



R2 Question #2: In countries where polling shows favorable opinions of ISIL (Syria, Nigeria, Tunisia, Senegal and Malaysia), what does this tell us? What do these countries have in common? What is our best approach to influence/inform?

Contributors: *Kathleen Reedy (RAND), Sabina Henneberg (Johns Hopkins University), Ini Dele Adedeji (School of Oriental & African Studies, London), Laura Steckman (The MITRE Corporation), Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi (Middle East Forum)*

Editor: *Laura Steckman, MITRE*

Compiler: *Sam Rhem, SRC*

Executive Summary – Dr. Laura Steckman, The MITRE Corporation

The contributors to this Quick Look responded to GEN Votel’s follow-up question, “*In countries where polling shows favorable opinions of ISIL (Syria, Nigeria, Tunisia, Senegal, and Malaysia), what does this tell us? What do these countries have in common? What is our best approach to influence/inform?*” To examine the complexity of the issues surrounding the question, the authors take both broad and country-specific approaches. There is general agreement that many Muslims worldwide are undergoing processes of Islamization for religious, social, economic, or political reasons, and that in some cases, built-up grievances have resulted in growing support for extremist movements, such as ISIL. Because each country varies, sometimes significantly, in terms of its domestic situation and its external relations, it is paramount to address those variations in crafting an effective approach to influence/inform.

This volume contains the following expert opinions:

Kathleen Reedy, a social scientist at RAND, argues that political Islam, of which Islamic extremism is one manifestation, has been gaining support worldwide with its “calls for social and political justice, and its ability to cut across a variety of ethnic lines.” In recent years, populations around the world have developed grievances around their political and economic situations, and in response, have pursued political Islam as a solution. While the circumstances causing grievances vary per country

and region, the best approach to mitigating support for extremist groups such as ISIL involves identifying and addressing underlying grievances and delegitimizing groups that espouse military and political violence.

Ini Dele Adedeji, a Junior Teaching Fellow at the School of Oriental & African Studies (SOAS), concludes that the countries under examination have all experienced one or more forms of religious, political, or economic upheaval, which have led to more favorable polling regarding ISIL support. In Syria, dissatisfaction with President Bashar al-Assad has created a Sunni versus non-Sunni divide within the country. That division has led to a dichotomy of “the enemy of my enemy is my political friend” that is sometimes expressed as support for ISIL or another anti-government faction. In Nigeria, Islamist movements have historically aligned with transnational movements as a form of protest against the state. Coupled with growing resentment of the West’s perceived war against Islam, some Muslim Nigerians have chosen to support ISIL, even when they do not condone all of the group’s methods. To influence populations, Dele Adedeji suggests promoting pro-Western sentiment among local clerics and using them to inject jihadist counter-narratives.

Sabina Henneberg, a Ph.D. candidate at John Hopkins University’s School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS), focuses on the intersection of Tunisia’s recent history with international extremist movements and how they are “partially linked to support for ISIL.” Within Tunisia, the main Islamist political party’s move toward democracy and other domestic pushes toward secularism have not led to increased freedoms and civil rights, but rather have frustrated Muslims, intensified local grievances, and increased anti-Western sentiment. In order to improve the situation, Henneberg recommends reducing suspicion of outsiders and promoting capacity-building programming, to include rehabilitation programs for returning fighters.

Laura Steckman, a social scientist at MITRE, provides responses to the three-part question with recommendations for the way ahead. She points out some of the challenges with current polling efforts, arguing for the need to “craft and implement updated survey instruments that incorporate local cultural, social, and political norms and sensitivities in the appropriate languages.” Through a discussion of the Malaysia, Nigeria, and Senegal cases, she outlines how recent experience with Islamization and related ideologies have led to increased support for movements like ISIL outside of the Middle East. In order to lessen the attraction of ISIL or other extremist groups, Steckman recommends multiple campaigns across traditional and non-traditional media per country affected by significant pro-jihadist leanings, tailored to each country’s susceptible populations.

Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi, a research fellow at the Middle East Forum, provides a more implicit answer to the question with an outline summarizing the macro- and micro-levels of ISIL’s online propaganda. At the macro level, primarily areas outside of Syria and Iraq, early propaganda centered on “the supposed success of the statehood project of ISIL,” while more recent production focuses on the group’s militant activities. At the micro level, “dissemination of ISIL propaganda material on the ground must be considered the primary means of reception...rather than online broadcasting.” Jawad al-Tamimi further expounds on ISIL’s outreach strategy as one of external and internal da’wa (proselytization), where internal da’wa depicts the Islamic State as a strong state that protects Muslims and their rights, and external da’wa, designed to show non-Arab, non-Muslims the power of the Islamic State and of Islam. The purpose and content of ISIL propaganda must be considered in any influence/inform approach.

SME Inputs

Kathleen Reedy, RAND

The growing popularity of violent extreme Islamism (of which ISIL is just one form) is rampant across the world, from Europe to Malaysia and everywhere in between. However, why such views are becoming so prevalent varies widely by region, so looking for commonalities between a selection of those countries may not be entirely helpful. In most cases, it is not so much that extremism is taking hold as that there is growing support for the idea of political Islam more broadly.

In Europe, for instance, poverty plays a lot less of a direct role, as many recruits are from the middle classes and are often motivated more by a sense of social alienation and enabled by having the leisure time to support an ideology. These individuals are often more motivated by individual sensibilities that drive them to find “a cause.” In sub-Saharan Africa, poverty, unemployment, and complications attaining basic necessities are more of a motivating factor, so drought and climate change resulting in the loss of arable land in Nigeria and Senegal are a proportionally greater source of problems that are going to worsen in the next decades. So for them, economic concerns carry a greater weight. In Syria, drought conditions and resulting economic troubles were part of the spark that set the war off, but in both Syria and Tunisia, frustration with the increasing lack of access to the government in formal and informal ways and the government’s loss of its more socialist agenda over the years created spaces for politically-based social unrest. In Malaysia, political grievances are also at the heart of the problem, as the party that long-dominated the political system began to fracture and was found to have committed impressive levels of fraud. Political Islam, with its calls for social and political justice, and its ability to cut across a variety of ethnic lines has therefore had a growing appeal as a political replacement.

The factors, then, that lead populations in these countries to support political Islam (if not necessarily violent or extreme version thereof) are different, but what they have in common is that political Islam is seen by many to be a solution. I suspect that the rise of this particular ideology is somewhat similar to the rise of socialism in the 1950s-1970s. That movement rode on similar calls for political and social justice, but with the collapse of the Soviet Union and many of the major socialist regimes, it lost its appeal. It has, in many places, been replaced by Islamism. Like socialism, most adherents are non-violent, but the movement has also produced its extremist elements. In a world that is as connected as today’s is, a transnational organization like ISIL can gain greater traction across the globe than it could have 50 years ago.

Unfortunately, tackling Islamism or even a particular group that has been enabled by the growing popularity of Islamism is not a viable alternative. We will just wind up playing whack-a-mole as al-Qaeda and Boko Haram are replaced by ISIL, which will be replaced by another group as long as the underlying grievances remain in place. It is possible that, without major financial support and with military and political failures that erode popular confidence in such groups to be effective methods of governing, extreme Islamist groups will eventually lose credibility as a concept. However, I would guess that will take some years to play itself out, and even then, may be replaced by another ideology that becomes relevant 50 years going forward.

The closest thing to a solution, then, is two-fold. First is to deal with the underlying grievances (which will take long, qualitative looks at the countries in question as no two will be quite the same). Second, and more short-term, will to be help de-legitimize violent groups by demonstrating their lack of military superiority (i.e. military defeat) and their lack of political competence (i.e. by more effectively utilizing information operations to highlight their failures and just how bad life under ISIL has actually been).

[Ini Dele Adedeji \(School of Oriental & African Studies, London\)](#)

First of all, it's important to firstly provide an overview of the contemporary contexts in those five countries, and how some of those contexts might play a role in influencing this polling of favourable opinions about ISIL.

