Research Report

Leiden Model United Nations 2015
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Forum: *General Assembly First Committee*
Issue: *The future of the post-ISIL Middle East*

Position: *Deputy Chair*

Introduction

The idea of religious extremism has been around for centuries. During the Elizabethan Era forin the Renaissance for example, the regent on the throne decided whether the state religion is officially Catholicism or Protestantism. Famous historical figures such as Mary Queen of Scots and Elizabeth Tudor are known rulers who used religion in their favour. People were slaughtered if they didn't comply with the current state religion. Now it is debateable whether such violence surrounding religion can be considered as extremism. But it is definitely violence and it is definitely about religion. Just as in today's world faces the threat of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (often abbreviated as ISIL) or the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or just simply Islamic State (IS). ISIL consider themselves to be the only true believers of Islam and are aware of the Sunni and Shia division in Islam. They are set out to obliterate the Shia belief and strongly believe that the Sunni way is the only way to be a Muslim. According to the jihadist group's leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, their objective is to create a new world order where Sunni Islam controls the middle east.

Definition of Key Terms

Militia
A military force that is raised from the civil population to supplement a regular army in an emergency. Iraq is now filled with Shia militias who fought against ISIL

Shia Islam
A branch of Islam which holds that the Islamic prophet Muhammad designated Ali ibn Abi Talib as his successor (Imam).

Sunni Islam
Is the largest branch of Islam. The differences between Sunni and Shia Muslims arose from a disagreement over the choice of Muhammad's successor and subsequently acquired broader political significance, as well as theological and juridical dimensions.

Humanitarian crisis
A humanitarian crisis is defined as a singular event or a series of events that are threatening in terms of health, safety or well-being of a community or large group of people. It may be an internal or external conflict and usually occurs throughout a large land area.

Capital de Facto
Official capital and unanimously agreed upon to be the capital but not lawfully. Raqqa is ISIL's capital de facto in Syria and Mosul was ISIL's capital de facto in Iraq.

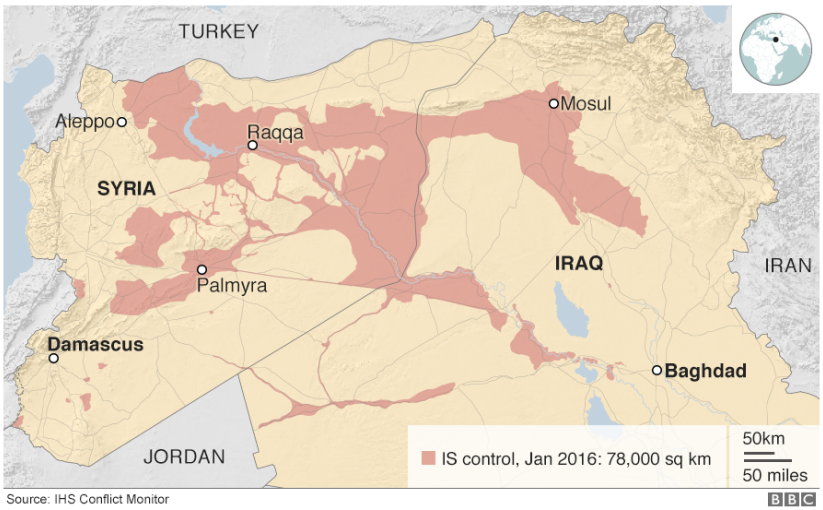
General Overview

After freeing Mosul, Iraq from the long-time possession of ISIL a new danger is on the loom. The war against ISIL was fought mainly by several militias in the region. These militias are of Shia Islam branch and they oppose ISIL just as any other groups in the region. This stems from the fact that Jihadists view themselves as the only true believers and they themselves are followers of Sunni Islam. The idea that another group claimed to be Muslims when they are the opposing branch of the religion of course causes agitation which is one of the root causes for the violence between Shia Muslims and ISIL.

The issue now is that after Mosul is freed these militias who were united with one common enemy now don't share that common enemy anymore. These militias weren't joined in one battle purpose out of nationalism or any other uniting factor but the one of the shared enemy. The new issue is that there is a possibility these militias will start to violently oppose each other which might turn into a regional war. This puts the civilians in the area back on square one.

The humanitarian crises in the area require immediate attention. Major parts of Mosul can't be inhabited and Mosul needs a lot of reconstruction. Besides that, emergency aid such as food, water and shelter are also urgent in this case. 15 out of 54 residential areas in Mosul have been completely flattened by the violence.

In September of 2017, the SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces) enter their third month of battle against ISIL in Raqqa. The capital of ISIL in Syria. The military actions are backed by the United States military. The violence in the area comes at the cost of civilians and the city who are viewed as collateral damage in the issue. As of 20th of September Raqqa is not officially freed from ISIL. It is however estimated that around 70% of the city is free and that the amount of 5000 ISIL fighters has now been reduced to a mere 1500.



Major Parties Involved

Iraq
The most important party in this issue. Mosul has just been freed by the Iraqi army and countless Shia militias. However, these militias are also a threat to the thin ice of safety the area stands on as of now. These militias face the threat of turning against each other. Iraq is now focusing on the recovery of Mosul.

Syria
Raqqa, ISIL's capital de facto is in its third month of struggling to be freed from ISIL's hold. The Syrian Democratic Forces are being backed up by the United States military. There is very positive expectation that Raqqa will be freed.

United States
The United States is one of the active countries supporting Iraq and Syria in their battle against ISIL President Trump has vowed that he will have driven ISIS out before the 30th day of his presidency which has so far been proven to not be the case as the battle of Mosul too longer than expected

Timeline of Events

2004	Official establishment of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). this is the terrorist organisation where the roots of ISIL can be traced back to. Similar extremist beliefs are shared by both groups. ISIL is considered to be the follow-up of Al-Qaeda after Usama Bin Laden's capture.
April 8, 2013	Official establishment of ISIL.
December 2013	ISIL infiltrates the Anbar province in Iraq causing the insurgency to turn into a regional war
June 4-10, 2014	Fall of Mosul. ISIL defeats the Iraqi army and takes over Mosul
2013-2017	ISIL grows. Launches countless attacks to incite terror
July 16, 2017	ISIL loses the battle of Mosul. Mosul is finally freed after being one of the longest captured areas by ISIL.

Previous Attemps to solve the issue

- Calling for a dismantling of the Shia militias. a call to demobilise all these militias has recently come from an unlikely source - Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, who was the first to establish a Shia militia in Iraq in 2003. As of 2017, he is now trying to dismantle the numerous Shia militias that are active in the country. He is unlikely to succeed, but a need for reforming Iraq's security forces is pressing.

- International attention and awareness in order to reach the funding necessary to rebuild Mosul. This is an attempt that is ongoing.

- A U.S. backed military intervention on the capital de facto in Syria. Supported by the Syrian Democratic Forces.

Possible Solutions

- Unite all the militias in Iraq into one official army. Urge the Iraqi government to recognise such militias as one official army.

- Send UN peacekeeping troops in order to ensure a frictionless rebuilding Mosul

- Advise member states to focus on clear communication of what the victims in Syria and Iraq need. The humanitarian crises are one of the biggest problems in the areas right now. It is of high importance that the civilians can be provided with shelter and emergency care.

- Call for the Human Rights council to meet and agree and sustainable development aid for Mosul. After emergency aid has been provided, it is important that Mosul can rebuild itself and not only rely on help from the outside.

Useful documents

-Timelines of important battles and events surrounding ISIL:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_ISIL-related_events

Appendix/Appendices

http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/03/future-militias-post-isil-iraq-170324090705631.html

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