovatively confusing the security services by simple means.

4.9.3. Video Games

“Your games and units are produced by you; we do the same actions on the battlefield”. This is the first message which appears for the sympathizers of ISIS during online recruitment and virtual training.

ISIS asks its community to join the virtual battlefield through video games, such as call of duty and PUBG. Mainly for two reasons: first, to recruit and train. Second, to share and spread.

The process is done mainly in this way; coaches and trainees agree on scheduling a meeting on a video game platform (where they can easily communicate and use terms without being unveiled). Then, the coaches teach the concept and the general idea of the mission, the type of attacks they are expected to conduct, and the key points that should be taken into consideration, so that the largest possible losses can be achieved. During the training process, the videos are recorded. Then, reproduced in high quality and backed with sound effects and heart-touching songs. To be ready later for sharing on social media.

These types of videos are launched as an appeal to raise funds and the number of sympathizers. But also, as a way to appeal to westerners by simplifying and legitimizing their Jihad through video games to the video games’ adductors and fun, who are eager to try in real life in Syria and somewhere else, what they see “fun and entertaining” in call of duty, PUBG, etc. (Anat Agron, 2015. Jihad & Terror Threat Monitor Research Fellow, MEMRI)

By the end of this section, it should be noted that none can deny the existence of ISIS and the extent of the threat it poses to international security services. Yet, it is worth mentioning that the content sharing of ISIS is mainly based on the ‘water blast’ or the magnifying effect. In other words, the over-exaggeration approach, by doubling and tripling the numbers of deaths, after attack effects, stretches the truth and overblows the threat. This point is mainly considered the source of the organization’s strength, which aims mainly to terrorize the enemy.

4.9.4. ISIS Cyberterrorism

Online recruitment of terrorists: The key point in the war on terror is not just on the ground, the virtual world also places an enormous threat and harm, more than the one done on the battlefield, ‘‘Internet is a sort of 24/7 hate buffet’’. ‘‘Social media is the way that attacks go viral, it is a strategy that perfects the movements over decades’’ (e.g., the White supremacist movement [a political ideology which was dominated in the United States and witnessing a re-emergence recently, the movement believes and imposes social, political, historical, and institutional supremacy and domination of White people over the other races.]. ‘‘White supremacists went online in 1983-’84, ‘‘in kind of pre-internet chat rooms, called ‘The Liberty Net’. These chatrooms were exchanging recipes and posting personal ads, besides the hit lists and assassination targets. So, these kinds of groups were doing social media before social media even existed for the rest of us’’ (Kathleen Belew -an expert on the history of white supremacists interview on PBS Newshour: 08.05.2019). K. Belew adds that: ‘‘the idea that terrorist groups started recently social media is erroneous, but what’s new is the way the technology of communication and technology of killing allows the body counts to go higher, higher and higher’’.

ISIS has used different technologies, like drone technology, chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear (CBRN), and communication technology. But The strength point of ISIS and the other terrorist groups was not about the sophisticated level of technology used, it was more about the innovative and impromptu way of using it (Truls Hallberg Tonnessen, Islamic State, and Technology, Dec 2017, Vol. 11, No. 6, pp.101-111).

What makes ISIS ahead of the rest of the terrorist groups in technology, is the fact that the latter managed to seize the most resources (e.g., territorial, financial, human, etc.). The group did not traditionally use these resources, but it used them in a very innovative manner both on the virtual battlefield and on the ground missions, as an offensive mechanism against rivals. It must be noted that the technology used by ISIS was not the most advanced one, some experts reported the use of ‘‘low-tech’’; less advanced, yet easily accessible technology.

4.10. ISIS between Facts and Exaggeration

ISIS is the tail-end of al-Qaeda. It [ISIS] emerged from its [al-Qaeda] remnants in Iraq. Therefore, analyzing ISIS without addressing Al-Qaeda may affect the general understanding of the movement’s nature and its modus operandi.

The guerrilla warfare of Al-Qaeda started as Jihad or holy war against the invaders [the

Christian or atheist Soviets as seen by Afghans and the Islamic world], in Afghanistan during the Soviet-Afghan war (1979-1989). During that war, the mujahidin employed guerrilla tactics against the Soviets; quick attacks then disappear into the mountains, which caused great destruction without bloody war. With U.S. anti-aircraft missiles that helped mujaheddin in shooting down Soviet planes and helicopters, the Soviets and under the guidance of the new leader Mikhail Gorbachev decided to hold back. The withdrawal process began in 1988. The war was put to an end officially on February 15, 1989 (after 9 years, 1 month, 3 weeks, and 1 day of the war).

