

**Forum:** Security Council

**Issue:** The question of DAESH

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## Introduction

The Islamic state of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), The Islamic state of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (DAESH), or simply Islamic State (IS) is an Islamic extremist militant group that has been active since 1999.<sup>1</sup> It is a self-proclaimed caliphate that is led by mainly Sunni Muslims from Iraq and Syria. The current caliph of the group is Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.<sup>2</sup>

DAESH originated as *Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad*, pledging its allegiance to al-Qaeda (a militant Islamist organization). Later on al-Qaeda disavowed any relations to DAESH, thus declaring that it is in no way responsible for the actions of the group.<sup>3</sup>

In early 2014 DAESH gained prominence by driving the Iraqi government forces out of major cities in western Iraq. From March 2015 onwards the group has had control over an area inhabited by 10 million people in Iraq and Syria, in addition to that, it has nominal control over limited areas in Libya, Yemen, Afghanistan and Nigeria.<sup>4</sup> As a caliphate, DAESH claims religious, political and military authority over all Muslims worldwide.

The group has been held responsible for multiple terrorist attacks, and has also proven to be very active through media, releasing video footage of beheadings etc. The group is therefore being held at fault for human rights abuses and war crimes, as well as being designated a terrorist organisation by the United Nations, European Union, and many individual nations.<sup>5</sup>

## Definition of Key Terms

### **Caliphate:**

An Islamic state, usually ruled by a religious and political leader

### **Caliph:**

The term for the leader of a caliphate

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50439#.VjHI-K4rJmA>

<sup>2</sup> <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/08/08/world/isis-fast-facts/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\\_east/al-qaeda-disavows-any-ties-with-radical-islamist-isis-group-in-syria-iraq/2014/02/03/2c9afc3a-8cef-11e3-98ab-fe5228217bd1\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/al-qaeda-disavows-any-ties-with-radical-islamist-isis-group-in-syria-iraq/2014/02/03/2c9afc3a-8cef-11e3-98ab-fe5228217bd1_story.html)

<sup>4</sup> <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/01/21/politics/isis-gaining-ground-in-yemen/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/syria/>

**Ba'ath party:**

An arab political party in Syria and Iraq. The main ideologies of the party are nationalism, pan-Arabism, socialism, and anti-imperialism. After the party was founded in April 1947, it rapidly achieved political power in Syria.<sup>6</sup>

**Pan-Arabism:**

A nationalist approach to cultural and political unity among Arab countries.

**The Opposition:**

Refers to those fighting in Syria to overthrow the regime of Bashar al-Assad and the Ba'ath Party.

**Insurgent:**

A person who is fighting against the government of their own country

**Arab Spring:**

A series of uprisings, demonstrations, protests, riots, and civil wars in the Arab world, beginning with the Tunisian Revolution of 18 December 2010

**Sanction:**

An official order taken against a country with the intention of making it obey international law

## Background

The Syrian Ba'ath government has had a strong anti-Western policy, especially under the rule of President Hafez al-Assad (1970-2000).<sup>7</sup> Syria went through a brief period of peace after his death in 2000. An abundance of political prisoner were released, but proper political freedoms did not materialise. Hafez's son Bashar succeeded him as president, having won the election unopposed. Despite the current president's talk of "democracy" and "freedom for political parties", the country remained a single-party dictatorship.<sup>8</sup>

In recent years, Syria has become increasingly disconnected from the rest of the world, due to the country's support for insurgents in Iraq and its role in Lebanon.<sup>9</sup> France attempted to bring Syria back into international fold in 2008, however Syria's violation of the ban of arming the Lebanese Hezbollah (Islamist militant group and political party), set out by the UN, led to the extension of US sanctions in May 2010.<sup>10</sup> The current government of Syria is one of the main reasons of the disruption of peace with nations such as Israel, mainly because of its support for groups such as Hezbollah.

