

# THE CHALLENGES IMPOSED TO EUROPE BY THE ISLAMIC STATE

## OS DESAFIOS À EUROPA IMPOSTOS PELO ESTADO ISLÂMICO

## LOS DESAFÍOS IMPUESTOS A EUROPA POR EL ESTADO ISLÁMICO

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### ABSTRACT

The Islamic State has been terrorizing the world with its barbaric actions, bringing to mind the ignominy that stigmatized it, and that was perpetrated in the first half of last century, under the epithet of sectarian and hegemonic policies. Combining practices of the past and modern techniques, the Islamic State has been attempting to conquer its caliphate, wishing for apocalyptic events, expecting that the end of times is near. With an ideology based on religious radicalism, the Islamic State tries to establish itself as the sole entity capable of purifying the world, by wiping out the impure. The ISIS cause has attracted a large number of young people looking for things the society where they grew did know how, or was unable, to give them. Solutions to current problems must be found and implemented by joint efforts from all countries, without distinction of religion or culture. It is just by understanding the facts we are witnessing that we will be able to handle the challenges posed by the threats the Islamic State represents, and find strategic lines of action, which more than destruction by confrontation with this entity, will lead to its annihilation by implosion. Never forgetting that this is not a religious war. More than anything else, it is a war on terror, intolerance and radicalism.

**Keywords:** Terrorism. Jihadism. Islamic State. Military Operations. War on Terror.

### RESUMO

O Estado Islâmico tem aterrorizado o mundo com sua barbárie, trazendo à sua memória o opróbrio que o estigmatizou e foi perpetrado na primeira metade do século passado, sob o epíteto de políticas sectárias e hegemónicas. Conjugando práticas do passado com técnicas modernas, o Estado Islâmico tem procurado conquistar seu califado, desejando a ocorrência dos acontecimentos apocalípticos, com a esperança de que o final dos tempos esteja próximo. Com uma ideologia baseada no radicalismo religioso, o Estado Islâmico procura afirmar-se como a única entidade capaz de purificar o mundo, através da eliminação dos impuros. Sua causa tem atraído um elevado número de jovens que procuram aquilo que a sociedade em que cresceram, não lhes soube, ou não foi capaz, de lhes dar. As soluções dos problemas vigentes têm de ser encontradas e implementadas na conjugação dos esforços do mundo, envolvendo todos os países, sem se olhar a religiões ou a culturas. É preciso compreender o que estamos a presenciar, para podermos equacionar os desafios que resultam das ameaças que emanam do Estado Islâmico, e encontrar as linhas de ação estratégicas que, mais do que a destruição pela atrição dessa entidade, façam o seu aniquilamento por implosão. Sempre com a consciência de que esta não é uma guerra religiosa. É antes uma guerra contra o terror, a intolerância e o radicalismo.

**Palavras-chave:** Terrorismo. Jihadismo. Estado Islâmico. Operações militares. Guerra ao terror.

### RESUMEN

El Estado Islámico ha estado aterrorizando al mundo con su barbarie, trayendo a su memoria el oprobio que lo estigmatizó y que fue perpetrado en su primera mitad del siglo pasado, bajo el epíteto de políticas sectarias y hegemónicas. Conjugando prácticas del pasado con técnicas modernas, el Estado Islámico ha buscado conquistar su califato, deseado que sucedan acontecimientos apocalípticos, con la esperanza de que el final de los tiempos esté cercano. Con una ideología basada en el radicalismo religioso, el Estado Islámico trata de afianzarse como la única entidad capaz de purificar el mundo, a través de la eliminación de los impuros. Su causa ha atraído a un elevado número de jóvenes que buscan aquello que la sociedad en que crecieron, no supo, o no fue capaz, de darles. Las soluciones de los problemas vigentes tienen que ser encontradas e implementadas en la conjugación de los esfuerzos del mundo, involucrando todos los países, sin considerarse las religiones o las culturas. Es necesario comprender lo que estamos presenciando, para poder examinar los desafíos que resultan de las amenazas emanadas del Estado Islámico, y encontrar las líneas de acción estratégicas que, más que la destrucción por el desgaste de esa entidad, consigan su aniquilamiento por implosión. Siempre con la conciencia de que esta no es una guerra religiosa. Es ante todo una guerra contra el terror, la intolerancia y el radicalismo.

**Palabras clave:** Terrorismo. Yihadismo. Estado Islámico. Operaciones militares. Guerra al terror.

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## I INTRODUCTION

It was on June 5 of 2014 that the West fully grasped that the Islamic State (ISIS), previously called the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, existed and was not the Al-Qaeda. On this date, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, ISIS (or ISIL) leader since May of 2010, in a sermon delivered at the Great Mosque of al-Nuri, in Mosul, declared himself the Head of the Caliphate. Since then, ISIS, also called Daesh, has been attracting followers all over the world in frightening numbers and speed.

The Daesh has given rise to questions and misunderstandings, even among Muslims. Islamism has several branches and the jihadist movement is not homogenous. This is to understand the Daesh you need to understand its essence. Its followers interpret the Koran to the letter, without taking into account when it was written. Hence, what they advocate is not what other people who have other interpretations of what they read argue for. Their actions are based on what is written in the Sacred Book. By their deep knowledge of the Sacred Book, the Daesh followers believe in the apocalyptic war between good and evil, and see themselves as the "chosen ones". Their clothes are not folklore and evidence their beliefs, making them feel closer to the 7th century, the gold era of Islamism.

The ISIS is not recognized as a State. It is rather an organization that practices an ultra-conservative form of Islamism. While the Al-Qaeda has a flexible, cellular and autonomous organization, without territory or borders, ISIS needs territory, a hierarchical and perfectly defined organization, with both a military structure and another one to handle State functions. But then, once there is a people, a political organization and territory, why ISIS has not been recognized as a state? Because, ISIS and its followers do not own the territory they control, the followers are not the ISIS people, as it has no right to grant citizenship.

The ISIS is not a terrorist organization, because, despite not waiving aside terror practices and tactics, it has an army as it intends to conquer lands. It is rather a dogmatic organization, whose behavior is shaped by a profound religious identity. ISIS followers claim that peace is not imperative, and yearn for the "final battle", where they are to act as agents and vanquishers. For ideological and religious reasons, they need a caliphate, a territory where to fight the enemy "face to face", to declare the Jihad. Their religious interpretation does not leave room for permanent peace agreements, well defined borders<sup>2</sup>, or International Organizations, such as the UN, as this would mean acceptance of limits to divine power, or that another power exists and this constitutes apostasy. By the way, to ISIS the concept of apostasy is proportionally broader than "sin". It is precisely in the difference between

what is "apostasy" and what is "sin" that Al-Qaeda differs from ISIS and refuses to recognize it, while being derided by the latter that sees it as apostate. It is this religious difference that keeps them apart, which is good for the rest of the world as it keeps the threat divided. A difference arising out of the religious fervor of the ISIS and that has been scaring the contemporary world.

The American interventions in Afghanistan, in October of 2001, in Iraq, in March of 2003 and in Libya from March 19 to 27, 2003, when the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) took over the operation<sup>3</sup>, changed the Middle East and the North of Africa. Despite recentering the social dimension on the Arab deictic, these interventions broke the precarious political balances existing at that time, widened or aggravated some threats that were already felt or implicit gave rise to Arab resistances and attracted to or produced jihadist groups in the region. These groups send combatants to several continents, all of them willing to fight and die for religious beliefs common western citizens are unable to understand. Up to a point, it was the lack of understanding by the West of the contexts that prevail at the sites of the interventions that gave rise to opportunities for development of the situations we see today in the Middle East and in Libya.

