



RESEARCH PAPER

The ISIS Factor: Destabilizing Peace and Security in the Middle East

¹Dr. Najaf Ali, ²Dr. Sadoon Masood and ³Akmal Sultan

1. Assistant Professor/IPFP Fellow, Department of Political Science University of Okara, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science GC University Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan
3. M.Phil Scholar, Department of Political Science GC University Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan

Corresponding Author

najafshigri72@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has changed the face of the political, social and security structures in the Middle East. This paper find out ISIS as a destabilizing force, threatening peace and security of the region, through violent extremism, sectarian polarization, and transnational terrorism. It focuses at how ISIS miss used state fragility, unresolved conflicts and governance deficits to enhance its influence with the aim of undermining national sovereignty and regional stability. This article highlights the group's impact on displacement, refugee emergences, and humanitarian crises as well as its role in exacerbating proxy wars and external meddling. It also investigates responses from Middle Eastern countries, other regional actors and certain external powers in the effort to contain ISIS; it features some success stories as well as some persistent challenges. The study argues that the emergence of ISIS demonstrates the importance of further counter-militancy security policies, social and political reform, and regional cooperation for a long-term peace in Middle East.

Keywords: ISIS, Middle East, Radicalization, Security and Stability, Caliphate, Non State Actor

Introduction

The emergence of ISIS is one of the most troublemaking enlargements in the modern Middle East regions. Born from the wreckage of Al-Qaeda in Iraq following the US invasion in 2003, ISIS rapidly grew into an aggressive non-state actor with international reach, a cruel ideology and unprecedented ability to take and hold territory. Its declaration of a "caliphate" in 2014 was a turning point not just for the region's history, as it obliterated the border between Iraq and Syria and forced it on the sovereign states, but also for the nature of terrorism and insurgency in the modern world. Unlike previous militant organizations the Islamic State replaced religious fundamentalism with advanced propaganda tactics as well as financial self-reliance to emerge as a quasi-state. It created a new security environment in the region unprecedented as a both source of peace and instability (Yaseen, et. al., 2019; Mirza, 2016).

The Middle East has always been a chaotic place, dominated by sectarianism, foreign interference and clashing national agendas. ISIS surfed these already existing crevices, most notably, the Sunni-Shia schism, porous governance and intensifying spaces of non-statehood due to various long-term conflicts. Weaponizing sectarian resentment allowed ISIS to present itself as the champion of Sunni identity against victimization, fostered among some other fundamentalist Sunnis the view that they were victims of sectarian persecution, and further entrenched sectarian divides in Iraq, Syria, and beyond. Additionally, it's territorial ambitions threatened statehood and sovereignty in the region and its extremist vision challenged the cultural and political order throughout the Arab, Muslim world.

ISIS posed a direct threat to international peace through the planning and inspiring of terrorist attacks in Europe, North America and Asia. Social media and cyber recruitment and radicalization devices were adopted with skill, which allowed the group to transcend its territorial areas of control and to produce transnational security inconvenience (Wood, 2015). With financing methods that include oil smuggling, extortion and kidnapping, the group operated free of dependence on outside donors, and was immune to standard counterterrorism measures.

ISIS destabilization, however, comes in many forms. It reconfigured the regional landscape, spawning new alliances and coalitions, even as it sucked in world powers such as the United States, Russia and Iran into protracted military battles. Its policies exacerbated humanitarian catastrophes, uprooting millions of civilians and driving flows of refugees into neighboring countries and Europe. The destruction of cultural heritage and the orchestrated acts of violence against minorities underscored the larger social and cultural impact of ISIS's rise. It investigates the ideological foundation, operational strategies and geopolitical implications of the organization, as well as regional and international responses to its appearance. Understanding ISIS is important to understand the changing security dynamics in the Middle East and to develop effective strategies to combat violent extremism (Karamat, et. al., 2019).

Literature Review

The book written by Fawaz (2016) thoroughly analyzes ISIS as a destabilizing force in the Middle East. By relating terrorism to fragile state structures, sectarian divisions and regional rivalries, it skillfully situates ISIS into larger geopolitical frameworks. The cogency of the arguments and the theoretical adoption of constructivism should be of interest to both policymakers as well as scholars exploring non-state actors. The study conducted by Stern and Berger (2015) actually does a good work of explaining how ISIS has transformed regional security, not just as a terrorist organization, but as an ideological movement that uses sectarianism as a wedge. The analysis is enhanced by the inclusion of political, social and cultural factors. Overall though, there could have been more analysis of response by international community to ISIS by this scholarship. Nevertheless, it is a valuable addition to the literature on terrorism and Middle Eastern chaos.