Osama Bin Ladin was one of the most significant Soviet-Afghan war aftermaths. He was the key figure in the Afghani battle and the sponsor of mujahedin by providing money, weapons, and fighters, along with other Islamic scholars like Abdullah Azzam the Palestinian Sunni Islamic scholar, and at the same time the preacher and mentor of Ben Ladin.

By 1988, Osama Bin Ladin along with Abdullah Azzam, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Aimen Dean, and some other volunteers, created a Sunny Islamist multi-national militant under the name of “al-Qaeda” and started to operate as a network of Islamic extremists and began launching missions and plots in different places of the world against the U.S. and western culture. The core aim of the organization was to spread a global Jihad. It set up operations in Sudan, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Yemen, etc. mainly against the United States (the top target and enemy number one of al-Qaeda).

In 1996, Osama bin Laden declared publicly a fatwa that announced officially the Jihad against the United States, Israel, and their allies, accusing them of occupying the land of Muslims, and stealing resources; “it wants to occur by our countries, steal our resources, impose on us agents to rule us, and then wants us to agree to all this” (Osama Bin Ladin, in 1997 CNN interview).

According to some officials, Bin Ladin returned to Saudi Arabia just after the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan, where he was working in his family’s construction company “The Saudi Binladin group”. The U.S. troops’ arrival in Saudi Arabia during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, provoked him. He considered the U.S. presence in Saudi territory unacceptable and far from being tolerated (Peter Bergen CNN terrorism analyst).

As an impact of the 9/11 attacks, “the United States made full use of its foreign intelligence liaison relationships and asked to benefit from the knowledge and experience of Russian, Chinese, Pakistani and even Libyan intelligence services” (European Union External Action 2022 EU- Libya Relations, p.528). “The director of Spain’s National Intelligence Center (CNI), Jorge Dezcallar, publicly confirmed the enhanced level of cooperation among

intelligence agencies since 9/11” (El Pais, Spain, April 28, 2002). Many intelligence and security agencies, for instance; the central intelligence agency (CIA), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), both increased their overseas legal attaché offices, and reinforced them with special agents and support staff, for better cooperation of coordination facing the terrorism issue (9/11 Commission Report 2004, p528). The events that lead to the attacks of 9/11, according to the final report of the United States Senate’s and the House of Representatives Joint Inquiry Staff, “were due to the over-relying on the cooperation of foreign intelligence agencies, instead of developing and relying on its human sources abroad “. (9/11 Commission Report 2004, p528). This limited productive intelligence was mainly due to two reasons; “some of the foreign services were not able to go after the Al-Qaeda network and its leadership and some others were unwilling to do so “(Joint Inquiry Staff, (2002) Report. Part 1: Findings and Conclusions, p.9).

The U.S. intelligence and security agencies had a lot to learn from their previous bitter experience with al-Qaeda. Soon, another threat emerged with the invasion of 2003, this time in Iraq and Syria mainly and nine other countries broadly, rising more challenges. This occasion was also an opportunity to measure the effectiveness of the decisions and strategies that have been approved after 9/11.

IS has successfully managed to move quickly from the borders to the center of the Middle East, showed a great ability to vanquish its rival and hold large areas, and exhibited a significant tactical performance. Despite the defeats that it faced recently facing the Global Coalition, which managed with local partners to liberate territories controlled by ISIS in Iraq and Syria (Antony J. Blinken (2021) – Secretary of State. U.S. Department of State. (March 23, 2021) Press Statement), but does the liberation of territory in Iraq and Syria mean the end of ISIS’s tyranny? And what about online recruitment, training, and radicalization?

4.10.1. Women & Children of ISIS a Ticking Bomb

It should be noted here that most of the information included under this title was taken from the documentary ‘Face to Face with Daesh Al-Hadath Al-Arabiya Channel’.

Most of the ISIS children received training courses, most of which lasted for a month. During the exercises, ISIS children were trained to carry weapons such as ‘ pistols’ and ‘Kalashnikovs’, in addition to receiving classes in Islamic jurisprudence or Sharia. The training was held in camps such as the ‘Tal Al-Abyad’ and ‘Teen/kids’ camps, where some children received suicide, combat, and immersion courses. Others were sent directly to the

camps of adult fighters. At the end of the training period, these children were transported to adult camps and the frontlines.