Syria is currently undergoing serious conflict, with civil war engulfing the country, pitting state forces loyal to President Assad against rebel forces, such as ISIL and Al-Nusra. These forces began to gather support in Syria mostly from the Sunni population. Initially, the primary focus for their mobilisation was the removal of Assad, but religion also entered into the equation. Although Sunni Muslims are the predominant religious group in Syria, there are sizeable proportions of other Islamic sects, and Christians. Assad belongs to the Alawiyyah/Alawi Islamic heterodox sect, which is closer to Shi'ism, on the religious spectrum, than it is to Sunni Islam. Over the last two decades or so, the Alawites have become the largest majority within the Syrian army, historically using it as a way for this minority religious group to secure an economic base and path for upward mobility for its members in Syria. With the ascension of the Assad dynasty to power in Syria, supported by the army made up of Alawites in the most powerful positions, this has made it relatively easy for Sunni Muslims who are dissatisfied with Assad's rule to see this as not just a political contestation, but as a religious one, also. While the dissatisfaction with Assad's regime cuts across the various ends of the religious spectrum, there has been a reluctant support from Christians, Shi'i, Alawites, and other minority religious groups for Assad's regime. This is because these groups consider themselves marginalised, by virtue of being minorities in a Sunni-dominated country and region. This has consequently created a Sunni vs non-Sunni divide within Syria, with this religious demarcation shaping the conflict. Thus, we have a case of "the enemy of my enemy is my political friend". Hence, the expression of pro-ISIL sentiment within certain blocs in Syria.

In Nigeria, Islamist movements have historically tried to align themselves with 'global' movements, or transnational Islamic symbols, as a way of protest against the state. For example, an early incarnation of the Boko Haram sect was known as the "Yobe Taliban". They used flags that copied those of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and even called the name of their commune/fortress (in Yobe state, northeastern Nigeria) "Afghanistan". Also, in 2011, after the death of Mohammed Yusuf, the former leader of Boko Haram, the sect declared its allegiance to Al-Qaeda. It is noteworthy, in regard to this question, that even before the emergence of Boko Haram, there were strong anti-American sentiments manifesting in Islamic northern Nigeria. These were caused by the resentment toward the American Middle East foreign policy, which (especially according to Islamic clerics in northern Nigeria) were part of a deliberate strategy to wage war against Islam. This led to the promoting of Osama Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda as heroes. Photographs of Osama, and artistic paintings of him became common sights in northern Nigeria, particularly in Kano, the most cosmopolitan and populous state in the region. Others named their children Osama, also. It is this same trend that has influenced some of the support for ISIL, and what the terrorist movement is perceived to symbolise. While some of those who express support for ISIL might support the anti-Western stance of the latter, it does not necessary mean that they also support all of the groups' methods.

The commonality between the five countries in this question is that of upheaval – religious, political, or economic. They all, also, happen to be countries with Muslim majorities.

The best approach would be to attempt influencing local clerics with pro-western sentiments or leanings, and begin a gradual injection of ideas into the local scene. This will help setup the

foundation for the creation of counter-narratives to those being propagated by several clerics at the local level, and countering the audiovisual materials espousing pro-ISIL ideas, which can be accessed online or even acquire locally.

Sabina Henneberg, Johns Hopkins SAIS

In countries where polling shows favorable opinions of ISIL (Syria, Nigeria, Tunisia, Senegal, and Malaysia), what does this tell us? What do these countries have in common? What is our best approach to influence/inform?

ASSIGNMENT: Respond to this question with a focus on Tunisia.

RESPONSE:

Polling data showing more favorable views of ISIL in Tunisia relative to most other countries does not necessarily suggest something about the character of the Tunisian people that makes them more susceptible to extremist jihadi movements. Rather it may suggest a coincidence of particular factors in recent Tunisian history with the rise of ISIL in the Muslim world¹.

Tunisians have been involved with Islamist extremist movements for several decades, as have the country's two neighbors, Libya and Algeria. Networks across the three countries permitted Tunisians to contribute to several jihadist groups in the region, including al Qaeda in Iraq (the precursor to the Islamic State). These networks have continued to allow militants from both Tunisia and Libya to benefit from one another's training and protection². This internationalist aspect of extremist Islamist movements further counters the idea that individuals identifying as *Tunisian* (vs. another nationality) would be drawn to join such movements.

However, certain aspects of recent Tunisian history may be at least partly linked to support for ISIL, including the particular experience of the main Islamist political party, Nahda. According to some analyses³, Nahda's evolution from the brand of Islamism which rejects a territorial/modern nation-state to one that finds religious grounds for competing within a pluralist, democratic national system may have also created a backlash among more traditional Islamists, including Salafist-jihadis. This explanation, however, is not unique to Tunisia, as some of this backlash has occurred against Islamist political parties in other countries, such as Egypt and Yemen, and has also spurred Salafist political parties rather than the more traditional calls for a "pan-Islamic state where sharia reigns"⁴.

Other specificities of Tunisia's historical experience since the end of the French protectorate may also be at work. The first Tunisian president, Habib Bourguiba, pushed a particular brand of "Tunisian-ness" that emphasized a more secular, modern identity, leading many who identified

¹ The rise of ISIL and its ideology since 2013 is described in Bunzel, Cole. 2015. *From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State*. The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World, Analysis Paper No. 19. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.

² See Zellin, Aaron. June 7, 2015. *The Tunisian-Libyan Jihadi Connection*. ICSR Insight. <http://icsr.info/2015/07/icsr-insight-tunisian-libyan-jihadi-connection/>

³ Cavatorta, Francesco and Fabio Merone. 2015. "Post-Islamism, Ideological Evolution and 'la Tunisianité' of the Tunisian Islamist party al-Nahda." *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 20(1).

⁴ Ibid.

strongly as Muslims to feel marginalized⁵. In the meantime, resentment grew even among moderate opposition figures of Western countries that tolerated the regime's human rights repression in exchange for cooperation in the war on terror⁶.

Furthermore, since independence in 1956 Tunisians experienced exposure to certain rights—such as limited political participation—without having them fully guaranteed. This *may* have contributed to a strong sense of frustration and willingness to take risks⁷. Such a narrative would fit the events of the 2011 MENA uprisings, which began when an unemployed youth from the Tunisian interior lit himself on fire. It would also explain why, despite the fact that Tunisia has been more successful in restoring political stability than the other countries in which the authoritarian leader was deposed (Egypt, Libya, and Yemen), the country is one of the top sending countries of fighters to ISIS⁸.

In the search for ways to influence/inform, it clearly seems important to avoid fueling further suspicion of outsiders. Capacity-building or even less direct forms of support for weak education systems (which in Tunisia also contributes to persistent high unemployment⁹) or other social services, such as rehabilitation programs for returned jihadi fighters, may be safer.

⁵ Packer, George. 2016. "Exporting Jihad." *The New Yorker* 92, no. 7:38. Also see Merone, Fabio. 2014. Enduring Class Struggle in Tunisia: The Fight for Identity beyond Political Islam. *British Journal of Middle East Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/13530194.2015.973188.

⁶ See Storm, Lise. 2009. "The Persistence of Authoritarianism as a Source of Radicalization in North Africa." *International Affairs* 85(5): 997-1013.

⁷ Packer 2016. Also see Marks, Monica. 2013. "Youth Politics and Tunisian Salafism: Understanding the Jihadi Current." *Mediterranean Politics* 18(1): 107-114.

⁸ See Benmelech, Efraim and Estaban F. Klor. 2016. "What Explains the Flow of Foreign Fighters to ISIS?" NBER Working Paper 22190.

⁹ This refers specifically to a mismatch between education and skills training and the needs of the private sector. For more on Tunisia's unemployment problem, see OECD. 2015. *Investing in Youth: Tunisia: Strengthening the Employability of Youth during the Transition to a Green Economy*. OECD Publishing, Paris. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264226470-en> and Khan, Mohsin and Karim Mezran. October 2016. *The Aftermath of the Arab Spring in North Africa*. Washington, D.C.: Atlantic Council Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East.

Laura Steckman, Ph.D., The MITRE Corporation

This Quick Look paper addresses the following CENTCOM-posed question: “In countries where polling shows favorable opinions of ISIL (Syria, Nigeria, Tunisia, Senegal and Malaysia), what does this tell us? What do these countries have in common? What is our best approach to influence/inform?” This paper addresses all three parts of the question briefly and offers the following comments and recommendations:

- Better, focused polling and surveys are required to understand support for ISIL
- Ideology and Islamization appear to be strong pulls for ISIL to attract supporters abroad
- Tailored Information Operations (IO) campaigns that combine traditional and non-traditional mediums and focus on mitigating returning foreign fighter influence and reducing pro-ISIL support in selected language information environments (IEs) will have an impact as ISIL continues to suffer losses in Syria and Iraq¹⁰

Polling: Issues and Requirements

Polling and surveys often provide some of the highest quality feedback about why people believe and behave the way they do. The quality of information that polls and surveys yield is tied directly to the instrument and how well it was constructed, verified, and validated. When conducting studies in other countries, there is often the additional challenge of making sure that the questions solicit information in a meaningful way from a respondent, which also entails crafting and tailoring questions based on deep regional and linguistic knowledge.

