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## ISIS – A GLOBAL OR REGIONAL THREAT?

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**Abstract:** *The study of terrorism is a very diverse, contingent and complex phenomenon. The world has long been fighting terrorism, pervaded with ethnic and religious characteristics, it does not represent a new tool against the civilized world order. Terrorism, featured by religious narratives backed by economic and political aspirations, has significantly changed a number of institutions and states' geopolitical strategies towards the hot terroristic areas of the world. When the Western world, in particular the USA, started celebrating a meritorious victory against "Al-Qaeda", by killing its spiritual leader Osama bin Laden, simultaneously a new terroristic organization called the "Islamic State of Iraq and Syria" (hereafter ISIS) announced a pretension of being a discretionary power in the Middle East. This paper aims at observing and analyzing how the ISIS has transformed from regional to a global threat and how the forming processes of such heavily militarized terrorist organization have developed to be perceived as a top global challenge of the world.*

**Keywords:** *Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Middle East, Terrorism.*

### INTRODUCTION

The world has long been fighting terrorism, pervaded with ethnic and religious characteristics, it does not represent a new tool against the civilized world order. Terrorism, featured by religious symbols backgrounded with economic and political aspirations, has significantly changed political map of the modern world. When the Western world, in particular the USA, started celebrating a meritorious victory against 'Al-Qaeda', by killing its spiritual leader Osama bin Laden, exactly that time, a new terroristic organization called the "Islamic State of Iraq and Syria" (hereafter ISIS) announced a pretension being a hegemonic power in the Middle East. The violation, which was being carried out by the ISIS militants against disobeyed Sunnis firstly and then Shias of the Middle East, soon crossed the regional boundaries and became an object of care for many Asian, African, European and Cross-Atlantic states. Occupation of North Iraqi cities in 2014 was accompanied by the statements of the European and the USA political leaders that it was a local problem that should have been solved in the Middle East, but after the November attacks in Paris in 2015, which ended with around 130 dead civilians, ISIS's actions were estimated as a global challenge for the European continent. Part of the US Senators had been persistently asserting that ISIS does not have any alarming linkage with the American soil, pretending that the Islamic Caliphate would have never appeared on the agenda, but after the December Christmas attack in San Bernandino in 2015, where 14 died and 24 were injured, American political establishment redefined ISIS as an increasing threat.<sup>1</sup>

Boko Haram, which is ISIS-affiliated terroristic organization, responsible for deaths of thousands of innocent people in North African states, is known as the most trusted supporter organization of ISIS, which also carries out a mass violation against African Muslims and Christians. Majority of fighters who have joined ISIS are from the North African states, where the idea of Islamic Caliphate is well absorbed and implementation of restrictive instruments against it seems hard for the local governments.

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<sup>1</sup> Atagi, C. (2016) *14 dead in San Bernandino, and we still don't know why one year later.*

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ISIS's seeking of strongholds is gaining momentum in Southeast Asia. In the list of 18 countries that estimate ISIS as a number one security, is also Philippines.<sup>2</sup> ISIS-affiliated Philippine terrorist group Maute, follows the path of the Islamic State and creates numerous problems to national security forces. It has already taken responsibility for many deadly attacks in the country and officially acknowledged ISIS as a brother organization. Apart from the Philippines, Australia, Indonesia and India are the targets of ISIS. It actively appeals local Muslims to sober, carry out jihad and put their contribution in creation of Islamic Caliphate.

According to Paw Research Center survey, aligned with global warming, ISIS is estimated as a top global threat in the world and perceived as a cancer that has to be carved out.<sup>3</sup> Regardless of open disputes between confronted political elites, existed threat, which is no longer regional problem, has made world's powerful states allied to root this cancer out with unified forces. The anti-ISIS USA-led coalition call on states to be engaged in the process since defeating such large-minded so-called 'Jihadist' state is unimaginable in only one state's endeavor.