Some of these children were arrested after the end of the war by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). But soon they were sent to the rehabilitation centers 'Hori Center for the Rehabilitation of ISIS Children'. Their ages range between 12- and 17 years old. Most of them do not have identification papers. A large number of them are Syrians, but there are different nationalities also (Russians, French, Iraqis, Moroccans, Tunisians, Turks, etc.).

Most of the children who were arrested on the battlefronts, of them were injured or amputated. According to the report presented in the documentary of Al-Hadath, these cases were either due to the bombing by the coalition forces and the SDFs or by the organization itself, which was setting up the punishment for anyone who breaks the pre-established laws of ISIS.

One of the most prominent difficulties that the 'Hori Center of Rehabilitation faces is mainly the difficulty of dealing with the male children who refuse to cooperate or deal with the center's administrators, female teachers in particular, because of their gender. Here it seems clear the great influence and impact of ISIS's ideas and doctrine on these children.

It is worth mentioning here that ISIS relied on women and children, and exploited them in security missions such as espionage, information gathering, and transfer of weapons. This category was previously trained by the organization in the camps to perform such tasks. Therefore, many experts see women and children as the most dangerous elements of ISIS, whose danger still exists.

Dr. Maysa Al-Hussieni, a doctor in clinical psychology, says that the speeches of the ISIS children, who were interviewed, are instructive and not speeches resulting from awareness and personal conviction in most cases. As a solution, Dr. Al-Hussieni says that these children must be accompanied and their psyches were taken into account (carefully and consciously) in the analyzing phase. She adds that this rehabilitation must be carried out at the psychological, analytical, and social levels. And from several sides (Politics: the law. Social aspect: civil society. And the competent authority: Psychologists), and in a coordinated manner.

But the situation on the ground is quite different. As many countries refuse to take back their citizens who were part of ISIS, and who are now in Al-Hawl and Al-Roj camps. In addition to the weak international support. These kids are sent to small centers with limited human, and material resources, and expertise.

4.10.2. Al-Hawl and Al-Roj Prison Camps

Al Hawal refugee camp is located in Northern Syria, close to the Iraqi borders. According to camp management statistics, more than 70.000 individuals are living in the camp, most of whom are women and kids, they come from around 30 or 40 different countries. 10.000 of them are ISIS families or had direct contact with ISIS. According to the administration of the camp.

The camp contains the necessary supplies for its residents, but it is noteworthy that it also contains offices to receive money transfers (for example Al-Sham Exchange, Transfers, and Jewelry Office). This detail leads to the next point, which is the smuggling process in the camp.

According to Badran Jaikard, the Joint Vice President of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, some guards, civil organizations, and camp-based elements are involved in smuggling operations, and most of these operations are carried out through coordination in a systematic way, especially between the aforementioned elements and external elements from ISIS to smuggle IS women from the camps. It is worth noting here that both the Al-Hawl and Al-Roj camps are in the countryside of Hasaka; Northern Syria close to the Iraqi borders, and that escaping from these camps is not easy, as they are subject to strict security protection by internal security forces (Al-asyash/ the Fences), and that it is not possible to leave these camps without a written order and security escort. But despite these security strictures, smuggling operations take place in food trucks and guard cars (According to one of the Smugglers).

Answer Youssef, the Responsible for Managing the Internet Security Forces in the Al-Hawl camp, says that smuggling operations are coordinated by several elements and complex networks that are often difficult to reach; (elements of civil organizations, drivers, etc.).

The price of smuggling a woman and her children from the camps range from \$10,500-\$25,000. These funds are collected by launching support campaigns on social networks. These amounts are sent to the transfer offices located inside the camps, to the ISIS women to pay the smugglers.

The stages of smuggling operations are as follows; mediators from inside the camp smuggle families from inside the camp to outside it through trucks transporting garbage, water,

or food, but especially through the water tank after it is emptied. A delivery process that takes place through an external network, transports the smuggled people to their final destination.

It is also worth noting that the humanitarian conditions in these camps are very deteriorating, which increases the number of escape attempts. However, the main reason for the women's escape attempts is to join organizations' sleeper cells in different areas.