The conflict began with anti-government protests and uprisings in 2011, which were inspired by the Arab Spring.<sup>11</sup> Security forces tried to suppress the protests and uprisings with the means of tanks, gunfire, and

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-baath-party-as-the-west-doesnt-want-you-to-know-it/5319120>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14703856>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/10338256>

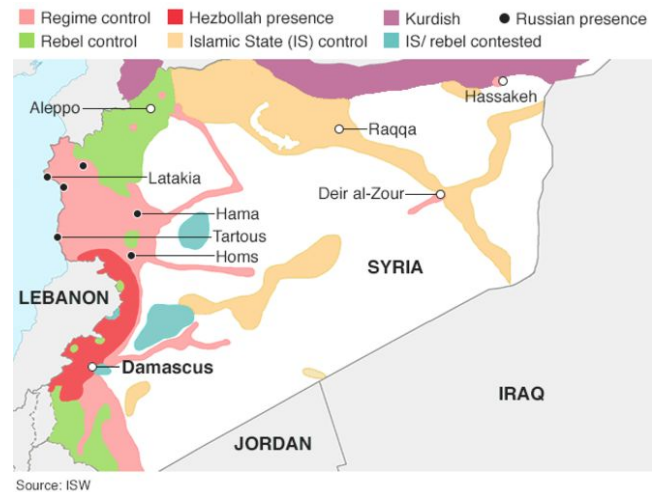
<sup>9</sup> <http://www.cfr.org/region/syria/ri370>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/world/hezbollah>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-12749674>

mass arrest. More international sanctions were set in the midst of the bloody suppression of protests. The situation quickly escalated into a civil war in 2012. The supporters of President Bashar al-Assad and those opposing his rule battled against each other, in addition to the Islamic extremist militant group DAESH that had slowly started to form in the region. There was a noticeable collapse of central authority.

The rise of Al-Nusra (an Islamist militia allied to al-Qaeda) led to the downfall of international and regional support for the opposition in 2013.<sup>12</sup> This allowed the government, as well as its allies in Hezbollah, to launch counter attacks. Despite this, a large quantity of Syrian territory remains in the hands of Islamist militant groups such as DAESH. Though DAESH has been present for quite a while, the group only became truly active in 2014, taking control of many regions in Syria and Iraq. Since then, the militant group has been widely active around the world, releasing propaganda videos through media and organising many terrorist attacks.



During more than four years of armed conflict, over 250,000 Syrians have deceased.<sup>13</sup> A Security Council resolution (February 2014) demanded that all parties end the “indiscriminate employment of weapons in populated areas”.<sup>14</sup> Despite the resolution, more than 6,000 civilians were killed by barrel bombs, dropped by government aircrafts aiming at areas held by rebels. According to the UN, in some cases civilian gatherings have been deliberately targeted. Peace talks between the Syrian government and opposition at the UN-sponsored Geneva II conference in 2014, failed to produce a lasting resolution to the conflict.<sup>15</sup>

In March 2015, the United Nations published a report that estimated the total economic loss of the conflict to be approximately 202 billion dollars, and that four out of five Syrians were now living in poverty. This led to the Syrian education, health, and social welfare systems to the state of collapse. More and more Syrians have thus chosen to seek asylum in many European countries, such as Germany.<sup>16</sup>

## Key member states and NGOs

### Russian Federation

The Russian Federation has been an ally of Syria since 1956. It has supported the Syrian government since the Civil War broke out in 2011.<sup>17</sup> The Russian Federation therefore continued supplying Assad’s government with weaponry, sending military and technical advisers to train the Syrian soldiers to use the

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sy.html>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26116868>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/index.php>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-24628442>

<sup>16</sup> <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/asylum.php>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/01/27/us-syria-russia-idUSTRE80Q0I620120127#37g8hG7SFJCCcQ5R.97>

armament, as well as helped repair and uphold the Syrian weapons.<sup>18</sup> The Russian Federation has agreed to aid Syria, Iraq and Iran in the battle against DAESH. A joint information center has been set up in Baghdad. Russia has since then been a part of many operations in order to eliminate DAESH, including sending troops to Syria, as well as various airstrikes directed at DAESH.<sup>19</sup> After the confirmation of the Russian plane being brought down by a terrorist attack in October 2015, killing all aboard the passenger plane, President Vladimir Putin announced that the work of the air force military in Syria must not simply be continued, but intensified.<sup>20</sup>

