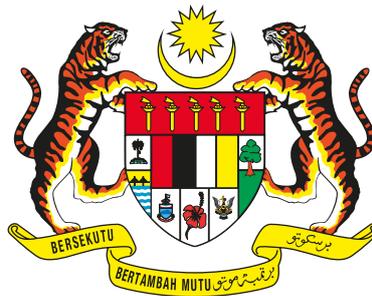


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BY COMMAND**



WHITE PAPER

**ADDRESSING THE THREAT OF THE
ISLAMIC STATE GROUP**

Tabled by

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Prime Minister of Malaysia

AT THE 13TH PARLIAMENTARY SESSION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ADDRESSING THE THREAT OF THE ISLAMIC STATE GROUP

“ This is because we have done this and when we relate it to maqasid al-Shariah (objectives of Shariah), i.e. the protection of religion, creed, life, intellectual dignity or progeny and wealth, it means that Malaysia is on the right track. ”

- Prime Minister of Malaysia, 9 April 2014

The government's surveillance of the militant Islamic State (IS) group reveals that it has a great impact on national security. The declaration of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as caliph for all Muslims is an indication of the international agenda of IS to establish an Islamic State. With 31,500 local and foreign militants, IS has managed to take control of several regions in Syria and Iraq. A stable financial foundation has also strengthened its position. The use of social media by IS to receive support is also a threat to the government.

2. IS which subscribes to the Salafi-Jihadi ideology has manipulated the teachings of Islam particularly the meaning of jihad. IS declares as apostates those Muslims who do not share its views apart from killing non-Muslims. IS also rejects the system of government of other Islamic states that do not implement shariah. Furthermore, the emergence of IS has incited the spirit of jihad among militant groups which have pledged allegiance to IS.

3. IS often commits atrocities and inhumane acts. Such acts of terrorism are not confined to Syria and Iraq but have spread outside the conflict zone. IS also urges Muslims around the world to launch attacks on Western interests and fight all countries that oppress Muslim minorities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ADDRESSING THE THREAT OF THE ISLAMIC STATE GROUP

4. Malaysia's experience in tackling the threat of radicalism, extremism and terrorism shows that the process of rehabilitating elements influenced by extremist ideology is difficult. Thus, the spread of militant ideologies is indeed alarming. Malaysians are easily influenced to join IS due to the desire of becoming martyrs, the belief that the war in Syria is the great battle of the end times, and out of sympathy for the plight of the Syrian people.

5. The RMP has identified 39 Malaysians who have joined militant groups in Syria and Iraq. In addition, 40 individuals who have been influenced by militant ideologies including returnees from Syria have been arrested by the RMP.

6. Malaysia faces security risks following the return of militants from Syria and Iraq. They have the potential to carry out lone-wolf attacks. Moreover, those who did not have the opportunity to travel to conflict zones may also be inclined to carry out radical and terrorist activities.

7. Several countries have strengthened their anti-terrorism laws. At the same time, international bodies and prominent Muslim scholars have issued resolutions and statements condemning the ideology and actions of IS. Malaysia supports the resolutions and position of the United Nations in relation to IS.

8. Since the efforts to address the threat of IS have become more challenging, the government must act immediately to contain the influence of IS. This white paper proposes that an appropriate new law be legislated to allow for action to be taken against Malaysians involved in militant activities and involvement with terrorist groups, and to strengthen existing laws to enable the authorities to act more effectively.

GLOSSARY

ADDRESSING THE THREAT OF THE ISLAMIC STATE GROUP

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| AQI | Al Qaeda in Iraq |
| ASG | Abu Sayyaf Group |
| BIFF | Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters |
| Conflict zones | Syria and Iraq |
| GCC | Gulf Cooperation Council |
| IS | Islamic State |
| ISA | Internal Security Act 1960 |
| ISI | Islamic State of Iraq |
| ISIL | Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant |
| JI | Jemaah Islamiah |
| JTJ | Jamaat al-Tawhid wal-Jihad |
| KMM | Kumpulan Militan Malaysia |
| MIT | Mujahidin Indonesia Timur |
| MSC | Mujahideen Shura Council |
| OIC | Organisation of Islamic Cooperation |
| POCA | Prevention of Crime Act 1959 |
| RMP | Royal Malaysian Police |
| SOSMA | Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 |
| TWJ | Tawheed Wal Jihad |
| UAE | United Arab Emirates |
| UNSC | United Nations Security Council |
| US | United States |

“ADDRESSING THE THREAT OF THE ISLAMIC STATE GROUP”

INTRODUCTION

1. Malaysia has always been monitoring and observing various radical movements and the spread of extremist ideologies. The emergence of the militant group ad-Daulah al-Islamiyyah or better known as the Islamic State (IS) due to the instability in Syria and Iraq is seen to have a direct effect on Malaysia’s security. The IS’ aspiration of establishing an Islamic state by resorting to terrorism is clearly against the teachings of Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah. The government is concerned with the signs of terrorism and the influence of IS’ extremist ideology being brought back by Malaysian nationals after participating in the Syrian and Iraqi conflicts. At the same time, the spread of IS influence in the country through social media is also on the increase.

2. The government’s monitoring shows that some Malaysians are inspired to travel to Syria and Iraq after being influenced by IS propaganda which claims that the war in Syria is the great battle of the end times. Until the end of October 2014, the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP)¹ has identified 39 Malaysians involved in various militant groups in Syria and Iraq. Of the said number, 17 are involved with IS and 22 with Afnad al-Sham². Six of them are former detainees of the Internal Security Act (ISA) 1960, i.e. five are former members of Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (KMM) and one a former member of Jemaah Islamiah (JI)³. To date, five have been killed including a suicide bomber in Iraq.⁴

3. Malaysia rejects IS due to the fact that the Salafi-Jihadi ideology advanced by the group is based on extremism and terrorism. Malaysia stands firmly united with the international community in the fight against this terrorist group which is tarnishing the image of Islam and whose mission violates the values of humanity.

¹ RMP statistics, 5 November 2014.

² Afnad al-Sham is a militant group involved in the Syrian conflict.

³ KMM: Mohd Lotfi bin Ariffin, Zainuri bin Kamarudin, Mohd Rafi bin Uddin, Samad bin Shukri and Murad Halimuddin bin Hassan; JI: Zid Saharani bin Mohd Esa.

⁴ Mohd Lotfi bin Ariffin, Mohd Fadlan Shahidi bin Mohd Khir, Zainan bin Harith, Muhammad Afiq Heusen bin Rahizat and Ahmad Tarmimi bin Maliki (see Appendix A).

