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The Islamic State: A Video Introduction

by [Aaron Y. Zelin](#)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



[Aaron Y. Zelin](#)

Aaron Y. Zelin is the Richard Borow Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy where his research focuses on Sunni Arab jihadi groups in North Africa and Syria as well as the trend of foreign fighting and online jihadism.

How did the so-called Islamic State (IS) originate? What are its goals? What is the scale of its recruitment in Europe and elsewhere?

As the United States leads a coalition to thwart military advances by IS – also known as ISIS, ISIL, and Daesh – Institute Richard Borow Fellow Aaron Zelin explains the jihadist group's origins, objectives, and operations in this introductory video presentation.

Key topics covered include:

- The Caliphate Project
- Flow of Foreign Fighters
- Recruitment Tactics
- Sources of Funding
- Split with al-Qaeda

At the Institute, Zelin's research focuses on how jihadist groups are adjusting to the new political environment in the era of Arab uprisings and Salafi politics in countries transitioning to democracy. He is also a PhD candidate at King's College of London and a fellow at its associated International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence.

Zelin's presentation was filmed at a January 13, 2015 event sponsored by [LINK](#), an Institute program for young professionals.

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