## Iran

Iran's leader Ali Khamenei has vocally expressed himself and the Iranian public to be in favour of Assad's government.<sup>21</sup> Thus Iran has provided support for the Syrian government during the Civil War in the means of technical and financial support, in addition to combat troops to aid the Syrian government in containing the violent protests, etc. Besides troops, Iran has also sent Qasem Soleimani (major general of the Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution) to Iraq in order to plan against DAESH.<sup>22</sup>

## Syrian Arab Republic

A large part of Syria is currently under the control of DAESH, thus it is in the center of the battle against the militant group.<sup>23</sup> DAESH is one of the main jihadist groups fighting against the government forces of Syria and Iraq. President Bashar al-Assad has announced that Syria had no part in the creation of the militant group and holds the west responsible for the creation of DAESH.<sup>24</sup>

## Iraq

A vast amount of the region surrounding the border between Syria and Iraq is controlled by the militant group DAESH. According to the US, the fall of the second city in Iraq poses a threat to the entire region.<sup>25</sup> The Iraqi government has not been able to much in order to claim back DAESH held areas, however it is intending to do so and has announced several operations to help overthrow DAESH.

## Turkey

DAESH is suspected for being involved or responsible for multiple terrorist attacks on Turkey. DAESH has advanced into territory along Turkish borders. Turkey has thus offered to allow humanitarian and logistical operations, carried out by Nato air bases, on it's land.<sup>26</sup> Due to Turkey being very vocally critical of President Assad, it has become the primary route into Syria for foreigners wishing to fight alongside the Syrian opposition, in addition to being a route for jihadists wanting to join DAESH.<sup>27</sup> Smuggling routes in Turkey have sought to be closed by Turkish security forces.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/world/feedarticle/10427926>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.rt.com/news/316592-russia-syria-islamic-state/>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-11-17/explosives-found-in-wreckage-of-russian-plane-crash-in-egypt/6949586>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/war-with-isis-iran-seeks-to-join-international-coalition-battling-militants-as-part-of-significant-10461307.html>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/16/qassim-suleimani-iraq-iran-syria>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-24179084>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/19/dont-blame-me-for-isis-says-syrian-president-bashar-al-assad>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-24179084>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29074514>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/nov/18/turkey-cut-islamic-state-supply-lines-erdogan-isis>

## Jordan

Since 2014, DAESH leadership has made threats to overthrow the monarchy of Jordan, along with invading Jordan after it has gained control of Baghdad. The Jordanian air force has thus joined the bombing of DAESH in Syria led by the US.<sup>28</sup> As a result of this, a downed Jordanian pilot by the name of Muath al-Kasasbeh was executed by DAESH. After the execution took place, King Abdullah II of Jordan lead the bombing raids against DAESH for a brief period in February 2015. Jordan claimed that during the course of three days (5-7 February), the airstrikes had killed 7,000 DAESH militants in Iraq and Syria<sup>29</sup>

## United States of America

In July 2014, President Obama announced that because of the continuing bloodshed in Iraq influenced by the growing of organisations such as DAESH, the United States would be increasing the amount of troops in the region in order to provide more security. The US supports the Syrian Opposition, and has has been very active in sending troops and commissioning airstrikes in the regions of Syria and Iraq.

## France

France has been providing armament to Kurdish fighters in Syria, along with the US and UK. This includes non-lethal military aid, in addition to communications equipment and medical supplies. Along with the United States, France is a strong supporter of the Syrian opposition. Since the attack the terrorist attack on Paris on 13 November, France has intensified its attacks on DAESH by launching multiple airstrikes.

## Timeline

**April 2013** - Rapid military gains by DAESH in northern Syria and became the strongest militant group there.

**May 2013** - Two car bomb explosions occur in Reyhanlı, Turkey. More than 50 people were killed and 140 were injured. This has been the deadliest act of terrorism in Turkey.