Many countries, such as France, the UK, and others countries, refuse to take back their citizens who were part of ISIS and who are still in Al-Hawl and Al-Roj camps. Recovery cases are very small and mostly centered around children.

In this regard, Fadel Abdel-Ghani, the Director of the Syrian Network for Human Rights, says that the countries' refusal to receive their nationals (families and children), is incomprehensible and unacceptable and that these countries must assume their responsibilities towards their nationals and take the necessary measures to get them out from the camps; either by referring them to the judiciary or rehabilitating them at their own cost (Native countries' expense). This inaction on the part of the countries of origin, especially Western ones, is mainly due to the difficulty of assessing the cases and the complexity of the legal aspect in the ruling process, due to the lack of evidence proving their innocence. John Sparks says that this situation reflects the government's lack of strategy to deal with ISIS ex-fighters/supporters, and exposes the massive loopholes in the law, where radical changes needed to be done that fit this particular case.

It is important to point out the seriousness of the situation in the camps. If these women and children are not sent to their home countries and rehabilitated, their fate will be more extremism and indignation, due to the difficult living conditions in the camps. But the most dangerous part here is the presence of a large number of women and people who still believe in the ideology of ISIS and who might be able to re-convince them, (the women and children who want to go back to their home countries or who are innocents), to re-engage in the organization.

The war of the US-led international coalitions forces against ISIS has indeed succeeded on the ground, but the ideological war against it is still ongoing. And this is mainly due to the wrong approach of the US and the world, which is revolving around the point of fighting terrorists and not terrorism; and fighting individuals and not ideologies.

4.11. The U.S. War on Terror: The U.S. Operations

The military option against al-Qaeda was an underthought for the U.S. authorities, until the attacks of September 11, 2001. On October 7, 2001, the U.S.-led coalition begins intensive

attacks in Afghanistan against the Taliban. The American and British forces got logistic support from France, Germany, Australia, Canada, and other nations.

By December 2001, the American invasion of Afghanistan led to the overthrow of the Taliban; the protector of Al-Qaeda and Bin Ladin. The latter, continued his hit-and-run operations until he was killed in the covert operation of May 1, 2011.

Al-Qaeda and after the death of Osama Bin Ladin proved again its tactical potentiality, which is not leader-based, but it is rather ideology-based. So, the death of Ben-Ladin or Ayman al-Zawahiri, or any of the movement's leaders, is not considered a hindrance. This is what Tore Hamming from the find of the International Center of the Study of Radicalization at King's College confirms: "Al-Qaeda remains potent and its leadership, in particular, remains strong, even if al-Zawahiri has died."

Another reason for this continuation is that the movement is based on the last number of commanders, officials, and ideologues.

The U.S. war against terrorism continued with the emergence of ISIS in Syria. U.S. backed the Syrian Kurds and Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in 2018, during its campaign against the group, and managed to capture the key positions. As a result of the SDF attacks against ISIS, the Syrian Democratic Forces managed to seize the town of Hajin. Which led to a territory reduction of ISIS.

The formal American president Donald Trump declared the defeat of ISIS on December 19, 2018. Meanwhile, he announced the withdrawal of 2,000 U.S. troops, which were on ground missions in Syria (mainly supporting the SDF). In February 2019, SDF launched the last siege on ISIS in Baghouz and managed to free the town and end ISIS's claim to any territory on March 23, 2019 (Figure 7).

Final assault on the last pocket of IS territory

The SDF has been closing in on IS fighters holed up in a small sliver of territory in the eastern village of Baghouz since January