4. The government of Malaysia takes firm actions, at all times, against actions which violate the law particularly terrorism. A number of terrorist threats were addressed through the strong support and cooperation given by all levels of society. Among these threats were the communist threat since 1948 that was fully overcome in 1989, and more recently, in February 2013, the attack by Sulu terrorists on Lahad Datu on the east coast of Sabah where continuous efforts are currently being made to ensure the area's security.

5. As a country which has pioneered moderation in all aspects of life, Malaysia has a responsibility to inform the people that the extremist ideology of IS is against the teachings of Islam and the constitution of the country. In this regard, the government has taken and will continue to take the necessary preventive measures. In addressing this threat, all Malaysians, particularly those who are Muslims, must unite, strengthen the spirit of Islamic brotherhood and remember that the country's history of prosperity is based on peace and racial tolerance. Furthermore, Malaysia will increase its efforts to explain the true concept of jihad and correct the Western perception which often associates Islam with terrorism.

OBJECTIVES

6. The objectives of this White Paper are as follows:
- i) to expose the danger of the radical and extremist ideology of IS which contradicts the teachings of Islam, the practice of democracy and human values;
 - ii) to urge Malaysians not to be influenced by the ideology of IS which threatens the security and stability of the country; and
 - iii) to propose integrated steps based on a specific law to address the threat of terrorism.

BACKGROUND OF IS

Establishment

7. IS which has its roots in Al Qaeda began with the establishment of Jamaat al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (JTJ) by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in 1999. JTJ pledged allegiance to Osama bin Laden in 2004 and changed its name to Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI).

8. To strengthen his leadership, al-Zarqawi unified six armed groups, including AQI in Iraq under the name of Mujahideen Shura Council (MSC) in January 2006. After the death of al-Zarqawi in a US military operation on 7 June 2006, MSC announced the appointment of Abu Ayyub al-Masri as the leader.

9. Al-Masri had a bigger dream and gave a new name to the group, i.e. Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), in October 2006 and appointed Abu Omar al-Baghdadi as its leader. Both al-Masri and al-Baghdadi were killed in April 2010 following an attack by US forces. Following the death of Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, the leadership of IS was assumed by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the current leader of IS.

10. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced the change of the group's name from ISI to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in April 2013 indicating the establishment of a caliphate which covers Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Cyprus, Hatay in southern Turkey and Sinai in Egypt. Later in February 2014, Al Qaeda under the leadership of Ayman al-Zawahiri announced that ISIL was no longer part of Al Qaeda. The announcement came after al-Baghdadi urged all groups affiliated with Al Qaeda in Syria to pledge allegiance to him and reject al-Zawahiri as a leader. ISIL's success in taking control of several cities in Syria and Iraq⁵ led the group to announce the establishment of IS on 29 June 2014. Al-Baghdadi declared himself the caliph and urged all Muslims from around the world to pledge allegiance to him. By right, a caliph has to obtain the agreement of Islamic countries, scholar bodies and Muslims from all over the world.⁶ However, al-Baghdadi failed to get the required support and recognition.

⁵ For the map of areas controlled by IS, see Appendix B .

⁶ Open letter by Council of American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) dated 19 September 2014.

Ideology

11. IS originated from an extremist group which subscribes to the ideology of Salafi-Jihadi. This ideology promotes the establishment of an Islamic State through war and declares that Muslim rulers who do not uphold shariah law are disbelievers. This group gives a different interpretation to the boundaries and limitations of jihad and rejects the true definition of jihad based on al-Quran and Sunnah. This permits them to kill anyone whether Muslim or non-Muslim. They also allow aggressive behaviour and the destruction of properties including those belonging to fellow Muslims.

Aims

12. On 29 June 2014, al-Baghdadi stated that the aim of IS is to establish an Islamic caliphate through armed struggle⁷ claiming that all other Islamic countries do not adhere to the shariah of Islam. IS urges all Muslims to migrate to Syria and Iraq to assist in the establishment of the Islamic State⁸ and the propagation of its ideology to the rest of the world. IS also supports the armed struggle of all oppressed Muslim minorities. Such a stance will increase unrest in the countries concerned.

Leadership

13. The top IS leadership comprises the caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi; the IS military commander, Abu Omar al-Shishani; and the IS spokesperson, Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, all of whom are militants who were once prisoners.

14. Al-Baghdadi,⁹ 43, was detained from 2004 to 2009 at Camp Bucca, Iraq which held 24,000 detainees including nationalists from the Ba'ath party¹⁰ and other Sunni groups which opposed the US occupation. It is believed that this camp was the birthplace of an inmate collaboration to establish IS.

⁷ Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's speech on 29 June 2014.

⁸ Abu Muhammad al-Adnani's speech on 29 June 2014.

⁹ See Appendix C.

¹⁰ Ba'ath was the party in power during the rule of Saddam Hussein.

15. Al-Shishani,¹¹ or his real name Tarkhan Batirashvili, 28, was born in Birkiani, Georgia and is also known as “Omar the Chechen”. He served in the armed forces of Georgia from 2006 to 2010 and travelled to Syria in 2012 to form Jaish al-Muhajirin wal-Ansar which collaborated with IS to fight the government of President Bashar Al-Assad. Due to his military experience, al-Shishani was appointed as IS commander for northern Syria in 2013. He was later appointed the military commander of IS in June 2014.

16. Al-Adnani,¹² 37, was born in the region of Idlib, Syria. He joined the foreign fighters in Iraq in 2003 to fight against US troops. He is a spokesperson good at disseminating the propaganda of IS through social media.

Membership

17. The membership strength of IS is estimated at 31,500 comprising locals and foreign fighters. According to the UN Security Council (UNSC), it is estimated that there are some 15,000 foreign militants from more than 80 countries including France, Britain, Germany, Belgium, Australia, US, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Jordan, Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines and China¹³ participating in the Syrian and Iraqi conflicts. These foreign fighters were successfully recruited by IS in just two years compared to the ten years Al Qaeda took in Afghanistan to recruit fewer than 10,000 members. Furthermore, IS is also successful in recruiting foreign militants from countries which have never been associated with terrorist activities such as Chile and Maldives. The widespread influence of IS is a serious threat to the international community including Malaysia.

Areas Controlled by IS

18. Throughout its involvement in the Syrian conflict from 2012 to 2014, IS has managed to take control of Deir al-Zour and Raqqa¹⁴ which has become the group’s operation centre. The group has also managed to gather strength in terms of weaponry, membership, finance and experience before re-entering Iraq in 2014.

