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HOW IS ISIS FUNDED?

Final Thesis

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I declare I have written the bachelor's thesis independently.

All works and major viewpoints of the other authors, data from other sources of literature and elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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ABSTRACT

The jihadist militant group, ISIS, controls a large chunk of territory in the heart of the Arab world, plus executes destructive attacks and crimes against humanity around the globe. Funding is a crucial factor to make its terrorist activity possible. This paper identifies and researches ISIS's revenue streams, and suggests ways to cut the group off from these sources. ISIS stood up on its feet with private foreign donations, but now mostly stolen oil, extortion revenues and trafficking in drugs keep its economy churning. Luckily, its biggest sources of money appear to be unsustainable in the long run, meaning that military means might not be necessary to disturb its finance. ISIS's rotten governance system has already started to turn against itself, as the local people are fleeing the caliphate.

Keywords: Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, ISIS, funding, terrorism, counter-terrorism

INTRODUCTION

Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), also known as ISIL, IS and Daesh, burst on to the international scene in 2014, as it seized broad swathes of land in Iraq and Syria, simultaneously declaring its ambition to establish a worldwide Sunni Muslim caliphate. Described as a dreadful terrorist organization by political directions, the group has developed rapidly in a remarkably short period of time. Even though its stronghold is currently based in the Middle East, it has successfully executed terrorist attacks and crimes against humanity in various locations, thus threatening global safety and security. ISIS is a new age terrorist organization where funding is very central and crucial to its operations. Guns, attacks, salaries to fighters, international transportation and well-functioning propaganda machine- all these things cost a lot of money. Without financial support, ISIS's influence would be significantly reduced. Its funding as a concept is quite uncertain, constantly changing puzzle, which makes it slightly hard to investigate and analyse the subject. However, ISIS is such a relevant, interesting and contemporary topic, that its revenue streams deserve deeper research, observation and analysis.

The purpose of this paper is to identify and examine ISIS's sources of money that enable its terrorist activities and everyday life in the caliphate. After that, the paper pursues to suggest ways to cut the group off from these sources. Thus, the research questions of this paper are as follows: what are ISIS's financial sources, and where do they stem from? How is ISIS able to use them, and how valuable is each source? Can these revenue streams be countered? The information in the paper is gathered by qualitative methods, based on documents, reports, articles and news verified by experts. The represented sources are to date, and referred to sites such as the U.S Treasury, Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and European Parliament Foreign Policy. Other main resources are International Business Times, Financial Times and Business Insider. Case studies on ISIS victims provide essential inside information about people's everyday life in ISIS-controlled areas. Since the emerge of ISIS is a relatively new issue, the selection of scientific resources is very limited at the moment.

ISIS's financial sources are separated into two main sections in this paper: internal and external ones. The first part focuses on ISIS's internal sources, including extortion and smuggling of various assets available in its territory. ISIS is able to exploit the local oil fields by taking oil to its own use as well as to sell it forward. Additionally, the local people living under its control are taxed highly on every possible occasion. How is the group capable of rotating this scheme, which requires to some extent support from the locals? ISIS utilizes the assets in its region also by smuggling humans, human organs, drugs and cultural artefacts to buyers in different locations abroad. Moving on to the second section, it discusses ISIS's external revenue streams, including private donations, kidnapping for ransoms, and abusing of humanitarian aid. The governments of oil-rich Gulf States, including Qatar, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, have been blamed for turning the blind eye for its citizens' private donations addressed to ISIS. What do the private donators gain by giving money under the table to the cruellest terrorist group of our times? Could the governments be involved in ISIS's financing, too? After all, they have previously funded extremist Islamic movements abroad quite openly. Kidnapping for ransoms has become an influential marketing tool for the group, since especially foreign audiences follow its brutality in shock and curiosity. Videotaped beheadings have succeeded to indicate that the group does not hesitate to kill its hostages if the required payments are not transferred. Lastly, this paper researches how ISIS abuses humanitarian aid. Which of all the revenue streams are the most crucial ones to ISIS? Are there ways to reduce or destroy these sources of money?

1. THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria is a challenge to the international system, simply because it is the most ruthless and single-minded enemy of the sophisticated world since the end of the Second World War. U.S. Foreign Service Officer Christian Cali expresses in his article “The Islamic State’s Challenge to the International System” (2014), that rather than being a real state, ISIS is more of a cross-border creation with an ambition to spread its caliphate beyond all the possible borders. Experts on the field of political science can all agree, to some extent, that ISIS performs a difficulty to the Westphalian age of international relations with its prompt, brutal growth and rejection of international norms. Cali notes, that after all, international relations theory is built on the state system and this makes the matter entirely reluctant to negotiate within the international organism. Since there is not much to debate about ISIS’s legality, the scholars are delving into questions about its origin, driving ideology, sources of funding, and whether it is possible to be defeated.

Researchers do not share the same point of views about who or what is responsible for ISIS’s establishment. Political science researcher and author Jülide Karakoc argues in her article “The failure of Indirect Orientalism: Islamic State” (2014), that the rise and development of ISIS is clearly a repercussion of the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. Putting the blame on US intervention is presumably the most common theory of ISIS’s formation. Even though Saddam Hussein’s regime raped, tortured and mass murdered its citizens completely arbitrarily, many scholars yet consider that the invasion was not justified. Historian Hans Krech opposes this common view in his research paper “Has Al-Qaeda in Iraq Been Destroyed? Reasons for the Power Struggle in Iraq After the Withdrawal of the US forces” (2014). Krech challenges the broadly accepted belief of US’s quilt by stating, that asymmetric conflicts do not end with an armistice as in a usual war, but instead, they decrease gradually. Thus, it might take ten to twenty years until the process of this type of conflicts collapse, consequently meaning that there might be waves of aggression in the region for years. According to Krech, formation of ISIS has nothing to do with US failure, but that it is

purely a concern of asymmetric conflicts.

Several western politicians, including for example Barack Obama (Dyer 2015), and additionally FATF report, “Financing of the Terrorist Organisation of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)” (2015), have argued that ISIS is “un-Islamic” and that it has absolutely nothing to do with Islam. By taking a look at ISIS’s religious bloodline, this claim seems very peculiar. As Maajid Nawaz highlights in his article “How to Beat Islamic State” (2015), while Islam is a religion, Islamism is an urge to impose a form of that religion on society. ISIS taking part on a universal campaign to spread Islam by gunpoint, undeniably makes the group Islamic. It also sounds implausible to insist that ISIS has nothing to do with Islam at all. Graeme Wood agrees with Nawaz in his text, “What ISIS Really Wants” (2015), by stating that the belief preached by ISIS’s most devoted followers stems from consistent interpretations of Islam. Practically, each main decision or law executed by ISIS complies with “the Prophetic methodology”, which stands for taking after the prophecy and example of Muhammad, in exact detail. According to Bernard Haykel, Princeton scholar and leading expert on ISIS’s theology, ISIS combatants are convincing throwbacks to early Islam, and are loyally copying its patterns of war. Their actions include things like slavery, beheadings and crucifixion, which modern Muslims often do not want to recognize as part of their scripture (Wood 2015). Thus, it is fair to argue that ISIS has not nothing, not everything, but definitely something to do with Islam.

When it comes to ISIS’s funding, Jamie Hansen-Lewis and Jacob Shapiro state in their research paper, “Understanding the Daesh Economy”, that oil, taxation, extortion, kidnapping and smuggling have all been recognized quite commonly among researches as ISIS’s revenue sources. Even acknowledging the notable range of ISIS’s fund-raising operations, it is significant to separate the reality from the mythology that has grown up. One example that has raised dispute is the heist of Mosul’s central bank that allegedly profited the organization roughly \$425 million, in 2014. Although the looting was broadly reported in media, many scholars have accused this theory false. For instance, according to Iraqi bankers in Financial Times, the robbery never took place, and the money stays inside the safe deposits. Moreover, the incident has no eyewitnesses and ISIS itself has never bragged about the robbery. (Daragahi 2014). Due to the lack of reliable evidence, this research paper excludes bank heists as a considerable revenue stream.

Another aspect that has not gained unanimity among researchers concerns funds from

foreign countries. Wealthy Gulf States; Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, have been accused to perform as significant “angel investors” for ISIS, giving the seed money that aided the organization on its feet. The dilemma between scholars is, whether these countries only turned the blind eye for the funds, or whether their governments were involved in the financing, too. Lori Boghardt, a researcher specialized in Arab Gulf politics, points out in her political analysis, “Saudi Funding of ISIS” and “Qatar is a U.S. Ally. They Also Knowingly Abet Terrorism. What’s Going on?”, that even though the Gulf States have been eager to strengthen the position of Sunnis abroad, there is no reliable evidence about government-based funding. A former head of the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), Richard Dearlove has a slightly more radical point of view in this issue. Dearlove states in an interview “Iraq crisis: How Saudi Arabia helped ISIS take over the north of the country”, that the Gulf States, especially Saudi Arabia, have been extremely fascinated with any militancy that can successfully challenge Shia-dom. Thus, the Saudi regime has previously quite openly funded several extremist groups abroad. Moreover, in the beginning, ISIS seemed like any other Sunni radical group. No one could have guessed how savage it would become eventually. Therefore, according to Dearlove, it is possible that Saudi Arabia has funded ISIS, but it simply lacks evidence at the moment.