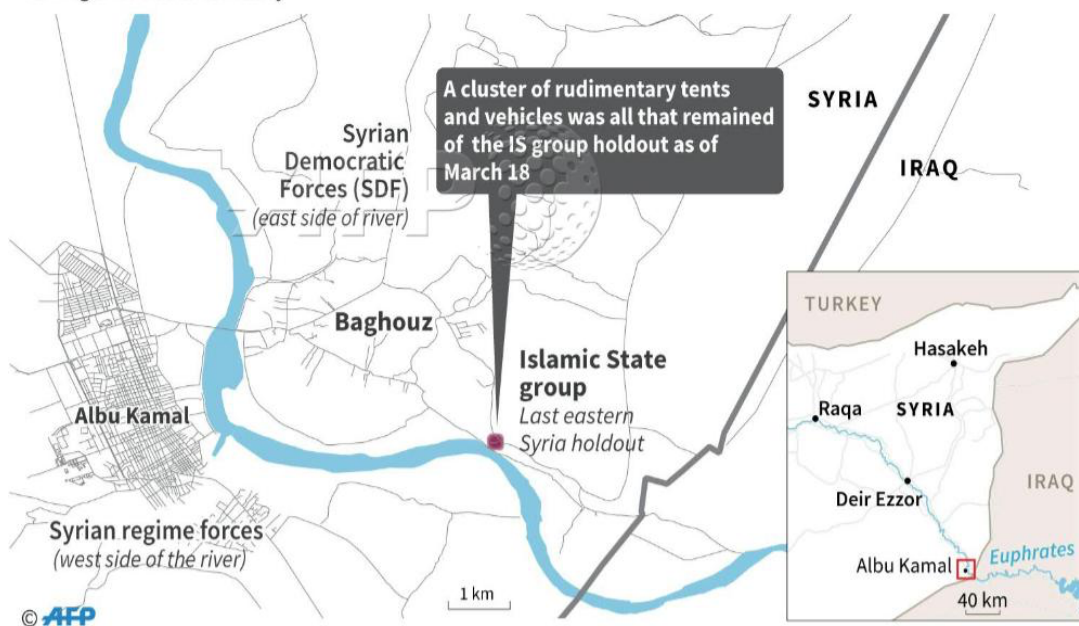


Figure 7. Kurdish-led groups advance on the Islamic State group's last bastion in eastern Syria, confining holdout jihadists to a tiny pocket on the edge of Baghouz village.

Many efforts are expended in cyberspace also, where ISIS became more active after the territorial defeat. A lot of directives are given to support “lone wolves” attacks at home or/and cyberattacks.

Corey Saylor, the Director of the department of monitoring and combating Islamophobia, in an interview with the Washington Post, on November 20, 2015, says; that as a counterterrorism ideology, what is needed is to fit the level of production value of ISIS and produce videos that can defeat their slick videos and offer a well-produced work to debunk what ISIS is saying. A counter-message that targets the same category of people, that the organization is managing to persuade.

In an attempt to put an end to the prevailing grim terrorism of ISIS, the U.S. government becomes aware of the urgent need for creating effective counter-message campaigns. So, the U.S. state officials decided to hire some marketing experts to create a counter-narrative to ISIS and reduce the effectiveness of its online propaganda.

As a response to ISIS attacks, the U.S. Military sent elite special operations forces on ground missions to capture or kill the leaders of the terrorist group in Iraq in 2016 (*Zachary Cohen and Rayan Browne - CNN, March 29, 2016*). Defense Secretary Ash Carter said later in

2016 that the U.S. is eliminating systematically ISIL's cabinet and that they are certainly gathering momentum and seeing that the momentum is affecting them.

4.12. The Missteps of U.S. Intelligence in its War Against Terror

The missteps of Al Qaeda and ISIS are discussed in the following sub-headings:

4.12.1. Missteps with Al Qaeda

According to the 9/11 Commission final report, the following general and specific findings were the reasons for failing to defeat the plot of al-Qaeda.

The general findings were mainly about the following two points

- None of the measures adopted by the U.S. government from 1998 to 2001, were able to prevent or postpone the secret plans of al-Qaeda.
- There were failures of imagination (top officials were not able to answer the following question 'how big is the thread of Al-Qaeda?'), policy (terrorism was not a priority or a national security concern of the U.S. government under the Clinton and Bush administration), capabilities (use of cold war capabilities, CIA had minimal capacity before 9/11, the department of defense was partly engaged in the mission of countering Al-Qaeda, 'FBI did not have the capability to link the collective knowledge', FAA capabilities were weak, no adjusted training in FAA or NORAD), and management (inadequate governmental problem management, no management checking or coordination across agencies and cross the foreign and domestic entities, weak priorities' set and resources allocation (e.g. DCI George J. Tenet's declaration on December 4, 1998).

The specific findings were mainly about the following points

- Unsuccessful Diplomacy: Pressure and sanctions diplomacy.
- Lack of Military Options: Lack of actionable intelligence to avoid embarrassment in case of failure of capturing or killing Bin Ladin "This scenario would make the United States look weak while making Bin Ladin look strong".
- Problems within the Intelligence Community: Poor collection of intelligence and analytical work; "no National Intelligence Estimate on terrorism between 1995 and 9/11".