## FROM REGIONAL TO GLOBAL STAGE

### Creation of ISIS

Many ISIS analysts confirm that the creation of this terrorist formation does not have a linkage only with the late Syrian rebellions, its creation has started long before. According to one of those sources, its roots can be traced to the late 1990's and in one man's vision to challenge the Western presence in the Middle East and its regional anchors and this man is Jordanian born Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. He has developed ties with Al-Qaeda under Osama bin Laden's rule and intending the resistance against the West, Israel and the Middle Eastern states, which did not consider to be genuinely Islamic.<sup>4</sup> Looking at 2016 mass Human Rights violation, raping and torturing carried out by the ISIS militants, the Islamic State represented a deadly challenge to the people of Middle East and to governments in this region, as well as to other countries worldwide.<sup>5</sup> This terrorist organization did not arise out of nowhere, it has profound roots in Jordan to the early 1990's, which became active in Iraq in the beginning of 2000's. After 2004, relationship between ISIS and its predecessor Al-Qaeda has worsened and because of ISIS savage methods of violation, ISIS – Al-Qaeda divorce derived from ISIS's open pretension to be a state with its own state institutions, legislation and governing structures, rather than a group, another source says.<sup>6</sup> Part of anti-USA political analysts argue that IS, as well Al-Qaeda, would not seize such threatening power without the West's support. They blame on US president Barack Obama and his administration in feeding this terrorist organization with weapon and finances by mediating other Arab states in order to overthrow Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, who represents a solid stronghold of Russia's Putin and whose rule has long transformed into tyranny.<sup>7</sup> The main arguments of these critics lay down

<sup>2</sup> Romualdez, G. B. (2017). *ISIS identified as top global threat*.

<sup>3</sup> Poushter, J., Manevich, D. (2017). *Globally, People Point to ISIS and Climate Change as Leading Security Threats*. Paw Research Center.

<sup>4</sup> Tziarras, Z. (2017). *Islamic Caliphate: A Quasi-State, a Global Security Threat*. Journal of Applied Security Research. No. 12:1, 111-112.

<sup>5</sup> Kerikmäe, T.; Hamulak, O.; Chochia, A. (2016). *A Historical Study of Contemporary Human Rights: Deviation or Extinction?* Acta Baltica Historiae et Philosophiae Scientiarum, 4 (2), 98–115.

<sup>6</sup> Johnston, B. P., Shapiro, N. J., Shatz, J. H., Bahney, B., Jung, F. D., Ryan, K. P., Wallace, J. (2016). *Foundations of the Islamic State. Management, Money, and Terror in Iraq, 2005-2010*. RAND Corporation. No. 1, 249-276.

<sup>7</sup> Hoffmann, T.; Chochia, A. (2018). *The Institution of Citizenship and Practices of Passportization in Russia's European Neighborhood Policies*. In: A. Makarychev, T. Hoffmann (Ed.). *Russia and the EU Spaces of Interaction* (223–237). Routledge, Taylor&Francis Group.

into the Obama's unforeseen vision that these radicalized fighters would become a threat for the region and for the USA, too, after capturing the weapon. Obama's such incorrigible mistake has made Russia able to hold a dominant position in the Middle East by destroying ISIS and reinforce its political weight in the West, critics argue.

Many ideas exist about ISIS as a second phase of Arabs Spring that did not find a success ending in the beginning of the 2010's. In the point of views of ISIS spiritual leader, Abu Bakr al-Zarqawi and current leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the purpose of the Islamic State is to unify Sunni jihadists of the Middle East, North Africa, South-West Asia and part of Europe that would fulfill the Mohammad's prediction.

Creation if ISIS was followed by some religious assessments that it was the sign of the apocalypse of the anti-Christ and the day of judgement<sup>8</sup> that in some degree leaves the questions how much this is the day of judgement and how much the economic factors are behind of this terrorist organization, which attracts many socially excluded and economically vulnerable people.

### **Occupation of the Middle East and Crossing Regional Borders**

According to figures that reveal the number and percentage of Muslim population in Africa, 635 million Muslims live on this continent making up 53% of the whole population (Africa Muslim Population 2016), it would be an acceptable for al-Zarqawi and al-Baghdadi to begin carrying out jihad from this soil, however it is quite noteworthy that they needed an acting lever, which would accelerate the spread of their ideology and attract radicalized Sunnis in very short terms. ISIS militants attached their forces to the civil rebellions against Syria's president Assad, which is why they have chosen this territory and not Africa for forming the Islamic State.