Rather than just identifying ISIS’s sources of money, it is more important to find out which ones are crucial to ISIS’s survival, and whether those revenue streams can be cut off from the group. Hansen-Lewis and Shapiro argue in their paper, that decisions over how to fight ISIS need to hinge to some breadth beliefs about its long run prospects and capability to continue its military enlargement. If the organization does not have financial means to wage war for larger regional domination because its economical structure is unsustainable, then containment could be the most suitable strategy. If, nonetheless, ISIS is prospective to acquire sufficient resources to continue its development, then dynamic counter procedures such as continuous and effective military action might be necessary.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The ideological origin of ISIS was formed already back in the late 1990's, as a spin-off for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The attack in 1979 shook the Muslims around the world so strongly, that nearly 20, 000 foreign combatants joined the Afghan forces. Jordanian-Palestinian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi from poor, uneducated and criminal backgrounds was one of them, arriving to Afghanistan just about when the war was over, in 1989. As al-Zarqawi returned to Jordan, he had converted to radical, fundamentalist Islam during his trip. In 1999, al-Zarqawi created his own terrorist group called Jamaat al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (JTWJ) with his followers. Elsewhere, Osama bin Laden intrigued also with rebels and created the famous al-Qaeda network. For years, the two men shaped their groups separately, without knowing each other (Zelin 2014). But how did al-Qaeda and JTWJ end up together, creating al-Qaeda in Iraq, which became the basis of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria? To be able to understand the outcome, it is crucial to take a look at the chain of events that started in the Middle East, a few decades ago.

The Arab nationalist Ba'ath Party ruled in Iraq during 1968-2003, standing for freedom from foreign rule and the establishment of a single Arab state. Due to the teachings of its founders, Christian-born Michel Aflaq and Sunni Muslim Salah al-Din Bitar, Ba'ath had a strongly secular standpoint (Devlin 1997). In 1979, Saddam Hussein became the leader of the party, fully agreeing that Ba'ath should not mix religion and politics. However, after Hussein invaded Islamist Iran, in 1980, he had to renege due to the consequences (Orton 2015). 1986 was a terrible year for Hussein's regime for many reasons. Iran-Iraq War was still on-going and Iraq had lost the Few Peninsula, its narrow gate to access the Gulf. International directions were openly speculating that Iraq was going to be the loser (Baram 2011). Moreover, Iranian propaganda machine was exceptionally talented in illustrating Iraq in a bad light, as an atheistic regime and as the enemy of Islam. As the country was obviously defeating, the Iraqi citizens reasoned there was something wrong with the ruling party and its ideology. The public religiosity began to increase because of Iraq's burden: wars,

international embargo, inflation and high unemployment resulted in people turning to God. Visits to the mosque were rising (Baram 2011).

Even though Hussein considered Islamists morally corrupted and sexists, he noted that their support would be very beneficial for his career. Consequently, Hussein decided to make a U-turn in Iraqi policies, and to ally with the Egyptian and Sudanese Muslim Brotherhood at the Pan-Arabic Leadership meeting, in 1986 (Baram 2011). However, it had to be kept as a secret for a while, because of two main reasons: Aflaq and Iran's leader Khomeini. Hussein considered that Aflaq would never approve the conversion as a Secularist. When Aflaq died in 1989, Hussein claimed to the world that he had converted to Islam just before his death. Moreover, Hussein was afraid that making a public concession to Islamists, right after Iraq's defeat, would make him look weak in the eyes of Iran's Khomeini. After Khomeini died, Hussein could afford support to Islam (Baram 2011).

Finally, in 1993, Hussein started his Faith Campaign (Baram 2011). The Iraqi government started to shape a completely new order, following harsh Shariah law. Thieves were mutilated, gays and prostitutes were beheaded in public. New mosques rose, studying the teachings of Quran became an obligation and clerics reached positions as community leaders (Huusko 2006). Nightclubs were shut down and the sale of liquors was banned (Baram 2011). Even though the Faith Campaign was declared to be universal, it distinctly favoured Sunnis and oppressed Shias. This froze the age-old tense Sunni-Shia relations remarkably (Huusko 2006).

In 2003, the USA invaded Iraq mainly due to three different things: its supposed links to nuclear weapons and bin Laden's terrorist group al-Qaeda, plus the dictatorship of the Sunni minority population over the Shias and Kurds (Huusko 2006). Hussein was called abroad as the Stalin of Iraq, as he conducted secret service agents, who killed, raped, tortured and looted on his behalf. In the name of "Iraqi Freedom" and "War on Terror", the USA conquered Iraq in a few weeks to save the locals from Hussein's captivity, and consequently imprisoned Saddam Hussein (Krech 2014). Unfortunately, the situation resulted in a very opposed outcome than what was hoped. Instead of building peace and democracy to the state, a "power vacuum" was left in Iraq: the country did not have a government or society anymore. Iraq sank into chaos and anarchy, as both of the opposing parties sought to grab the throne. In the world of jihadists, this changed everything. Al-Zarqawi and bin Laden relocated from Afghanistan to Iraq in order to establish a Sunni extremist resistance and to fight against

the US. In 2004, al-Zarqawi declared his loyalty to al-Qaeda, in order to access its money and combatants. The groups merged and its name became al-Qaeda in Iraq (Beauchamp, 2015).

In 2006, Hussein was executed, and in order to stabilize the confused environment it was time to establish a new government. To maintain peace, power was shared between Sunnis, Shias and Kurds somewhat equally. Consequently, Iraq got a Kurd president, a Sunni head of the parliament and a Shia Prime minister (Karakoc 2014). New Prime Minister, Al-Maliki, assured to the world that he could make a positive change in Iraqi politics by increasing democracy and stopping oppression. However, after the US army left Iraq, in 2011, al-Maliki's government turned out soon to be highly corrupted, incapable and unpopular. Al-Maliki betrayed his promises about sharing the political power and, instead, imprisoned and executed large amount of Sunni protestors (Khedery 2014). The fight between Sunnis and Shias drifted into a bloody civil war. Since then, Kurds, Sunnis and Shias have segregated Iraq in three parts, all living in their own areas. The USA thought it had attacked a government supported by terrorists, but it turned out not to be true. Ironically, only after Sunnis were deposed, exasperated and vindictive followers of Hussein, al-Zarqawi and bin Laden started to develop a reprisal plan together (Zelin 2014).

In 2010, Tunisian revolution caused a large wave of demonstrations and protests in the Arab world, also called as the Arab Spring. The leaders of Egypt, Libya and Yemen were forced from power. Bahrain and Syria experienced civil uprisings. In addition to Iraq, protests started in Algeria, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco and Sudan. Smaller protests broke out in Mauritania, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Djibouti, Western Sahara and Palestine (Naar 2013). Due to the Arab Spring, the Syrian protestors demonstrated on the streets against the President Bashar al-Assad's Shia government. Al-Assad refused to resign and tried to silence the Sunni dissidents, but was not able to decrease the unrest. Consequently, the situation was the same in Iraq and Syria: Sunnis felt oppressed and desired revenge (Naar 2013).

ISIS, that time a small and unsuccessful Sunni rebel group in Iraq, decided to relocate in Syria to take an advantage of its disorganized environment. To be able to relocate, ISIS created an "Islamic Intelligence State", similar to East Germany's Stasi. The recruited spies gathered information about Syrian towns and their inhabitants, so that later ISIS was able to blackmail these people and spread its influence in important areas (Huusko 2006). In June 2013, the Free Syrian Army stated that the war against Bashar al-Assad's regime would be lost shortly if international forces did not provide help. In a few weeks, the USA, Saudi

Arabia, Jordan, Qatar, Turkey and Israel began to send money, fighters and weapons worth of billions of US dollars to the Free Syrian Army. ISIS was somehow able to take over these assets, which gave the group a remarkable kick-start (Swann 2015). The very next year, in June 2014, ISIS returned to Iraq and seized vast swatches of land in Sunni-populated territories, like Mosul, and declared the beginning of caliphate. Consequently, it upgraded from a “no-name group in Syria” to a feared, well-equipped, wealthy organization and rose on the international stage (Swann 2015). Since then, ISIS has been considered as the most determined and promising terrorist organization of the modern times, not due to its particularly unique ideology, but rather due to its operations based on barbarous tactics, including mass murders, beheadings in public and kidnappings (Kovakoc 2014).