Many polls and surveys are created and implemented without considering the international and local contexts where the studies are conducted. For example, an individual who created US government-sponsored surveys used abroad reported several years ago that the only effort to ensure that the surveys considered national and local contexts included writing the instruments initially in English, translating them into the national language, and then translating them back into English. Questions “passed” if the conversion back into English made sense, and then the national language translation became incorporated into the final survey. Little to no emphasis was placed on whether potential survey respondents would receive and interpret the questions as intended. For simple questions, such as those based on demographics, there is only a slight risk with this translation-retranslation method. For more complex questions, such as how a Muslim native from another land perceives a group like ISIL, the instruments must be precisely worded and tailored to consider local factors that may impact how a person responds, and then pretested to ensure the instrument works as intended.

¹⁰ IO campaigns must include effective efforts to maneuver within the contested narrative landscape. These campaigns must be nested vertically (tactical → operational → strategic) and horizontally (across services and agencies). For examples on applying narratives, see Nissen, Thomas Elkjer. (2012, October 17). “Narrative Led Operations: Put the Narrative First.” *Small Wars Journal*; Cobb, Sara, Michael Lewis, Angelica Martinez, Diane Maye, Chris Blakely Jr., and Eric Grenlin. (2016, November 7), “From Countermessaging to Narrative Transformation: Information Operations 2.0.” SMA Reach-back ViTTa 1 Report Final Update, 12-36.

Recent polling on how Muslims abroad view ISIL must be examined closely and critically; many polls that made the news regarding support for ISIL were conducted less than a year after al-Baghdadi declared ISIL's caliphate in June 2014. At that time, ISIL was a new, seemingly different terrorist-insurgent group that had come to claim and hold territory and create a utopian society for Muslims. It also had resources: access to oil, antiquities to smuggle, and other smaller income generating schemes (e.g. taxes, fees for foreign truck drivers, etc.). ISIL called itself a state and looked like a state for those who desired to see it that way. From the group's perspective, its media strategy could be viewed as emulation that of other nations. Specifically, it produced "national news" through its official reporting (e.g. the Harvest Reports) and created radio stations to reach its inhabitants and other listeners abroad. Internally, it created provincial social media channels (however, note that some of ISIL's wilayah-specific Twitter accounts were formed months before the "official" establishment of the caliphate and expanded in number as ISIL claimed more territory), to reach people living in the occupied areas. It also produced recruitment guides aimed at foreign Muslim populations to attract soldiers, women, and other potential supporters of its cause. Through these means, ISIL reached out easily and inexpensively to inhabitants and populations abroad. Because of the group's perceived success and its commitment to self-interpreted Islam, polling results from this period may have lost accuracy.

One of the better polls conducted less than a year after the caliphate's establishment is the Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Survey. Conducted in Spring 2015, the survey included question Q12n: "Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of the Islamic militant group in Iraq and Syria known as ISIS."¹¹ This question is clear and direct in English, but it also contains a potentially leading description of ISIL as an "Islamic militant group." From the methodology section, surveys were conducted either face-to-face or by telephone in their native languages. But, does the word militant translate the same way across the world? Could the interviewer have introduced bias with the question? Or did they get it exactly right?

The terminology question is significant because there is no way to tell if respondents who interpret words differently are actually responding to the same question. In 2013, Pew Research Center released a report called *The World's Muslims: Religion, Politics and Society*. Within that project, it included a series of questions on Sharia law to elicit respondents' beliefs. The final report concluded that 72% of Indonesian Muslims supported making Sharia law the official national standard.¹² While the survey also included a question about whether Sharia should be open to multiple interpretations—to which 44% of Indonesians said yes and 45% believed there was only one interpretation—it is not clear how the results were reconciled, as respondents supported Sharia but did not necessarily define it in the same way.¹³ In the survey, there is no indication that Sharia

¹¹ Pew Research Center (2015, November 17). Views of ISIS Topline. <http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/11/17/views-of-isis-topline/>

¹² Pew Research Center (2013, April 30). The World's Muslims: Religion, Politics and Society. <http://www.pewforum.org/2013/04/30/the-worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society-overview/>

¹³ For more details, see topline survey questions and results here: <http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2013/04/worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society-topline1.pdf>

was defined, making it possible that 72% might support Sharia, but they might not support the same Sharia concept.¹⁴

Pew's results created controversy in Indonesia. Many people, including Muslims, believed the survey was flawed.¹⁵ Apart from Aceh province, the only Indonesian province to adopt Sharia law that had pushed to implement more stringent Sharia regulations up to and after the 2012 elections, there were no local pushes to introduce Sharia into the legal frameworks of other provinces. The few attempts that had previously occurred in other provinces failed, such as in South Sulawesi, despite indications that conservative Islam had taken a greater hold on the national political arena.¹⁶ The one group that benefitted from the survey results was the Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), a radical group that calls for the immediate implementation of Sharia. It reproduced information about Pew's research in its publications to support its cause. Thus, it is difficult to reconcile how 72% of Indonesian Muslims supported adopting Sharia when there were few other indications within the country demonstrating that support. Perhaps the survey was flawed or perhaps the results were representative of some Indonesian Muslims who, through valid sampling methods, were inadvertently overrepresented in the results. However, because the results seemed skewed for Indonesia, it raises curiosity about the poll's results from other parts of the world and how respondents define Sharia.

Returning to Pew's Global Attitudes Survey from Spring 2015, it found only 4% of Indonesians, 11% of Malaysians, 11% of Senegalese, and 14% of Nigerians viewed ISIL favorably at that time, where favorably reflected a positive or somewhat positive view.¹⁷ For the Malaysia estimate, the results appear way too high. In 2015, Malaysia's population was 30.3 million. 11% translates into approximately 3.3 million people. According to Malaysian officials in December 2015, the country had sources indicating approximately 50,000 people supported ISIL, primarily Muslims and based in peninsular Malaysia, which corresponds to 0.5% of the total population.¹⁸ While the actual numbers supporting ISIL have likely changed in the last eighteen months, this poll does not create an accurate baseline from which to measure any change.

There are also issues with the methodology and reporting on the survey. First, Pew's research sampled 1,000 people from each country, which could be too small a sample size for the issues in

¹⁴ For a backgrounder on Sharia and some of its different interpretations, see Johnson, Toni and Mohammed Aly Sergie. (2014, July 25). *Islam: Governing Under Sharia*. Council for Foreign Relations. <http://www.cfr.org/religion/islam-governing-under-sharia/p8034>; for a discussion on how Indonesians view Sharia and why it isn't cause for alarm, see Bev, Jennie S. (2013, June 11). "Why 72% of Indonesians Want Sharia." *Common Ground News Service*. <http://www.commongroundnews.org/article.php?id=32990&lan=en>

¹⁵ For example, see Hermanwan, Ary. (2013, May 3). "Commentary: Is Pew Really Saying Most Indonesians are Muslim Radicals?" *Jakarta Post*. <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2013/05/03/commentary-is-pew-really-saying-most-indonesians-are-muslim-radicals.html>; Timur, Fitri Bintang. (2013, May 8). "Do RI Women Want Sharia, Too?" <https://fitribintang.com/2013/05/08/do-ri-women-want-sharia-too/>

¹⁶ Lane, Bernard. (2013, July 13). "More Rigid Islam in Indonesia." *The Australian*. <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/more-rigid-islam-in-indonesia/story-e6frg6so-1226678644547>

¹⁷ Poushter, Jacob (2015, November 17). "In Nations with Significant Muslim Populations, Much Disdain for ISIS." <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/11/17/in-nations-with-significant-muslim-populations-much-disdain-for-isis/>

¹⁸ Malaysiakini. (2015, December 12). "Liow: Opposition Willing to Trade National Security for Own Gain." <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/323152>; Steckman, Laura. (2016). "The Abu Sayyaf-ISIS Nexus: Rising Extremism and its Implications for Malaysia." *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis*. <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/CTTA-May-2016.pdf>

question. In addition, in Malaysia, Pew was unable to survey parts of Kelantan, the home base of the conservative Muslim political party PAS (pan-Malaysian Islamic Party), due to flooding, and did not travel to much of Sarawak and Sabah, Malaysia's eastern provinces, because the areas were difficult to access.¹⁹ Sabah, in particular, a historically non-Muslim province, has seen a rise in pro-ISIL support and incidents since the Jakarta attacks in January 2016. Second, in terms of reporting, the Malaysia data further breaks down the 11% by religious groups. According to the breakdown, 12% of Muslims support ISIL and 6% of Buddhists support ISIL.²⁰ The Buddhist support is neither explained nor further explored, and raises many questions, such as why Buddhists, who condemn conflict, would support ISIL. Ultimately, the poll doesn't show what it purports to: a representative sample of how many people truly support ISIL; in Malaysia, that number is probably greater than 0.5% and far less than 11%.

