

How Islamic is the So-Called Islamic State?

By [Steven MacMillan](#)

Global Research, August 26, 2016

[New Eastern Outlook](#) 26 August 2016

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Religion](#), [Terrorism](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

Since the so-called Islamic State (ISIS) declared a caliphate in June 2014, Muslim extremism has once again become a major topic in the media and therefore in the public mind. Islamophobic attacks have skyrocketed in the West in recent years, as many people tarnish over one and half billion Muslims with a single brush. In the distorted logic of the modern-day Islamophobe, all Muslims are intrinsically violent savages who are responsible for the actions of ISIS fighters, simply because ISIS is carrying out atrocities under the banner of Islam.

Purely due to the name of the group, most people in the West believe that all ISIS fighters are pious individuals with a deep understanding of the Muslim faith. When you actually analyse many of the 'religious' extremists who are fighting for ISIS however, a different picture emerges. A recent [analysis](#) conducted by the Associated Press of thousands of leaked documents from ISIS pertaining to their recruits from 2013 and 2014, shows that most ISIS fighters have only a very limited knowledge of the religion they are supposed to be fighting in the name of.

The documents show that just 5 percent of recruits were "considered advanced students of Islam," with approximately 24 percent having "intermediate" knowledge, and an astonishing 70 percent having only "basic" knowledge of Shariah. The notion that many ISIS members are ignorant of Islam is further confirmed by the reports of fighters buying 'Islam for Dummies' books on Amazon just before joining terrorist organizations abroad. It should also be kept in mind that ISIS combatants are paid to fight (albeit they did take a massive [pay cut](#) at the start of the year – terrorism apparently doesn't pay).

I'm not arguing that there is no such thing as radical Islam, but the idea that all Muslims are somehow inherently violent is nonsense. The vast majority of Muslims are peaceful people who have no desire to harm others, and just want to live in secure and stable countries like every other normal person in the world. Most victims who suffer at the hands of 'Islamic' terrorist groups (who have usually always received funding and support by Western intelligence agencies at some point) are [Muslims themselves](#).

Furthermore, looking at recent decades, it is many of the so-called Christian-based countries (i.e. the West) that have killed millions of predominately Muslim people in incessant imperial wars in the Middle East and North Africa; with the body count of all the atrocities that are blamed on people claiming to represent Islam coming nowhere close to the West's staggering amount of casualties.

What all the journalists, commentators and members of the public who spend the majority of their time denouncing all followers of Islam fail to mention, is the two-pronged assault the

West has waged on the Muslim world: by ousting (and trying to oust) the secular leaders in the region on one hand, whilst facilitating the rise of the most extreme forces on the other.

Which country put the House of Saud [into power](#) in Saudi Arabia approximately a century ago? Which countries orchestrated the 1953 coup that ousted the secular Iranian leader, Mohammed Mossadegh? Which countries funded the Mujahideen in Afghanistan in the late 1970s? Which countries have been funding terrorists to overthrow the secular Syrian government of Bashar al-Assad for years now?

The growing Islamophobia we see in the West today is built on nothing but ignorance. Given the leaked documents on the nature of ISIS recruits, it is clear that the so-called Islamic State isn't really Islamic or a state; rather, it is collection of (predominately foreign) professional mercenaries and intelligence operatives, mixed with disillusioned young men and actual jihadis, that the West played a major role in creating in the first place (through the 2003 war in Iraq, and through the [support](#) of terrorists fighting against Assad in Syria).

Steven MacMillan is an independent writer, researcher, geopolitical analyst and editor of [The Analyst Report](#), especially for the online magazine ["New Eastern Outlook"](#).

The original source of this article is [New Eastern Outlook](#)
Copyright © [Steven MacMillan](#), [New Eastern Outlook](#), 2016

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Steven MacMillan](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca