

# Funding ISIS (Infographic)

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**A quick guide to the finances of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), the world's best-funded terrorist group.**

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# FUNDING ISIS

The Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) is the world's best-funded terrorist group and is richer than some small countries. How does ISIS, now controlling territory in Syria and Iraq, fill its coffers?



## Independently Wealthy

Unlike other groups, which rely on state sponsors, major donors, or abuse of charity, ISIS is financially independent due to its successful criminal enterprise.



## An Illegal "Inheritance"

Then known as al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), the group brought in some \$70 million a year through criminal activities—and was so flush that central al-Qaeda asked the group for money in 2005.



## Growing the Business

ISIS continues to engage in activities such as smuggling, extortion, and crime. Not being tied to major donors has helped the group evade counter-terrorism finance measures.



## Private Gulf Donations

Private contributions to ISIS—as well as to other groups operating in Syria, such as al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra—are a concern for U.S. policymakers. Wealthy citizens and others in the Persian Gulf countries have funneled hundreds of millions into the conflict.



## U.S. Response

Washington can tighten counter-terrorism financing cooperation with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, but significantly undermining ISIS's financial base would now require rolling back its access to local Syrian and Iraqi income sources.

## ENTERPRISING CRIMINALS

### » Extortion

ISIS levies around \$8 million per month in "taxes" on local businesses

### » Kidnapping

### » Robberies

The seizure of Mosul's central bank netted tens of millions of dollars

### » Counterfeiting

### » Smuggling

Oil, weapons, and antiquities

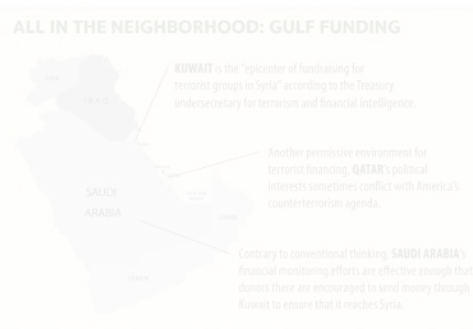
### » Racketeering

## Sources

- ▶ [Declaring an Islamic State, Running a Criminal Enterprise](#)
- ▶ [Qatar and ISIS Funding: The U.S. Approach](#)
- ▶ [Saudi Funding of ISIS](#)
- ▶ [The Terrorist Funding Disconnect with Qatar and Kuwait](#)

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## Washington Institute Analysis of ISIS Funding

- [Declaring an Islamic State, Running a Criminal Enterprise \(/policy-analysis/view/declaring-an-islamic-state-running-a-criminal-enterprise\)](#) (Matthew Levitt | *The Hill*)
- [Qatar and ISIS Funding: The U.S. Approach \(/policy-analysis/view/qatar-and-isis-funding-the-u.s.-approach\)](#) (Lori Plotkin Boghardt | *Panorama*)
- [Saudi Funding of ISIS \(/policy-analysis/view/saudi-funding-of-isis\)](#) (Lori Plotkin Boghardt | PolicyWatch #2275)
- [The Terrorist Funding Disconnect with Qatar and Kuwait \(/policy-analysis/view/the-terrorist-funding-disconnect-with-qatar-and-kuwait\)](#) (Lori Plotkin Boghardt | PolicyWatch #2247)

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