Because questions and concerns exist within the Malaysia case, similar inaccuracies may exist for the other countries polled. Nigeria, for example, is listed with 14% of the population professing support for ISIL. The sample size had 1,047 people over the age of 18, interviewed face-to-face in English, Hausa, Igbo, or Yoruba. However, due to security concerns, interviewers excluded all of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states, and parts of Bauchi, Benue, Kaduna, Katsina, Jigawa, Taraba, and Zamfara states.²¹ In other words, Northern Nigeria, specifically the ISIL-affiliated Boko Haram strongholds and most surrounding states, had limited representation in the survey. Due to the excluded areas and the sample size, the 14% figure could be misleading. Therefore, all of the countries in the survey must be re-polled to obtain more accurate data.

The critique herein is not meant to disparage Pew in any way; Pew has a history of delivering timely surveys that inform the US people about current issues, beliefs, and perceptions in the US and abroad. Pew is also one of the few organizations that publishes its survey methodology and occasionally, the data, making it easier to evaluate their results. Pew's greater transparency is a contributing factor to its reputation as a renowned research center. Most other reported surveys carefully select what to report, with sparse mention of methodology or datasets, making their value more obscure.

Polls and surveys remain good measures of assessing attitudes and beliefs. They do, however, need to be well-constructed and, when used in foreign populations, carefully crafted to elicit the necessary, nuanced responses required to inform national security issues. To remedy questions about how many people support ISIL, we need more focused, tailored surveys that incorporate or address the cultural realities of the respondents. There will still be challenges and costs associated with the process, but done well, the results would be informative and could also be used to baseline, and later monitor, inform/influence campaigns.

Summary and recommendation: Current polling on pro-ISIL tendencies should be examined critically, as reported polling may severely under or overestimate actual ISIL supporters in a country. In order to obtain better numbers, we must craft and implement updated survey

¹⁹ Pew Global. (2015). International Survey Methodology. http://www.pewglobal.org/international-survey-methodology/?year_select=2015

²⁰ Poushter, Jacob (2015, November 17). "In Nations with Significant Muslim Populations, Much Disdain for ISIS." <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/11/17/in-nations-with-significant-muslim-populations-much-disdain-for-isis/>

²¹ Pew Global. (2015). International Survey Methodology. http://www.pewglobal.org/international-survey-methodology/?year_select=2015

instruments that incorporate local cultural, social, and political norms and sensitivities in the appropriate languages. With better data, we will be poised to monitor changes in attitudes and perceptions more precisely, ultimately leading to better assessment of US government lines of effort (LOEs), and especially for information operations (IO).

Commonalities

Syria, Nigeria, Tunisia, Senegal and Malaysia have some qualities immediately in common: they contain large, majority in some cases, Muslim populations who are experiencing a crisis of identity in terms of who they are as Muslims and how they fit in within the context of global current events. Along these same lines, these countries have either had a caliphate historically, had a violent jihad waged in their territory, or debated what it means to be an Islamic state. Within this crisis and exploration of identity, there is little doubt that some religious people will reexamine their beliefs and ideologies; the success of ISIL's terrorist-insurgent movement, at least in terms of claiming and [temporarily] holding territory, demonstrated to those willing to believe that an Islamic state is viable and incurs an obligation to support.

The ideal process for determining actual similarities, backed by empirical data, is to bring experts and scholars on these countries with deep country-specific and regional knowledge together. As a surrogate method, experts could produce comparative reports on Islamization in these countries that included major events and narratives. However, for purposes of this paper, select cursory case studies attempt to show some impact that Islamization has had on Malaysia, Nigeria, and to a lesser extent, Senegal.

Malaysia: A Case in Brief

Malaysia has a long history with Islam. In recent years, the country has been experiencing an Islamization, especially within its politics. Unsurprisingly, the move toward Islamization has led to questions of identity. It has opened the door to Salafism and Wahhabism in particular, reinvigorated debates over Sharia criminal codes, and caused controversy over whether Malaysia is an Islamic state. While none of these have been directly correlated with pro-ISIL support, when reporting exists on why Malaysians have traveled, or attempted travel, to Syria or have been arrested locally, they have indicated religious and ideological reasons for supporting the group.

Within Malaysia, the debate about whether the country is an Islamic state (Negara Islam) pre-dates independence. One of its political parties, Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS, Pan-Malaysia Islamic Party) asserts that Malaysia is an Islamic state and usually supports the implementation of Sharia law.²² Since 1990, PAS has worked to implement hudud, or Islamic criminal law, which can allow for legal amputation and stoning. In 2015, the PAS-controlled Kelantan Legislative Assembly amended the Sharia Criminal Code to open the door to hudud. However, the amendment needed federal approval that was not forthcoming. Through the introduction and tabling of multiple bills supporting Sharia and hudud throughout 2016, one bill reached parliament, despite opposition from non-Muslim political parties. The issue continues to be hotly debated and divisive within Malaysia. The fact that

²² Rhetorically, PAS has sometimes backed away from pro-Sharia language. From approximately 2006 to very recently, PAS promulgated the Negara Kebajikan, or Caring State, concept to make their vision sound more inclusive of Muslims and non-Muslims. However, PAS has apparently seen the rise in Malaysians who support ISIL as a social mechanism to relaunch its pro-Sharia policies. For more specifics, see Mueller, Dominik M. (2014). *Islam, Politics and Youth in Malaysia: The Pop-Islamist Reinvention of PAS*. Routledge Contemporary Southeast Asia Series, Vol. 65.

the issue exists shows that there is a segment of the population, such as PAS members and leadership, who promote traditional, conservative Islam based on Sharia law. It is logical that some PAS and non-PAS members could share similar beliefs and take them a step further to supporting a group like ISIL in Malaysia, a state that prides itself for being a pluralistic, tolerant, moderate state.

The Negara Islam branding of Malaysia, which is generally not considered radical, is not unique to PAS. Historically, conservative Muslims have advocated for all of Nusantara (the Malay world) to unite together as an Islamic state. Under the Nusantara umbrella, Muslims in Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand would adopt a transregional state conforming to Islamic principles. Historically, there was also a secular political initiative to unite these same areas, but it did not get significant traction. The existence of the desire for a Negara Islam, or a secular transregional state, created a narrative that such a state could eventually be created.

The Negara Islam concept, with some alterations, has also been a core jihadist tenet in the Malay world. Belief in the potential for a transregional Negara Islam was also a part of Jemaah Islamiyyah's (JI's) jihadist narrative from the 1990s forward. The main difference, however, was that JI sought to instill a Daulah Islamiyyah (Islamic State), where daulah, taken from Arabic, is fleshed out as a three-tiered state concept where Islam rules at the federal, legal, and social welfare levels. JI's narrative also tied nicely with one of AQ's major narratives—the idea that the West must be destabilized to set the stage for the eventual establishment of an Islamic caliphate; for this, and other reasons, JI became an AQ affiliate. Southeast Asia's governments defeated JI before it made substantial headway in instituting a Daulah Nusantara, but they were not able to defeat the idea that such a state might exist in the future. ISIL's caliphate, or Islamic State, resonated for some people who envisioned this future, as exemplified by the fact that ISIL supporters refer to the caliphate as a Daulah Islamiyah; in fact, ISIL's Malay Combat Brigade, the Katibah Nusantara Lid Daulah Islamiyyah before its name change, had an "official" Malay news channel called the Khilafah Daulah Islamiyyah (KDI), which regularly used digital media to reach supporters in the Malay world.