This paper intends to discuss the challenges posed by ISIS to Europe, broadening the field of the analysis to the Middle East and the North of Africa, the preferred stages of Daesh presence. It also intends to identify the European strategic lines of action (LA) to eliminate the threat ISIS represents.

Our methodology involves: studying the anatomy of the threat; dissect the challenges posed to Europe by the components of this threat; and, this being done, we will try to envisage the LAs Europe could implement as part of the strategy of fighting the threat.

The following conceptual definitions were adopted in this paper:

- Challenges – "Objectives or realities continuously faced by state or non state players, requiring from them logical and structured lines of action, suited to the political, psychological, economic, social and military areas, in order to face or to exploit them, and that may become threats, risks or opportunities." (SOUSA, 2014, p. 85).
- Threat - "A threat is the result of a possibility times an intention." (COUTO, 1988, p. 172).
- Threats to international security - "Any event or process that leads to large-scale death or lessening of life chances and undermines States as the basic unit of the international system..." (UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION, 2004, p. 23).

<sup>3</sup> The NATO adopted a broad interpretation of the UN Security Council Resolution (UN/SC) 1973, which despite just allowing protection of the Libyan people, justified the strikes against Libyan ground forces, influencing relative combat outcomes and facilitating the death of Gaddafi.

<sup>2</sup> The caliph is required to continuously expand the caliphate.

## 2 ANATOMY OF THE THREAT

The origin of all threats coming from the ISIS is in its religious radicalism. It is this fervor that makes it scarier than the Al-Qaeda itself.

ISIS recognizes Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi, disciple of the Al-Qaeda mentor, Salafi<sup>4</sup> Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, as one of its leaders. In Iraq, between 2003-2006, Zarqawi, poured out the teachings of his master, notably with respect to the concepts of "infidel" and "forswearing", transferring part of the concept of "sin" to "apostasy", and blurring the borders between these two concepts (WOOD, 2015, p. 15-16). Thus, to Zarqawi the sale of alcohol, voting or production of legislation became "apostasy". And, the Koran says that apostasy must be punished with death.

For being Sunni, ISIS tolerates other religions, provided their followers pay tribute and accept subordination to Muslims. They do not tolerate, however, amendments to their religion, their law (Sharia) and the Muslims who leave Islamism or venerate tombs and images. These individuals are apostates for disowning the Word of the Scriptures and, therefore, deserve to die. ISIS has been generalizing these accusations seeking to purify the world also by killing the apostates.

The claim that the Daesh is not Islamic<sup>5</sup> and/or saying that religiousness has equal value in the Middle East and in the North of Africa and in Europe, it to deny the obvious, and refuse to make correct diagnostics. The ISIS is Islamic, and the context of religion in the societies of these regions is crucial. This is not the source of the problem, the problem is radicalism. This type of radicalism believes that change produces iniquity of opportunities, humiliation in society or exploitation of Muslim lands. Change may imply innovation and, innovating, means acceptance beyond what is written in the Book, which may be evidence of apostasy. And, it is relying on the literal meaning of what is written that the Daesh accepts sentences the West sees as belonging to the past, such as sexual slavery, beheading, amputation of limbs and crucifixion. If its opponent is not an apostate, for not being Muslim he can then be enslaved. This idiosyncrasy has been trivializing terror by the daily use of those tools, shown to the world via digital power. This trivialization is also patent in the recurrent threats ISIS makes against the West and are published in the media and social networks, about the conquest of Rome and enslavement of Western women, in this generation or in the generation of their children and grandchildren (WOOD, 2015, p. 16), thus illustrating their will and determination in achieving this objective, admitting even to continue efforts for a long time in order to achieve this goal.

<sup>4</sup> The Salafi movement is a branch of Sunni Islam that takes as literalist approach to the Scriptures.

<sup>5</sup> In 09/10/2014 Obama said, "Now let's make two things clear: ISIL is not "Islamic." And ISIL is certainly not a state..." (OBAMA, 2014).

In the past, such cultural and feudal practices served to demoralize the opponent, and slaves were seen as part of the spoils of war. Astonishingly, these practices are back, they happening today. The Daesh employs them as psychological and physical pressure to overpower by terror, showing to the world murders perpetrated with refined cruelty, as for example, burning alive, on January 3, 2015, the Jordanian pilot ejected from the plane hit by ISIS in Iraq, or the beheading of the 21 Copt Christians in Libya, on February 02, 2015, or of British citizen David Haines on September 9, 2014. Terror serves ISIS intents, as through terror they seek quick victory and to provoke others to join them for the "final battle". According to the Daesh, sexual slavery of polytheistic and pagan women can and should, be "...one of the signs that the time has come, and one of the causes of the "al-Malhalah al-Kubra" the final battle that will take place at Dabiq..." (STERN; BERGER, 2015, p. 251).

ISIS manipulates social communication, notably the digital platforms, the social networks, image, voice and characters, getting everywhere and disseminating its propaganda and message. Through these instruments of power, a limited number of followers appearing to be highly competent professionals, evidencing marketing, image and communication and social network management skills, persuade and grab the attention of many citizens all around the world. And the West, with its liberal rules, most of all those related to freedom of communication/expression and the right to identity confidentiality, is vulnerable to ISIS propaganda. This form of manipulation has been successful as a powerful recruiting tool, increasing the number and the eclecticism of jihadists. Thus, a peculiar coexistence is evidenced between the practices of the past and the use of modern technology.

Arab society is organized around tribes, and it should not come as a surprise that it is easily adaptable to social networks, which, in essence, are based on the principle of tribes. Notwithstanding, the social networks exploited by ISIS are used to attract not just the Arabs, but to extend beyond the territories under ISIS control.

The precise number of ISIS fighters is unknown. In an article published on January 1, 2015, Peter R. Neumann, director of the prestigious International Center for the Study of Radicalism and Political Violence (ICSR), says that based on the most recent estimates produced by this institution, the number of Sunni combatants in Syria/Iraq has now reached 20,730, one fifth of them coming from Western Europe (NEUMANN, 2015). This author also says that based on reliable data from fourteen countries, the number of combatants coming from Western Europe is close to 4,000, multiplying by a factor of two the total estimated in December of 2013, with most of them coming from countries with larger territories (France, United Kingdom and Germany). Considering the size of the population, the largest contributors are Belgium, Denmark and Sweden. On the other hand, the Middle

East has contributed with up to 11,000 to this contingent with 11,000 combatants, and the former Soviet Union countries with about 3,000 (Ibid.). The table below shows the total number of combatants, by Eastern Europe country, that had immigrated to that region by the end of the year 2014<sup>6</sup>, and the maximum number of combatants per million of inhabitants in each one of them.

**Table 1. Number of combatants in Iraq and Syria coming from Western Europe**

Country	Estimate	Combatants per million of inhabitants
Germany	500-600	7.5
Austria	100-150	17
Belgium	440	40
Denmark	100-150	27
Spain	50-100	2
Finland	50-70	13
France	1200	18
Holland	200-250	14.5
Ireland	30	7
Italy	80	1.5
Norway	60	12
United Kingdom	500-600	9.5
Suécia	150-180	19
Suíça	40	5

Source: Neumann (2015).