Very first successful punitive operation jihadist carried out was burning a Jordan pilot alive in the beginning of 2015 that caused open anger of Jordan King who immediately announced the war against ISIS and led his army to Syria. Exactly this fact is estimated as a first regional level violation that was followed by other regional states' involvement in fight against ISIS. Soon ISIS declares war against Assad of Syria and all Sunni Muslims who refuses allegation to ISIS, as well. Their punitive methods have become known as brutality against innocent people at lower level and destruction of the Middle East civilization at upper level. Occupation of North Syrian and Iraqi cities has left thousands of tortured, raped and killed people aligned with devastated cities of antic civilization hearth. Bombing of Aleppo and Raqqa of Syria and Mosul of Iraq has left thousands of people without households and enforced to seek a shelter in neighbor Turkey and Europe at best.

After mass flows of migrants from Syria and Iraq towards Turkey and Eastern Europe in 2015, Western media and a number of European states considered ISIS as an increasing global threat.<sup>9</sup> After seeing millions of exterminated migrants at the European door, Germany, France and Belgium political leaders called for sanctions against ISIS-affiliated fighters in their state boundaries that was later resulted in mass suicide bomber and armed attacks by ISIS-inspired militants over the innocent civilians in those countries.

## **ISIS OUTSIDE THE MIDDLE EAST**

### **ISIS in Africa**

Mass violation and high rate of death of civilians committed by ISIS-inspired radical Muslim fighters in Africa have attracted global attention and become an object of discussion. Sunni

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<sup>8</sup> Asim, Q. I. (2017). *This is why young European Muslims are joining Isis*.

<sup>9</sup> Kerikmäe, T.; Chochia, A. (Eds.) (2016). *Political and Legal Perspectives of the EU Eastern Partnership Policy*. Springer International Publishing.

Muslims' attitude that no Muslim can be a true Muslim without living in the Islamic State<sup>10</sup> is well shared and well supported by Boko Haram terrorist organization. A Nigerian terrorist group, Boko Haram, is an African fundamentalist Islamic organization, which has a direct tie with ISIS and express allegiance to this organization. Boko Haram's intention to carve out any Western education and values related to Western society and form a state in accordance with Sharia laws, has already sacrificed more than 20,000 police officers and civilians. The Global Terrorism Index said that this radical group is responsible for 6,644 in 2014 and that number is expected to increase, since its insurgency against Christians and local governments continues.<sup>11</sup> North Africa is the area where Islamic radical ideology has easily penetrated into masses and placed a radicalized youth into its service. Because the ideology of Islamic Caliphate soon has become popular among economically deprived African Muslims, ISIS leaders officially acknowledge Boko Haram as a brother organization and assess Africa as the best stronghold for ISIS. According to numbers revealed in 2015, so-called Maghreb region, combining of Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Libya and Mauritania, is characterized by the highest number of fighters who have left Africa for ISIS and it reached 8240 fighters.<sup>12</sup> The vast majority of those fighters are the people who don't have access to education, work, social benefits and from nothing they become enemies for the local governments, particularly, when they use "Eastern fighting methods" gained during travelling to the Middle East.

Boko Haram does not frighten only local communities, as it is estimated as a significant threat for international organizations represented in North African region. United Nations compound became a target of this group in 2011 when 23 people died and 75 got injuries after explosion of car bomb.<sup>13</sup> Boko Haram's imagination of torture reached a peak when they kidnapped 276 schoolgirls from Nigerian village Chibok. Part of those girls are still missing while many of them were raped and killed. Chibok tragedy has turned around the face of this Islamic group that was qualified as the crime committed against humanity and it has created a necessity for the Nigerian government to call for international help to defeat this Islamic radical terrorist organization.

