

# ISIS

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## In News

ISIS is a powerful terrorist militant group that has seized control of large areas of the Middle East. Infamous for its brutal violence and murderous assaults on civilians, this **self-described caliphate** has claimed responsibility for hundreds of terrorist attacks around the world, in addition to destroying priceless monuments, ancient temples and other buildings, and works of art from antiquity.

## History of ISIS

- The roots of ISIS trace back to **2004**, when the organization known as **“al Qaeda in Iraq”** formed.
- Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who was originally part of Osama bin Laden’s al Qaeda Network, founded this militant group.
- When Zarqawi was killed during a U.S. airstrike in 2006, Egyptian Abu Ayyub al-Masri became the new leader and renamed the group “ISI,” which stood for “Islamic State of Iraq.”
- **In 2010, Masri died in a US-Iraqi operation, and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi took power.**
- When the civil war in Syria started, ISI fought against Syrian forces and gained ground throughout the region.
- In **2013**, the group officially renamed themselves “ISIS,” which stands for “Islamic State of Iraq and Syria,” because they had **expanded into Syria.**

## Working of ISIS

- The group focused on creating an Islamic state and **implementing sharia law**-a strict religious code based on traditional Islamic rules and practices.
- In **2014, ISIS took control of Fallujah, Mosul and Tikrit**

**in Iraq**, and **declared itself a caliphate**, which is a political and religious territory ruled by a leader known as a caliph.

- ISIS fighters **attacked a northern town in Iraq that was home to the Yazidis**, a minority religious group, in August 2014. They killed hundreds of people, sold women into slavery, forced religious conversions and caused tens of thousands of Yazidis to flee from their homes.
- The attack **sparked international media coverage and brought attention to the brutal tactics employed by ISIS**. Also in **2014, al Qaeda broke ties** with ISIS, formally rejecting the group and disavowing their activities.
- ISIS became recognized around the world for carrying out **heinous acts of violence, including public executions, rapes, beheadings and crucifixions**.
- The group has earned a nefarious reputation for videotaping brutal killings and displaying them online.
- **Major terror acts:** 2015 Paris Attack, 2015 San Bernardino Attack, 2016 Brussels Bombings, 2016 Berlin Attack.
- **Assaults on historical sites:** Mosul museum, churches and shrines in the Middle east, ancient ruins in Palmyra.
- **ISIS funding:** Much of ISIS's money has come from seizing control of banks, oil refineries and other assets in the territories it occupies. The group has also used kidnapping ransoms, taxes, extortion, stolen artifacts, donations, looting and support from foreign fighters to fill its coffers.