Malaysians who traveled to Syria to fight claimed to have done so because of their commitment to Islam and Islamic principles. Many often already had celebrity status at home, particularly the ones who traveled early in the conflict, which allowed them to use their celebrity status to urge widespread support for ISIL at home. PAS Dewan Ulama member and Kedah Youth Information Chief Lotfii Ariffin traveled to Syria in 2014. He fought in support of the Al Nusra Front (ANF) in the months prior to ISIL declaring its caliphate.²³ From Syria, Ariffin used social media to publicize his experience and assist Malaysians who wanted to wage jihad there, primarily over Facebook. He died in a battle in early September 2014. Akel Zainal, a drummer from a popular 1990s pop band, used Facebook to connect Malaysians at home with ISIL. Specifically, he allowed Facebook friends to have their name written on mortar shells used against the infidels along with the phrase

²³ In Indonesia and Malaysia, the split between the ANF and ISIL did not occur until approximately May 2014, more than a year after al Baghdadi announced to the world that ANF was a cover for ISI in Syria and would merge with ISIL. ANF leadership subsequently decided to throw its support behind Al Qaeda. For further discussion, see Caillet, Roman, (2013, December 27). "The Islamic State: Leaving al-Qaeda Behind." Carnegie Middle East Center. <http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/54017?lang=en>

“Malaysian Citizens Together with the Islamic Revolution.”²⁴ Celebrity status allowed pro-jihadist messages to spread widely online, setting the foundation for the growth and expansion of pro-jihadist social media.

Many Malaysian ISIL supporters believe they are a part of a “Cyber Ribat” and are very active online. Ribat is a Malay word borrowed from Arabic that means fortification. Cyber Ribat is the digital guarding, and promulgation, of ISIL’s narratives, messages, and propaganda. The effect of this cyber guard has had a real sociocultural impact. For example, AQ support is also widespread in Southeast Asia. However, presently in Malaysian culture, one can be pro-AQ or pro-ISIL, but it is usually not acceptable to be both. Thus, the pro-ISIL voices seek to promote ISIL as the dominant pro-jihadist voice in the region. A second effect is that many online crusaders have formed offline connections and networks they would not have otherwise developed.²⁵ In order to conduct cyber ribat, supporters follow ISIL websites and blogs; some supporters, known locally as fanboys, often create their own sites and content supporting ISIL. Locally, pro-ISIL supporters translate material from Arabic or English to Bahasa Melayu or Bahasa Indonesia.²⁶ These supporters use all major social media sites, including vKontakte, a Russian social media site, on a limited basis, in addition to ISIL’s preferred websites and apps.

Wannyy Jedi, also known as Abu Hamzah, the top Malaysian ISIL member in Syria, uses social media to recruit and organize attacks in Malaysia. While the Jakarta bombings in January 2016 received international media attention, the first ISIL-related attack that occurred in Malaysia was almost invisible to the press in June 2016. Organized by Jedi, attackers threw a M67 grenade into Movidia, a night club in Kuala Lumpur. There were several casualties. According to the news, Jedi funded and encouraged the attackers; in fact, they allegedly sent him a picture of the grenade before using it.²⁷ For the news outlets that reported the incident, ISIL sponsored the attack. However, closer inspection reveals that Jedi, an ISIL member, devised and financed the attack²⁸—a nuance that must be made, just as Bahrin Naim, a top Indonesian ISIL member in Syria, incited and allegedly funded the Jakarta attack. In both cases, Jedi and Naim, who now have jihadist celebrity status, utilize social media as a form of outreach, and whether it is true, there may be the perception that these men, and other ISIL fighters, are just a click away.

Nigeria: A Case in Brief

Nigeria’s history with Islam, and specifically with the caliphate, lends itself to narratives that support the present-day support that some Muslim Nigerians profess for Boko Haram and, after it declared bai’at (fealty), to ISIL. Usman dan Fodio waged jihad in northern Nigeria in the early nineteenth century. He established a caliphate based on Islamic law in Sokoto. As the British colonized Nigeria, the caliphate ruled indirectly. Apart from banning violent punishments (e.g.,

²⁴ Malay Mail Online. (2015, September 29). “Eat. Pray. Jihad. Malaysians Fighting for IS in Syria Say the Prophet Demands It.” <http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/eat.-pray.-jihad.-malaysians-fighting-for-is-in-syria-say-prophet-demands-i>

²⁵ Haziq bin Jani, Muhammad. (2016, March 29). “Urgent Need to Counter Malaysia’s ‘Cyber-ISIL’.” *Straits Times*. <http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/urgent-need-to-counter-malaysias-cyber-isis>

²⁶ Bahasa Melayu (Malay) and Bahasa Indonesia are about 85% mutually intelligible, making it easy to share information within the archipelago

²⁷ Mohd, Hariz. (2016, July 5). “IS Warns of More Attacks in Malaysia.” *New Straits Times*. <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2016/07/156787/warns-more-attacks-malaysia>

²⁸ Malay Mail Online. (2016, September 10). “Report: Top Malaysian IS Man Used Donations to Pay Debt.” <http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/report-top-malaysian-is-man-used-donations-to-pay-debt>

stoning and amputation), Sokoto remained the sole area outside of the Middle East that enforced Islamic law. After independence, the Nigerian government temporarily curtailed Islamic law, but the people continued to seek its restoration, especially after multiple military coups. In 1999, when Nigeria re-adopted democracy, the northern states made Sharia a political issue.

Drawing upon the Sokoto caliphate, the clamor for Sharia, and a backlash against democracy and Westernization, Boko Haram formed in 2002. It was not until 2009, when Abubakar Shekau took over leadership, that the group intensified military operations to form its own caliphate. Under Shekau, Boko Haram became more radical and more violent. It established links to Al Qaeda and its affiliates, such as AQIM, to join in the movement to wage international jihad. In 2013, the US declared Boko Haram as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. In 2014, using ISIL's success and drawing upon local historical narratives, Boko Haram re-established a caliphate across northern Nigeria. In 2015, an African coalition forced Boko Haram to flee from the towns under its control, but the threat the group poses to Nigeria remains.

There are many theories behind why Boko Haram rose up in 2009. Some focus on relative deprivation theory, highlighting the poverty in northern Nigeria and the income disparity between the north and south. Others concentrate on religious and ethnic divides. The reality is probably a mixture of the two combined with the country's tradition of political zoning. Zoning was an unofficial power sharing arrangement designed to placate the north and the south, the Muslims and the Christians. As part of zoning, the presidency switched between the regions every two terms or eight years. In addition, when the president hailed from the north, his vice president came from the south, and vice versa. Other offices also had some degrees of zoning attached.

Zoning was interrupted with the death of President Umaru Yar'Adua in 2010. Under zoning, the south controlled the presidency from 1999-2007 and the north from 2007-2015. However, Yar'Adua was ill during his term. In November 2009, he was sent abroad to hospital. After months of recovery, he returned to Nigeria, only to pass away in May 2010. Goodluck Jonathan, Yar'Adua's southern vice president, assumed power after his death and then chose to run for the presidency, breaking the zoning agreement. Jonathan won. Because of the timeline, Jonathan's presidency could not have been a causal factor in Boko Haram's rise—Yusuf died in July 2009 before the elections and Shekau increased the group's militancy in late 2009—but the president's illness, and later, the unfulfilled expectation that the highest level of government would represent the north may have emboldened conservative and radical Muslims who felt the system betrayed them. The timing could indicate a breakdown in how the state managed this complex network of ethnic and religious interests, fueling the radical Muslims. In 2015, Buhari, a northern Nigeria, won the most recent presidential election, indicating a return, at least for now, to the zoning system.

Boko Haram's media strategy has evolved over time, with more visible online presence after ISIL accepted its fealty pledge. Al Qaeda utilized a robust media campaign that was revolutionary for its time, using online magazines, videos, and a few social media platforms operational in the early to mid-2000s. Boko Haram, despite its alliance with AQ, had a miniscule online footprint in comparison. It had a sparse number of online videos and a relatively early Twitter account—which may or may not have been official—but otherwise it did not reach out online. The lack of a digital strategy reflected low internet penetration in northern Nigeria and the lack of forums and platforms that used the Hausa language, the primary language used by the Kanuri ethnic group, who, according to news reporting, comprise the majority of Boko Haram's fighters. However, after the 2014 video discussing the fate of more than 200 kidnapped girls, the group started relying more

heavily on social media. Boko Haram opened a new Twitter account that was shut down after only 19 posts in early 2015.²⁹ It did start uploading more videos to YouTube, some of which were high quality and contained English subtitles, creating media speculation that ISIL was directing new video production. What has not been explored is whether Boko Haram utilizes social media sites popular with Nigerians such as 2go and Eskimi, or even WetinDay, a Nigeria-specific social media app launched in April 2016. Further research is required to discover whether and where Boko Haram operates online.

A major difference between the Malaysia and Nigeria cases is that there is not much evidence that Nigerians are traveling to Syria or Iraq. While some are going to Libya, the difference may be that Nigerians could stay at home to experience a caliphate and Sharia law. It could also be that ISIL is not as strong a pull for them as it is for Muslims in other countries, or conversely, that ISIL's Dabiq magazine detailing its strategy on Africa encouraged them to stay on the continent. Further research is recommended to determine why Nigerians join; it may contain clues useful for future IO campaigns.

Senegal: A Short Case Study

Senegal's Muslim community has a strong Sufi influence and has been known for promoting peace and tolerance. In Senegal's history, however, Muslims have experienced jihad, as the events that led to Nigeria's Sokoto caliphate spilled over into what was then the Senegambia region. Despite this historical experience, Senegal has not seen the rise of a Boko Haram-like group, nor has Islamization impacted the country as it has in other countries.³⁰ Salafism and Wahhabism have existed in Senegal since the 1950s, though Sufism is believed to have kept its influence under control.

ISIL has not had a long or overly successful history of recruiting more than a few West Africans to Syria and Iraq. As of early 2016, a dozen Senegalese had joined ISIL or other terrorist groups.³¹ ISIL also, either directly or through an affiliate or franchise, sent some recruiters to Ghana in 2015. There were also tentative reports that ISIL had made some minor pathways into Niger and the Ivory Coast. Hotel bombings linked to violent extremist groups, though more likely AQIM than ISIL, occurred in Mali, Burkina Faso, and the Ivory Coast. Senegal, however, had not been touched by violent Islamic extremist operations, or at least, not that was reported. The police have made some arrests, though few have been reported as being related to extremism.

Some Senegalese have, however, allegedly joined ISIL in Sirte. One Senegalese man chose to leave to become a jihadist doctor. He had apparently been planning an attack on Dakar until he decided to travel with another Senegalese man to Libya.³² After he traveled, some unconfirmed photos

²⁹ Moore, Jack. (2015, February 25). "Twitter Shuts Down Boko Haram Account." *Newsweek*.

<http://www.newsweek.com/twitter-shuts-down-boko-haram-account-309320>

³⁰ Senegal has, however, used the term caliph for certain religious leaders. For example, the two main brotherhoods, the Tijaniyya and Mouridis, have caliphs. For example, Caliph Serigne Saliou Mbacke, the sixth caliph of the Mouride brotherhood, passed away in 2007. It is unclear whether the title, and a subsequent caliphate, has the same meaning as it does in other countries.

³¹ Frantzman, Seth J. (2016, March 14). "Senegal: The Linchpin of Security in West Africa." *The National Interest*.

<http://nationalinterest.org/feature/senegal-the-linchpin-security-west-africa-15485>

³² Farge, Emma. (2016, April 1). "From Senegal to Libya: An African Student Joins IS." *Times of Malta*.

<http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20160401/life-features/From-Senegal-to-Libya-an-African-student-joins-IS.607411>

appeared on Facebook of 12 allegedly Senegalese men who were in Sirte fighting for ISIL.³³ Therefore, there is clearly some influence that convinced a small number of people to support ISIL, something that caused these men to decide to offer their lives to adopt ISIL's cause. The small numbers do, however, draw into question Pew's 11% favorable support. 11% translates into 1.7 million people. So why would only 12 join?

To better understand what is happening, it is recommended to consult a Senegal SME who is well-versed in Senegalese Islam, Sufiism, and Islamization. Senegal seems a very different case than Malaysia or Nigeria; without a complete understanding of trends in the country, it is difficult to assess.

Summary

The cases presented herein on Malaysia, Nigeria, and Senegal provide glimpses into political and social influences that may play a role in fostering violent Islamic extremist sympathies, such as ISIL's initial apparent success, the idea or actualization of a historical caliphate, ideological support for Islamic criminal codes, and, to a lesser extent, cyber phenomena related to ISIL support. Each country has a history, with perhaps the exception of Senegal, of traditional, conservative Islamic ideologies present within the Muslim community. From the available reporting, it is the ideology and the influence of Islamization (e.g. the idea that Islamic civilization is the only viable option to resolve the world's fundamental problems) that have drawn supporters to ISIL, especially after it called itself a state and claimed territory. The logical answer, if it is possible, is to disconnect ISIL from the ideological hold it has on potential supporters.

What to Do?

As operations against ISIL unfold in the Middle East, the prognosis is that ISIL as it currently operates, especially within its usurped territory, will cease to exist in the future. However, that does not mean that ISIL's ideologies or support will be defeated, but rather deferred until something takes its place. The scary reality is that destroying ISIL is a great victory against terrorism, though at the same time, the coming years may be very rough as now-trained, war-hardened fighters seek to readapt to society. There will always be the risk that they choose to seek to use or sell their skills. ISIL will have been a failed caliphate, but it will also be an example that fits into a narrative with the caliphate as a projected future goal.

The immediate challenge is that there was an estimated 50,000 foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq. When ISIL can no longer support their basic needs, they have to go somewhere. Supposedly ISIL confiscates and destroys passports; if this is true, many people are stuck unless they find sympathetic shelter or flee as refugees or Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). For those who have access to travel documents or have the ability to forge them, they are most likely headed home or to another location abroad, whether in the Middle East or elsewhere (e.g. the foreigners recruited from their jobs in the Middle East may be able to return to work). Those headed home have the most potential to wreak havoc, especially to a location like Malaysia, because there are now real-world communities who have supported them abroad that may continue to collaborate with them at home. Mitigating the potential for devastation in their home countries should be top priority for any inform/influence campaign.

³³ France 24. (2016, February 1). "Who are the Senegalese Men Joining the Islamic State Group?" <http://observers.france24.com/en/20160201-senegal-jihadist-islamic-state>

IO campaigns need to be designed for the specific environments where they will be used, meaning that multiple campaigns will be needed per country to address any local cultural, social, political, or economic norms in that area, to include narratives that can be built up or altered. The appropriate language(s) and dialect(s) are also key components. In addition, the campaigns should be developed in conjunction with Koranic and religious scholars who understand the nuances of Islam in the country. Non-traditional approaches should be considered. For example, several years ago an Indonesian Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) worked with a former violent jihadist who fought in Afghanistan to create a graphic novel about his life and why militant jihad is the wrong path. Anecdotally, according to the media, the graphic novel reached the young populations susceptible to pro-jihadist ideology and convinced them not to wage militant jihad.³⁴ Another consideration might be to train local social media enthusiasts who have taken an anti-militant jihad stance to form social media brigades to counter violent Islamic extremism online. Local people know the correct platforms, digital language, narratives, and have the cultural background knowledge, along with the local netiquette, to convince their peers of the dangers in supporting militant jihad. These suggestions are potential tools to help prevent returning jihadists from committing domestic attacks. Regardless of the approach taken, the most important thing to note is that a cookie cutter approach to these countries will fail. There is no one-size-fits-all IO plan that can address ISIL supporters in an entire country. Creative solutions that draw upon people with deep local knowledge have the greatest chance to succeed.

As a part of the campaign, tip lines and tip apps should be set up in coordination with national governments to encourage citizens to report on people recently returned from Syria or Iraq, or people who share information about an upcoming attack. These lines probably only need to exist for a year to eighteen months, and should both incentivize people who want to reveal their identities as well as provide anonymous reporting capabilities.

Summary: IO can make the greatest impact focusing on reducing levels of jihad on- and offline in the countries where foreign fighters may return and pose a grave threat. Well-tailored strategies can cut off a group like ISIL from the majority of its online support and impose difficulties for groups looking to reestablish their presence online. It is paramount that these strategies keep the people they deem to influence in mind.

³⁴ No empirical studies were conducted, however. The approach may nonetheless have been successful for the environment and target audience. If a similar approach is taken, a follow-up study is recommended.