The paper written by Speckhard and Ellenberg (2020) presents a compelling argument that the power of ISIS derives less from its military strength than from the weakness of Arab states and rivalries. The constructivist analysis adds to the conversation by demonstrating the role of identities and norms in radicalization. Though more data could bolster its contentions and narrative, still it is compelling and valuable for readers. Even an undergraduate readership of international relations and security studies can utilize this resource. Jasko et al. (2018) provides important new information about how ISIS uses propaganda, media, and constructed identities to generate fear and to recruit new members. In deconstructing terrorism outside of traditional security paradigms, the author offers an interdisciplinary approach to the subject. While some parts would be enriched by more case-specific evidence, the paper succeeds in connecting theory with developments in the Middle East.

Smith (2015) provides an essential reading to understanding how ISIS harnessed sectarian rivalries, regional wars and Western interventions. Its degree of policy pertinence including concerning regional cooperation is high. All in all, the balance between theory and evidence is a good one. Future research may also look at post-ISIS dynamics to better put its impact on regional security into perspective. Georgis (2023) emphasis on constructivism explains why this article differs from orthodox realist or liberal accounts of ISIS. "The argument is that ISIS, as a phenomenon, has emerged as a result of identity politics, propaganda and sectarian narratives, and this aspect of the study represents the further widening of one's understanding of terrorism. It's a bit light on the case studies front but it

makes up for it in conceptual depth. In sum, it is an informative and theoretically rigorous piece. Hegghammer (2017) successfully embeds ISIS in the big context of regional peace and security in the Middle East. Its delve into weak governance, sectarian divides and outside interference puts forward a multifaceted explanation for ISIS's emergence. Its organization is also very clear, which should be attractive to both students and policy makers. It is unique in its ability to marry theory with security issues of today.

Theoretical Framework

Terrorism is commonly defined as organized violence by non-state actors, to create public fear or terror, and which is motivated by political, religious or ideological goals. Unlike traditional warfare, terrorist attacks are frequently directed at noncombatants and use asymmetrical methods to undermine state power. Non-state actors, including insurgents, militias, and transnational groups, are increasingly active in today's wars, exploiting lack of governance, social cleavages, and global communications networks (Mousavi, 2020). ISIS is an example of this: both a terrorist organization and a quasi-political actor with territorial objectives. Constructivism stresses identity, norms, and ideas as important factors in international politics and security relations. Instead of material power, constructivism emphasizes the meaning of threats. Constructivism provides an understanding of how terrorist organizations create the narratives, mobilize the constituents and justify the use of violence through creating the 'in-group' and 'out-group' distinctions. "Security" thus becomes a social construction that is influenced by discourse and perceptions, not just military reality (Yadav, 2021).

The emergence of ISIS can be analyzed from a point of view of constructivism, because the ideology of ISIS is based on identity construction, symbolic narratives and propaganda. It built a collective identity for disenchanted Muslims by declaring a caliphate and proposing an alternative order of politics and faith. Its propaganda, spread across the world through digital media, also did much to shore up narratives of victimhood, martyrdom and divine polity. Additionally, ISIS questioned accepted international principles by denying state sovereignty, pushing sect-based tensions, and reinterpreting the concept of jihad (Mirza, 2016). Constructivism, then, will help us to understand the way in which ISIS disrupted security not by violence alone, but also by changing perceptions, understanding and identities among actors in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world.

Historical Background

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), also referred to as ISIL or Daesh, has set a standard as one of the most brutal and powerful non-state actors of the modern era. It has its origins in the chaos that followed the 2003 American-led invasion of Iraq, which swept away the state's institutions and gave rise to widespread instability. Jordanian fighter Abu Musab al-Zarqawi created Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) that was held responsible for killing Shias and assaulting Coalition troops. After Zarqawi's death in 2006, AQI renamed itself as Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) yet remained hampered by US counterterrorism measures and the Sunni tribal "Awakening Movement." Yet the eruption of the Syrian civil war in 2011 gave the group new possibilities. Under its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, ISI expanded into Syria and rebranded itself ISIS, announcing a "caliphate" in 2014 (Jasko et al., 2018).