- Problems in the FBI: “Limited capacity to share information both internally and externally, insufficient training, perceived legal barriers to sharing information, and inadequate resources”.
- Permeable Borders and Immigration Controls: Protecting borders was not a national security issue before 9/11.
- Permeable Aviation Security: FAA did not use the U.S. TIPOFF data which included the names of two of the hijackers on the terrorist watchlist.
- Financing: The relevant authorities could not determine the origins of the money used for the 9/11 attacks, and were not able to remark the transactions of millions of dollars made by al-Qaeda around the world every day.
- An Improvised Homeland Defense: FAA and NORAD were not prepared for the attacks.
- Emergency Response: Poor coordination especially within the fire department which had no technical capabilities or protocols to deal with an incident of the magnitude of 9/11.
- Congress: Slow response with little adjustment and inadequate guidance to the executive branch agencies on terrorism.

Bin Ladin succeeded to frustrate the most powerful military and the most sophisticated intelligence services for more than a decade (*Mark Mardell. BBC Report, May 2, 2011*), but the U.S. forces managed on May 1, 2011, to kill al-Qaeda’s leader in his backyard in one of the top-secret operations ordered by the U.S. President Barack Obama, under the direction of the CIA director Leon Panetta. Barak Obama ordered send a small elite team of Americans to conduct “the covert operation” and the site commander Admiral William McRaven was the one in charge of the military operation (*Leon Panetta on PBS Newshour, May 3, 2011*).

After the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. and the whole world realized the extent of the threat Al-Qaeda posed to national and international security. Many steps have been taken to recurrence of such plots. But the question remained, is the world safe now?

The U.S. has created more local, state, and federal agencies gathered all under an Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council (ATAC), to coordinate activities, develop policy, implement strategic plans and provide training to combat terrorism. Examples of agencies dealing with terrorism in the U.S. (The Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, United States Customs Service, United States Marshals Service, and

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives). And provided hotlines to report about individuals or groups that may be involved in domestic or foreign terrorism.

All these decisions, law enforcement, precautions, and steps were vital, yet it seems that they were not enough to prevent ISIS from evolving.

4.12.2. Missteps with ISIS

The senior military analyst at the Institute for the Study of war, Chris Harmer, described the air campaign as “tactically spectacular but strategically irrelevant”, he added that airstrikes are not the key, boots on the ground are the key decisive impact on ISIS since ISIS is not following a strict organizational structure.

Focusing on specific ISIS leaders instead of understanding the deep tactical ideology of the forces’ fast mobilization, is not a wise step. This solution did not bear fruit previously with Al-Qaeda, and obviously, it won’t be with ISIS.

It is important to know, that ISIS’s ground withdrawal and territorial loss, do not necessarily mean the end of this terrorist organization.

Intelligence services are not effectively using imagination to predict the possible worst-case scenarios to prevent them or at least minimize the impact of the threat. ISIS uses an evasive method, which is based on simple tools and means but can confuse the most powerful agents.

Most of the recruitment and directives are conducted via an online platform. The plots are organized and led by planners living mainly in Syria. So, visa restrictions and airport security are not enough procedures to stop ISIS from implanting its plans.

ISIS and after its territorial defeat and aggravated constriction moved to what experts call “lone wolves” operations. There is direct communication between the attackers and the virtual plotters. The intelligence services should use a fair percentage of their potential to deal with cyberterrorism.

The counter-message management is still far from meeting the required level. It is based on using sarcasm to ruin the image of ISIS and turn the argument against it. Yet, the U.S. State officials (as the creator and producer of the campaign) were not able to fulfill the mission. Some officials, like Richard Stengel – the Undersecretary of State for public diplomacy and

public affairs, think that this campaign was even in favor of the terrorists and that the American government should not do sarcasm since it is not good at it.

In short, the real threat of ISIS, and all the organizations that are similar to it, is represented in cyberspace where it is hard to fight their extremist propaganda. All global effort and regional and international organizations must focus their efforts and capabilities on fighting these terrorist groups in cyberspace mainly - where these groups promote their extremist entity, in addition to confronting them on the ground.

ISIS just like any other foreign terrorist organization can inspire Americans and domestic terrorism (e.g., The White Supremacy Movement) simply by sharing videos of their plots and achieved attacks, like Christopher Wray the director of the FBI called “Jihadist-inspired violence”. So, homegrown violent extremists are the greatest threat to the homeland now. They are trying to provoke and incite a race war, through the accomplishment of some manifestoes.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

ISIS hoax was based on the pretext of helping the Syrian people and establishing the Caliphate State based on Islamic rules and regulations. In its online campaigns, it promised to provide all the needs of the recruits, including clothing, food, housing, etc., to persuade a larger number of people to join the battlefield. To reach as many followers as possible, the organization relied also on an innovative and gimmicky propaganda style.

The detail that increased ISIS's violence, was the absence of any principles or rules of war at the field level, which would have restricted the organization's fighters while dealing with the prisoners and/or the opponent. All methods of torture were permissible; murder, beheading, amputation, rape, etc. which caused a further escalation of violence.

To keep the morale of fighters and recruits of the organization high and strong, ISIS was sending motivational videos from the leaders, Abu Baker al-Baghdadi in particular was using this method a lot.

To force the fighters to stay and not leave the battlefield, ISIS first planted mines and booby traps in many border areas, and set up punishments in public places (slaughtering and hanging), for those caught fleeing.

It is important enough to restate at this level that commanders did not enlist in the war, but only directed the recruits to fight. Therefore, no princes (Emir), leaders, or commanders were found or arrested in Baghouse, for instance. All those that have been arrested were general fighters, specifically migrants, besides women and children, who were transferred to the prison camps of Al-Hawl and Al-Roj.

It is not wise to consider the war against ISIS, a war over. However, women and children in the camps of Al-Hawl and Al-Roj must be dealt with, in realistic, cautious, and serious manners. This requires security and intelligence coordination from all sides (Syrian, Iraqi, Turkish, coalition forces, Kurdish communities, and organizations, etc.), to avoid the re-emergence of this organization, which seeks to rebuild its ranks out of sight. Therefore, the international community must be vigilant, especially against the sleeper cells of ISIS.

To recap some of the main points, this work touched on the emergence of ISIS and the influence of Al-Qaeda on it, and how the invasions of the 1980s and 2000s by the Soviet Union

and America, affected this conflict and contributed to the emergence of extremist movements like Al-Qaeda and ISIS in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. And how this terrorism spreads until it has become a threat to the world, including the hegemonic powers and their regional and international intelligence and security organizations.

Indeed, the study focuses on dismantling and understanding the structure of the top two most dangerous terrorist organizations and the way they operate, in addition to addressing their strengths and explaining how these groups exist in areas over which they mainly have no authority over. With more emphasis on ISIS, as the top dangerous terrorist entity in the Middle East.

This work provided a more comprehensive and varied analysis of the types of ISIS attacks, how they are carried out, their cyber forces, the recruitment methods, instructions, and executive orders, and how they were remotely conducted.

Some data related to the attacks of September 11, 2001, were also provided and cited the findings of the intelligence and security services based on official reports.

The study also addressed the way the global security services dealt with the terrorist threat and the fast and viral spread of ISIS, in addition to addressing the missteps that the U.S. security services have made in particular during their war on terror.

5.2. Recommendations for Future Research

ISIS has been defeated and wiped out on the ground, but its ideology, doctrine, and spirit are still alive in many, especially women and children, who are present in large numbers in Al-Hawl and Al-Roj camps. It is worth mentioning here that the SDFs run these two camps, with the support of the US Government basically, but the Kurdish forces do not have enough capabilities to take responsibility for these residents or to keep them under control for a longer time.

A key challenge for future research is to try to investigate the situation of ISIS women and children in the Al-Hawl and Al-Roj prison camps. The task will be to find how the international community act to deal with this ticking bomb.

The second key challenge is concerning domestic terrorist movements. Terrorism is not limited to ISIS as an organization or to its ideology, but there are many movements and organizations in different countries around the globe (E.g.: Zionism, Black supremacy, Jewish supremacy movement, White supremacy movement, etc.). However, the Western media in general and through political guidance and pressures does not happen to cover and give these

movements big attention, in other words, they do not want to show these movements as terrorist and violent organizations which threaten the regional and international security, although they constitute a real threat to the global security. First, because of their fanatic ideology. Second, due to the fact that the international community is not dealing seriously or firmly with this threat.

This task will be to find how the US administration and international policies select decisions concerning domestic terrorism, and how the broad IR approaches, offensive liberalism, defensive liberalism, offensive realism, and defensive realism, influence the escalation of domestic terrorism.



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