In spite of the fact that ISIS is losing important territories in the Middle East, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi assumes Magreb region as a solid stronghold where the lack of international surveillance, weaknesses of local governmental security forces and shortage of local people's resistance can be used in favor of ISIS.

### **ISIS in the USA**

The United States has an incomparable experience in fighting against terrorism. It seemed that CIA has defeated Al Qaeda, which some political scientists believe this terrorist group was remarkably promoted by the United States, a new threat has emerged on the stage, called ISIS.<sup>14</sup> Garikai Chengu is a research scholar at Harvard University who belongs to the group of analysts who considers ISIS as a US-based terroristic organization against Assad's regime and Russian ambitions in the Middle East. Chengu states that Obama and his administration have started assessing ISIS as a global threat only after the American journalists had been beheaded by ISIS-inspired militants and they has realized that controlling the Islamic State would require a hard effort.

After the San Bernandino and Orlando attacks in which 63 people died in total, former president Obama stated that ISIS did not have anything with religion, that it was a cult of death,

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<sup>10</sup> Dar, A. S (2016). *Contemporary discourses on the possibility of an 'Islamic state': an overview*. Journal of Contemporary Arab Affairs. No. 9:3, 421-427.

<sup>11</sup> INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMICS AND PEACE. (2017). *Global Terrorism Index 2017*.

<sup>12</sup> THE SOUFAN GROUP. (2015). *An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Fighters into Syria and Iraq*. Foreign Fighters. THE SOUFAN GROUP.

<sup>13</sup> CNN Library (2017). *Boko Haram Fast Facts*.

<sup>14</sup> Chengu, Garikai. (2017). *America Created Al-Qaeda and the ISIS Terror Group*.

which threatens the Muslims in the region and in the USA, too.<sup>15</sup> Current 45<sup>th</sup> president of the USA, Donald Trump has criticized Obama's regulations against the Islamic State and condemned him that was immediately followed by his promise he would take care of this global problem. From the first days of his rule he enhanced the sanctions against travelling from eight Asian and African countries towards America, the countries where in six out of eight, Muslims comprises of the total majority of population. In late 2016 Trump frozen the mass migration flows from the Middle East and Magreb regions that is vividly clear it worsened the situation that had been even much worsened before.

Brett McGurk, the top US envoy for the anti-Isis coalition bombing its territories in Syria and Iraq, said it was his and his coalition's duty to defeat the IS fighters in the Middle East and protect Americans from their killing hands.<sup>16</sup> Atrocities, the Islamic State fighters led in the US soil after returning from the Middle East, needed to be solved by a complex approach and killing those fighters straightforwardly after revealing them in connection with ISIS, would not be the best solution. The USA was one of the first states aligned with leading European states, which have introduced the promoting programs to the returnees in case of revealing in inspiration by the Islamic State ideology. That programme has intended to help the returned fighters in resocialization process and make them able to find their place in society.

### **ISIS in Southeast Asia**

India is the part of the countries the Islamic State struggles to unify under so-called Khorasan Province and this unification belongs to ISIS's so-called 'five years plan' that should be completed by 2020. Among the terrorist attacks IS-affiliated terrorist groups have carried out in India there is one when terrorist attacked the railway near Mumbai city that has ended up with 182 dead and 770 wounded. After that, the Islamic State militants threatened India by attacking one of its national symbols and a pattern of Indian civilization, Taj Mahal. ISIS has announced within its main social media, Telegram, that Taj Mahal is the main target of their actions in India.<sup>17</sup> Destroying exhibits of cultural heritage represents IS's handwriting that had already devastated the cities of Syria and Iraq representing the face ancient civilizations. In the views of some ISIS researchers, Taj Mahal is the part of the Islamic State's saga and a piece of chain of violation. Although, regardless of the current circumstances that more and more Indian youth join ISIS, India does not tend to be engaged in fight against ISIS at the global level. India supposes to work on suspension of IS-inspired Indians at a local level, rather than to involve in the US-led anti ISIS coalition in Syria and Iraq. Unlikely to Trump's administration, Indian government argues that fighting in the Middle East will bring some negative results back in India.<sup>18</sup>

As in every action area of the Islamic State, Indonesia's capital city, Jakarta, suffered from IS attacks carried out by its fighters in shopping mall and around the city's public gathering places, lost 4 civilians that has encouraged IS's behavior in this region and it has called on others to commit attacks ahead of Indonesia's Independence Day.<sup>19</sup> This message once again has confirmed that public holidays are the best acting place for the Islamic State's fighters.