3. INTERNAL SOURCES

3.1 Occupation and Control over Territories

ISIS has built a diverse extortion system, which includes stealing and taking by force shares of the economic sources in districts where it operates. Central features of this scheme are oil sales and arbitrary taxation of its inhabitants. While ISIS frames its exploitation as taxation, it actually rotates a well-planned safeguard machine, where compulsory “charity” buys short-lived protection for the frightened people (FATF 2015).

3.1.1 Taxation And Extortion

At first, when ISIS captured new areas, it counted on confiscations for salaries, looting army bases and houses of Iraqi attendants. In every province, ISIS established and continues to have a station for pillages, where the ISIS combatants can bring their war spoils. The fighters get as an exchange a fifth of what the item is actually worth in money. Non-military items are traded at local “loot markets”, where ISIS members get everything at half price. There people can buy anything: cows, tables and generators. All this is of course pure profit for ISIS (Jones, Solomon 2015)

Currently, in addition to taxes on income, ISIS officials are demanding taxes on grain and livestock; rent for state flats; tariffs and transport permissions, commodity invoices for water and electricity; and even fines for smoking or appearing in public in prohibited clothes. ISIS dominates water-canning factories, fabric studios and phone firms. The organization even gathers car-registration fees and payments from children’s schoolbooks (Rosenberg, Kulish, Myers 2015).

Whatever the ISIS officials are collecting, they do not agree to use the expression “tax”. They prefer to call it “zakat”, which attributes to the Islamic “charity”, that Muslims are obliged to pay. Normally, the amount of zakat is 2,5% of an individual’s capital, but ISIS

requires 10%, rationalizing the gigantic rate by stating they are living in an age of war (Engel 2015). On top of that, business tax is 10-15%, sales tax 2%, cash withdrawals from banks 5% and pharmaceutical drugs 10-35% (Mendelsohn 2016).

The most fruitful source of zakat is agriculture, with wheat, barley and cotton the main goods. Iraqi farmers compensate their tax to ISIS collectors in grain and livestock, while Syrian agriculturists pay zakat in cash calculated from market prices. In 2015, ISIS was able to collect approximately over \$20 million dollars by using this strategy (Jones, Solomon 2015). ISIS has also seized machinery, such as tractors and combine harvesters, which it then leases back to the farmers they were originally stolen from. Rather than approving all this madness, many farmers have decided to flee and leave behind their homes and everything they own. “We escaped with our money and gold but left our wheat and furniture and everything else. Everything we built for 20 years using my salary and our farming: it’s all gone”, cried one of the victims (Fick 2014). By taking over several wheat silos from governments, including 40 000- 50 000 tons of wheat, additional \$200 million dollars fell into the hands of ISIS. The organization manages to control not only the farmers, their fields and production, but also simultaneously the price of grain and it’s trading (Fick 2014).

Another lucrative source of zakat comes from trade. Around 600 trailer trucks queue every day on Turkey’s border ready to deliver groceries, such as rice and cooking oil, to Syria. According to several traders, it is more profitable to pay zakat for ISIS than bribes to al-Assad’s militia, in order to practice their business. Trucks driving into ISIS territory are collected tariffs that profit the group approximately \$140 million dollars per year (Jones, Solomon 2015). According to experts’ calculations, ISIS profits from taxation and extortion together tens of millions of dollars per one month, around \$400 million per year (Engel 2015).

The stronghold of ISIS’s fraud relies on the intimidation or use of violence within its territory. If the locals refuse to pay the asked amount of money, they will either face fines, torture, arrest, public humiliation or death. Their houses, vehicles and enterprises might be burned. Too many people have learned that the hard way. Therefore, the majority of the locals rather surrender and pay than demonstrate and suffer from the consequences (Jones, Solomon 2015).

Legal state or not, ISIS runs almost half of Syria and one third of Iraq, with the assistance of its little group of tax collectors. ISIS has taken over the appropriate revenue gathering activities of the governments it has dethroned. It is able to exploit everything and

everyone in its territory, and thus leaves no revenue stream unspoilt (Jones, Solomon 2015). The Western officials are having hard time to cut this source of money, because it is internal. Consequently, classical counter-terrorism tools such as sanctions and air attacks cannot be applied in this issue (Rosenberg, Kulish, Myers 2015).

After observing different alternatives, there seems to be two possible choices: to execute a military intervention in ISIS's territory or containment. Neither of the solutions strikes as compelling options. Firstly, military interventions usually require deaths of civilians, and they rarely have been effective in the long-run anyway. At least in the light of history, forced democracy in Arab regimes has left behind only power-vacuum, ever bloodier clashes in the future and a puzzled environment for extremists groups to rise. It simply does not appear to be a wise way to counter ISIS's taxation.

On the other hand, it sounds cruel to be a bystander and accept the locals to suffer from discrimination. However, maybe this specific source cannot be killed, but rather must be allowed to destruct itself. According to Adam Chodorow, a Professor of Law at Arizona State University's Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law, the biggest threat to ISIS might be imposed by itself. ISIS surely seeks to have a working economy, but capturing land and leading it like a legal, functioning state necessitates it to offer government services and to pay for them with taxes. Middle management is crucial and infrastructure cannot be neglected. Governing is very detail-oriented, monotonous and tiresome, says Chodorow (Mendelsohn 2016).

Leading its territory like a real state is something that ISIS has already failed in. In Mosul, water has turned out to be undrinkable due to its lack of chlorine, whereas in Raqqa, availability of water and electricity are remarkably uncertain, rubbish heaps rot in the streets, and homeless people are searching for leftovers (Sly 2014). This is a problem, especially because ISIS has guaranteed heavenly living conditions to its followers in jihadi. For example, al-Qaeda promises eternal reward to its members in afterlife, and thus, it cannot be proved to be true or false. ISIS supporters, however, are able to see that the caliphate is nothing that was promised (Traub 2015). In the long-run, the majority of ISIS followers might get tired of paying the burdensome taxes and receiving a poorly working state as an exchange. Many local people have already decided to escape ISIS, running the risk of getting killed (Mendelsohn 2016).

3.1.2 Oil

ISIS has understood the relevance of oil as a trustworthy income source: it fuels ISIS's war machine and provides electricity. Thus, it pursues to seize and run the local oil infrastructures instead of blowing them up in the air (Bernard, Kwong, Solomon 2015). By controlling several oil fields, ISIS manages to take oil to its own use as well as to sell it on local markets and smuggle it abroad, keeping its black flag waving (FATF 2015).

The main oil producing area for ISIS is located in eastern Syria, oil-rich Deir Ezzor province. Until the US and Russian airstrikes, in October 2015, the oil production there was between 34, 000 to 40, 000 barrels per day. Since then, the amount has fallen to some extent, but specific numbers is challenging to estimate, according to experts. In addition to Deir Ezzor, ISIS controls also an oil field in northern Iraq, Qayyara, where the production is around 8000 barrels per day. The price scale per barrel varies between \$25 and \$45 dollars, depending on the quality and the field. For example, al-Omar field in Syria is able to charge \$45 per barrel, which is more than the international oil price (Bernard, Kwong, Solomon 2015). Something that has reduced the production of all ISIS-held fields is the fact that the militants do not have the skills and updated machinery to take care of the aging fields. Nevertheless, ISIS reaps about \$1,5 to 2 million dollars per day by its oil business, meaning around \$547-720 million dollars in a year (Masi 2015).

How does the oil selling process work then? ISIS trades most of the crude oil straight to independent dealers at the oil fields. After the buyers have filled their trucks, they have three different ways to bargain it forward. The majority of traders have an agreement with neighbouring refineries, meaning that they simply transport the oil from the field to the refinery, and queue straight back to the field again. Other two options are either to pass the oil forward to a new trader with a smaller vehicle, or try to sell the oil independently at local oil markets (Bernard, Kwong, Solomon 2015).

After the oil is refined, it is time to trade fuel locally in northern Syria to the rebel groups, in eastern Syria to the Syrian Kurdish soldiers and in ISIS's own caliphate, near the Syria-Iraqi border. Ironically, Syrian rebel groups, which are at war with ISIS, are completely dependent on its enemy's oil. Without ISIS, the rebel groups would be dead. "It's a situation that makes you laugh and cry", told one of the Syrian rebel commanders. However, the rebel groups do not have other options than to buy oil from ISIS, and thus, in a twisted way to make

ISIS stronger (Solomon, Chazan, Jones 2015). Even more perplexingly, the al-Assad's regime has bought a staggering amount of oil from ISIS. The two parties are doing their everything to kill each other, and yet they are committed in trade worth of millions (Sonawane 2015).

ISIS is using the age-old, secret smuggling chains in Iraq and Syria. They are difficult to track, since the knowledge about them are passed on by families to the next generations. (DI Giovanni, McGrath Goodman, Sharkov 2014). Even though the international price of oil went down, in 2015, and oil smuggling became a bit less profitable, many persistent traffickers have continued their business (Bowler, 2015). Where is the oil smuggled and who is buying it? Israel and Russia are openly accusing Turkey of buying ISIS's oil (Justice 2016). After Turkey shot down the Russian aircraft in November 2015, Russia has revealed satellite images of Turkey's actions, apparently as revenge. They show trucks filling up oil in ISIS's territory in Syria, and right after crossing the boarder into Turkey (Brooks-Pollock 2015). According to Russia, Turkey was trying to protect its secret oil activity in Syria by shooting down the Russian plane (Masi 2015).