Table 2 shows the total number of combatants from countries outside Western Europe, who by the end of 2014 had immigrated to Syria/Iraq

**Table 2. Accrued number of combatants in Iraq and Syria from countries outside Western Europe**

Country	Estimate
Afghanistan	50
Albania	90
Saudi Arabia	1500-2500
Algeria	200
Australia	100-250
Bahrain	12
Bosnia	330
Canada	100
Kazakhstan	250
Qatar	15
China	300

<sup>6</sup> Most of them have joined ISIS.

Country	Estimate
Egypt	360
United Arab Emirates	15
USA	100
Yemen	110
Israel/Palestinian Territories	120
Jordan	1500
Kosovo	100-150
Kuwait	70
Lebanon	900
Libya	600
Macedonia	12
Morocco	1500
New Zealand	6
Pakistan	500
Kyrgyzstan	100
Russia	800-1500
Serbia	50-70
Somalia	70
Sudan	100
Tajikistan	190
Tunisia	1500-3000
Turkmenistan	360
Turkey	600
Ukraine	50
Uzbekistan	500

Source: Neumann (2015).

Also according to Peter R. Neumann, five to ten per cent of these combatants are already dead, and ten to thirty percent went back to their countries or are in transit (NEUMANN, 2015). The intervals between the figures evidence the uncertainty about the exact numbers. The estimates above enable to infer the amount of jihadist recruitment in Europe. Networks of recruiting agents and doctrine ideologists also have a role to play in recruitment. Part of the indoctrination is carried out in prisons as in case of Chérif Kouachi and Amedy Coulibaly, two terrorists that took part in the attack in France, on January 1, 2015. The first one claimed to be an ISIS combatant and the latter a member of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. They had been in prison at Fleury-Mérogis, in France, living in close contact with Djamel Beghal, a jihadist arrested for taking part, in 2001, in the planning of the attack to the United States Embassy, in Paris (LORENA, 2014). The development of potential jihadists by radical indoctrination gives reason for concern, once it is carried out where the indoctrinators are serving time for terrorism.

Indoctrination also happens at the *madrassas* and the Darul Uloom Koran higher education school. Some if

these Koran schools find guidance in Wahhabism/Salafism, recruiting and preparing ISIS followers. These schools also provide social support to numerous Muslims by educating children and youths, thus shaping ideas and behaviors.

The significant flow of European combatants towards Syria/Iraq, affords ISIS a multinational feature, without granting it the idea of Home Country. To Muslims, the concept of unity (*ummah*) differs from the Western concept of Home Country, for its key focus is religion and not territoriality. ISIS hopes to establish a complete society (WOOD, 2015, p. 17) through wide ranging recruiting, ensuring also its unity. Some of the newly enlisted Westerners are women who offer themselves as wives and/or combatants.

Each one of these immigrants is wholly convinced that to fully enjoy the spirituality of Islamism they must take an oath of fidelity to a caliphate, which is mandatory to Muslims driven by true fervor. Thus, when Baghdadi declared the caliphate, in June 5, 2014, for some Salafists the hope for Islam purity was reborn. The Ottoman caliphate was the last in history and ended in 1924, with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, but it is not recognized by ISIS, as the caliphs did not belong to the Quraysh, the Prophet's tribe. To Salafists, the caliphate is the sole lawful government conceivable, constituting a political and religious entity, governed by the Sharia and with social and economic responsibilities, such as free health care, education and housing. Anyone who fails to follow these principles is guilty of apostasy. This is why the Daesh believes that there are rulers, such as those in Saudi Arabia, who are said to be apostates for failing to fully enforce the Sharia, most of all in its social dimension, as they charge for some services that should be offered at no cost. In face of ISIS demands, the late king Abdullah urged the ulemas, sheiks and imams in his kingdom to condemn the actions of the followers of the Daesh, for this they were declared enemies of the Muslims and apostates by ISIS and some Wahhabists (PINTO, 2015, p. 17-18).

A true caliph must be an adult, from the *Quraysh* tribe, endowed with moral integrity, physical and mental capacity and recognized power (WOOD, 2015, p. 17), which are requirements ISIS recognizes in al-Baghdadi. For a caliph to have power there must be a people paying homage to him and a territory where this power can be exercised. The subjects, even if not a people, are attracted to the cause, being driven by religious fervor. The territory must be conquered and, currently, this is the main focus of ISIS efforts.

In June of 2014 a map appeared on Twitter and was amply disseminated in the social networks, allegedly showing the territories the caliphate intended to conquer in five years. This map encompasses the territories of Portugal, Spain, Greece, North of Africa, Sahel, sub-Saharan, the Middle East and Asia. Expressions of support and rejection appeared in the social networks, and the map appeared in the media in most parts of Europe. The ISIS has never explicitly confirmed the intents expressed

in that map. However, on July 2, 2014, in his first audio communication as caliph, al-Baghdadi claimed violation of Muslim rights in China, India, Somalia, Arabian Peninsula, the Caucasus region, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Tunisia, Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Central Africa and Burma, in the East, and in the West, calling upon all Sunnis around the world to engage in sacred war (jihad) (VARGHESE, 2014).

**Figure 1. Territory allegedly targeted by the Caliphate (published on twitter, June 16, 2014)**



Source: ThirdPosition (2014).

On November 13, 2014 al-Baghdadi posted another audio message<sup>7</sup> on Twitter affirming that: the jihad is a duty of all Muslims; ISIS will fight to the last man; the crusade of the coalition<sup>8</sup> is a failure and soon it will be forced to send troops against ISIS; the march of combatants (*Mujahidin*) should continue up to Rome; he accepted the loyalty of groups in Yemen, Egypt, Algeria and Libya with this countries becoming provinces of ISIS; the *Mujahidin* must first clean the Arabian Peninsula of Shiites, the Saudi family and their soldiers and attack the crusaders. Talking to the *Mujahidin* in Maghreb, he urged them to take the territory away from secularists, and demanded ISIS to recruit new combatants to cause volcanic eruptions all over the world (PIETERVANOSTAEYEN, 2014). This speech, without mentioning that map, evidences the hegemonic aspirations harbored by ISIS. Next figure shows another version of that map, where provinces are identified in Latin characters. Although not identical, the two maps evidence the agreement about what the caliphate must be.

The importance of Syria has to ISIS lies essentially in the religion dimension. Dabiq<sup>9</sup>, identified in the following figure by a red circle, is situated Northwest of Aleppo.

<sup>7</sup> About the above mentioned message see:

PIETERVANOSTAEYEN. Audio Message by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi – Even if the Disbelievers Despise Such. [S.l.: s.n.], 2014 Available at: <<https://pietervanostaeyen.wordpress.com/2014/11/14/audio-message-by-abu-bakr-al-baghdadi-even-if-the-disbelievers-despise-such/>>. Access on May 8, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Formed by 62 countries (GLOBAL-SECURITY, 2015).

<sup>9</sup> The official ISIS magazine has this name.

**Figure 2. Territory allegedly targeted by the Caliphate with province names in Latin characters.**



Source: Varghese (2014).