According to a report of by the Carnegie Council, around 1,000 people travelled to ISIS-controlled territory of the Middle East from the Southeast Asia<sup>20</sup> and the contribution of the

<sup>15</sup> Schwartz, I. (2015). *Obama Addresses Nation on ISIS Threat: This Is Not A War Between America and Islam*.

<sup>16</sup> Dearden, L. (2017). *More than 400 British Isis jihadis have already returned to UK, report warns*.

<sup>17</sup> Abraham, B. (2017). *ISIS Terrorists Vow To Intensify Attacks On India, Declare Plan To Target Taj Mahal*.

<sup>18</sup> Tecimer, N. (2017). *India and the Fight Against Islamic State*.

<sup>19</sup> THE STRAITS TIMES. (2017). *Further attacks in Indonesia feared after Jakarta bombing, ISIS-linked insurgency in Philippines*.

<sup>20</sup> Kurlantzick, J. (2016). *Southeast Asia – The Islamic State's New Front?*

Philippines in this terrorist migration is sizeable. Maute and Abu Sayyaf are the two representatives out of 60 Islamist radical groups in the Southeast Asian region, which have pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and decided Marawi city to be the place of their violation. This city poses the ground of battles between IS fighters and military personnel and because of the large-scale attacks on the Filipino civilians it has long ago attracted the interests of international organizations, such as United Nations.<sup>21</sup>

This year one jihadist appealed Chinese people with video message that they don't understand the speaking language of other people and the soldiers of Islamic Caliphate themselves will come to Chinese people and teach them the language of weapon as revenge against the oppressors.<sup>22</sup> Speaker of the Internal Affairs of China, Xuan Lei stated that ISIS is the challenge for the whole universe and it should be defeated by the coalition forces, but hesitation of China resisting ISIS at the global level is clear. As India, China's president Xi Jinping follows the Mao's non-interference policy and use some abstaining ways in order to avoid mass attacks at the local stage. It is more predictable that Jinping is going to be use UN's peace programmes to pretend other global political leaders that he puts his contribution against ISIS.<sup>23</sup> Such peaceful position of China against ISIS, analysts argue, comes from China's local problem with Muslim radical Turkic ethnic group called Uyghurs who declare pretensions over China's west border, and who also represent the target of ISIS for mass recruitment. This is the main condition why China attempts to close the eyes on mass defeating operations in the Middle East.

### ISIS in Europe

Despite the fact Quran says that carrying out jihad is unacceptable on people who don't pose a threat for you, ISIS fighters consider Europe and the Western ideology as a main threat for true Muslims. Speaking about ISIS and its violation, immediately Europe and innocent European civilians emerge on the scope. Since 2013, hundreds of Europeans have sacrificed IS's armed and suicide bomber attacks. Massive attacks during the celebration of public holidays and in public transports, carried out by the militants of the Islamic State, have created fear in people to join the public gathering places. Moreover, it has aggregated the conflict between Europeans and Muslim migrants. The assaults committed by radical Islamist organization followed by part of Europeans' radical position against expanding Muslim communities in Europe has formed open ideological confrontation between the latter societies that is merely noticeable.

Before the well-known Parris attacks in 2014, the British government assessed the Islamic State as a global threat and a part of Al-Qaeda. The government stated that IS aims to carry out jihadist ideology almost everywhere based on Sharia law and refer violation by using its radicals. Prime Minister, Theresa May commented that the Islamic ideology would not spread root in British society.<sup>24</sup>

Russia, France, Germany, Belgium and the United Kingdom comprise the European five, which are characterized by the highest numbers of fighters left Europe for ISIS and exactly these are states, which suffer the most from ISIS attacks. From March 2016 to August 2017, 850 people left the UK for the Islamic State where 350 have already returned and 200 of them were liquidated by the national security forces.<sup>25</sup> British soldier and veteran of the Afghanistan war was ruthlessly

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<sup>21</sup> Griffiths, J. (2017). *ISIS in Southeast Asia: Philippines battles growing threat*.