The reason for Turkey to do oil business with ISIS is quite straightforward. Turkey used to get a great amount of oil from Russia, but since the relations between these two countries have dried up, that source is empty. Turkey has no oil resources, and thus it desperately needs oil. On the other hand, ISIS has a lot of oil and is more than willing to sell it forward. In other words, ISIS has plenty of oil and needs money, whereas Turkey has money and needs oil (Halpern 2016). Relatives of Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, are accused to be involved in this suspicious business, more specifically Erdogan's son, Bilal Erdogan. The younger Erdogan is one of the three shareholders in the BMZ group, a dominant marine shipping firm, which the Syrian government has blamed of purchasing oil from ISIS. Even though Syrian Information Minister, Omran al-Zoub, stated in public that Erdogan's enterprise and ISIS's oil really do share visible connections, Turkey has not admitted anything (Masi 2015).

When it comes to Israel and Turkey, they share a history way back, and sometimes they are allies. However, in the beginning of 2016, Israeli Defence Minister, Moshe Ya'alon, claimed that Turkey has been buying oil from ISIS for a long time (Justice 2016). The question arises, why did not Israel say anything earlier? Most likely, Israel has remained silent, because it was hoping to do business with ISIS as well. As Turkey has seemingly kept the lucrative business only to itself, Israel decided to reveal Turkey's secret (Halpern 2016).

Israel also stated that it is willing to rehabilitate its relations to Turkey, if it stops the illicit actions in ISIS-held areas (Justice 2016).

What could be done to stop ISIS profiting from oil? In October 2015, the U.S. bombed ISIS's oil infrastructure, which was right after followed by Russian airstrikes, in November (Solomon, Chazan, Jones 2016). Since then, the amount of attacks has declined. The coalition's new tactic is to disturb the oil extraction operation by hitting ISIS vehicles at the oil fields, and equipment for pumping or transporting oil. These attempts to counter ISIS's oil money have been somewhat influential. For example, the production at al-Tanak and al-Omar fields decreased 30%, in December. However, the fields recovered quickly back to normal, and the attacks have cost many civil human lives. The locals are furious about the new operation, because it forces them to fear for their lives and financial survival (Solomon, Chazan, Jones 2016).

Unfortunately, in ISIS-controlled areas, the caliphate dominates the oil supply, and for now, there is no decline in demand. Everybody needs oil: hospitals, enterprises, offices and farms. In the modern world, without oil there is no life, and ISIS is very aware of that. However, the oil production has fallen due to ISIS's poor technical skills. Also, the coalition attacks, Russian intervention and internationally reduced oil prices have somewhat influenced on ISIS's oil revenues.

3.2. Trafficking

Iraq and Syria, both, have had a great smuggling chain for years. They are hard to track, since they have had their secret routes for decades. ISIS's trade occurs in this very same, well-organized, illicit market via corrupted security guard, enabling it to smuggle humans, human organs, drugs and cultural artefacts to different destinations (DI Giovanni, McGrath Goodman, Sharkov 2014).

3.2.1 Humans

Human trafficking is a powerful tool, which provides various functions for ISIS. It eases the recruitment of male soldiers from highly conservative Muslim societies, where sex is taboo, and works as a prize system for triumphant fighters. Additionally, the trade creates profit (Binetti 2015).

Zainab Bangura, the UN's special representative on sexual violence in conflict, visited refugee camps in Iraq and Syria, and gathered information on ISIS's sex crimes by interviewing many escaped victims. Bangura reports, that ISIS is clearly institutionalizing sexual assaults (Callimachi 2015). At the moment, ISIS runs a campaign of enslaving solely Yazidi females in its online propaganda magazine (Tharoor 2015). According to Mr. Baber, of the University of Chicago, the reason why ISIS is focused on oppressing Yazidis so eagerly, is most likely because they do not have a written scripture, but an oral tradition instead. Thus, they are not part of the "People of the Book". This makes Yazidis even worse than Christians and Jews, in the eyes of ISIS (Callimachi 2015).

ISIS's official debut of organized sex slavery began in August 2014, when the combatants attacked the southern Iraqi villages (Callimachi 2015). Since then, ISIS has followed a certain pattern when it invades a new Yazidi town. It kills men and over 14 years old boys. Females are undressed, analysed for virginity and evaluated for attractiveness. The youngest, prettiest and virgin girls are the most expensive ones, and thus urgently taken to the ISIS's human markets in various places in Iraq and Syria. Flat-chested, ugly girls, and older or already married women are transported and accommodated in schools, prisons or farm compounds to wait for their turn (Callimachi 2015).

At the human market, the trade may begin. As a nice gesture for their dedicated work in the organization, ISIS leaders can choose first for free the girls they like. After that, the prosperous non-ISIS Middle Easterners are required to pay thousands of dollars to buy the girls they want to have. The rest of the slaves are sold to fighters at list prices, between \$40-165 dollars, depending on their qualifications. The clients may cold-bloodedly bargain the cost down, if they are not happy with the girls' features (Smith 2015). In average, each men selects three to four females at once, and uses them as he sees fit for a couple of weeks. Capturers often write their names on the back of the girls' hands, indicating that they are nothing more than objects. All the humanity is ripped off. When the owner has had enough,

the girls are brought back to the market. For example, one of the young victims told that she was sold 22 times forward (Tharoor 2015).

According to experts' calculations, there are somewhat 3000 to 5000 females enslaved by ISIS at the moment. Many have been either killed or committed suicide, and the lucky ones have been able to escape. The females who shared their stories with Human Rights Watch, described their own suicide attempts in order to avoid endless rape, forced marriage, violence, hunger and forced religious conversion. Many girls had tried to take their lives by cutting their wrists, drinking poison and electrocuting themselves in bathtubs (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

Comparing human trafficking to ISIS's other resources, the profits from sex slavery seem to be quite diminutive. By selling girls to the wealthy non-ISIS members, the organization makes some extra money, but it is not the main reason why ISIS is in the industry. In the end, ISIS supposedly practices human trafficking mostly in order to meet the sexual demands of its male soldiers, and to humiliate the people it considers as infidels.

3.2.2 Human Organs

According to Iraqi Ambassador to the UN, Mohamed Alhakim, one of the newest revenue streams of ISIS is to harvest and sell human organs from prisoners and slaves before their execution (Ahlert, 2015). Many of the prisoners that are not executed, are at least forced to donate large amounts of blood (Huusko, 2015). In addition to Yazidis, these victims often include other minorities such as Shia, Christians, Turkmen and Shabak - involving also children. The argument is based on various examined mass graves that are located in ISIS-held areas. They reveal hundreds of ISIS victims lacking several body parts, kidneys and livers. Surgical carvings, plus missing organs inevitably lead to dark conclusions (Ahlert 2015).

The information about organ selling started to leak when otolaryngologist Siruwan al-Mosuli recognized uncommon movement at hospitals in Mosul. Several new Arab and foreign doctors were hired, but they were not allowed to work with the previous local surgeons. It came out, that the organs come from dead fighters, wounded people and most of all from ISIS victims. As stated by al-Mosuli, the actions are operated by "specialized mafia", which works with foreign medical institutions and takes care of the organ trafficking (Ahlert

2015). If the doctors refuse to remove the asked organs, they are killed. In February 2015, Alhakim requested the U.N. Security Council to research the vague and sudden deaths of 12 doctors in Mosul (Strobel, Landay, Stewart 2015).

In May 2015, American forces revealed a genuine gold mine of information on its invasion in Syria. Among all the data uncovered, they found a certification, which gives religious permission to take organs from live “apostates”, for the sake of saving the life of a Muslim. The commanding states that the operation is legitimate even if it is fatal for the captive. “The apostate’s life and organs do not have to be respected and may be taken with impunity”, the document goes on (Wood 2015). Alhakim considers, that the finding should be examined as evidence that ISIS is indeed trafficking human organs to make money. Since this revenue stream is so new, there is not much information yet about how much it profits ISIS. (Strobel, Landay, Stewart 2015).

3.2.3 Drugs

Soldiers using drugs during war is a very common phenomenon, and ISIS is no exception. ISIS fighters are incited to combat not only by political and ideological passion, but also by a highly addictive drug called Captagon, an amphetamine pill produced in Syria (McConnell, Todd 2015). As reported, the drug stimulates central neural system and rapidly produces a euphoric intensity in consumers, enabling jihadist fighters to stay awake for long periods and to murder with a cold-blooded, imprudent ease. Hallucinations, bloodlust and hyper sexuality are possible side effects. The militant commanders in Syria distribute this drug to ISIS fighters, so that they could fight days without rest or fear, almost “zombielike” (Anderson 2015). A 19-year-old Kareem Mufleh, an ex-ISIS member, described that the drug ISIS gave him, caused hallucinogenic effects, and that it made him go to a fight without caring if he lived or not. “If they give you a suicide belt and tell you to blow yourself up, you’ll do it”, Mufleh said (Khazaal 2016).