The region currently controlled by ISIS, is, as interpreted in the Book, the place where the messianic *Mahdi* will take the Muslims to victory against Rome<sup>10</sup>. After this victory that ISIS intends to claim, they believe the victor will conquer territories. However, a leader will come from Iran to fight him, reducing this organization to just a few combatants who will gather in Jerusalem and Jesus, then, will come back to Earth to lead them to the final victory (WOOD, 2015, p. 18). In this apocalyptic vision, ISIS believes that the time for the battle between good and evil is approaching, and they must embrace this mission, perpetrating terrific actions and seeing the colligation that fights them as the “crusaders”. This is why in his speech, on November 13, 2014, al-Baghdadi said that soon there will be troops of the “crusaders” in the region. This serves as additional motivation to ISIS combatants.

Some of the combatants do not find in ISIS the expected “paradise”, and try to draw away. Foreigners are seen by Arab combatants as “second class” and, until ultimately earning their trust, they are assigned

foreigners who joined that project driven by religious ideals are not prepared to the barbarian ways they find. Others face momentary problems related to payment of their salary. Part of ISIS funding comes from contraband of the oil taken from the wells they control. ISIS lacks the equipment needed for appropriately refining heavy oil, as for this purpose, they need technology currently subject embargoes. The colligation has been bombing the light oil-producing wells, as this oil can be refined using technology ISIS has access to. Thus, ISIS has been evidencing that funding from this source is thinning. This is worsened by the oil price drop, as contraband close to the Turkish borders has been reduced. Denied payment of ransom of hostages and the problems faced to sell plundered artwork are further reducing ISIS funding. Unpaid salaries, disappointment and poor preparation have led some followers to desert. It has been reported that followers who tried to leave the group were murdered by the Daesh. The Salafists are more willing to accept non Muslims than deserters, because they feel that foreigners still have to see the “light” of Islamism, while by drawing away deserters that have seen “light” disown it and, thereby, become apostates. Notwithstanding, some are able to escape and try to go back to their countries. Others, without disowning the organization, try to contact their families and/or to go back to their countries. Even if this is accepted by ISIS, it will tend to see these followers as lacking faith and ardor, and will cease to trust them. Unless they leave the region in a mission, which is a possibility the West should be cautious about.

The terror spread by the Daesh has been generating waves of refugees coming from Syria, Iraq and Libya, resulting in demographic pressures in neighboring countries and migration flows to Europe. ISIS strikes on the Yarmouk Palestinian refugees, in Syria, as well as those perpetrated by the Jabhad al-Nusra faction and by Assad,

**Figure 3. Dabiq location**



Source: Google (2015).

minor and administrative tasks in the organization. Some <sup>10</sup> Could represent the Eastern Roman Empire, whose capital was Istanbul, or the “infidels” and, therefore the West (WOOD, 2015, p. 18).

have led the population to flee, and were condemned on April 30, by the European Parliament (HUMAN..., 2015). In August of 2014, during the ISIS offensive against

Sinjar, women and children were enslaved and men from the Yazidi ethnicity murdered, driving refugees towards Turkey. In Syria there are over 7.6 million displaced persons, and 12.2 million Syrian refugees (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, 2015, p. 2). In Iraq there are more than 2.1 million displaced persons, and about 2.2 million Iraqis in need of immediate aid inside areas under ISIS control (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, 2015, p. 2). In February, the European Commission reported that approximately 276,000 refugees had attempted to enter the EU illegally, most of them across the Mediterranean routes (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, 2015, p. 2) and many coming from Syria and Iraq.

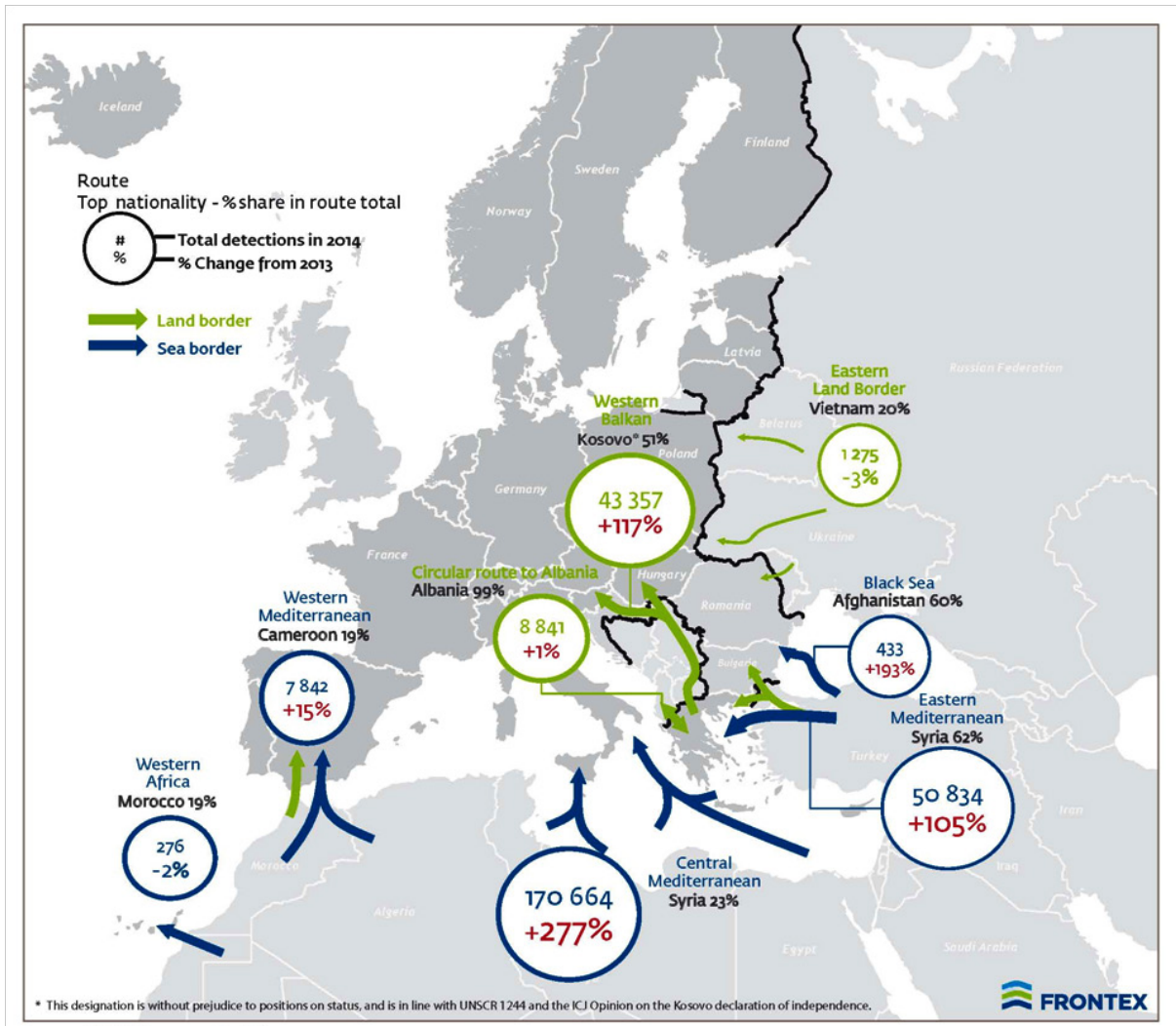
On April 27, 2015 the Frontex agency published its 2014 report underling the increased migration movement across the Mediterranean. By looking at the following figure it can be inferred that the east and central routes are most frequently used by illegal immigration to Europe, and the percentage of immigrants from Syria is significant.