Means of reception of ISIL propaganda

On the macro level (e.g. outside CJOA), audiences are primarily receiving ISIL propaganda via the Internet, consisting of dozens of items of official propaganda on a daily basis such as videos, photo series, magazine publications, a radio broadcast, books and pamphlets- all alongside output from supportive but unofficial media outlets like al-Battar media and al-Nusra al-Maqdisia. Prior to late summer 2014, this meant prolific use of open access social media platforms, in particular Twitter, where ISIL operated multiple official accounts for central media outlets like al-Itisam and the media offices for their various declared 'provinces' (wilayas) within Iraq and Syria. Since being kicked off Twitter though, ISIL has tried various other means to aggregate information. Sometimes, this has involved the setting up of websites that feature the group's media releases, such as Isdarat ('issues/releases') and Akhbar al-Muslimeen ('News of the Muslims', a website that claims to be officially 'independent') and 'Come to Success News.' Though able to operate with a degree of impunity at first, these sites too have been increasingly shut down over the period 2015-2016, such that the web addresses to locate them now can be very complicated if they exist at all.

The present trend has been to migrate to the more closed platform of Telegram, where channels aggregating ISIL propaganda were initially able to operate with total impunity until the Paris attacks, when pressure came on the platform to take action. While ISIL propaganda accounts are now increasingly being deleted, aggregate channels, which are normally accessed via finding 'invite links' that expire after a limited amount of time, normally create multiple copies of themselves in a bid to remain one step ahead of deletion. That said, certain ISIL propaganda accounts and supporters do remain persistent in trying to open accounts on Twitter and other more open platforms.

Alongside the trend in deletions has been the disappearance of most social media accounts operated by individual members, which was an important means for sympathetic audiences on the macro level to establish personal connections and either join the ranks of ISIL within Iraq and Syria or perhaps plot to conduct attacks in home countries. Alongside action against these accounts on social media, ISIL has issued at least two internal communiqués warning members against operating individual accounts on social media: General Governing Committee directives no. 8 and no. 94, the latter essentially being a repeat of the former's contents after reports of continued violations of directive no. 8.

Looking more specifically at the content on the macro level, one can distinguish general themes in the propaganda and also messages aimed at a particular demographic. The former has varied over time alongside the fortunes of ISIL: that is, at the height of ISIL's success, the messaging gave big weight to advertising the supposed success of the statehood project of ISIL. This would mean photo and video releases, for example, that display normal daily life under the Caliphate as well as the functioning of ISIL's various bureaucratic departments on the ground within Iraq and Syria in particular. Over time though, as the statehood model has increasingly faced challenges and suffered territorial losses, the propaganda has increasingly become military in nature, providing daily

updates from the frontlines and producing infographics with battle statistics. That is not to say that propaganda advertising life under the Caliphate and governance does not exist anymore, only that it is much less prominent. Increasingly on the macro level perhaps, one could say that the messaging is being directed more at those who already are sympathetic to the organization, as recruitment to come to Iraq and Syria has also been made logistically difficult and ISIL tries to explain how its losses do not translate to the end of the Caliphate project.

Particular demographics were also targeted on the macro level in the form of media campaigns. This concept was alluded to in an internal text called Principles in the Administration of the Islamic State, a position paper discussing organization of media and other aspects of the ISIL project. These media campaigns typically involve the production of multiple videos over a short time period from the organization's various provincial media offices all revolving around messages to people in a particular place. Target locations have included Somalia, the Maghreb and the Palestinian territories. A specific agenda is normally apparent in each campaign: for example, in the case of Somalia, the aim was to secure as many allegiance pledges as possible, gearing up for the defection of Abdiqader Ma'mun from al-Shabaab, Somalia's al-Qa'ida affiliate. Since al-Shabaab had not openly spoken out against ISIL (though internally prior to the Caliphate declaration, it seems efforts had been made to ban circulation of ISIL propaganda material among al-Shabaab members), the language of the video campaign was very conciliatory in the spirit of 'brotherhood', emphasizing that not pledging allegiance to the Caliphate is a missed opportunity. In contrast, the messaging to the Maghreb was more open in attacking al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

On the micro level (i.e. within ISIL-controlled territories in Iraq and Syria), the online propaganda is distributed in multiple forms on the ground to the local populations: this includes broadcasting of video releases at designated *nuqtat ilamia* (media points), distribution of pamphlets, books, CDs, DVDs and newsletters on the street and at designated offices, and the radio broadcasting. However, there is also plenty of propaganda not available online that is disseminated on the ground to the local population, permeating most aspects of life through the extensive bureaucracy. For instance, the Diwan al-Da'wa wa al-Masajid (Da'wa and Mosques Department) organizes Friday sermon themes in the mosques, and has distributed multiple pamphlets not published online. The department also helps organize 'Shari'i courses' (dawrat shari'ia) to reinforce ideological indoctrination, issuing certificates for those who complete such courses. In a similar vein, the school curricula has been revamped with the publication by the Diwan al-Ta'aleem (Education Department) of a new set of textbooks for children. In part, these textbooks act as a platform for ISIL propaganda through normalizing ISIL concepts of jihad, warfare and an Islamic way of life (e.g. English language education discussing the prohibition on smoking, math problems involving weaponry etc.).

Considering the increasing restrictions on Internet access within ISIL territory in Iraq and Syria, whereby attempts have been made to restrict private Internet access and monitor Internet use as far as possible short of being able to develop the necessary technology, distribution and dissemination of ISIL propaganda material on the ground must be considered the primary means of reception for the micro-level audience, rather than online broadcasting.

An internal text discussing Da'wa: external vs. internal

The ISIL strategist and dissenter Abu al-Faruq al-Masri, who was based in Raqqa but has since been disappeared by the organization's security apparatus following a critical pamphlet he disseminated earlier this year, wrote a text (subsequently banned) called *al-Manhaj al-Sayasi wa al-Tandhimi lil-Dawlat al-Islamiya* ('The political and organizational program for the Islamic State'), which contains a specific section on da'wa (outreach work/proselytization) that is of interest here, as da'wa is an integral concept of ISIL propaganda outreach.

Abu al-Faruq al-Masri makes a similar distinction to what we have considered here regarding the distinction between the macro and micro level audiences. He distinguishes 'internal da'wa' and 'external da'wa': the former he defines as directed towards the audiences of Arab and Muslim countries. This da'wa, he says, must aim to 'show the strength of the Islamic State and that it is capable today of protecting the Muslims, gathering their banner together, and ridding them of the bonds of humiliation and tyrannical rule that have stripped them of their religious and human rights. External da'wa he defines as directed at "the idolaters", in particular those residing in places like Europe, U.S. and Russia. This da'wa, he says, is directed to show that the Islamic State is a "powerful rival state and not sects in conflict that appeal to the West for rule to resolve their issues and disagreements." He adds that this da'wa must also be intended to show that the religion of Islam is great, because the citizen of those countries will not convert to a religion seen as weak. The aim should be to create media noise that attracts attention.

The da'wa here must therefore rely on "a media da'wa office independent from the media of the wilayas [provinces of ISIL], with media production centers overseen by "specialists in the Majlis al-Shura [consultation council that advises ISIL leader Baghdadi] and the office of the distant provinces [provinces outside Iraq and Syria]." Design and production in this case is to be delegated to those who came to the Caliphate from Europe and America, utilizing media production in their languages. Of course, the most obvious reflection of this approach is the al-Hayat Media centre that was set up primarily to disseminate propaganda in English, French and other non-Arabic languages.

Abu al-Faruq al-Masri says that the messaging in this case should focus on the injustice and evils of the Western governing systems, highlighting for example the Islamic State's disregard for skin colour/ethnicity and borders as opposed to historical racism in Western societies. In addition, he suggests highlighting the gold dinar currency as something that protects the wealth of its citizens rather than being beholden to the monopolies of international currencies and banks.

The relevant pages of the text are produced below.

بنسب عالية، وهنا الدعوة تكون بإظهار قوة الدولة الإسلامية والتي هي قادرة اليوم على حماية المسلمين وجمع رايئهم وتخليصهم من عقود الذل والحكم الاستبدادي الذي جرّدهم من حقوقهم الدينية والدنيوية.

وإن الدولة الإسلامية هي جامع المسلمين اليوم على اختلاف ألوانهم وجنسياتهم التي فرقتهم حسب اللون والعرق.

وإنّ المنهج هو منهج واحد وإنّ الدين هو انتماء وواجب وليس مصلحة ومطيّة كما فعل الإخوان المسلمون.