¹¹ See Appendix D.

¹² See Appendix E.

¹³ UNSC report, 29 September 2014 (S/2014/770).

¹⁴ See Appendix B.

19. Meanwhile, in Iraq IS has managed to take control of a relatively large area which, among other places, includes Anbar, Nineveh, Salahaddin, Babel and parts of Kirkuk and Diyala. Much of the group's success was achieved through the assistance of Sunni tribes and former members of the Ba'ath party who had been marginalised by the former prime minister, Nouri al-Maliki. IS has benefited from Ba'athist elements with vast experience and expertise in the field of military and intelligence strategy that had been acquired during the 25-year rule of former President Saddam Hussein. The area controlled by IS is estimated to have an Iraqi population of between 9 and 13 million. It also has around 11 per cent of Iraq's oil and gas reserves.

Financial Sources

20. After its success in taking control of a number of regions in Syria and Iraq, IS has managed to accumulate almost RM7 billion in assets. In addition to its oil revenue amounting to RM3 million a day in the black market, IS also has financial reserves of RM1.4 billion after it looted the Bank of Mosul. Historical artefacts in IS-controlled regions are worth about RM3 billion.¹⁵ These financial resources have indeed strengthened the financial position of IS and enabled the group to expand its control and influence.

Exploitation of Social Media

21. IS makes full use of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter to gain support and recruit new members particularly the youth in order to realise its agenda.

22. IS uses various languages including English, French and Indonesian in distributing its propaganda in order to attract Muslims from all over the world to go for jihad. Its widespread propaganda which includes online magazines has gained the support of its target audience.

¹⁵ UNESCO report, 30 September 2014.

THE THREAT OF IS

Exploitation of the Teachings of Islam

23. IS has misinterpreted the teachings of Islam particularly regarding the concept of jihad. It believes that the objective of establishing an Islamic state can only be achieved through “war jihad”. This approach contradicts the views of the scholars of Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah who state that the scope of jihad is broad and includes the protection of national security, the protection of the sanctity of religion, the preservation of lives, the protection of progeny, dignity and property. This view is also shared by the scholars and muftis in Malaysia.

24. Actually, the concept of jihad in terms of protecting oneself and the nation must be consistent with Allah’s command in surah al-Hajj, verse 39, the translation of which is “Permission to fight is given to those (Muslims) against whom war is made, because they are wronged; and verily, Allah is Most Powerful to help them achieve.” Meanwhile, permission to go to war without transgressing the limits prescribed in Islam is explained in surah al-Baqarah, verse 190, the translation of which is “Fight in the way of Allah (to uphold and protect the religion of Islam) those who fight you but do not transgress (by starting a war). Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.”

25. IS has also perverted the true meaning of hijrah (migration). They call upon their supporters to perform hijrah to Syria and Iraq while the families they leave behind face hardship and difficulty. This is against the teachings of Islam which state that the ultimate responsibility of the head of the family is to care for the welfare of the family before anything else.

26. IS easily declares those who do not share its views as apostates and permits their killing. This principle contradicts the true teachings of Islam which uphold the principle of brotherhood and social harmony.

27. Moreover, IS has killed non-Muslim civilians and destroyed their properties despite the fact that Islam guarantees religious freedom and gives those in authority the responsibility of protecting the rights of non-Muslims in Islamic countries.

Rejection of the System of Government of Other Islamic Countries

28. IS rejects the system of government of other Islamic states which do not implement its version of Islamic shariah and considers other interpretations of Islamic shariah as a deviation or even taghut (idolism). In the eyes of IS, its system of government is the only system consistent with the teachings of Islam, and it does not tolerate opposition particularly from non-Muslims. IS demands non-Muslims to pay jizyah or special tax if they do not want to be attacked or driven out of their land. IS also uses violence against people including women and children and sentences people to death arbitrarily without giving them the right to defend themselves. The stance taken by IS contradicts the parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy practised in Malaysia which is regarded as a multi-racial country which practises racial and religious tolerance.

Instigation of Jihad among Militant Groups

29. The IS threat is becoming increasingly dangerous because the Islamic state ideology similar to the one advocated by IS is not a new phenomenon but has been advocated by the JI in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and the southern Philippines. The emergence of IS has inspired and re-ignited regional militant groups which have been subdued by the security authorities of the countries concerned. These groups including JI, Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT), Tawheed Wal Jihad (TWJ), Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) have now pledged allegiance to IS.

30. Malaysia faces a similar threat because the Salafi-Jihadi ideology was once championed by local militant groups including JI, Al-Maunah, KMM, Darul Islam Sabah and Tanzim Al-Qaeda Malaysia. The surge in IS influence can inspire and re-ignite these groups' activities in Malaysia which will create fears among not only Muslims but also non-Muslims in this country.

Atrocities of IS

31. The cruelties committed by IS have received global attention following its brutal slaughtering of two US citizens, James Foley and Steven Sotloff, and two British citizens, David Haines and Alan Henning. Scenes of these brutal killings were publicised by IS through social media in an attempt to create fear among its enemies. Nevertheless, these incidents have tarnished the image of Islam and increased Islamophobic sentiments around the world.

32. The atrocities of IS can also be witnessed in their persecution of the Yazidi and Turkmen minorities who were forced out of their homelands in Mosul and Amril in Iraq. The gruesome crimes of IS also include the destruction of Shia mosques¹⁶ and the mass killing of members of the Iraqi military forces as well as civilians including women and children. The UN mission in Iraq reported that throughout October 2014, IS had killed at least 1,273 people.¹⁷ IS will also not hesitate to kill fellow Sunnis such as in an incident which took place in early November 2014 when 322 people including 50 women and children were killed in the village of Albu Nimr, Anbar.¹⁸

The Danger of IS Influence Outside the Conflict Zone

33. Terrorist incidents due to the influence of IS extremist ideology were also reported to have taken place outside the conflict zone. Among these incidents were:

- i) on 24 May 2014, Mehdi Nemmouche, a member of Shariah4Belgium carried out a fatal attack on four civilians at the Jewish Museum of Belgium in Brussels. He had previously travelled to Syria and established links with Muslim militants there. Shariah4Belgium is an extremist group which supports IS;
- ii) on 24 September 2014, a group called Jund al-Khalifa in Algeria, which announced its support for IS, slaughtered a French tourist, Hervé Gourdel, a day after the US-led international coalition launched an air strike on IS in Syria;
- iii) on 24 September 2014 also, two Australian counterterrorism police officers were stabbed in Melbourne, Australia by Abdul Numan Haider who was believed to be a supporter of IS; and
- iv) on 22 October 2014 in Ottawa, Canada an IS sympathiser, Michael Zehaf-Bibeau shot dead a guard at the Canadian National War Memorial and after that staged an attack in the parliament building. He was later shot dead.