This report acknowledges that there are threats

of terrorist movements in face of the attractiveness of Syria to foreign combatants, either born in the EU, or with double citizenship (FRONTEX, 2015, p. 49). Turkey is the preferred illegal immigration corridor between the EU and Syria and vice-versa. As a result of more effective control enforced by the European countries on the movement of citizens, it is possible that combatants are increasingly using the illegal immigration routes because of the lower costs and risks of being detained (FRONTEX, 2015, p. 49). In face of the legal measures imposed by the different countries to the combatants who wish to come back, they are likely to resettle outside their home countries (FRONTEX, 2015, p. 49).

The Table below shows that most of the illegal immigrants who try to cross the external EU borders come from problematic countries, such as Syria, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Mali and Nigeria. In Nigeria, on March 7, 2015, the jihadist group Boko Haram took an oath of fealty to al-Baghdadi and engaged in terrorist actions similar to those perpetrated by ISIS in Syria and in Iraq, and generating groups of displaced persons and refugees.

Figure 4. Detected illegal border crossings in 2014, by route, with percentage variation in 2013.



Source: Frontex (2015, p. 19).

**Table 3. Number of illegal immigrants, detected at control points on the external borders of Europe, by route and the ten countries with more immigrants.**

	2011	2012	2013	2014	Share of total	% change on prev. year
<b>All Borders</b>						
Syria	1 616	7 903	25 546	<b>79 169</b>	28	210
Eritrea	1 572	2 604	11 298	<b>34 586</b>	12	206
Unspecified sub-Saharan nationals	0	0	0	<b>26 341</b>	9.3	n.a.
Afghanistan	22 994	13 169	9 494	<b>22 132</b>	7.8	133
Kosovo*	540	990	6 357	<b>22 069</b>	7.8	247
Mali	2 602	657	2 887	<b>10 575</b>	3.7	266
Albania	5 138	5 651	9 021	<b>9 323</b>	3.3	3.3
Gambia	599	553	2 817	<b>8 730</b>	3.1	210
Nigeria	6 893	826	3 386	<b>8 715</b>	3.1	157
Somalia	3 011	5 038	5 624	<b>7 676</b>	2.7	36
Others	96 086	35 046	30 935	<b>54 216</b>	19	75
<b>Total all borders</b>	<b>141 051</b>	<b>72 437</b>	<b>107 365</b>	<b>283 532</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>Land Border</b>						
Kosovo*	540	990	6 350	<b>22 069</b>	35	248
Syria	1 254	6 416	8 601	<b>12 471</b>	20	45
Afghanistan	20 396	9 838	4 392	<b>9 445</b>	15	115
Albania	5 076	5 460	8 833	<b>9 268</b>	15	4.9
Palestine	652	1 195	723	<b>984</b>	1.6	36
Iraq	1 094	1 027	413	<b>939</b>	1.5	127
Mali	118	235	651	<b>786</b>	1.2	21
Cameroon	152	80	125	<b>755</b>	1.2	504
Pakistan	13 781	3 344	3 211	<b>555</b>	0.9	-83
Guinea	123	64	161	<b>394</b>	0.6	145
Others	26 693	20 534	13 732	<b>5 672</b>	9	-59
<b>Total land borders</b>	<b>69 879</b>	<b>49 183</b>	<b>47 192</b>	<b>63 338</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Sea Border</b>						
Syria	362	1 487	16 945	<b>66 698</b>	30	294
Eritrea	680	1 942	10 953	<b>34 323</b>	16	213
Unspecified sub-Saharan nationals	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	<b>26 341</b>	12	n.a.
Afghanistan	2 598	3 331	5 102	<b>12 687</b>	5.8	149
Mali	2 484	422	2 236	<b>9 789</b>	4.4	338
Gambia	511	514	2 722	<b>8 642</b>	3.9	217
Nigeria	6 380	575	2 870	<b>8 490</b>	3.9	196
Somalia	1 513	3 480	5 054	<b>7 440</b>	3.4	47
Palestine	251	448	1 351	<b>6 418</b>	2.9	375
Senegal	453	145	1 391	<b>4 769</b>	2.2	243
Others	55 940	10 910	11 549	<b>34 597</b>	16	200
<b>Total sea borders</b>	<b>71 172</b>	<b>23 254</b>	<b>60 173</b>	<b>220 194</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>266</b>

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Source: Frontex (2015, p. 57).