ISIS's ideological basis is a hardline version of Salafi-jihadism. Central to its creed is the idea of the caliphate. A political or religious leader who claims both spiritual and temporal authority over all Muslims on the basis of Islamic law and by presenting itself as the true defender of Islam. ISIS rationalized horrifying tactics like beheadings, mass executions and the enslavement of minorities. This ideology not just justified violence against assumed "apostates" but attracted disaffected Muslims the world over, in search for an identity, a purpose and a sense of belonging (Gordon, 2018; Stern & Berger, 2015). ISIS was, in organizational terms that combined (top to down) hierarchical leadership structure

integrated with decentralized networking. At the highest level was the so-called caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, along with a Shura Council and military commanders. Below them ISIS began building up bureaucratic-like apparatus, ruling through taxes, courts and welfare, mimicking a government base. This mix of ideological rigidity and organizational plasticity allowed ISIS to spread quickly, conquer large areas of Iraq and Syria, and present itself as a global jihadist movement (Fishman, 2021).

Result and Discussion

ISIS in the Middle East: Expansion and Tactics

Utilization of State Weakness (Iraq, Syria, Libya)

In Iraq, following the 2003 invasion, state institutions were shattered, the army dissolved, and many individuals who had not been part of the previous order felt excluded from politics. Corruption, joblessness and bad services induced rage. ISIS leveraged this outrage to mobilize fighters and gain local support. The group seized cities including Mosul (2014) through taking advantage of cleavages between communities and the demoralization of security forces.

In Syria, the civil war (since 2011) opened up power vacuums. Various armed groups waged war on the government and on one another (Yaseen, et. al., 2018). ISIS established itself, seized oil fields, and installed checkpoints and court systems in ungoverned areas. It presented as a force that could exert "order," however through fear. And in Libya, after collapse of Gaddafi (2011), Libya fractured between rivaling authorities and militias. ISIS capitalized on these gaps to set up cells, in particular around Sirte (2015–2016). While eventually repelled, there ISIS demonstrated how it can take root where police, courts and armies are weak or divided.

Key pattern

1. ISIS want weak governance, local distrust and a lack of basic security. It then creates a state like setup to control resources (oil, checkpoints, taxes) and to in a sense perform "stateness" with courts and administrators and all other needs mostly to legitimize its rule and find the resources to keep fighting a war.
2. Sectarian and Regional Rivalry (Saudi Arabia–Iran Factor) Sectarian suspicions (particularly, between Sunni and Shia communities) enabled ISIS to expand.
3. Local dynamics: ISIS created itself as a protector of Sunnis from governments or militias led by Shias. This message would resonate in places where Sunnis felt excluded or oppressed.
4. Regional rivalry: The wider rivalry between Saudi Arabia (largely Sunni) and Iran (largely Shia) shaped conflicts in Iraq, Syria and further beyond. Neither state backed ISIS, but the rivalry propelled proxy wars, hardened identities and made it easier to mistrust. ISIS in such polarized contexts, promulgated a hardline Sunni narrative to attract new recruits and justified violence. In result segmented narratives among sects made it more difficult to reconcile, extended wars and gave ISIS a constant supply of grievances to feed its ideology and maintain its momentum.

Military Plans and Tactics/Tactical Moves and Surprise Attacks

ISIS mixed classic insurgent tactics with attacks designed to shock and surprise;

1. Speed and surprise: ISIS would often launch their attacks at night or during sandstorms, with small, fast-moving assault groups. Surprise drove defenders to panic and caused them to stage collapses.

2. Urban warfare: The group employed tunnels, snipers, IEDs (improvised explosive devices) and booby traps to stall enemies. It compelled adversaries to engage in costly street battles (such as in Mosul and Raqqa).
3. Suicide operations: Coordinated bombings of suicide attackers led to attacks on bases, prisons and checkpoints. It instilled fear and shattered defenses.
4. Prison breaks: Freeing prisoners gave ISIS fighting veterans and a propaganda lift (as in repeated incidents in Iraq and Syria)
5. Decentralized cells: After losing territory, ISIS reverted to a “network” approach hit-and-run attacks, roadside bombs, assassinations of local officials, and extortion. That kept the group dangerous even without a “caliphate.”