¹⁶ See Appendix F.

¹⁷ Report of UN Mission in Iraq, 1 November 2014.

¹⁸ Report of Ministry of Human Rights, Iraq, 2 November 2014.

Calls for Retaliation

34. Al-Adnani has urged Muslims around the world who could not fight in Syria to launch attacks against the citizens and interests of the West, particularly the US, Australia, Canada and France¹⁹ in retaliation for the air strikes launched by the US-led international coalition. This is considered a serious threat as the IS supporters and those who are deceived by IS propaganda can launch an attack on the interests of member states of the coalition anywhere in the world including Malaysia.

35. Meanwhile, al-Baghdadi has instigated oppressed Muslim populations in a number of countries including Indonesia, Myanmar and the Philippines to rise and fight against their unjust governments.²⁰ This will worsen the unrest in these countries and will threaten regional stability and Malaysian border security.

THE LEVEL OF SECURITY THREAT TO MALAYSIA

Malaysians are Easily Influenced to Join Jihadists

36. The call to jihad by IS is very influential as it is made based on Islamic requirements that have been manipulated. Some Malaysians are attracted to join IS for the following reasons:

- i) Some Malaysians believe that participating in the Syrian conflict is the way to achieve martyrdom. They believe that the war in Syria is a war in the path of Allah and that paradise is the reward for those who die in this war. Nevertheless, the National Fatwa Council in its 106th Muzakarah²¹ has concluded that the participation of Muslims in IS activities in Iraq and Syria is contrary to Islamic law, and their deaths cannot be categorised as martyrdom. The conclusion was made based on the argument that IS kills and fights against fellow Muslims;

¹⁹ Al-Adnani's speech on 21 September 2014.

²⁰ Al-Baghdadi's speech on 29 June 2014.

²¹ The statement of the 106th Muzakarah of the National Fatwa Council in Kuala Terengganu on 23 October 2014.

- ii) Meanwhile, some Malaysians are attracted to travel to Syria and Iraq after being lured by IS propaganda which claims that the current war in Syria is considered the great battle of the end times also known as al-Malhamah al-Kubra. IS exploits verses from the holy Quran and the hadith on this issue to attract and deceive many Muslims. However, what is taking place in Syria is the killing of fellow Muslims. This shows that the claim of IS is not consistent with the teachings of Islam. The war in Syria is merely a political clash and a sectarian conflict;

- iii) The plight of the Sunni population in Syria caused by the atrocities and oppression of the Assad regime has received the sympathy of some Malaysians. This sentiment can be seen through a number of demonstrations, including the one which took place in front of the Syrian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur in June 2013 involving more than 1,000 demonstrators. The presence of anti-Assad preachers from Syria has also encouraged a number of Malaysians to travel to Syria for jihad. Although some travelled to Syria on humanitarian missions, it is feared that they were exposed to IS ideology and became sympathetic towards the group. As a result some of them joined the group. Among the Malaysians who were lured to join IS due to the factors stated above are:
 - a) **Razif bin Mohd Ariff**
Aged 33, educated in Pakistan and Yemen, a construction contractor, arrested in Lebanon by military intelligence on 18 October 2012 on his way to Syria;

 - b) **Muhammad Razin Sharhan bin Mustafa Kamal**
Aged 24, a former college student, arrested with Razif in Lebanon;

 - c) **Yazid bin Sufaat**
Aged 50, former military officer, former member of KMM, former ISA detainee, recruited new members to go to jihad in Syria through Facebook, arrested by the RMP in February 2013;

 - d) **Wan Mohd Aquil bin W. M. Zainal Abidin**
Aged 35, former musician, also known as Akel Zainal;

- e) **Syamimi Faiqah binti Sulaman**
Aged 20, a former college student, travelled to Syria and married Akel Zainal;
- f) **Muhammad Aqif Heusen bin Rahizat**
Aged 22, responsible for assisting in organising the travel of Malaysian militants from Istanbul to Syria, killed in Syria;
- g) **Ummi Khalsom binti Bahak**
Aged 24, private sector employee, planned to marry Aqif but was arrested before she left for Syria;
- h) **Hassanbusamah bin Suleiman**
Aged 30, casual worker, arrested before leaving for Syria;
- i) **Ahmad Tarmimi bin Maliki**
Aged 26, factory worker, became a suicide bomber in Anbar, Iraq in May 2014;
- j) **Mohd Lotfi bin Ariffin**
Aged 46, founder of a madrasah, former member of KMM and former ISA detainee, killed in Syria in September 2014;
- k) **Zainan bin Harith**
Aged 52, self-employed, former member of KMM and former prisoner, killed in Syria in August 2014; and
- l) **Mohammad Fadhlan Shahidi bin Mohammad Khir**
Aged 21, a religious school student, killed in Syria on 9 September 2014.

Security Risks

37. The involvement of Malaysians in the armed conflict in Syria and Iraq poses the following security risks to the country:

- i) Individuals influenced by radical and extremist ideologies have the potential to plan attacks in Malaysia. Information obtained by the police based on the interrogation conducted on 11 suspected cell members arrested on 28 April 2014 revealed their plan to launch bomb attacks on entertainment centres in Kuala Lumpur, a brewery in Selangor and government buildings in Putrajaya. In fact, one of the suspects arrested had already purchased aluminium powder to be used in manufacturing the explosives;
- ii) Militants returning from Syria and Iraq have the potential to continue terrorist activities including establishing cells and launching attacks. They can also influence others and recruit new members particularly youths. Investigations by the RMP revealed that youths are the most vulnerable target group and can be easily influenced by IS propaganda. Such elements must be stamped out to avoid Malaysia becoming a terrorist hub. Furthermore, the harmonious environment enjoyed by multiracial Malaysia in which followers of different religions respect one another will be threatened if these people continue to promote the ideology of IS in Malaysia;
- iii) The militants involved in the Syrian and Iraqi wars have the potential to establish networks among themselves. Once they return to their home countries, these networks can be maintained whether directly or indirectly through social media. They have the potential to carry out terrorist activities as lone wolves or in groups whether in Malaysia or across the borders;
- iv) The return of these militants will also increase security risks in the eastern coast of Sabah which is already facing the threat of ASG which has pledged allegiance to IS. Moreover, currently the Malaysian militants supporting IS have established ties with the ASG. These include five Malaysian militants who have been identified as individuals who were previously in hiding in the southern Philippines.²² The spread of militant activities may also create racial and religious tensions if both Muslim and non-Muslim religious extremists continue to exploit sensitive religious issues for their own benefit and self-interest. In fact, it is feared that the IS network in Sabah may spread into neighbouring Sarawak. Although Sarawak is relatively peaceful, it must be noted that Sarawak once did face a security problem due to the threat from the communists;

²² Dr Mahmud bin Ahmad, Mohd Najib bin Husien, Muhammad Joraim bin Awang Raime, Mohd Amin bin Baco and Jeknal bin Adil.