<sup>22</sup> O'Neill, K. (2017). *ISIS threatens China for the first time as child Muslim fighters vow to return home and attack own country*.

<sup>23</sup> Topuria, R. (2015). *CHINA VS. ISIS?*

<sup>24</sup> Ramiro Troitino, D.; Kerikmäe, T.; Chochia, A. (Eds.) (2018). *Brexit: History, Reasoning and Perspectives*. Springer International Publishing.

<sup>25</sup> Radio Free Europe. (2017). *Where Do IS Foreign Fighters Come From?*

tortured by two Islamic extremists in accordance to the reason that Muslims are dying by the British soldiers every day. Extremists announcing it as 'an eye for an eye'.<sup>26</sup>

Issue of returned fighters is on the agenda in British government. Unlikely to Rory Stewart, Minister of International Developments, who considers killing jihadists as the best solution, the British government defines rehabilitation and reintegration of the British-IS fighters as a significant solution, particularly for women and children who are vulnerable to the Islamic ideology.<sup>27</sup> They think that they have to detect the returned fighters and support them in resocialization because much has been spent on their growing, forming and educating.

In March 2016 Belgium's capital Brussels was rocked by several deadly attacks thought to be linked with ISIS. Soon Brussels airport appeared in panic where 14 people died and 20 wounded after the terrorist attack inspired by the Islamic State's ideology, which once again united the Belgium's people against terrorism. The level of terrorism threat in Belgium is three out of four that is very dangerous. A small European state is distinguished by its number of terrorists with per capita. Around 85 out of 130 terrorists, who are being searched by Red circular enhanced patrolling, are Belgium-born.<sup>28</sup>

Among the explanations why this country is in the target of ISIS we can name one very symbolic factor that Belgium and Brussels are the face of the European Union while the main EU institutions are deployed here. Rooting fear in Belgium and victory over the city of the European political establishment automatically means the defeat of the Western ideology that is the motto of the ISIS.

Emergence of ISIS at the global level seriously damaged German society. After several armed attacks on German people in which the Christmas market attack is exceptionally brutal, year of 2016 was acknowledged as a year of terrorism. The photos, the ISIS fighters published in German media in late 2016, the slogans against "enemies of Allah" were included where they intend German people. They were also appealing other Muslims in Germany to do the same as their Belgium brothers have already done in Brussels.<sup>29</sup> Massive attacks, in which young people's, sometimes teenagers, contribution is sizeable, and fighter's migration from Germany to the Middle East that is very critical, have caused certain legislative amendments aiming at revision of travelling laws.

Regardless of the fact that German state officials approved the plan of sending 1,200 soldiers in the Middle East against ISIS, they look aside of fighting ISIS at a global level in order to prevent its people from the Islamic State's violation. Their position about involving in airstrikes in the Middle East against ISIS was negative.

Compared to Germany, France leads the strongest anti-jihadist coalition in the Middle East and Africa. France, among the European five, has suffered the most and the November 2015 Paris multiple attacks is estimated as the deadliest aggression carried out on the European continent by the Islamic Caliphate. It left 130 dead and millions of threatened. Saint-Etienne, also is the first European city where clergymen itself was executed by the ISIS fighters. A question might be raised why eight times more fighters are joining ISIS from France, rather than from Bosnia and Herzegovina where 51% of population are Muslims.

Many analysts argue that terrorism has deep roots in France and apart from religious, some socio-economic factors play a crucial role, as well. From the Western Europe, France has "sent" the biggest number of radical fighters to the Middle East and the vast majority of those fighters had grown up in the culturally isolated and economically devastated "banlieues" (suburbs), which are far away from France of wine, charcuterie, chateaux and cheese (Burke 2016). Unemployment and

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<sup>26</sup> Hayden, E. M. (2017). *Terror in the UK: A timeline of recent attacks*.