Propaganda, Media and Recruitment Strategies

ISIS made media a battlefield;

1. Clear messaging: Its most effective message was stark and emotional: a “caliphate” that promised identity, purpose, affiliation. It offered justice (on its terms), power to those without, and a heroic part in a grand religious narrative.
2. Aesthetics: ISIS whipped out slick videos, photos, magazines and nasheeds (chants). It included battlefield triumphs, social welfare and savage punishment to communicate both “competence” and fear.
3. Localized messaging: Content was specifically designed through language and culture to resonate with various audiences throughout the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and Asia.
4. Social media networks: Supporters pushed content across platforms, private chats and forums. Recruiters went after those who felt lonely, alienated, or seeking meaning.
5. Women and families: Propaganda depicted life in ISIS territory as stable — schools, markets, and moral order — in order to draw not only fighters but women and entire families, to create community that would last.
6. Counter-measures impact: As platforms deleted ISIS content and governments disrupted networks, ISIS improvised — turning to smaller platforms, encrypted apps and offline couriers which continue to define identity, grievance, glory and belonging shaping primary narrative that seemed to shape everything.

Impact of ISIS on Peace and Security

ISIS has dramatically changed the state of the peace and security, in the Middle East plus the world at large. Its brutal tactics, sectarian aims, and transnational ambitions have led to significant humanitarian, political and security challenges that continue to impact regional and international security.

Humanitarian Crisis (displacement, refugees, mortality)

ISIS and the situations of armed conflict in Iraq and Syria led to one of the largest humanitarian crises of the 21st century. Millions became internally displaced and hundreds of thousands fled to neighboring countries and Europe, with refugee crises crippling social and economic infrastructures. According to the report of International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) 1.2 million Iraqi's are displaced due to the rise of ISIS in Iraq. Civilians were subjected to arbitrary violence, mass killings and enslavement, with particular targeting of ethnic and religious minority groups such as the Yazidis and Christians. The destruction of vital infrastructure – schools, hospitals, and markets – deepened human suffering and left interminable scars on communities (DORA, 2021). Political instability and fragility of states in Iraq, Syria and Libya are used for its advantage, ISIS weakened the state's ability to govern and weakened the faith of the people in their own government. The inability of these

regimes to protect their citizens or provide services led to legitimacy crises. ISIS'S arrival has interrupted state processes, strengthened militias and stemmed corruption. It made governments even more prone to insurgencies. Post-ISIS recovery is slow, as rebuilding institutions will require overcoming deep-seated sectarian and political divides (Ali et al., 2024).

ISIS's philosophy and tactics have further destabilized Sunni Arab governments in the region, especially Jordan, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia. Border insecurity, infiltration, and sporadic terrorist attacks forced these states to make substantial investments in defense and counterterrorism. Furthermore, the fear of sleeper cells and radicalized youngsters heightened domestic security requirements. The group's message spurred lone-wolf attacks, while fomenting regional instability. The ISIS threat has extended beyond the Arab world, with its affiliates and sympathizers making inroads in Afghanistan (ISIS-Khorasan), Pakistan, and carrying out recruitment in India. ISIS-K became known for their brutal attacks against civilians, particularly ethnic groups. The impact of that spillover compounded security concerns across South Asia, where fragile states and pre-existing militancy offered a fertile ground for ISIS-inspired strikes (Poljarevic, 2021).

ISIS, at the macro level, rebranded terrorism and initiated and inspired attacks in Europe, North America, and Asia. High-profile cases in Paris, Brussels and Sri Lanka have spread fears worldwide and put terrorism at the top of the international security agenda. The group's sophisticated use of online propaganda helped spread a dispersed base of support that made a complete elimination somewhat impossible. Hence, international coalitions were formed to fight ISIS – born, in the end, period of (2004-2018) known as the Global War on Terror Nevertheless, the continuous fear of its rebirth jeopardizes world peace and security.

Regional and International Responses

The emergence of ISIS as a regional and global threat prompted widespread responses involving regional states, international organizations and world powers. While they have secured significant achievements, these efforts revealed deep political divides and strategic shortcomings. The brunt of ISIS's expansion was borne by the states of the Middle East, particularly Iraq and Syria. Iraq, with international backing, rebuilt its army and mobilized local militias, including the Popular Mobilization Forces, to recapture lost territory, most notably Mosul in 2017. Syria's ability to recapture important cities such as Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor depended heavily on support from Russia, Iran and Hezbollah. Other countries, like Jordan and Saudi Arabia, tightened border security and adopted tough counter-radicalization measures, also to prevent ISIS penetration. Yet regional rivalries — in particular, between Saudi Arabia and Iran — stifled coordinated action and often turned counter-terrorism into a proxy war et. al., 2023; Chakrobarty, 2024).