- v) The gradual release of 250-300 prisoners, most of whom are former members of JI, from Indonesian prisons beginning from early 2015 is a concern as it may have an effect on Malaysian security. Some of these prisoners including the former leader of JI, Abu Bakar Bashir, have pledged allegiance to IS. After their release, it is feared that they might unite or establish ties with the remaining members of JI in Malaysia to create an IS network. It has been reported that some militants from Malaysia and Indonesia in Syria have established an IS unit for Southeast Asia known as Katibah Nusantara Lid-Daulah al-Islamiyyah; and
- vi) IS is adept at manipulating verses of the Quran to turn people into radicals. Even those who did not have the opportunity to travel to Syria and Iraq can be inspired to carry out lone-wolf attacks locally. Such attacks have taken place in Australia and Canada as stated above.

Malaysia Faces the Threat of Becoming a Financial Hub for Terrorism

38. Malaysia faces the risk of becoming a hub for financing terrorism if existing laws are ineffective to curb the flow of funds aimed at assisting militant movements abroad. Australian authorities have detected the transfer of funds from suspected militant groups in the country to the accounts of certain individuals in Malaysia.

Actions by Malaysian Authorities

39. Until 13 November 2014, the RMP has arrested 40 suspects inside the country. The first arrest was made on 7 February 2013 at Ampang, Kuala Lumpur. Of the said figure, 21 people were charged in court [19 people under the Penal Code, Chapter VI A (Terrorism-Related Offences), and two people under the Arms Act 1960 and Firearms (Increased Penalties) Act 1971]. Meanwhile, 19 people were released due to insufficient evidence. As a precautionary measure, the government has barred them from leaving the country and they are currently being monitored by the RMP.

40. In addition, there are five Malaysian militants who have returned from Syria where three of them are under temporary detention while two others are still being investigated. According to RMP reports, one of those arrested is a high risk individual named Mohammad Fauzi Misrak, also known as Abu Dayyan. It is known that he often collaborates with another Malaysian known as Abu Naeem who is an IS commander still in Syria. As stated earlier, the return of experienced veterans such as Mohammad Fauzi poses a threat to national security. Following the arrest of the three militants by the authorities, it is expected that other militants who plan to return to Malaysia will enter the country illegally, for example, through the Malaysia-Thailand border. This will indeed make it difficult for the authorities to detect their return.

ACTIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AGAINST IS

Resolutions and Statements of International Organisations

41. Following the emergence of the IS threat, the UNSC passed two anti-terrorism resolutions, i.e. Resolution 2170 and 2178 in August and September 2014. These two resolutions state that member states of the UN must curb the movement, financing and recruitment of terrorists.²³

42. The Secretary General of OIC, Iyad Ameen Madani, in a statement on 25 July 2014 condemned the cruel treatment of IS towards Christian Iraqis in Mosul and Nineveh including forced deportation and threat of execution, which has torn apart the structural cohesion of the Iraqi people.

43. The Secretary General of the Arab League, Nabil al-Arabi, in a statement on 11 August 2014 has called for military and political action in facing the threats of IS and other militant elements which pose a threat to the sovereignty of Arab states. He also stated that the actions of IS in Iraq are a crime against humanity and demanded that the perpetrators be brought to justice. Meanwhile, all members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have agreed to play their role in combating foreign militant movements including IS.

²³ Resolution 2170 (15 August 2014) and Resolution 2178 (24 September 2014).

44. ASEAN has also supported UNSC Resolutions No. 2170 and 2178 and condemned all acts of destruction, violence and terrorism in all their forms and manifestations and reiterated its stance to implement the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism and ASEAN Comprehensive Plan of Action on Counter Terrorism. These two conventions aim at eliminating terrorism as well as terrorist networks and funds.

Enhancement of the Law

45. The international community has also taken some steps to enhance anti-terrorism laws in order to address the threat of IS. Among countries which have taken these steps are the US, Britain, Australia, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and United Arab Emirates (UAE). Among ASEAN countries, Myanmar, Brunei and the Philippines already have specific laws to address the threat of terrorism. Furthermore, in Singapore and Brunei the Internal Security Act is still being used.

46. The Australian Parliament approved the Counter Terrorism Legislation Amendment (Foreign Fighters) Bill 2014 in October 2014. The legislation aims, inter alia, to broaden the jurisdiction of the security agency and facilitate the identification and charging of Australian citizens who travel to declared conflict zones. This legislation complements the Anti-Terrorism Act 2005.

47. In Britain, the government will be introducing a new law to enable the relevant authorities to cancel the passports of British citizens who plan to travel to conflict zones. The law aims at enhancing the existing law, i.e. Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Act 2011.

48. Meanwhile, the US has amended the Patriot Act 2001 to allow the government and the authorities to access social media websites to obtain personal information of US citizens suspected of being involved in terrorism.

Statements of Muslim Scholars Condemning IS

49. A number of prominent Muslim scholars have issued fatwas condemning IS. Sheikh Abdul Aziz al-Sheikh, the Mufti of Saudi Arabia, has stated that IS is enemy no. 1 of the Muslim world and that the declaration of the establishment of an Islamic state by IS contradicts the shariah of Islam.²⁴

²⁴ Fatwa of Sheikh Abdul Aziz al-Sheikh, 19 August 2014.

50. Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the Chairman of the International Union of Muslim Scholars has stated that the declaration of the establishment of an Islamic state by IS contradicts shariah law. There is no doubt that Muslims are awaiting the arrival of a Muslim Caliph but the IS action has endangered the Muslims in Iraq and Syria.²⁵

51. Sheikh Shawqi Allam, the Grand Mufti of Egypt has also stated that IS is a terrorist entity which is wrong in Islam and the rules of shariah and is tarnishing the religion of Islam.²⁶

Formation of a Coalition to Combat IS

52. The US uses specific strategies to weaken and defeat IS with the cooperation of the international community. The US Congress in June 2014 approved an additional budget of RM1.7 billion to train and arm moderate fighters in Syria. Furthermore, the international coalition has launched its first air strike on IS positions in Aleppo, Raqqa and Deir al-Zour, Syria with the participation of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE and Jordan beginning from 23 September 2014. To date, more than 60 countries have joined the coalition to fight IS. The US is currently also considering a budget of RM10 billion to fight IS and train the Iraqi military.

SUMMARY

53. The government should never take the IS threat lightly as it has a great impact on national security. Preventive measures must be taken to avoid the involvement of Malaysians in militant activities in conflict zones. If no action is taken, these militants who have military and logistics expertise as well as the capability to manufacture explosives can carry out lone-wolf attacks, establish IS cells in Malaysia and establish networks with other militants in this region. The government's experience in combating radicalism and terrorism has shown that it is quite difficult to change the entrenched views of militants who totally reject other views.

²⁵ Statement of Yusuf al-Qaradawi, 6 July 2014.

²⁶ Fatwa of Sheikh Shawqi Allam, 12 August 2014.

54. The spread of IS ideology and the return of militants are equally dangerous and must be dealt with effectively so as to eliminate the influence of the group. Due to the principle “the end justifies the means” held by IS, members of the group will not hesitate to commit acts of terror. It is obvious that the atrocities committed by IS are indeed transgressions against humanity and have exceeded all bounds. For these militants, human lives have no value. This is evident from the group’s act of slaughtering people alive, the killing of people whom they regard as enemies including women and children and the forced exile of a population from their homeland. IS has also confiscated and destroyed properties including homes, historical sites and places of worship.

55. If not stopped, IS ideology may create chaos as well as racial and religious conflicts in Malaysia. Furthermore, the presence of IS on social media has received the sympathy of Malaysian youths and has enticed them into joining the group. This is a great challenge to the Malaysian government in its effort to effectively control the spread of IS ideology. Thus, all parties and not just the government have a role to play in fighting IS in the cyber world.

56. Malaysia is a country which promotes moderation and practises Islam based on the Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah school of thought. In this regard, it is the responsibility of both the government and people of Malaysia to rectify the image of Islam that has been tarnished by IS. It is extremely unfortunate that all the actions of IS are done in the name of Islam. This militant group manipulates the verses of the holy Quran and authentic hadiths particularly those on the call to jihad to establish an Islamic state and to justify all its actions. This has caused the West to equate Islam with terrorism. As a result, Islamophobia can heighten further. With these challenges, a new legislation to specifically deal with the threat of militant groups must be enacted in Malaysia.

57. The government has previously acted swiftly to deal with the threats of terrorist groups through existing laws, namely the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 (SOSMA), Prevention of Crime Act 1959 (POCA) and the Penal Code.

58. In cases involving militants, existing laws can be further strengthened to enable the authorities to act more effectively. However, to address a new threat like IS, a specific law must be enacted to address the issue of Malaysians being present in conflict zones.

RECOMMENDATION

59. In line with the challenges explained above and consistent with the steps taken by other countries to introduce anti-terrorism laws, the government is proposing a new law to deal with Malaysians involved in militant activities and terrorist groups. Meanwhile, SOSMA, POCA and the Penal Code must be strengthened.

CONCLUSION

60. It is hoped that this White Paper will explain the danger of IS and the threat it poses to national security. The security risks which the IS poses indicate that the problem must be addressed immediately through the passing of a specific law. The involvement of Malaysians in militant activities in the name of Islam has tarnished the image of the country and the sanctity of Islam. All Malaysians regardless of race, religion and political affiliation must reject extremist ideologies and be convinced that the concept of wasatiyyah or moderation is the best way to ensure peace and prosperity.

61. Malaysia is committed to working with the international community to address the threat of terrorism. The government is confident that this cooperation will contribute towards the strengthening of national security. These measures will further enhance the government's efforts to address the threats of radicalism, extremism and terrorism.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

MALAYSIAN NATIONALS KILLED IN SYRIA



1. MOHD LOTFI ARIFFIN



2. MOHAMMAD FADLAN SHAHIDI
MOHD KHIR



3. ZAINAN HARITH



4. MUHAMMAD AFIQ HEUSEN
RAHIZAT



5. AHMAD TARMIMI MALIKI

APPENDIX B

MAP OF AREAS CURRENTLY CONTROLLED BY IS & THE LEVANT



APPENDIX C



**IBRAHIM BIN AWWAD BIN IBRAHIM AL-BADRI AL-HUSSAINI AL-QURASYI
@ ABU BAKR AL-BAGHDADI**

Aged 43, born in Samarra, Iraq

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Education | - Doctor of Philosophy in Islamic Studies from the Islamic University of Baghdad |
| Early occupation | - Mosque clerk in Baghdad - Religious preacher in Baghdad and Fallujah |
| Militant activities | - Imprisoned in 2004 and influenced by radical ideologies while imprisoned at Bucca Camp, Iraq - Joined AQI and ISI under the administration of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi until 2009 - Involved in smuggling foreign fighters into Iraq before he was appointed Emir in Rawa that borders Syria - Led a number of small militant groups before he was invited to join MSC and ISI Shura Council - Took over ISI following the death of Abu Omar al-Baghdadi - Washington listed al-Baghdadi as a terrorist in 2011 - Al-Qaeda cut ties with ISIS following a dispute between al-Baghdadi and several opposition group leaders in Syria and Al-Qaeda |

APPENDIX D



TARKHAN BATIRASHVILI @ ABU OMAR AL-SHISHANI (OMAR THE CHECHEN)

Aged 28, born in Birkani, Georgia

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| Early occupation | - Member of Georgian military (Intelligence Unit) |
| Former membership | - Muhajireen Brigade & Jaish al-Muhajireen wal-Ansar operating in Syria |
| Position in IS | - 2013: Commander of ISIS for northern sector, Syria - June 2014: IS Military Commander |
| Background | - Former member of Georgian military. Served in the military intelligence unit during the five-day war between Russia and Georgia in 2008 - Dismissed from the military on medical grounds - Left Georgia and headed to Istanbul, Turkey before entering Syria to fight in 2012 |
| Militant activities | - Pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in 2013 - Dismissed as the leader of Jaish al-Muhajireen wal-Ansar as the majority of Chechen fighters in Syria were still loyal to Dukko Umarov, the leader of Chechen fighters in Russia at that time - Due to his military experience, he was appointed as the commander of IS for the northern sector, Syria in 2013 - It is claimed that he was appointed as the Military Commander of IS after the death of Abu Abdul Rahman al-Bilawi al-Anbari in Mosul in June 2014 - His greatest success was taking control of the Menagh military air base in the Aleppo region in August 2013 |

