

Ten Things You Need to Know about ISIS

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Washington Institute research explains the complexities of the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS).

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Ten Things You Need to Know about ISIS
Washington Institute research explains the complexities of the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS).

- #1 ISIS is an extremist Sunni Islamist movement.**
Ejected from al-Qaeda, its founding organization, as too radical, ISIS now pursues its jihadist agenda with unprecedented resources, territory, and arms. [MORE](#)
- #2 ISIS wants to be known as "Islamic State."**
ISIS has declared a Muslim caliphate with Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi at its head. [MORE](#)
- #3 ISIS is rich, and not beholden to foreign patrons.**
The capture of Mosul's central bank bolstered an ISIS war chest already well-funded by criminal enterprises. [MORE](#)
- #4 ISIS brought foreign fighters back to Iraq.**
Moving into Syria enabled ISIS to more easily recruit foreign fighters. [MORE](#)
- #5 ISIS capitalized on Iraq's alienated Sunnis.**
Former Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki created fertile terrain for ISIS operations. [MORE](#)
- #6 ISIS has weaknesses.**
ISIS's early successes—largely due to its foes' ineptitude—can be rolled back. [MORE](#)
- #7 ISIS is still gaining ground.**
ISIS has all but erased the border between Iraq and Syria. [MORE](#)
- #8 ISIS threatens more than Iraq and Syria.**
Core American interests are at stake. [MORE](#)
- #9 ISIS would benefit from more Iranian involvement in Iraq.**
The American and Iranian shared interest in the defeat of ISIS is no cause for collaboration. [MORE](#)
- #10 ISIS won't be defeated without a comprehensive strategy.**
The United States needs to take the lead in building a local and international coalition to defeat ISIS. [MORE](#)

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Research Guide/Infographic

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