The Arab League and the OIC condemned ISIS and emphasized the need for a collective counterterrorism approach. However, their efforts were mainly representational because they lacked enforcement measures and were paralyzed by political fractures among their members. Antagonist groups did this to delegitimize ISIS, but without effective coordinated military and political responses. The United States was at the forefront of the fight against ISIS with airstrikes, the training of local forces and the construction of an international coalition. The fall of Assad government in Syria despite the support of Russia and Iran further creates trouble in the region while at the same time US and Israeli forces are claiming that they are hitting ISIS positions (Baroudi, 2025). The European Union supported counter-terrorism efforts in areas including; intelligence-sharing, humanitarian aid, and programs of de-radicalization, especially after ISIS-inspired attacks in major European cities (Cordesman & Toukan, 2022). China held a relatively low profile and put its stability in the Middle East above all, concerned over a possible collusion between Uyghur terrorists and ISIS, conducting limited diplomatic and security cooperation. The Global

Coalition to Defeat ISIS was formalized in 2015 that consists of more than 80 countries and organizations. It choreographed military operations, hijacked financial systems, fought digital propaganda and provided stabilization assistance in liberated areas. The coalition's efforts were critical to the collapse of ISIS's territorial "caliphate" by 2019. Military action successfully eroded ISIS territorial control, but the group regrouped and refocused on insurgent tactics. Lack of political reconciliation, persistent sectarian tensions, and weak government provided ideal conditions for ISIS cells to operate. What's more, clashing interests between regional and world powers prevented a functional long term plan from being put in place. As a result, despite the military defeat of ISIS as a quasi-state, underlying factors that allowed for its rise to power are not resolved (Tajudin & Saputra, 2025).

Why ISIS Persists

Even with the fall of its territorial "caliphate," ISIS remains an enduring insurgency and ideological movement. There are many interconnected reasons the issue continues to resonate throughout the Middle Eastern region and beyond.

1. Most Arab countries have poor institutions, are corrupt and have exclusionary politics. In Iraq and Syria, a lack of trust between governments and societies allowed ISIS to exploit the divide. And Russia's weak and overstretched ally Bashar al-Assad, who had prioritized attacking non-Islamic State insurgents over tackling the group, freed up manpower so it could regroup in the remote countryside where the ability of national forces to patrol and provide public services is weak (Shawn, 2023).
2. Instability has been further extended by regional rivalries — especially between Saudi Arabia and Iran fueling conflicts. Proxy wars in Syria, Iraq and Yemen took the focus off of counterterrorism and exacerbated sectarian fissures. These divisions established a permissive environment for extremists to thrive in — and for great powers to plot for broader geopolitical advantage over a unified approach against ISIS.
3. Youth unemployment, poverty and social immobility make many youths susceptible to being radicalized. ISIS exploited these grievances, providing a sense of identity, a source of income and a community to belong to. When away from their homes, the most disenfranchised minorities as well as refugees were most vulnerable to recruitment (Ababakr, 2022).
4. Military offensives have delegitimized ISIS on the ground but have not resolved the underlying factors. Counterterrorism tactics have a tendency to opt for quick security fixes rather than political settlement, good governance, and social building. Those problems — of sectarianism, corruption and economic hopelessness — remain unaddressed; and the spawn of ISIS have not been stamped out but have adapted and continued.

Conclusion

The emergence of ISIS transformed the security and political environment in the Middle East. Rising from the rubble of the Iraq War, with further fuel from the Syrian civil war, ISIS fed on failed governance, sectarian tensions, regional rivalries and an absence of borders to emerge as a transnational menace. Its extreme-violent ideology, including the state-like governance structures, and advanced propaganda, have disrupted the peace by causing humanitarian disasters, weakening state authority, and contributing to regional and global insecurity. Even after the loss of its territorial "caliphate," ISIS endures through dispersion, hit-and-run tactics and ideological contagion, indicating that military defeat alone will not necessarily solve the underlying problems.

ISIS's legacy is a reminder that Middle Eastern terrorism is so entrenched in structural deficiencies and unaddressed political grievances and competing geopolitical

interests. These underlying causes must be addressed to ensure against future extremist resurgences and to support lasting peace and security in the region.