Drug trafficking has long been used to fund terrorist activity, and thus it is not surprising that ISIS not only uses the product by itself, but also sells it across the Middle East. Islam strictly prohibits smuggling of narcotics, but ISIS justifies it as fighting a better jihad. Drugs seem to be like low-hanging fruits: easy to gather and easy to sell. An extensive production of Captagon started in Syria as a result of its civil war. In 2014, ISIS was able to

seize pharmaceutical laboratories in Aleppo, full of chemicals and equipment crucial to manufacture the product (Perlmutter 2015). Even though ISIS has the needed substances, it is apparently not too concerned to produce the drug without its original formula. An interviewed Captagon manufacturer for ISIS, located in Bekaa, has never heard of fenethylline, the main ingredient of the pill. Instead, he puts components like vitamins, different amphetamines and some sort of caffeine coming from Turkey in a chocolate machine, and lets them harden to produce the drug (Anderson 2015).

Scientifics have debated over whether this pill, in the past legitimately made in the USA, could actually result in the side effects characterized by consumers in the Middle East. According to the experts, it is presumable that stronger amphetamines are being used to produce the present variants of the narcotic. This means that nobody can be sure what these “Captagon pills” coming from Syria include exactly (Anderson 2015). Yet, it should be remembered that no matter how strong they are, any drugs cannot give people superhuman abilities.

After the production, drugs are trafficked mostly to Lebanon, which in turn smuggles the pills all over the Gulf area. Before the collapse of Syria, Captagon was quite rare in Lebanon. In 2014, Lebanon’s Internal Security Forces (ISF) confiscated 55 million tablets of Captagon, over four times more than in 2013. In 2012, and years prior to that, ISF caught less than 0,5 million pills in a year in Lebanon (Perlmutter 2015). Captagon guarantees enormous profits for ISIS, approximately \$200 million dollars per year. Each pill is made of chemicals worth of cents, but in the end, the street price for one pill climbs up to around \$10-15 dollars in Syria, and accordingly \$20 per pill in Saudi Arabia. The latter country has been the biggest consumer of Captagon for years, apparently due to the fact that any kind of alcohol is strictly banned there (Holley 2015). Ironically, Saudi Arabia beheads in public its drug convicts, when simultaneously its royal family smuggles narcotics to Saudi Arabia. An embarrassing incident proved this, in October 2015, when a Saudi prince got caught at the Beirut Airport for trying to traffic two tons of Captagon out of the state on his private plane. This is also why terrorists and narcotics have been connected forever- they share the same enemy: the law enforcement (McConnell, Todd 2015). In addition to Captagon, ISIS smuggles also cocaine, heroin and hashish (Sharkov 2014). However, in 2016, the production and trafficking of these types of drugs is very marginal compared to Captagon, or at least verified information of this

trade is hard to find. Captagon seems to be so easy and cheap to manufacture, that it is leaving other drugs behind in Syria.

3.3.4 Cultural Artefacts

Starting from 2014, ISIS has distributed propaganda videos where it loots historical sites in different cities in Iraq and Syria, and then destroys what is remaining. In the end, ISIS members are celebrating their victory by cheering and jumping in the middle of the ruins. Satellite photos indicate lines of looting holes on cultural heritage sites in ISIS held areas, suggesting that the content of the clips is true (Joffe 2016). What does ISIS gain by doing this?

Whatever ISIS spites, it wipes out, and historical artefacts are no exception. In order to delete pre-Islamic past, it has put to use sledgehammers at Mosul's museums, bombs at Palmyra and bulldozers at Nimrud. According to ISIS members, the Prophet Mohammed also destroyed similar things right after invading Mecca, almost 1400 years ago. Thus, the statues and other items have become useless, even if they were worth of billions of dollars, ISIS fighters assure (Taub 2015). In reality, ISIS steals objects from the sites: statues, frescoes and stone faces. Then, ISIS trades them forward to earn money, and after that blows up the historical temples and buildings. This is done to destroy the evidence of what has been pillaged, according to archaeologist Joanne Farchakh (Fisk 2015).

Dissonantly, the very same history enthusiasts, people who dignify cultural artefacts, are causing circumstances that result in the depredation of ancient sites. Historical items are put on sale only because they have financial value, in other words, because someone is willing to pay for them. ISIS's business in looted antiquities is a sales activity fuelled principally by Western demand (Amineddoleh 2016). A few of the gatherers eager to bargain black-market antiques are supposedly also from Persian Gulf countries. According to Markus Hilgert, director of the Museum of the Ancient Near East in Berlin, there seems to be an interesting geographical distribution: Islamic art is sold to Gulf countries, whereas pre-Islamic items are traded to Europe and America. (Myers, Kulish 2016).

How does the trade work then? The items on sale, dating back even 5000 years, can be introduced to the buyers for example in photographs via WhatsApp, Facebook or Snapchat, or alternatively in catalogues. The very same smuggling networks, that are rotating drug and

human trafficking business in Iraq and Syria, will import the artefacts to the buyers. According to Brent Easter, a customs special agent in New York who investigates art smuggling, as soon as the items fall into the hands of these people, they are extremely difficult to trail ever again. In addition to their trained smuggling skills, the middlemen are challenging to track because they often keep the newly looted objects in warehouses until attention has faded (Myers, Kulish 2016).

How profitable is the trade of cultural heritage, after all? The media has reported it to be a billion dollar business, but experts consider this figure absolutely absurd. According to the specialists, ISIS earns at most only a couple of million U.S. dollars per year by looting historical items (Joffe 2016). Randall Hixenbaugh, antiquities trader, states that this particular sector is a very small market, making tops \$200 million per year, if you include both, legal and auction through traders. Also Charles Ede, ex-president of the International Association of Dealers in Ancient Art, continues with the same opinion. According to Ede, ISIS has undeniably accomplished significant cultural eradication, but looting is not funding terrorism in a massive form (Adam 2016).

A U.S. bill called as the “Protect and Preserve International Cultural Property Act” (aka H.R. 1493), is hoped to block ISIS from earning the business of pillaged antiquities (Kaplan 2016). In April 2016, the bill is waiting for the Senate’s attention. If approved, it would arrange groundwork for a more capable federal reaction to cultural goods vulnerable to international conflict and disasters. Moreover, it would permit the U.S. to serve as a stronghold to Syrian cultural items in danger and to start a crucial boycott on Syrian artefacts that are illegally collected after the Syrian civil war started. Also, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 2199, in February 2015, which seeks to quit the illegal business of cultural artefacts coming from Syria. The main idea is to have all states and market actors to refuse to accept looted items (Kaplan 2016). Succeeding will not only stand for decreasing assets of a merciless terrorist organization, but also for saving the invaluable remains of our history.

How could ISIS’s trafficking in general, including humans, human organs, drugs and cultural artefacts, be countered? The intermediates, purchasers, transporters, sellers and paths through which the items are smuggled, should be analysed in a broader scale. In 2016, the information is still very limited. Obviously, also the role of international financial sector should be researched deeper. This is crucial, since the illicit chain does not only profit ISIS,

but also creates local financial reliance on illegal operations. To enhance additional proceeding, data concerning multinational links of smugglers should be shared with different jurisdictions, including the government and private sectors (FATF 2015).

4. EXTERNAL SOURCES

4.1. Private Donations

With its conquered territory, oil reserves, extortion and trafficking in drugs, ISIS does not need foreign donations much anymore. However, private funds from prosperous Gulf States; Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, acted as crucial “angel investors” for ISIS, granting the seed money that assisted the group on its feet. Now, in 2016, these rich countries are still blamed to have donors, who keep the flow of money going to ISIS, in order to wage hostility for their own political ambitions. The common goal of the grantors seems to be most of all to strengthen the power and position of Sunnis around the world. Are the donations provided only from private sources, or are the governments involved in it too? Moreover, have the funds served the purpose they were planned to? (Windrem 2014).

4.1.1 Qatar

There seems to be two main aims that Qatari policies pursue to accomplish: to boost Qatar’s influence on a global level and to secure the safety of the ruling family. To reach these goals, Qatar has for example openly financed various Islamic extremist groups abroad (Boghardt 2014). To what extent do they include ISIS?