<sup>27</sup> Dearden, L. (2017). *More than 400 British Isis jihadis have already returned to UK, report warns*.

<sup>28</sup> Tabula. (2015). *Brussels is paralyzed because of high terrorist threat*.

<sup>29</sup> Tomkiw, L. (2016). *ISIS Attack Germany? Islamic State Lists German Targets For Brussels-Style Terrorism*.

poverty that usually accelerates the joining process to ISIS, are the main troubles of French Muslims added social exclusion and encouragement in a negative context that they will never become real français. After above mentioned factors, analysts argue that satiric magazine Charlie Hebdo, which is very prominent in France, put its own contribution in the ISIS attacks throughout the country when they have actively started insulting Muhammad's cult.

We face a paradoxical moment in Russian Federation. Many jihadists leave Russia for ISIS while Putin actively provides Bashar al-Assad with a significant artillery forces to defeat the Islamic State. For Russia, it might be considered as a fight against own Muslim citizens on another soil that emerges questions about fairness of Putin's behavior. We can convert this issue into historical narrative that asserts that Muslims and particularly radical Muslims have always been a threat for Russia and those Muslims' free outflow to the Middle East poses a great opportunity for Putin to clean Russian soil.

Number of fighters, who left Russia in from March 2016 to August 2017 for joining ISIS, is three times bigger than German one. Muslims coming from the Caucasus region have always been a part of Russian society and confrontation between the Caucasian Muslims and Russian government reached a peak in the middle 1990's in the Chechnya.<sup>30</sup> Those Muslim's desire to revenge for the Chechnya wars is tireless and that desire has already found a successful ending into several suicide bombings at public transports.

## ISIS AS A GLOBAL CHALLENGE

### Political assessments

The Islamic State has partially reached some success the European people to be afraid of enjoying public holidays in the streets. After the Nice terrorist attack during the Bastille Day and the Berlin Christmas market tragedy, ISIS has published a dangerous poster in which the Santa from one of London's streets is holding a bloody knife in hand and the main slogan of the poster is: "Soon on your holidays" that sent British people to constant panic once again.

The money ISIS earns from oil, banks robbery and drug trafficking seriously threatens Western political elite. According to Viktor Ivanov, the head of the Federal Drug Control Service in Russia, ISIS's annual income from transiting heroin from the Middle East to Europe is up to one billion Dollar.<sup>31</sup> It becomes more complicated to negotiate with such financially strong terrorist power, which aims at altering current religious, political and socio-economical aspects at any cost that aggravates critics in the Western camp.<sup>32</sup> Barack Obama defined ISIS as a global threat that does not have any mutuality with religion, because no religion, including Islam, condones massacres of innocent people.

Sometimes when we see how politicians in the Congress and Europe attempt to spread the notion that people in the West are out of ISIS's danger, they immediately get attacked from the opponents to declare ISIS as a global threat and denounce misleading people. According to official web page of the US Department of State, ISIS presents a global threat which has attracted a lot of foreign young fighters from across the world who technologically organize the IS's operations.<sup>33</sup> In

<sup>30</sup> Chochia, A.; Popjanevski, J. (2016). *Change of Power and Its Influence on Country's Europeanization Process. Case Study: Georgia*. In: Kerikmäe, T.; Chochia, A. (Ed.). *Political and Legal Perspectives of the EU Eastern Partnership Policy* (197–210). Springer International Publishing.

<sup>31</sup> (Joshi 2015).

<sup>32</sup> Tziarras, Z. (2017). Islamic Caliphate: A Quasi-State, a Global Security Threat. *Journal of Applied Security Research*. No. 12:1, 111-112.

<sup>33</sup> U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE. (2014). *The Global Coalition To Defeat ISIS*.