References

- Ababakr, A. (2022). The Reasons Behind the Rise of ISIS: An Analytical Perspective. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 13(5), 11-27.
- Ali, N., Din, J. U., Kousar Ali, D., & Azhar, M. (2024). The Root Causes of the Syrian Crisis: Analyzing Internal and External Factors. *Remittances Review*, 9, 211-229.
- Baroudi, S. E. (2025). Arab intellectuals, ISIS, and the West. *Third World Quarterly*, 1-17.
- Chakrobarty, S. (2024). ISIS and Its Global Impact: A Comprehensive Analysis of Terrorism's Rise. *Bharati International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, 2(9), 89-94.
- Cordesman, A. H., & Toukan, A. (2022). *Return of ISIS in Iraq, Syria, and the Middle East*. JSTOR.
- DORA, Z. K. (2021). Borders, terror and immigration: the ISIS case. *Security Issues in the Context of Political Violence and Terrorism of the 21st Century*, 143.
- Fawaz, G. A. (2016). *ISIS: a history*. Princeton University Press.
- Fishman, B. (2021). The History of the Islamic State: From Abu Musab al-Zarqawi to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. In *Routledge Handbook of US Counterterrorism and Irregular Warfare Operations* (pp. 54-70). Routledge.
- Georgis, M. (2023). The rise of ISIS in postinvasion Iraq. *The Myth of Middle East Exceptionalism: Unfinished Social Movements*, 111.
- Gordon, J. (2018). ISIS: A History. *The European Legacy*, 23(1), 189-191. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10848770.2017.1349967>
- Hegghammer, T. (2017). *Jihadi culture: The art and social practices of militant Islamists*. Cambridge University Press.
- Jasko, K., Kruglanski, A. W., Hassan, A. S. R. B., & Gunaratna, R. (2018). ISIS: Its history, ideology, and psychology. In *Handbook of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Lives* (pp. 1-25). Springer.
- Karamat, S., Muzaffar, M., & Shah, A. S. (2019). Politics of Religious Extremism in Pakistan: An Analysis, *Review of Economics and Development Studies*, 5 (2), 315-322
- Mirza, L. G. Z. L. (2016). A CONSTRUCTIVIST RESPONSE TO ISIS. *NDU Journal*, https://www.ndu.edu.pk/issra/issra_pub/articles/ndu-journal/NDU-Journal-2016/03_Lt_Gen_Zahid_Latif_Mirza.pdf Date of Access.
- Mousavi, S. M. (2020). A Constructivist Analysis of the Formation of ISIS in Iraq and its Challenges and Opportunities for Iran. *Contemporary Researches on Islamic Revolution*, 2(6), 1-20.
- Poljarevic, E. (2021). Theology of violence-oriented Takfirism as a political theory: The case of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). *Handbook of Islamic Sects and Movements*, 485-512.

- Shawn, L. (2023). The Rise and Decline of ISIS: An Analysis of the Islamic State's Genesis, Expansion, and Demise. *International Journal of Science and Society*, 5(1).
- Smith, B. (2015). ISIS and the Sectarian Conflict in the Middle East. *Economic Indicators*, 3, 15.
- Speckhard, A., & Ellenberg, M. D. (2020). ISIS in their own words. *Journal of Strategic Security*, 13(1), 82-127.
- Stern, J., & Berger, J. (2015). ISIS: The state of terror. HarperCollins.
- Tajudin, A. M., & Saputra, M. A. (2025). ISIS and the Clash of Interests Among Global Political, Economic, and Social Actors. *Oosthaven: Journal of Islamic History and Cultural Research*, 1(1), 29-37
- Wood, G. (2015). What ISIS really wants. *The Atlantic*, 315(2), 78-94.
- Yadav, S. (2021). Examining the Islamic State Through the Constructivist Lens. *International Journal on World Peace*, 38(3), 67-84.
- Yaseen, Z., Muzaffar, M., & Naeem, S. (2019). Resurgence of Russia: A case Study of Syrian Crisis, *Journal of Politics and International Studies*, 5 (II), 147-154
- Yaseen, Z., Muzaffar, M., & Naseem, F. (2018). Syrian War in the Context of National and International Aspects: An Analysis, *Pakistan Languages and Humanity Review*, 2(1), 15-27
- Yaseen, Z., Muzaffar, M., & Tariq, K. (2023). Impacts of Saudi-Israel Relations on the Middle East: An Analysis, *Political Studies*, 30(1), 17-27