Qatar, like also other small and vulnerable countries seek to do, has built long-lasting relations with many different directions. The eagerness to expand Qatar’s impact abroad stems from the personal enthusiasms of Shaykh Hamad bin Khalifa al Thani, father or the present emir. During his 18-year rule, the older al Thani, for example, made Qatar the richest country in the world, founded the Qatar Investment Authority and held various sport and diplomatic events (Hall 2013). Al Thani succeeded to establish functioning affairs with a great variety of political authorities and organizations in both, West and East. For instance, Doha hosts the biggest military base of U.S in the Middle East. This has offered internal

protection for Qatar from its hostile neighbours. After all, the country is located next to Saudi Arabia, a bigger, more capable and at times belligerent state. Iran, with whom Qatar shares the biggest gas field in the world, is only a short distance across Gulf waters. Additionally, Iraq in the north has been very problematic and puzzled for a long time (Boghardt 2014).

Apparently to play safe, Qatar's government cooperates with the West, and simultaneously it has also openly supported Islamic extremism abroad. It stays in good relations with groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah and Taliban, which are all classified as terrorist organizations by the West. During the Arab Spring in 2011, Qatar backed Muslim Brotherhood in the Middle Eastern countries, trying to ally itself with the group that it considered to be the dominant force for the future (Boghardt 2014). But do the groups supported by the Qatar's government include also ISIS?

Abdul Karim al Thani, a member of Qatar's ruling family, arranged passports and safe house for Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and his network when he was creating the origin of ISIS, in the beginning of 2000s. This fact, however, is the sole proof linking ISIS and the Qatar's government support together. The ruling family furiously denies all the blamed connections to ISIS, and currently there is no reliable evidence proving against its statement either (Boghardt 2014).

Even if the government is not directly financing ISIS, there have been some complex issues in its behaviour. One problematic aspect is individuals who benefited from Qatari funds, which were meant to other extremist groups than ISIS. Several people from Qatari funded forces have later joined ISIS brigades, taking their experience and arms with them, thus strengthening ISIS. Moreover, several wealthy Qatari citizens have been able to finance the group through private donations, thanks to some loopholes in Qatar's monitoring system (Boghardt 2014). For example, as reported by the U.S. Treasury, Abd al Rahman al Nuaymi worked for years as an observer between Qatari funds and heads of ISIS. Al Nuyami supervised, as transactions worth of \$2 million dollars per month reached ISIS successfully. So, even if Qatari government is not directly supporting ISIS, it has either turned the blind eye for its private grantors, or alternatively failed to block them. The USA, the UN and the EU have blacklisted Al Nuyami due to his actions, but yet he is still at large in Qatar, apparently because of his close connections to the ruling circle. Obviously, this did not please the Western policymakers (Taylor 2014).

Consequently, the Undersecretary David Cohen defined Qatar as a “permissive jurisdiction” for terrorist funding, in March 2014. Under pressure over charges that Qatar has to some extent itself caused the extremists activity in Syria and Iraq, current Qatari emir issued a new law establishing a new agency authorized to organize charities in the country that are linked with politics, send money abroad, or accept donations. This is of course improvement to its past, but Qatar has had the habit of introducing parallel laws with enthusiasm and limited follow-up (Levitt 2014).

4.1 .2 Saudi Arabia

Even though Saudi Arabia has lately taken part in counter-terrorism activity, it still has not effectively decreased ISIS’s sources, or fought its ideology (Peled 2015). Many experts are assured that the monarchy has been funding ISIS from private sources abroad for strategic and ideological reasons, while destroying extremists at home. Thus, it has kept its place under Western allies observation. Why would Saudi Arabia do something like that? (Peled 2015)

ISIS’s religious bloodline stems from Jihadi Salafism, an ancient doctrinal orientation that interprets Quran fundamentally. Muhammed ibn Abd al-Wahhab, a Sunni Muslim preacher, created this religious movement in order to devote Muslims deeper to Islam, to “purify” Islam back to what he considered it used to be. Al-Wahhab was able to network with al-Saud family, in 1744, and the cooperation had long-lasting effects (BBC 2015). Now, in 2016, Saudi Arabia is a Wahhabi (Sunni extremist) country, practicing an ultimate interpretation of Sharia law. In practice, this ideology legitimizes violence and human rights abuse in the name of Islam. The Saudi government allows, for example, beheading and crucifixion as a form of death penalty (Cockburn 2014). In January 2016, Saudi Arabia beheaded 47 people in 13 cities, during one day. These executed people were members of Shia minority, and got killed due to their participation to peaceful democracy protests (Norton 2016). Kamel Daoud, an Algerian journalist, characterizes Saudi Arabia as “an ISIS that has made it” (Norton 2016). Daoud suggests, that Saudi Arabia is doing the exact same thing as ISIS: oppressing and killing the Shia minority, which does not obey Wahhabism. Yet, for some reason, Saudi Arabia’s actions are not nearly as judged as ISIS’s.

ISIS and Saudi-Arabia following the same religious movement gives the country a logical reason to fund the group. However, there is only evidence suggesting that the Saudi

regime has been eager to export Wahhabism, not necessarily to finance ISIS. During the past decades, Riyadh has devoted around \$100 billions to spread its extremist form of Islam abroad. It conceals the converting process as charity work, often focusing on needy Muslim societies or refugee camps, where illiterate and exploited people are vulnerable to accept it (Norton 2016).

Saudi Arabia's understanding towards the anti-Shia belligerence was recognized in U.S. official documents, which were released in Wikileaks, in 2010 (Norton 2016). The that time U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, stated in the documents that Saudi grantors form the most important donation source to Sunni terrorists around the world. Moreover, Clinton reported that it has been a continuous problem to convince Saudis to treat terrorist funding, originating from Saudi, Arabia as a strategic preference (Norton 2016).

A former head of the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), Richard Dearlove is convinced that Saudi Arabia supports ISIS in a way or the other, in order to spread Wahhabism and to defeat Shia. Just a bit before 9/11 attack, Saudi Prince Bandar bin Sultan stated to Dearlove: "the time is not far off, Richard, in the Middle East when it will be literally 'God help the Shia'" (Cockburn 2014). Also, a convicted 9/11 organizer, Zacarias Moussaoui, confessed in his testimony that Saudi royal family members had funded al-Qaeda just before the 9/11 attack. These particular cases obviously do not prove that Saudis fund also ISIS, but it shows to what extent they are willing to go in order to reach their religious and ideological goals (Peled 2015).

Naturally, Saudi Arabia denies all the accusations, stating that the country has never supported ISIS in any way (Goodenough 2014). Similarly to Qatar, Saudi Arabia may have not funded ISIS directly by the government, but it has failed to stop the private donations from flowing to ISIS. Regardless its indirect assistance to ISIS, the U.S. State Department sees Saudi Arabia as its ally, "a strong partner in regional security and counter-terrorism efforts, providing military, diplomatic, and financial cooperation" (Norton 2016). This close relationship started in the beginning of 20th century, when the world's supposedly biggest oil reserve was found in Saudi Arabia. In 1945, the U.S. president Franklin Roosevelt had a meeting with the first king of Saudi Arabia, Ibn Saud. Roosevelt gave his word that the leader of the USA would back up his monarchy- in exchange for oil (Norton 2016). Consequently, so far all the U.S. presidents since Roosevelt have cooperated with Saudi Arabia, and it is not

hard to guess why. Moreover, the USA has traded weapons to Saudi Arabia worth more than \$100 billion, in five past years (Norton 2015).

Saudi Arabia seems to be, and it should be, a bit worried about repercussion. Enabling its residents to finance terrorists that are belligerent towards the al-Saud family, have led to many attacks in Saudi Arabia, and also in other Gulf Cooperation Council regimes, in 2015. (Al Rowas 2016). Similar chain of events took place in the beginning of 2000s, as Saudi Arabia went through various al-Qaeda strikes, which were connected to Saudis comeback from Afghanistan jihadi. This might have encouraged Saudi Arabia to take a contra-terrorism outlook in public (Boghardt 2014).

Consequently, Saudi Arabia classified ISIS as a terrorist organization, already in March 2014. It also donated \$100 million dollars to the UN counter-terrorism agenda, and declared that ISIS is its “enemy number one” (Jones, 2014). One of the most monitored contra-terrorism activities in Saudi Arabia is now observing the state’s official economical sector, for the sake of preventing private grants (U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2014).

4.1.3 Kuwait

Kuwait used to have a very permissive attitude towards ISIS, but in 2016, it declares to be on a war against the group. What happened?

From the beginning, there was a paradoxical twist in Kuwait’s support for ISIS. Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait back in 1990, purely because of the country controlled the second largest source of petroleum in the Middle East. If the USA and Great Britain had not freed the country in 1991, it would most likely still be part of Hussein’s Iraq. As mentioned earlier, members of ISIS are mostly Hussein’s followers. By supporting ISIS, Kuwaiti donators were financing the rise of Hussein’s heirs (Rogin 2014). What are those directions?

