



The meteoric expansion of the ISIS movement in Iraq, Syria and beyond during the past year has led to numerous, often conflicting interpretations of this phenomenon and its seeming success, as well as divergent perspectives on its prospects and future.

#### ORGANIZERS

Bassam Haddad  
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The workshop, “Understanding the ISIS Phenomenon”, to be jointly convened by the Arab Studies Institute and the Issam Faris Center of the American University of Beirut on 28 July 2015, seeks to promote and provide a multi-dimensional, inter-disciplinary examination of its subject.

The purpose of this workshop is to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the Islamic State phenomenon, both in terms of the contextual factors that have produced it; its territorial, organizational, political, socio-economic, and religious-theological features; the extent of continuity and change with respect to other Islamist and particularly other radical Jihadi movements; and informed discussion on its further trajectory.

#### PARTICIPANTS

Mouin Rabbani  
Bassam Haddad  
As’ad Abu Khalil  
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Oraib Rantawi  
Abu Ibrahim  
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Zaid Ali  
Maher Esber  
Rim Turkmani  
Rami Khoury  
Yasar Qatarneh  
Nabih Boulos  
Basileus Zeno

## Papers and Presentations

**Mouin Rabbani** (*Arab Studies Institute*)

ISIS: Research and Policy Agenda

**Bassam Haddad** (*Arab Studies Institute and George Mason University*)

*How Not to Study ISIS*

**Yezid Sayigh** (*Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*)

Cloning Saddam: Understanding ISIS

**Oraib Rantawi** (*Al-Quds Centre for Political Studies*)

The Development of Organized Salafi Jihadism, its Deployment in Regional Struggles, and the Failure of the Contemporary Arab Nation State: Three Entry Points to Understanding the Emergence of ISIS

**Abu Ibrahim Raqqawi** (*Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently, via skype*)

ISIS and the Virtual War on Social Media

**As'ad Abu-Khalil** (*University of California – Stanislaus*)

The Study of ISIS and the Role of Islam

**Rim Turkmani** (*London School of Economics*)

ISIS and the War Economy in Syria

**Rami Khoury** (*American University of Beirut*)

Battalions of Discontent, Despair and Directionlessness: The many motivations for joining or backing ISIS

**Maher Esber** (*Developmental Interaction Network*)

How Islamist Discourse penetrated the Syrian Uprisings:  
Understanding the Emergence of ISIS

**Yasar Qatarneh** (*The Arab Initiative for Conflict Transformation*)

ISIS: Positioning Radicalism on the Map of Contemporary Ideologies, or Positioning Ideology on the Map of Contemporary Radicalism?

**Nabih Boulos** (*Los Angeles Times*)

ISIS's Bureaucratic and Administrative Trappings

**Basileus Zeno** (*University of Massachusetts, Amherst*)  
*More than Mere stones: Archeological Sites under ISIS*

**Ziad Ali** (*Princeton University*)

Isis in Tikrit: Invasion, Occupation and Legacy