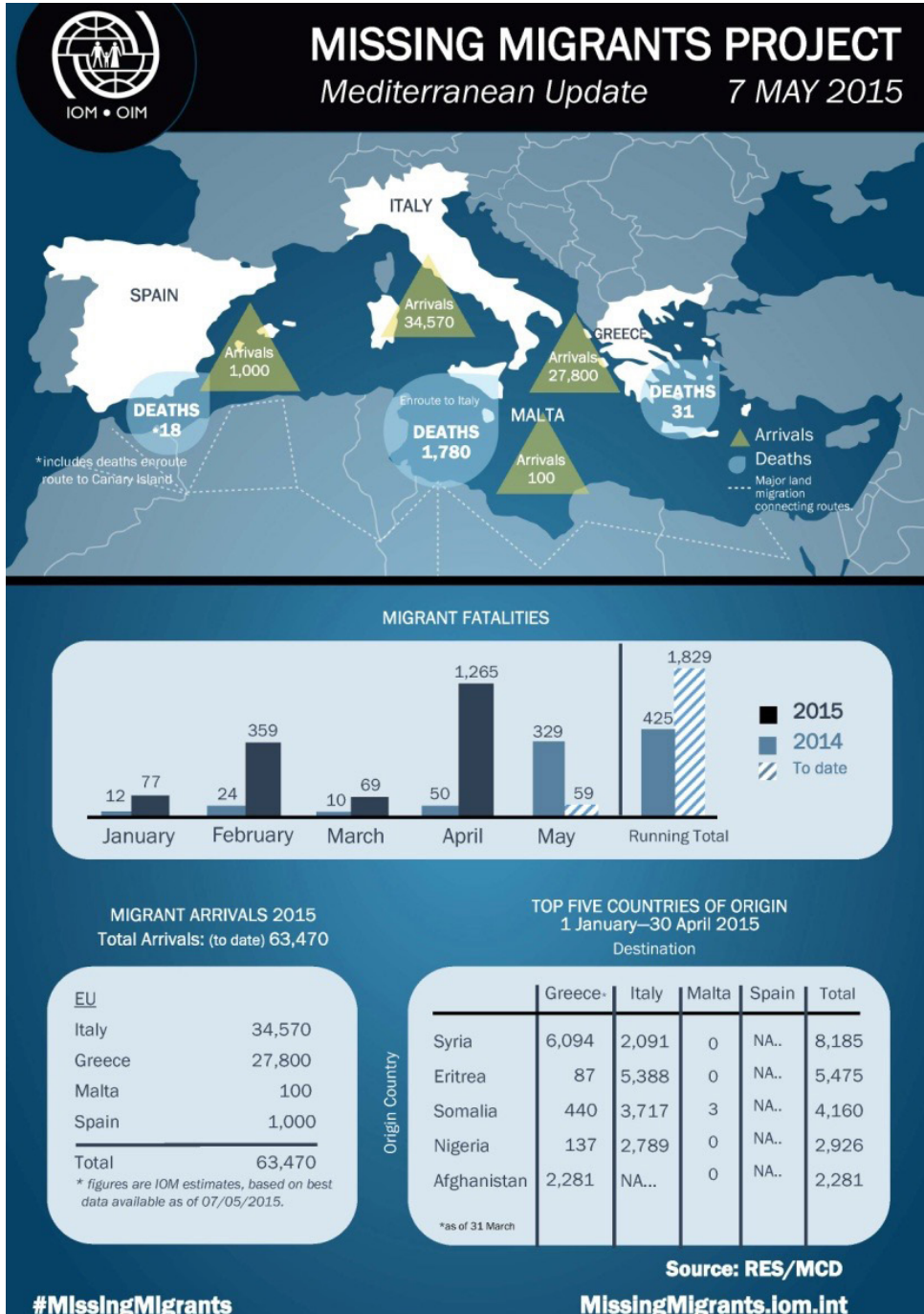


Illegal migration has been transforming the Mediterranean into a graveyard, as often, without any type of safety, the *pateras* carry a number of passengers that exceeds by far the allowed capacity. The figure below shows the number of person that went missing in the Mediterranean, in 2015, up to July 7, 2015. The number of fatalities has been increasing, prompting the EU to look for solutions to this problem. The support measures offered to passengers/shipwreck survivors do not represent an effective solution and such measures should target the situation in the home countries of the migrants.

### 3 CHALLENGES TO EUROPE POSED BY THE THREAT

ISIS has a jihadist ideological discourse, through which it intends to achieve political objectives inside and outside the organization. ISIS discourse, practices and beliefs reduces the likelihood of common platforms with the West. For being different, the principles of East and West cultures clash, interrupting dialogue. Dialogue requires recognizing one another. And, ISIS radicalism does

Figure 5. Number of persons that went missing in the Mediterranean in 2015, until 05/07/2015



Source: Missing Migrant Project (2015).

not allow it to recognize anything besides itself. Thus, the radicalism of ISIS poses to the West the challenge of finding out how to deal with it. Understanding how they think and their culture may help to overcome this challenge, however, communication only exists if the interlocutors actually wish it. The intellectual difficulty in accepting the reasoning and the culture of the other party prevents dialogue and, generally, the parties tend to ignore each other. Dialogue may not exist because ISIS does not wish it, but the West must not ignore it or its radicalism.

To ISIS, Western secularism, its Westphalian political system, its concept of democracy and its legal framework are instruments of apostasy. Hence, it is hard for the West to find common grounds to keep conversations going. Making allowances is normal in a process of conversation, but ISIS accepts no compromise. As Graeme Wood says "...it's hard to know how much ISIS will lose from its radicalism."<sup>11</sup> (WOOD, 2015, p. 19). But we also do not know how much harm it can cause the West. Could this radicalism be the weapon capable of imploding ISIS?

The vulgarization of terror has been disturbing the West, especially when westerners were hit by violence and the above mentioned maps were disseminated. As the Daesh sets his eyes on the West, the horrors get closer to it. Then, apprehension, feelings of exposure and insecurity are born from idea that the blood baths may reach the West. And, fear and emotional instability are also part of the objective ISIS intends to achieve. These emotions may lead Europe to place that region under a dome, interrupting trade and industrial relations, failing to feel any solidarity towards the local populations and to send aid. This will contribute to the achievement of ISIS objectives, as for example, "banishing foreigners/infidels/crusaders" from Muslim lands. But strikes against human rights, the refugees and other anathemas will not go away and this will not contribute to European security<sup>12</sup>, as ISIS will target other domains in Europe.

For its clandestine nature and unforeseeable actions Al-Qaeda instills in Europe stronger feelings of threatened security than ISIS. Notwithstanding, the Daesh is also capable of executing targeted terrorist attacks outside Syria/Iraq, as the attack in Garland, on May 3, 2015 in the suburbs of Dallas, Texas, carried out by two of its members against a Prophet charge contest (SANTOS, 2015).

The use of new technologies by ISIS threatens Europe as this affords it a broader range of influence, more power to recruit and to indoctrinate. No place with access to internet and a computer is free from ISIS. The European values of freedom and democracy are gateways to these threats. Hence, we face the dilemma of keeping them or to impose restrictions to hinder access

by ISIS. Some countries are already monitoring the social networks to detect the threats in a timely manner, and this has been the target of criticism from the purists of freedom of communication/expression.

ISIS recruiting and indoctrination in Europe, in prisons, in the madrassas and at Muslim social centers increase European insecurity and insecurity, once the disturber is already part of the European society, living daily side by side with us. In Syria and Iraq there were neighbors that lived in peace and friendship for a long time but, for religious reasons, when conflicts started they became mutual tormentors. These examples make Europe increasingly alert and mistrusting, with manifestations springing up against the Islamist communities, such as those that took place after the attack in France, on January 7, 2015. The attacks to the weekly magazine Charlie Hebdo fuelled the far right movements, giving rise to leaders - such as the National Front, in France, the Ukip in the United Kingdom, the Pegida in Germany, or the PVV in Holland - challenging the multiculturalism policies, Islamic ability to accept democracy, claiming "de-islamization" of the West and, ultimately, the end of Islamic immigration (DUARTE, 2015). According to a survey published by Bertelsmann on January 8, 2015, fifty seven per cent of non Muslim Germans see Islamism as a threat; sixty one per cent (against fifty two per cent in 2012) said that Islamism is incompatible with life in the West; forty per cent do not feel at home in their own country because of its islamization, and one fourth of the German people said that Germany should not allow more Muslim immigrants to enter the country (BERTELSMANNSTIFTUNG, 2015). Despite the fact the data collected in this survey refer only to a specific country, it may reveal perception trends among the Non Muslim European population.

Incidents like those in Dallas, or Paris, will only fuel xenophobia, racism and ideological radicalism, notably from the far-right, providing grounds to their arguments, even if such criticism is designed for political gains, as Thomas de Maizière, from the German CDU said, adding that "...the attacks have nothing to do with Islam" (apud DUARTE, 2015). Except that, if ISIS is involved, such attacks have essentially to do with religion.

ISIS caused one of the largest migrations of "internationalist" war volunteers ever recorded in the last decades (ROGEIRO, 2015, p. 97). Immigration to Syria/Iraq takes from Europe youths who could contribute to its society with their knowledge and labor, reducing the intellectual and social assets of the countries and highlighting the vulnerabilities of the educational, professional training and social policies. Europe never had such a high rate of qualified young people. Except that, this has not been accompanied by job opportunities, motivation and satisfaction of lawful life expectations. Additionally, countries have been offering an academic education unsuited to the labor needs, increasing the unemployment rates and the lack of motivation. These qualified youths with no hopes are easy preys to jihadist radicalism recruiting efforts.

<sup>11</sup> "EI" means IS/ISIS.

<sup>12</sup> Security "...expresses spiritual peace, born from trust people have ...that there is no danger..." (COUTO, 1988, p. 38).

Another area of radicalism recruitment comprises the second and third generations of Muslim immigration to European countries, generated in the sixties and in the following decades of last century, as they were offered values they felt to be those of their identity. These generations have been questioning the theories of multiculturalism sociology or assimilation, as they start looking for their identity in the past of their grandfathers, denying integration by acculturation or enculturation.