Kuwait, a Sunni-majority country like Qatar and Saudi Arabia, has had supporters for ISIS because it could work as a stabiliser to its Shia rival, Iran, and the Iranian-assisted al-Assad’s administration (Gilligan 2014). Starting from 2013, Kuwaiti TV channels and social media let the jihadists to collect blatantly donations for guns and combatants. One of these crucial “charity organizations”, was an association called the Kuwait Scholars’ Union (KSU). It led many fundraisings, like for example “the Great Kuwait Campaign”, gathering many million U.S. dollars for explosives, ammunitions and fighters. The profit was split between

ISIS and the al-Qaeda front Jabhat al-Nusra (Gilligan 2014). Shafi al-Ajmi, one of the KSU's members even tweeted, that the money would be used to purchase what ever is essential to destroy the Shia (Windrem 2014).

Kuwaiti government's attitude towards the KSU and other terror financiers used to be very permissive for a long time, just like Qatar and Saudi Arabia. It did not do enough to counter the private donations and the funding was possible due to Kuwait's lax counter-terrorism funding laws and freedom of association and speech. Then something happened. Many rulers have considered, that they could use terrorists as their soldiers of fortune. Often, they unexpectedly realize that the terrorists only took advantage of their money to further their very own interests. This seems to have happened to some extent in all of the three mentioned Gulf States (Gilligan 2014).

Apparently, ISIS became eventually way more barbarian and savage than the prosperous donators expected. In June 2015, ISIS executed a successful suicide attack at a Shia mosque in Kuwait, killing 27 people. Interior Minister, Sheikh Mohammed Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, stated in his speech shortly after, that Kuwait and ISIS are now in a state of war (Paton 2015). Since then, Kuwait has for example participated in an anti-ISIS coalition and withheld citizenships from jihadi funders (Gilligan 2014). Also, in November 2015, Kuwait captured a group of five people, which supposedly financed ISIS with \$1,3 million, and sentenced it in jail for ten years (Parkinson 2015).

Conclusively, what could these three governments of Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait do in order to counter the donations from private sources, better than at the moment? All of the states could establish, for example, travel bans, strip the nationality and freeze the assets of those citizens who get caught of either supporting ISIS or even being associated with it. Serious consequences like this would most likely reduce the donators' willingness to take risks in the issue. The Gulf States also need to enforce more closely the already existing laws. For many years, these countries have implemented several counter-terrorism laws, but in the end failed to observe if people were actually obeying them. Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait should also be aware, that by refusing to follow the international law, foreign directions are going to impose sanctions against them (FATF 2015).

4.2 Kidnapping for Ransoms

Kidnapping has been a lengthy habit for ISIS mainly for two different reasons: to collect ransom payments and to send a political message. Hundreds of captured victims have included Europeans, Americans, Asians and local Iraqis and Syrians. Refusing to pay the ransom leads infamously to execution, whereas releasing the victim equals to financing ISIS.

Several terrorist groups, like al Qaeda, bargain captured foreigners from local gangs in order to reduce the risk of getting caught by itself. ISIS acts on its own when it comes to this issue (News Corp Australia 2014). The executive director of the Syrian Emergency Task Force, Mouaz Moustafa, strongly doubts that ISIS trades victims from other groups, like most of the terrorists do. Moustafa considers, that this is because ISIS fights basically against all the other groups. Additionally, there is not a shared communication forum where deals like this could happen with ISIS. Instead, ISIS sends its spies to various spots to listen and report, thus making it easy for the group to capture its victims. Normally, ISIS abducts the whole crew and later selects which hostages are the most valuable ones to ask ransoms from. According to Amnesty International, targeted people are often foreigners, such as reporters, journalists, security officials, humanitarian aid workers and members of international organization (News Corp Australia 2014). Kidnapping people from these branches guarantee a massive media attention, and a better opportunity to actually get the requested money (FATF 2015).

Over the past two years, ISIS has earned a notable amount of profit through ransoms. The numbers are generally concealed on purpose, as the payments are usually given in cash and they come from private businesses or families. These directions secretly pay the ransom for the return of a kidnapped employee or family member. For example, in 2014, a Scandinavian company gave \$ 70, 000 dollars to ISIS in order to save the life of its employee. Additionally, France most likely paid around \$18 million dollars to release four French journalists from ISIS's captivity. France has denied all of this, but it is highly questionably, how else did the victims get a free ride home. Consequently, it is very hard for institutions to analyse the business between ISIS and the ransom payers, because the transactions are often done secretly (CBS News 2014). The precise profit that ISIS gains from this business is challenging to estimate, but the U.S Treasury suggests that the load is around \$20-40 million per year (Di Giovanni, McGrath Goodman, Sharkov 2014).

In August 2014, ISIS broadcasted its beheading of captured U.S. journalist James Foley to show what happens to those who do not cooperate with ISIS. Foley's case was unique in many ways. First of all, the requested ransom from him was \$125 million dollars, which is way above the average amounts. Before that, ISIS had asked a couple of hundred thousands between a few million US dollars per person. Also, Foley's case made foreign countries fully to understand that it really kills its hostages, if it does not get the money. Even though ISIS did not get the money, Foley worked as a beneficial example to express ISIS's determination and brutality (Rosen 2014). After killing Foley, ISIS stated that it would behead systematically more foreign reporters and aid workers, if its requirements were not met. Consequently, ISIS beheaded journalist Steven Sotloff, Haruna Yukawa and Kenji Goto, as well as air workers David Heines, Alan Henning and Peter Kassig, just to name a few (Beauchamp 2014). Why were the ransoms not paid?

“ We do not negotiate with terrorists” arrived to the political terminology somewhere in the 1980's, during Ronald Reagan's U.S. president campaign. Unfortunately, that promise was never kept. Soon after, Reagan himself accepted the terms of Iran-Contra Affair. As a consequence, the USA sold arms to Iran, in order to finance the Contras in Nicaragua, and to free many US captives from Lebanon (Sabato 1998). George W. Bush continued with the same formula: he judged negotiating with terrorists, but yet he paid \$300 000 dollars ransom to free Martin and Gracia Burnham from Abu Sayyaf's captivity, in 2001 (McWethy 2002). However, according to the US law, negotiating with terrorists was illegal, until June 2015. Before that, making agreements with terrorists was strictly forbidden and could have caused pressing charges. As the US president Barack Obama stated, the US government will no longer consider prosecution of the hostage's families who want to pay the ransom (Hirschfeld 2015). Nevertheless, no person or business has ever been taken to the court in the USA, due to exchanging money for the return of a victim (Beauchamp 2014).

So, what is the point of opposing ransom payments, but not suing the people who afford them? The main hypothesis behind this is, that paying ransoms backfires eventually. When someone grants money to ISIS, it increases ISIS's ability to fund more horror in the future. With that money, ISIS can plan and execute new terrorist attacks against the West. Also, it might motivate ISIS to take hostages again. At least the empirical evidence suggests, that paying ransoms increases the probability of future kidnappings. Professors Todd Sandler and Patrick Brandt discovered in their study that every paid ransom led to 2,62 new

kidnappings. Thus, one theory is that not negotiating with ISIS would be the most effective way to stop its kidnappings (Beauchamp 2014). Moreover, according to the former mayor of New York, Rudy Giuliani, paying ransoms might motivate ISIS to take hostages from those specific countries, that are willing to pay. Giuliani uses as an example Mexico, where people pay ransoms, and thus thousands of kidnappings happen every year. It could be argued, though, that Mexico is one of the most dangerous countries in the world, where different types of crimes happen all the time (Fox 2015).

Michael Scott Moore, a former U.S. hostage, who was kept captivated in Somalia for almost three years, states that his kidnappers had no idea about different hostage policies. The capturers did not know, that the European countries have disserting methods in kidnapping situations compared for example to the USA. The abductors expected to receive money somewhere from the West, private or government sources. They did not care who was going to pay for it, and why. Moore also highlights, how useless it is to say to the TV cameras not to negotiate with terrorists, but yet to act differently. The only language that terrorists comprehend is a persistent rescue policy. Moore suggests, that an effective way to reduce kidnappings is to execute regularly rescue plans, where kidnappers and guards are killed (PBS 2015). It should be remembered, however, that ISIS is remarkably more developed terrorist group in many levels, than its colleagues. Thus, the case could be that ISIS is aware of different hostage policies.

Even if it was possible to decrease kidnappings by refusing to negotiate with terrorists, it is quite cold comfort for the victims' families. Sadly, everybody knows that the business idea is very simple: if the ransom is paid, the person is freed. If it is not paid, the person is killed (Di Giovanni, McGrath Goodman, Sharkov 2014). That is exactly the reason why kidnapping can be so effective: in reality, most of the families are not willing to loose their members only to counter the idea of terrorism. Needles to say, that captive taking has become a valuable business for ISIS, and a vicious circle to everybody else.

4.3. Humanitarian Aid

The biggest goal of ISIS is to establish a new state. Every state should offer some kind of aid for its residents, or as in ISIS's case, even pretend to do so. No matter how corrupted and twisted ISIS's idea of citizenship is, these terrorists know that validity is linked to its capacity

to at least act like a state. ISIS has realized that aid forwards its state-building plan, and extends the organization's capability to dominate the people who are living in its territory. Consequently, there is a clash of interests between ISIS and the humanitarian organizations. Both parties wish to help these underprivileged people, but for fairly different reasons (Rosen 2015).