٢ - الدعوة الخارجية :

وهي الدعوة الموجهة للمشركين عموماً أو من يقصد بهم اليوم " أوروبا - أمريكا - روسيا" وهذه الدول التي تحكم العالم.

فالدعوة فيها تُوجّه نحو اظهار الدولة الإسلامية كدولة قوية منافسة وليست طوائف متفرقة متنازعة تحتكم الى الغرب لحل قضاياها وخلافاتها.

كما يقصد من الدعوة فيها الى اظهار عزة الإسلام لا هوائيه، فالمواطن في تلك الدول لا يقبل أن يدخل في دين ضعيف لا يحميهم أحد ولا يرفع رايئته أحد بل ينظر الى الدين من طرق مختلفة عن المسلمين، فيبهتُم بداية بالقوة والعزة وتاريخ هذا الدين وإنجازاته إن صحّ التعبير، فلأنّ هنا من إحدائهم ضجة للدولة الإسلامية تُلفت النظر اليها والى الدين الإسلامي الصحيح،

وإنّ الدعوة التي لاتقوم على اظهار عزة المسلمين هي دعوة باطلة، فكيف لدعوة الى دين الإسلام أن تنبذ الخلافة الإسلامية وتكتم المجاهدين وتصفهم بـ " التطرف" والـ " إرهاب" وتدعو المجتمع الغربي الى عدم اعتماد الدولة الإسلامية منهجاً سليماً في الإسلام.

ومن ثمّ إن نتائج الدعوة الى الله يجب أن تقضي بالنهاية الى تنفيذ أوامر الله وأحكام كتابه والتي تتمثل في الحكم بشريعة الله والامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر والعيش بدولة إسلامية تكفل حقوق الجميع حسب الكتاب والسنة.

فالدعوة الى الله يجب أن تنتهي بالخلافة الإسلامية وهو نزوة الدعوة الى الله، فالدعوة في عهد النبي أفضت الى قيام الدولة الإسلامية والتي بدأت تنشر الدين الإسلامي بالدعوة والقوة، وكان أن أخذت الدعوة الى الله شكلاً جديداً بعد إقامة الدولة الإسلامية ، حيث أقيمت وفود العرب والعجم الى النبي تخلع عنها ثوب الشرك وتلبس ثوب الإيمان وتبايع النبي على السمع والطاعة.

واجب الدولة الإسلامية تجاه الدعوة :

يأخذ الإعلام اليوم نصف الدعوة الى الله وهي الدعوة الداخلية والخارجية :

١ - الدعوة الداخلية :

هي الدعوة الموجهة الى المسلمين أو كما تعرفون عنها اليوم " الدول العربية ورابطة الدول الإسلامية" وهي الدول التي ينتشر فيها الإسلام

أشكالهم، فلا أبيض ولا أسود كما فعل طواغيت أمريكا الذين جعلوا البشر طبقاتٍ متفاوتة في الحقوق حسب ألوانهم.

ويبين الإعلام الدعوي أن لحدود في دولة الإسلام فالأرض كلها لله وحده ولا فرق بين مسلم عربي أو أوروبي أو أمريكي أو حتى أفريقي فكلهم اخوة في الله وجميعهم أمام الشريعة متساوون.

كما يتطرق الإعلام في هذا على حرص الإسلام والخلافة على أموال المسلمين من الضياع أو التلف، حيث تدُرُّمُ الدولة الإسلامية في التمكين مشروع صكِّ الدينار الذهبي الذي لا تقنى قيمته بعكس أوراقهم النقدية التي يصبح المرء عندهم على ثروة ويمسى مفلساً ، كما أن قوانين البنوك والإفلاس والربى كلُّ تلك يحقق الأموال عاجلاً أم آجلاً، بينما تحفظ الدولة أموال رعاياها في قيمتها وزكاتها.

وهذا ما فعلته الدولة الإسلامية وما نصحت به مجلس الشورى ومكتب الولايات البعيدة ، هي أن تهتم الدولة في مسيرها في البداية لإحداث نقلة نوعية وتكثيف الجهد على لفت الانتباه إليها وجعلها قضية عالمية.

فيهذا يلتفتون الى منهج الدولة ومسيرها وليس الى دعوات المرجنة والمهادنين الذين يدعون فقط لتطبيق أحكام الطهارة والصلاة والصوم، دون أن يذكروا عن هذا الدين جوهره وأوتاده وتاريخه الحافل ومسيرة الصالحين الصحيحة التي مُرِجت بين الدعوة والتراحم والقوة والعزة لنصرة الدين.

وبفضل الله سنشهد تحولاً كبيراً في دول الغرب ونقله نوعية في تواجد المسلمين هناك بحيث يكونون العنصر المؤثر والصانع للتاريخ والذي يحول أوروبا وأمريكا من الدعوة السريّة وتحت اشراف مخابراتهم الى الدعوة الإسلامية التي ترعاها دولة الخلافة.

وتعتمد الدعوة هنا بشكل مطلق على الإعلام الذي يجب أن يكون في مكتب اعلامي دعوي مستقل عن اعلام الولايات، ويكون في مراكز اعلامية ومؤسسات إنتاج خاصة يشرف عليها أخصائيين في مجلس الشورى ومكتب الولايات البعيدة، ويكون عمدة التصميم والإنتاج فيها لرعايا الخلافة ممن أتوا من أوروبا وأمريكا، حيث يكون الإعلام بلغاتهم شتى

ويركز الإعلام هنا على مساوئ الحكم العثماني والرأسمالية الأوروبية والأمريكية والضررائب والقوانين الظالمة، كما يبين منهج الدولة الإسلامية في الحكم والعدل أمام القضاء والمساواة بين المسلمين على اختلاف

Contributor Biographies

Ini Dele-Adedeji

Ini Dele-Adedeji is a Junior Teaching Fellow in the Politics and Development Studies departments at the School of Oriental & African Studies, London (SOAS). He has an undergraduate degree in Law, and a postgraduate degree in Security and Intelligence Studies. Ini's doctoral Thesis, in Politics, is an anthropological study of the mobilisation of the Boko Haram sect in northern Nigeria".

Sabina Henneberg

Sabina Henneberg is a Ph.D. candidate in the African Studies program of the Johns Hopkins University School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in Washington, D.C. Her doctoral dissertation is on the current political transformations in North Africa. Ms. Henneberg has worked for Creative Associates International in international education and civil society development in Africa and the Middle East and with other organizations on human rights and gender issues. She also taught English for two years at Nankai University in Tianjin, China. Ms. Henneberg is a 2015 Cosmos Scholar and Boren fellowship recipient. She holds a Bachelor's degree in international political economy from Colorado College and a Master's degree in International Relations from SAIS.

Kathleen Reedy, Ph.D.

Kathleen Reedy is an anthropologist and mixed methods researcher at the RAND Corporation. Her background is in Middle Eastern culture and politics. In particular, her research has focused on nationalism, political identities, governance, rule of law, and the gaps between policy and practice in war zones. Prior to joining RAND, she served as a CENTCOM SME for the USAF and as a social scientist for the Army's Human Terrain System, embedding with BCTs in Iraq and Afghanistan. Her graduate fieldwork included 13 months of ethnographic research in Syria, and she has also worked in and on Egypt, the Gulf, China, and Japan.

Since joining RAND in 2014, Dr. Reedy has led or participated in studies on strategic posture and presence; Islamic extremism; right-wing nationalism; the human domain in remote sensing operations; policy options for Syria, Yemen, and Iran; military education and training; and military gender integration.

Dr. Reedy received her Ph.D. from the University of Edinburgh, and her undergraduate degree from Penn State.

Laura Steckman, Ph.D.

Laura Steckman is a social scientist who works to operationalize theories and methodologies from the social and behavioral sciences, sociocultural analysis, linguistics, and related disciplines to address mission-specific problem sets around the globe. She holds multiple Master's degrees and earned a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She has worked in support of U.S. Central Command, U.S. Pacific Command, various multi-agency efforts, and is the former Command Social Scientist with the Marine Corps Information Operations Center.

Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi

Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi is a research fellow at the Middle East Forum, a U.S.-based think-tank. His work primarily focuses on Iraq and Syria, including an archive project of hundreds of Islamic State internal documents. His work has been published in Jihadology, Syria Comment, The Daily Beast and the BBC, among other outlets. For his insights, he has been quoted in a range of international media outlets, including the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Guardian, AFP, Associated Press, El Mundo, Le Monde and other outlets. His website is <http://www.aymennjawad.org>