2016 during the Milken Institute-organized platform about the ways of defeating ISIS, Former Prime Minister of the UK, Tony Blair, who admits his mistake in the UK-US led operations against Saddam Hussein, now confidently defined ISIS as a global problem that has to be solved in the regional boundaries and further distribution towards other regions has to be prevented. This year Indonesian president Joko Widodo estimated the Islamic caliphates' violations as a wake-up call for the entire region. His vision is the regional governments to unite under strong coalition to combat ISIS in this region.<sup>34</sup>

### **Problem solving methods**

Summarizing briefly to what measures need to be implemented in order to handle such growing global threat, quoting an American President would be a good start: "The vast majority of victims around the world are Muslim. If we are to succeed in defeating terrorism, we must enlist Muslim communities as some of our strongest allies rather than push them away due to suspicion and hate," Barack Obama said.<sup>35</sup> Secretary of States, John Kerry has long started criticizing ISIS as a modern world's cancer and Al-Qaeda's successor organization, who previously gave ISIS a qualification of mass threat. In his words, defeating such sophisticated and well-funded terrorist organization makes the mission more complicated where a single state's battle is a waste of time. Only a single state's effort to change ISIS's plans is doomed to failure and this attitude is well shared by the US Department of State. According to this institution's official statement, terrorism can be defeated by a sustained and comprehensive multilateral approach that combines active participation and co-operation of the states. The governments of the Southeast Asian countries launched the joint campaign in the Sulu Sea against kidnapping and piracy perpetrated by the Abu Sayyaf, ISIS-affiliated terrorist groups.<sup>36</sup> France, which is one of the main enemies of ISIS in the Middle East, calls for other European and African political leaders to send their fighting items to the Middle East aligned with anti-ISIS US-led coalition and support the local governments to advance in this ongoing war.

Solving economic and social problems, which play a significant role for young fighters to join ISIS, would be considered as a successful step in terms of destroying this radical fundamentalist terrorist group. It is a decisively important from the local Europeans to promote Muslim minorities to integrate, get jobs and have access to proper education. They need to leave bidonvilles, actively engage in the process of healthy social life and have less time for making radical decisions. Society to avoid the contradictions between the civilizations which is the major driving force for this radical Islamist organization, it is also vitally important to acknowledge and respect different religious and political affiliations and enhance co-operation with Muslim communities that are suffering from the outrage of so-called Islamic Caliphate. Prominent sociologist Samuel Huntington has developed the same vision in the early 1990's that incentivizing controversy between different religious communities is the major purpose of such terrorist groups that bring us to war of civilizations eventually.

## **CONCLUSION**

During last several decades, the wars the terrorist organizations have declared against religious minorities, the Western ideology and the whole universe, are realizing by abusing religious

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<sup>34</sup> Edwards, W. (2017). *ISIS' Reach Extends to Southeast Asia*.

<sup>35</sup> Schwartz, I. (2015). *Obama Addresses Nation on ISIS Threat: This Is Not A War Between America and Islam*.

<sup>36</sup> Edwards, W. (2017). *ISIS' Reach Extends to Southeast Asia*.

naivety for political and economic purposes. ISIS struggling to bring its goals into reality have already destroyed the half of the Middle East region and millions of innocent lives. Its brutality is experienced in almost every continent and aligned with global warming it carries a significant massive threat for the strongest states of the world. Its violations particularly since 2014 have deserved the frantic attention of mass and social medias that increases the level of panic through the vulnerable groups. Despite the fact ISIS is losing important bases in north Iraq, it belongs to their strategic plan to attack the West by the Christmas. They also warn Chinese people to be careful and acknowledge 45<sup>th</sup> American president Donald Trump as the enemy of Allah.

Among the socially unsuccessful and economically vulnerable fighters who join ISIS, there are many who possess European passports and had access to proper European education before. Europe-born fighters represent the main technical force for ISIS and exactly they are responsible for large-scale terrorist attacks on the European soil. This fact threatens the European leaders the most. They constantly increase the number of social programmes in order to exclude European Muslim from ISIS propaganda. The United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium and France who suffer the most from ISIS armed and suicide bombing attacks, actively attempt to detect young people noticed in relationship with ISIS and promote them in rehabilitation and resocialization process instead of punishment.

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