ISIS has set very strict terms for those aid groups that wish to serve in ISIS's domain, since it seeks to abuse their assistance. ISIS deputies are demanding to participate for aid deliveries, and are willing to distribute the aid only if the boxes are not marked with the symbol of the group offering it. ISIS has even subsumed aid into its own formal propaganda machine: the group has shared videos, where ISIS hands out food and medicine in bags that are carrying "IS Department of Relief" labels. These conditions of course allow ISIS to take credit for the international help, increasing ISIS's popularity among the locals (Rosen 2015).

The food, medical and clinic help is certainly meant for the hungry and hurting civil population living under the power of ISIS, but parts of it end up also to the jihadist fighters' own use. The aid is not well-monitored, and thus ISIS exploits the chance by selling it in the black market. In some regions, the locals need to pay for the aid, which enables ISIS to earn money. Consequently, the humanitarian aid eases ISIS's burden to cover the food costs for the locals and displaced people, allowing the group to spend even more money on war waging (Dettmer 2014).

Knowing all this, why does the West keep on supporting ISIS indirectly? Is there an actual concern, that cooperating with ISIS in this issue would only lengthen the war and hardship? There is no right answer what to do with this problem. However, as a financial source, humanitarian aid is very marginal, only the tip of the iceberg to ISIS (Dettmer 2014). Therefore, stopping the aid would guarantee only increasing famine and illness among the civilians, not stop ISIS.

CONCLUSIONS

Even though political injustice and radical Islamism compose the ideological backbone for ISIS, it takes more than a number of common principles to become a successful terrorist organization. Weapons, working propaganda engine, wages to combatants and coordination of attacks- all these things require a remarkable amount of money. Currently, ISIS has a diverse funding system, which profits the group approximately with \$2-4 million US dollars per day. Consequently, it is able not only to execute raids and aggression, but also to provide for the eight million people living under its control. This paper researches and analyses what kind of sources ISIS's several revenue streams include. The findings are followed by discussion about how valuable each source is. Lastly, the paper pursues to suggest the most suitable ways to disturb ISIS's access to those assets, if not to destroy them completely.

ISIS's biggest sources turn out to be oil and taxes, which brings us good and bad news. The ultimate drawback is that both of these revenue streams are located in ISIS-held territories, and thus it is challenging to disturb the group's access to them. However, they might not be sustainable sources in a long-run. When it comes to oil, ISIS is able to fuel its war machine and provide electricity to the caliphate with it, and additionally to amass money worth of \$1,5-2 million US dollars per day, meaning \$547-720 million dollars per year by selling it locally to the civilians, Syrian and Kurdish rebel groups, plus al-Assad's regime. The coalition and Russia have executed air strikes in ISIS's oil fields, and successfully reduced their production. However, this method has required civil lives, as well as it has disturbed the locals' finance. On the other hand, ISIS members have luckily quite poor technical skills needed on the fields, plus the group's equipment is already out-dated. These things have complicated to some extent ISIS's ability to profit from oil.

Excessive taxes on income, crop and livestock; tariffs and transport licences, and for example fines for smoking profits ISIS roughly \$400 million US dollars per year, thus making the extortion system its second valuable source of money. ISIS seeks to justify the burdensome, compulsory taxation by referring to it as zakat, Islamic charity, even though all

the Muslims know that the real amount is way smaller than what the group demands. The locals are willing to pay high taxes only because those who refuse to pay will be punished. Finding ways to counter ISIS's taxation is difficult, since classical counter-terrorism tools do not apply in this case: you simply cannot bomb or invade taxes. Consequently, containment could be the most effective way to defeat this source. This conclusion can be drawn from the fact that the locals, and even ISIS fighters themselves, are unsatisfied with the living conditions in the caliphate. Forced to exchange hard work and heavy taxes for poor infrastructure plus a constantly hostile and unstable environment, the locals are fleeing the territory, even with the risk of facing death. On the other hand, also many ISIS-fighters are fed up with the rotten system, even though they do not need to pay the taxes, and are now seeking a way out. In the light of this information, aggressive taxation and extortion seems to be an unsustainable revenue stream in the long run, and might turn ISIS against itself.

The third most profitable source for ISIS comes from smuggling. The group manages to utilize its age-old, secret smuggling chains to traffic different sorts of slaves, human organs, drugs and cultural artefacts to various destinations. As the corrupted routes have existed for decades and the trade occurs via illegal markets, the smuggling business is challenging to track. Drugs, more specifically Captagon pills, are clearly the most lucrative trafficking item for ISIS. This highly addictive amphetamine is produced from cents worth of ingredients, but sold forward with huge profits. Trading the pills benefits ISIS approximately \$200 million dollars per year. However, not nearly all of the pills are sold, since ISIS leaders distribute them among the group's own fighters. Captagon is perfect for war waging, since it stimulates the central neural system, promptly creating a euphoric intensity in users, and thus supporting the combatants to stay awake for long periods and to kill with a merciless, irresponsible ease. When it comes to smuggling in cultural artefacts, humans and human organs, they are not nearly as important revenue streams to ISIS as drugs. Historical objects profit the group roughly only a few million per year. As a contradiction, the same history enthusiasts who adore cultural relics are the ones providing conditions that result in pillage of antique sites. In other words, the objects are put on sale solely because people are willing to pay for them. As the final point of smuggling, human and human organs trafficking seem to be so far the least lucrative targets. Nevertheless, human trafficking is a useful instrument for ISIS, since it eases the recruitment of male combatants from highly conservative Muslim circles, where women and sex are taboos, and rewards devoted fighters. As for trafficking in human organs, it is

ISIS's newest revenue stream, and thus there are not exact figures available yet about its productivity. Nevertheless, numerous scrutinised mass graves that are located in ISIS-held regions reveal hundreds of ISIS casualties lacking body parts, kidneys and livers. Surgical scars and absent organs lead inevitably to dark conclusions. In order to counter ISIS's overall trafficking, the middlemen, clients, transporters, traders and paths through which the items are smuggled, should be examined in a larger scale. Currently, this data is unfortunately rather incomplete. Clearly, also the role of international financial sector should be investigated more closely. This is essential, because the illegal chain does not only benefit ISIS, but also generates local financial dependence on criminal actions.

Kidnapping plays the fourth biggest position in ISIS's funding system, gaining it \$20-40 million US dollars. Taking hostages to collect ransoms has been a long-lasting habit for ISIS, victims including local Iraqis and Syrians, plus Western and Asian individuals. The effectiveness of hostage taking relies on its cold-blooded policy: if the ransom request is not met, the captive faces execution. The problem is, that paying ransoms makes ISIS richer, and thus strengthens its possibilities to coordinate new attacks. Nonetheless, many families and firms have rather saved their members and employees, than countered ISIS. A solution to this dilemma could be a persistent rescue policy. An example, which does not include the death of the victim or strengthening of ISIS, is persistent rescue policy. Regular rescue plans, where kidnappers and guards are killed, might decrease the attractiveness of hostage taking, simultaneously saving the lives of captives without strengthening ISIS financially.

Moving on to humanitarian aid, ISIS has arranged exact terms for those aid groups that desire to operate in its territory, purely because it craves to abuse their help. ISIS fighters insist to take part in aid deliveries, and also accept only boxes that are not marked with symbols of any organization. Thus, ISIS has been able to sell the food and medicine forward, instead of giving it to the hungry and needy locals. As a financial source, humanitarian aid reveals to be really marginal for ISIS. Accordingly, quitting the aid would only assure rising starvation and diseases among the inhabitants, but would not be able to destroy ISIS.

As the last point, private donations from oil-rich Gulf States; Qatar, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, are almost non-existent at the moment. Thanks to their poor monitoring systems, prosperous individuals were able to assist ISIS with millions of US dollars. By now, this source has dried up, for few causes. Firstly, international decision-makers were not happy to find out evidence about private funding. Also, ISIS has become something else than anyone

expected: a miserable slaughter machine. Since 2015, the organization has even attacked the Gulf States themselves several times, by bombing for example Shia mosques. For a reason, the three governments have joined counter-ISIS activities and arrested people with links to the group. Since there still seems to be some persistent private donators trying to find their way to send money to the caliphate, the countries should threaten their citizens, for example, with travel bans and nationality withdrawals, to make it stop.

To sum up conclusions of this paper, the need for large funds to meet organization and governance necessities represent a weakness to ISIS's structure. In the light of the findings in this paper, containment appears to be the only option to counter ISIS's largest revenue streams, oil and taxation. It demands perseverance, which is arduous to muster when the opponent is a savage slaughter machine. Yet, patience might allow ISIS to collapse of its own intrinsic contradictions, eventually. ISIS's poor system has already started to turn against itself, as the locals are escaping its territory.

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