The declaration of a caliphate poses to Europe the challenge of being able to deny its political identity and invalidate its rationale. No State has yet recognized the ISIS. Nonetheless, there are jihadist organizations<sup>13</sup> in several countries that have sworn to follow it. If these groups happen to take over control of these States, as might happen in the case of failed states, ISIS may then be recognized by them, leading to questions about if, in these circumstances, these are actually legitimate States under the rule of law. This would be embarrassing to the world. Control of territory, existence of a population and a State organization may afford ISIS an implicit and non recognized status of political entity that enforces values that clash with modernity. However, there will always be somebody asking what moral authority has the West to reject ways of thinking and deny value to radical organizations, when it actually enforces other rationales and values that are questioned by the Western culture itself, such as the death penalty or the acceptance of tyranny because of the obligation of non intervention in other States. This criticism, however, makes the mistake of taking these principles as universal in the Western culture, when they are not, while the values and reasoning enforced by ISIS are, by religious imposition, the actual foundations of the organization.

Without territory there is no caliphate, and a caliph has the duty of enlarging the territory, under penalty of committing sin. This duty of survival prompts ISIS look for other domains beyond Syria/Iraq, and this already constitutes a threat to international security. In theory, there are only two ways of neutralizing a threat: acting on the likelihood of a given act or on the intent to perpetuate said act. In the case of ISIS, the "act" of conquest" is inherent to the organization, once the Islamic law forbids permanent agreements or borders, demanding the perpetual expansion of the caliphate. Hence, the intent and the search for the possibilities constitute the very essence and nature of the ISIS and the caliphate. Thus, this threat will only be overcome with the end of both the caliphate and ISIS.

The return of combatants to their home countries challenges Europe to admit the risk of accepting them back and importing radicalism, or denying them their home country and exporting radicalism to other parts of the world. For being unable to contact their families or friends, individuals without a nationality may be compelled

to remain attached to radicalism at the sites of conflicts, or anywhere else, or will continue roaming around Europe/ the world or settle in other countries. Abandoning the area of conflict does not mean to abandon the organization or radicalism. On the other hand, acceptance of these citizens by their own countries may enable control of their steps and to neutralize their radicalism.

The growing number of refugees has been driving illegal migrations without posing a threat to Europe. The threat comes from "what is carried in the back set of this vehicle". After illegal migration comes more illegal migration by the families that are left behind and wish to be reunited with those who were the first to take the "leap"; comes criminality, embraced by individuals who enter contexts that differ from theirs and only find subsistence in illegality, or by anybody who uses them to get rich; come cultural, religious and professional integration problems that shun immigrants to ostracism, marginality and radicalism; come disenchantment and disillusion for having expected to find paradise and instead finding purgatory, which leads to rebellion and radicalism; come terrorism and more radicalism on the part of these migrants that have already joined jihadist sects and also internal social pressure from public opinion and the xenophobic and racist organizations.

Immigration interests Europe as it offsets social security weaknesses and ageing populations. The figures below show that Europe is getting older and population is shrinking.

As the population gets older, there will be more retired persons and less social security payers. Immigration may contribute to mitigate this decrease. Additionally, these migrants tend to engage in tasks that are less valued by Europeans, thus reducing lack of this type of labor.

Migration poses the following question to Europe: where does the status of refugee ends and that of immigrant starts? It also brings the following dilemma: send back illegal immigrants, sentencing them to inhuman fates, if not to death, or assume the risks and the consequences of welcoming them in the territory?

As evidenced, the specific characteristics of ISIS may create challenges to Europe and, to be overcome these challenges will require strategies and lines of action.

## 4 EUROPEAN LINES OF ACTION TO FIGHT THE THREAT

The attacks in France on January 1, 2015, reminding us that terrorism has no borders, prompted the Interior Ministers of the EU formally gathered in Riga, on January 29, 2015, to look for security solutions as for example: keeping for five years the records of aircraft passengers, even in the absence of any suspicion, a measure that will not be easy to approve at the European Parliament because of the issues related to privacy rights (LOS 28 ..., 2015); increased control on EU external

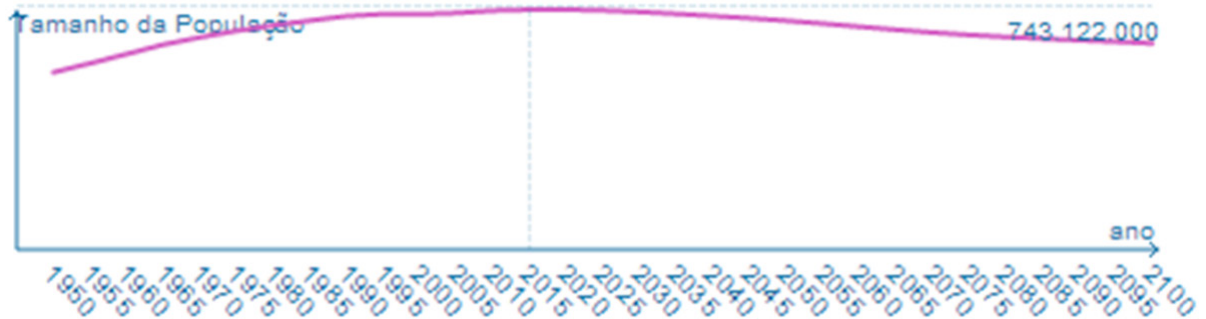
<sup>13</sup> As Yemen, Egypt, Algeria, Nigeria and Libya.

Figure 6. The age pyramid in Europe (2000-2015)



Source: Wulf (2012).

Figure 7. Evolution of the size of population in Europe



Source: Wulf (2012).

borders and, sporadically, by nations in their own space; control of weapon and financial flows; stronger cooperation and information exchanges; and monitoring of the social networks. Since January 1, 2014, the United Kingdom has in force laws that allow it to revoke the nationality of individuals that have harmed the country and, being born abroad, have a British citizenship, on grounds that citizenship is a privilege (MINISTER., 2014). In the pre-elections period Cameron declared that if he won the 2015 elections - which actually happened - he would pass laws allowing access, through the security agencies, to encrypted messages, which is a method employed by jihadists in their communications (PEREIRA, 2015). Spain decided to revoke the nationality of Spanish citizens who went fight for conflict zones, and enforced rules about the so-called "solitary wolves"<sup>14</sup>. Germany has been cancelling the passports of citizens affiliated to the jihad movement, replacing their identity documents with others where it is stated that they are forbidden to travel abroad.

These are measures intended to "shield" countries against terrorism. Nonetheless, ISIS prefers direct confrontation, looking for apocalyptic and aggressive combatants, once if you die for your ideology you are a "martyr" and this word has for them same sense the term "hero" has in the West. Thus, we need to understand "...the intellectual genealogy of the Islamic State if we are to find an answer about what leads it to self-sacrifice for its excess extreme zeal." (WOOD, 2015, p. 15). Being aware that those measures do not suffice to fight ISIS, at a plenary meeting of the European parliament, the EU called for a regional strategy to fight ISIS (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, 2015). But what strategy?

The orgy of terror spread by ISIS aims at pushing towards that battle at Dabiq. The natural trend of the West is to answer the provocation from the Daesh sending "crusaders" to Syria/Iraq. And, this is what ISIS wants. Is this a sensible solution?