**August 2013** - Menagh Airbase captured.

**3 January 2014** - DAESH proclaims itself as an Islamic state in Fallujah. After prolonged tension the Army of Mujahedeen, the Free Syrian Army and the Islamic front launched offensives against DAESH in Syria.

**4 January 2014** - DAESH captured Fallujah after many days of fighting resulting in more than 100 dead.

**6 January 2014** - Syrian rebels managed to drive DAESH out of the city of Ar-Raqqah, which was largest stronghold of DAESH and the capital of the Ar-Raqqah province.

**16 January 2014** - The Iraqi Army and allied Sunni tribes recaptured Saqlawiyah from DAESH.

**22 January 2014** - Over 50 DAESH militants were killed by Iraqi Air Force strikes in Anbar province.

**25 January 2014** - DAESH announced the creation of its new Lebanese arm, pledging to fight the Shia militant group Hezbollah in Lebanon.

**3 February 2014** - al-Qaeda's general command broke off its links with DAESH, in order to concentrate its efforts on unseating President Bashar al-Assad.

**23 February 2014** - DAESH carried out a suicide attack in Aleppo, killing a commander of Ahrar ash-Sham and six other members of the group.

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/jo.html>

<sup>29</sup> <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/02/05/world/isis-jordan/>

**March 2014** - DAESH forces had fully retreated from Syria's Idlib province after battles against the Syrian rebels.

**June 2014** - DAESH was reported to have seized control of most of Mosul, the second most populated city in Iraq.

**21 June 2014** - DAESH captured Iraq's largest oil refinery in Baiji.

**22 June 2014** - DAESH forces captured the towns of Rawa, Ana, Huseiba and Rutba.

**24 June 2014** - The Syrian Air Force bombed DAESH positions in Iraq for the first time. The Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki expressed his support for the acts of Syria, since DAESH also threatens Iraq in addition to Syria.

**25 June 2014** - Al-Nusra Front's branch in the Syrian town of al-Bukamal pledged loyalty to DAESH, thus bringing months of fighting between the two groups to a close.

**26 June 2014** - Iraq launched its first counterattack against DAESH.

**29 June 2014** - DAESH announced the establishment of a new caliphate. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was appointed its caliph, and the group formally changed its name to the "Islamic State".

**24 July 2014** - DAESH blew up the Mosque and tomb of the Prophet Yunus (Jonah) in Mosul, which was an important heritage site for the Iraqis.

**7 August 2014** - DAESH took control of the town of Qaraqosh in the Iraqi province of Nineveh, which forced its large Christian population to flee.

**7 August 2014** - President Obama authorised targeted airstrikes in Iraq against DAESH, along with airdrops of aid. The United Kingdom offered the US assistance with surveillance and refuelling, and planned humanitarian airdrops to Iraqi refugees.

**8 August 2014** - The US military launched indefinite airstrikes targeting DAESH, with humanitarian aid support from the UK and France, in order to protect civilians in northern Iraq.

**11 August 2014** - The UK decided not to join the US in airstrikes and instead stepped up its humanitarian aid to refugees.

**15 August 2014** - The United Nations Security Council issued a resolution which condemned the terrorist acts of DAESH and its violent extremist ideology.

**16 August 2014** - The EU agreed to supply Kurdish forces with arms.

**18 August 2014** - The Syrian Air Force launched another 20 airstrikes against DAESH positions in Raqqa, cutting off water supply to the city

**22 August 2014** - The US is considering airstrikes on DAESH in Syria, which would draw US military forces directly into the Syrian Civil War, as President Obama develops a long-term strategy to defeat DAESH

**19 September 2014** - Four French air strikes had hit the town of Zumar, killing dozens of militants. Those were the first air strikes conducted by French Air Force in Iraq.

**10 October 2014** - Spanish Defence Minister Pedro Morenés announces that Spain will send 300 troops to Iraq in non-combat roles.