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APPENDIX E



TAHA SOBHI FALAHA @ ABU MUHAMMED AL-ADNANI AL-SHAMI

Aged 37, born in Idlib, Syria

Position

- Official spokesperson of IS
- IS Emir in Syria

Militant activities

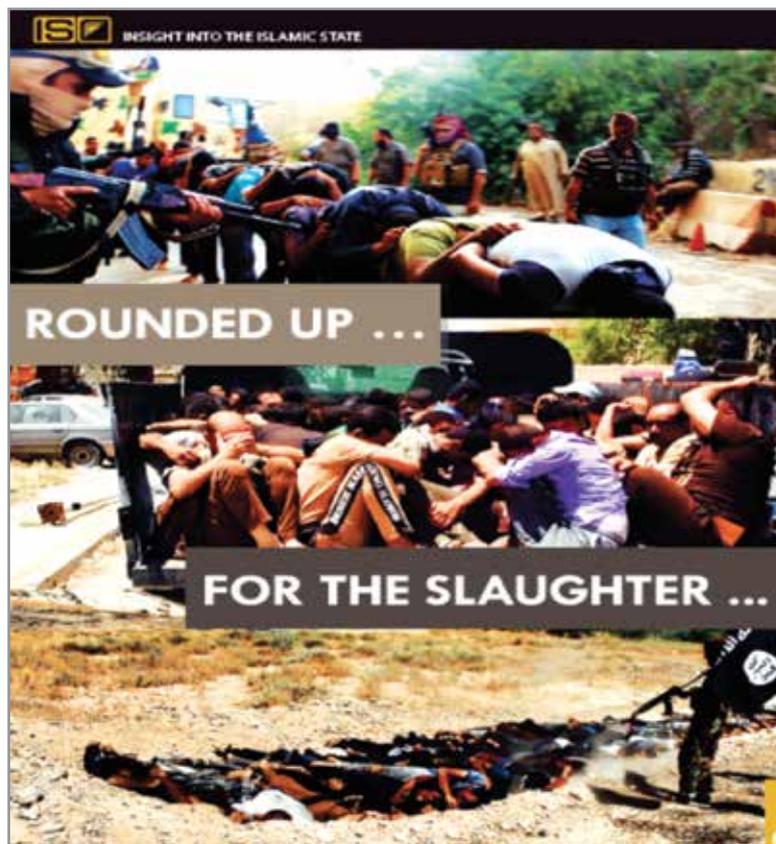
- One of the first foreign militants to fight the US coalition force in Iraq in 2003
- Detained by the US coalition force from May 2005 - 2010

APPENDIX F

IMAGES OF IS ATROCITIES



KILLING OF ALAWITE SOLDIERS IN SYRIA
SOURCE: AL-HAYAT MEDIA CENTRE



MASS KILLING OF IRAQI SOLDIERS
SOURCE: AL-HAYAT MEDIA CENTRE

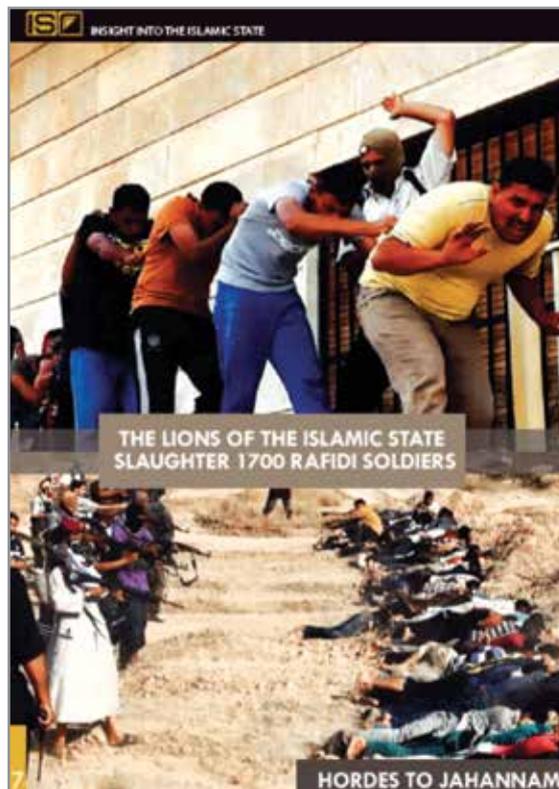
WHITE PAPER

ADDRESSING THE THREAT OF THE ISLAMIC STATE GROUP

APPENDIX F (Continued)