In his speech in 11/13/2014 al-Baghdadi, mentioned two relevant issues: primacy of the fight against the Shiite and the Saudis, and just subsequently against the "crusaders", thereby setting out hate priorities; deployment of Western soldiers in the region, illustrating the obsession with direct confrontation. Such comments show that the West should make the most of ISIS predictability, grounded on apocalypse and intransigence, by acting against expectations; cause the implosion of ISIS, by its radicalism, eagerness and for seeing everybody as an enemy. Hence, this is not a war of Europe against ISIS, but rather of the world in a coalition - involving involves Muslim countries - against the Daesh.

One of the lines of action is to have the coalition deploying forces in the conflict region. Current coalition air strikes against ISIS have only limited the conquest of territory, without actually defeating it. To achieve this goal, it will be necessary to have boots on the ground in

Syria/Iraq, as the ISIS wishes. Hence, actions should be forceful, projecting a power of combat superior, in terms of volume and capacity, to those available to ISIS, looking for swift destruction to have it quickly discredited. A message must be conveyed that the intent is actually to fight ISIS, and not Islam, and before the intervention, the West should look for commitment and support from the Sunnis. As much as possible, it will be wise to keep the Shiite and the Israeli from sending forces to the conflict in order to avoid polarization around religion. The action in Syria/Iraq should come simultaneously to intervention in other States, notably in Libya<sup>15</sup> against groups faithful to the caliphate, so as to prevent them from sending combatants to that region. This line of action has some drawbacks, namely: - Intervention will attract to the region many jihadists willing to fight and die for ISIS, and the central governments will be required to control the radicals in their countries;

- The military operation may take a long time and involve significant confrontations;
- Conflicts may, suddenly, spread to neighboring States;
- Intervention in Syria/Iraq is already a victory for ISIS and will fuel the motivation of its combatants;
- The Muslim population could see the intervention as a "crusade" and react against it;
- An operation of this size hinders both the coordination and the operational design, requiring balanced and representative multinational representation at the decision making/planning centers, in order to avoid cracks in the coalition.

This LA is quite expensive, but defeating a threat to international security is priceless. Another additional difficulty is that it will only be executed under a mandate from the SC/UN, where Russia and China have been blocking military interventions. Notwithstanding, ISIS is also a threat to these countries, and this may lead them to awareness of the importance of the resolution.

But, this Line of Action has the advantage of allowing fast conquest of the territory under ISIS control, speeding up its implosion, as no caliphate exists without territory, and their acolytes will then be prone to demobilization.

But, there is also another LA: the coalition resisting, as much as possible, the temptation of having boots on the ground and accepting ISIS provocations; extinguish the sources of funding, impoverishing it as much as possible; without direct involvement, promote and support war against ISIS in Syria/Iraq through the Muslim countries, notably the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council<sup>16</sup>; support interventions by Kurds and Shiites, balancing them to Sunni actions, avoiding to compromise commitment; train, equip and fund Arab

<sup>15</sup> Currently a failed State and a highway without access to Europe, and the governments and parliaments existing there do not control the whole territory.

<sup>16</sup> Formed by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Oman.

<sup>14</sup> Dormant jihadist cells in foreign territory, most of all in Spain, fully prepared for terrorist attacks.

forces, mostly in Iraq and Kurdistan<sup>17</sup>; prevent recruitment and projection of ISIS followers in the region; and promote war on factions loyal to ISIS, relying on actions taken by the countries where they are established.

This Line of Action prioritizes the corrosion of ISIS, undermining and fighting it, going against the issues emphasized by al-Baghdadi, once it does not include the deployment of "crusaders" on the ground and forces ISIS to fight a set of Muslim countries, without considering its priorities. By resisting the provocations, the coalition will not make easier for ISIS to achieve its apocalyptic objectives, preventing it from expanding its domains, impoverishing and refusing to give ISIS an opportunity to "engage in battle against the crusaders", demoralizing its followers and leading it to implosion for discredit. Nonetheless, this LA also has certain vulnerabilities that must be mentioned, namely:

- The multicultural nature of the coalition could become a fault line, if it fails to center its efforts on the implosion of ISIS;
- It is a prolonged war, and leaves ISIS some freedom of action;
- Part of the solution lies on support from region countries, bearing in mind that relations between them are far from perfect;
- Once again, ISIS may spread the conflict across the region, tending to drag Iran and Israel into it by provocation;
- Until its final implosion, ISIS will continue to commit atrocities and, before taking any step, consideration must be given to what is actually admissible, but never setting aside the possibility of intervention by force;
- Global public opinion could fail to understand the apparent passiveness of the West, and this will result in criticism and discredit;
- Delay in the achievement of the final result leads troops on the ground to lose motivation, and makes time for more jihadist groups to declare their loyalty to ISIS, thus spreading its influence to other countries.
- ISIS sources of funding and supply may be hard to detect. ISIS sees "others" as enemies, but has been able to get a certain amount of weapons and cash, which is a paradox.

The key problem of this is LA is the West accepting the provocations from ISIS, without responding by deploying troops, and to know up to what point this is acceptable. Its chief advantage is to avoid a direct confrontation that might cause widespread conflict and thousands of deaths and victims.

The West should combine these lines of action to analyses of its social, academic and motivational policies, in order to drive its youths away from radicalism and its people from xenophobia and racism. The West must also think about why counterinsurgency was successful in Iraq in 2007, with General David Petraeus, and today is not applicable there. Besides the sectarian policies of former Prime Minister Maliki, who ostracized the Sunnis, and today stand in the way the conquest of "hearts and

<sup>17</sup> Which may be a risk manifested after the end of these conflict, once these forces may use their training and weapons against the West.

mind", the motives also lie in the fact that the West did not know how to move out of Iraq leaving it stable, "built" and inclusive.

## 5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

There is no question today about ISIS. It threatens the world once the very nature of ISIS drives it to look at the world according to its interpretation of the Book. Its religious feelings guide its fate, but it is radicalism that will determine it. It is interesting to realize that it is through religious radicalism that the world finds itself centered on a cause involving people from all religions and secularists, without taking religious ideologies into account because the motive is imperative: neutralize jihadist radicalism, wipe out hate, and the orgies of terror. Maybe a better world will come out of that, even if this takes a long time. If this goal is to be achieved, there must be no room to ignore reality, or to think that this is a problem of the "others" who are in Syria and Iraq. This is a problem of the whole world.

The four last considerations:

- ISIS is a threat to international security that is more serious to Europe than to the USA. To the USA Al Qaeda may be the more important enemy. Continued interest from the USA in fighting ISIS is crucial, as success cannot be achieved without their capabilities;
- Europe, notably the EU, should make efforts to solve the situation in Libya, preferably, by convincing the Libyans to accept a peacekeeping force and aid to rebuild the State, since this country is an excellent field for training and action for the militia, terrorists, criminality and the ISIS;
- The West must resist the temptation of letting the war on ISIS become a war on Muslims. Judgments and verdicts must be based on actions and not on religion;
- To this date, ISIS has been ridiculing Al-Qaeda. But there is no question that, in case of an alliance between ISIS and Al Qaeda the world would be facing a much more powerful enemy. This is a possibility that must not be ignored.

In sum, a future of concern lies ahead, but it is also a future of hope.

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