

transforum toolbox

UNDERSTANDING ISIS

DEFINITIONS/GLOSSARY

Al-Qaeda: a global militant, Islamist, terrorist organization founded by Osama bin Laden.

Caliphate: a form of Islamic government led by a Caliph—a person considered a political and religious successor to the prophet Muhammad and a leader of the entire Muslim community.

ISIS: acronym for "Islamic State of Iraq and Syria" (also referred to as ISIL in other places).

IS: acronym for Islamic State.

Islam: a monotheistic and Abrahamic religion articulated by the Qur'an—the Muslim holy book—considered by its adherents to be the verbatim word of God (Allāh).

Jihad: The Arabic meaning of this word is "striving" or "struggling." While it can mean the striving a Muslim exerts to live a holy life, its broader meaning is in holy war. ISIS seeks to bring a strict military application of jihad to include armed struggle against all people not in communion with their understanding.

Kobane: Syrian Kurdish town on the border of Turkey. 150,000 people fled into Turkey as refugees in October after ISIS siege began.

Kuffar: a derogatory Arabic term to refer to non-Muslims or "Infidels."

Mohammed: believed by Muslims to be the last prophet sent by God to mankind.

Muslim: lit: "one who submits to God" – a follower of the religion of Islam.

The Ottoman Empire: (1350 to 1918) The greatest of the Muslim states in terms of duration was founded in the late 13th century by the Ottoman Turks. It lasted until its dissolution after WW I in 1918 when it was divided by the Allies into states which we know as the Middle East.

Peshmerga: the military forces of Iraqi Kurdistan (lit.: "one who confronts death").

Sharia Law: the legal framework within which the public and some private aspects of life are regulated for those living in a legal system based on Islam.

Shiite Muslim: believes that only the heirs of the fourth Caliph, Ali, are the legitimate successors of Mohammed.

Sunni Muslim: believes that the first four caliphs—Mohammed's successors—rightfully took his place as the leader of the Muslims.

Taliban: an Islamic fundamentalist political movement in Afghanistan.

Yezidi: an ethnically Kurdish people group who practice forms of Zoroastrianism living mostly in Iraq. Seen as 'devil-worshippers' by ISIS.

SOME STATISTICS

- There are approximately 1.6 billion Muslims in the world making Islam the second-largest religious tradition after Christianity.
- **ISIS Members:** estimates are extraordinarily varied from between 20,000 to 30,000 and all the way up to 200,000+.
- **Refugees:** Estimates are around 11 million Refugees and IDP's (internally displaced peoples) from the conflict.
- As of early 2015, ISIS controls an area roughly 35,000 square miles in Syria and Northwestern Iraq (approximately the size of the state of Maine)

WAYS TO BE INVOLVED

- **Prayer.** The battle is ultimately a spiritual one (Ephesians 6:12).
- **Write to Representatives** to call for aid relief for refugees (house.gov, senate.gov).
- **Provide Financial Support for Refugees** with a portion of your 5+5 Giving.
 - **Samaritan's Purse:** A Christian organization that has local teams distributing clothing and humanitarian supplies (samaritanaspurse.org/article/iraq-crisis-response).
 - **World Vision:** A Christian organization helping Syrian refugees (wvi.org/syria-crisis).
 - **World Witness:** Provides aid to Turkish churches for Yezidi and Kobani refugees (worldwitness.org).
- **Facilitate Muslim-to-Muslim Dialogue**
- **Love Your Neighbor as Jesus Did!**

responding to
the call
JUSTICE. MERCY. GOD.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Online Articles & Videos:

"The Danger ISIS And Its Progeny Pose" (www.oxfordpolicycentre.org/research-papers)

This paper was written for the Oxford Centre for Law & Public Policy by Jay Alan Sekulow, Ph.D., J.D. and Robert Weston Ash, J.D. of the American Center for Law & Justice.

"What ISIS Really Wants" & "The Phony Islam Of ISIS" (www.theatlantic.com/features)

The first article provides an overview of ISIS and its goals. The second article expands the discussion and gives the perspective of many Muslims regarding ISIS.

"The Islamic State" (news.vice.com/video/the-islamic-state-full-length)

Vice News provides an extensive report on the Islamic State; its formation, rule and advance.

"Slaves Of The Caliphate" (www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/n3csxl53)

The BBC's Arabic Service follows a young woman as she negotiates to free Yazidi women being held captive by Islamic State fighters in Northern Iraq.

Books:

- *Terror in the Name of God* by Jessica Stern
- *Jihad vs. McWorld* by Benjamin Barber

Books Relating To Muslims:

- *Engaging Islam* by Georges Housney
- *Muslims Next Door* by Shirin Taber

Sites to Watch for More Information:

- Persecution – International Christian Concern (Persecution.org)
- World Watch Monitor (worldwatchmonitor.org)
- Voice of the Martyrs (persecution.com)
- Comma Network – Resources for reaching out to Muslims in North America (commanetwork.com)
- OpenDoorsUSA.org - Advocacy and prayer requests for the persecuted church

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