**13 October 2014** - US planes launched 21 strikes against DAESH forces,

**25 November 2014** - The Syrian Arab Air Force launched a series of airstrikes on Ar-Raqqah, Syria.

**3 February 2015** - DAESH released a video of Jordanian hostage Muath al-Kasasbeh being burned to death while locked in a cage. Protests occurred in Jordan with some Jordanians demanding revenge on DAESH.

**5 March 2015** - DAESH had destroyed the ancient Assyrian city of Nimrud and its archaeological site, claiming that the city and its extensive collection of related antiquities were blasphemous.

**7 March 2015** - Iraqi forces took control of the town of Khan al Baghdadi, with the support of coalition airstrikes.

**8 April 2015** - The Canadian military conducted its first airstrike on an DAESH target in Syria.

**28 July 2015** - The United States and its allies conducted 11 airstrikes in Iraq against the DAESH and also targeted the militant group with three strikes in Syria.

**5 August 2015** - The US launches its first attacks against DAESH from Turkey.

**29 August 2015** - Turkish military aircraft launches first airstrikes against DAESH targets as part of the Western coalition.

**September 2015** - Russia launched an air campaign targeting all terrorist, but mainly DAESH. However many of the air strikes hit the Syrian rebels as well as civilians.

**11 September 2015** - Russian troops present in Syria in order to help the Syrian government battle against DAESH as part of Operation rescue.

**17 September 2015** - Syrian warplanes carried out a wave of airstrikes in the DAESH held city of Raqqa with Russian weapons supplied by Russian Armed Forces.

**September 2015** - Russia, Iraq, Iran and Syria agreed to fight DAESH together, thus they set up a joint information center in Baghdad.

**13 November 2015** - DAESH claims responsibility for Paris attacks leaving 129 dead and 352 injured, including at least 99 seriously. 7 terrorists have been killed, 6 of them blew themselves up and 1 was killed by French police. The death toll rises to 132 after 3 seriously injured people died in hospital.

**November 2015** - China declares war on DAESH after the execution of a chinese hostage.

## UN Documents and Resolutions

**Resolution 2133 (2014)**, calls upon states to keep ransom payments and political confession from benefiting terrorists: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2014/sc11262.doc.htm>

**Resolution 2161 (2014)**, on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts by Al-Qaida: <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2161>

**Resolution 2170 (2014)**, Condemns widespread abuse of human rights by extremist groups in Iraq, Syria: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2014/sc11520.doc.htm>

**Resolution 2178 (2014)**, Condemns violent extremism and support for foreign terrorist fighters: <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2178>

**Resolution 2195 (2014)**, Urges international action to break links between terrorists, transnational organized crime: <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2195>

**Resolution 2199 (2015)**, on DAESH and Al-Nusra's illicit funding via oil exports, traffic of cultural heritage, ransom payments and external donations.

[http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2199.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2199.pdf)

**Resolution 2214 (2015)**, Security Council extends United Nations presence, eases arms embargo to counter terrorist threat: <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2214>

**SC/12090 20 OCTOBER 2015**: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12090.doc.htm>

**SC/12067 2 OCTOBER 2015**: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12067.doc.htm>

**SC/12066 30 SEPTEMBER 2015**: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12066.doc.htm>

**SC/11979 22 JULY 2015**, Condemned the ISIS-linked terrorist attack in Suruc, Turkey, a town near the border with Syria: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc11979.doc.htm>

## Possible solutions

There are no quick and easy solutions to the issue at hand, since there are many factors involved in the conflict. However there are ways how DAESH could be broken down and ultimately eliminated. More so called traditional ways of war are of course a huge part of it. The situation calls for airstrikes, ground troops, etc. as per usual, but other methods are also required in order to completely eradicate the threat. The flow of income through oil supplies should be stopped. As the Middle East is rich with oil the elimination of all oil supplies could perhaps require drastic measures. As this war is also fought through the internet the flow of propaganda should also be completely stopped, as this will prevent any negative influence it might have on people for example Western countries.

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