KILLING OF IRAQI SOLDIERS
SOURCE: AL-HAYAT MEDIA CENTRE

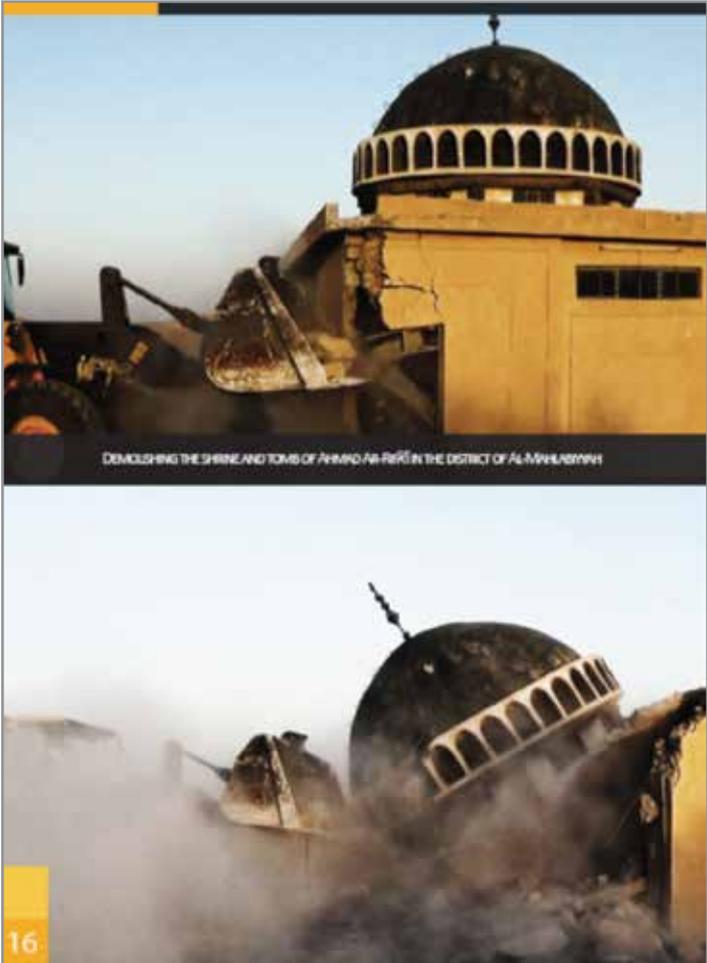


MASS KILLING OF IRAQI SOLDIERS
SOURCE: AL-HAYAT MEDIA CENTRE

APPENDIX F (Continued)



DESTRUCTION OF A SHRINE
SOURCE: AL-HAYAT MEDIA CENTRE



DESTRUCTION OF A TOMB
SOURCE: AL-HAYAT MEDIA CENTRE

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ADDRESSING THE THREAT OF THE ISLAMIC STATE GROUP

APPENDIX F (Continued)



DESTRUCTION OF A TEMPLE OF HUSSEIN
SOURCE: AL-HAYAT MEDIA CENTRE



DESTRUCTION OF A TOMB
SOURCE: AL-HAYAT MEDIA CENTRE

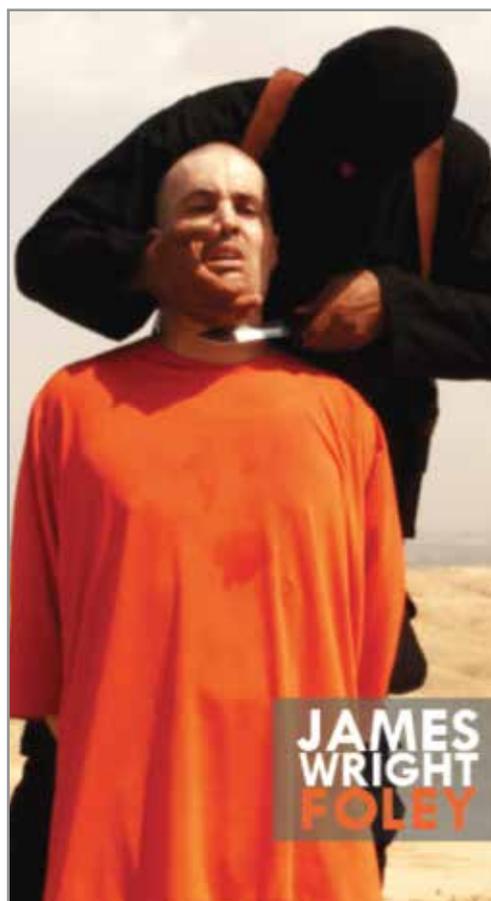
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APPENDIX F (Continued)



KILLING OF SYRIAN SOLDIERS
SOURCE: AL-HAYAT MEDIA CENTRE

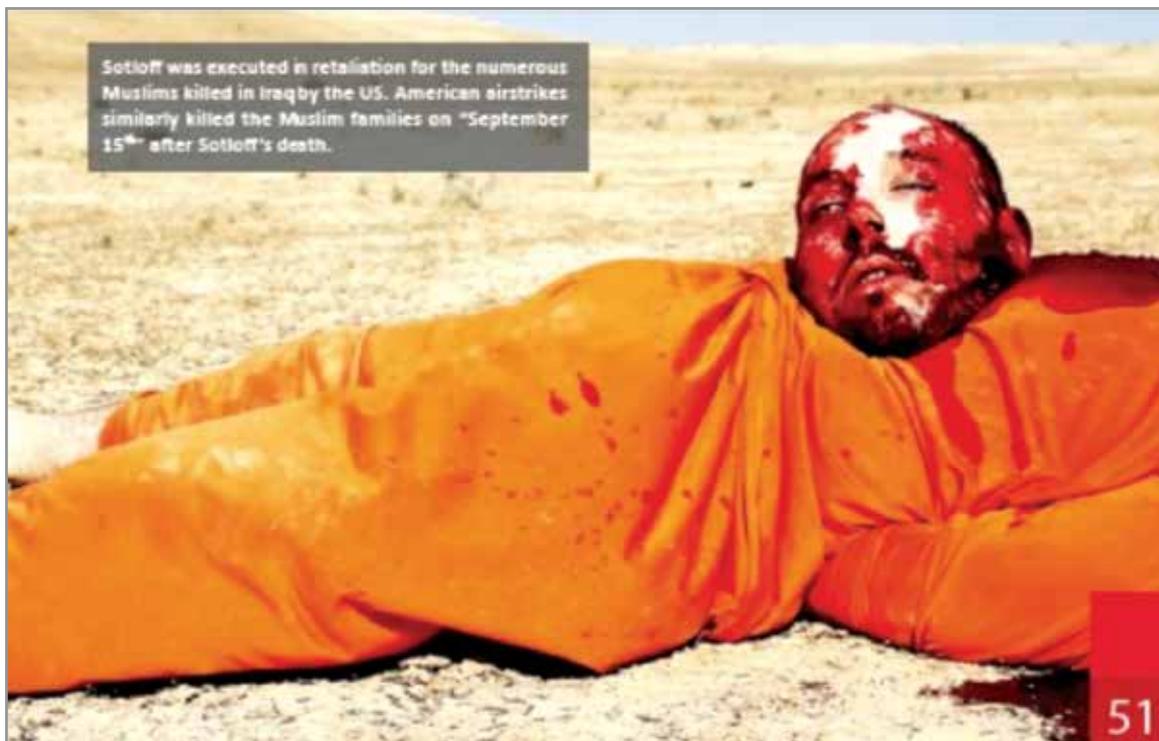


KILLING OF US CITIZEN, JAMES FOLEY (19 AUGUST 2014)
SOURCE: AL-HAYAT MEDIA CENTRE

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APPENDIX F (Continued)



KILLING OF US CITIZEN, STEVEN SOTLOFF (2 SEPTEMBER 2014)
SOURCE: AL-HAYAT MEDIA CENTRE



KILLING OF BRITISH CITIZEN, DAVID HAINES (13 SEPTEMBER 2014)
SOURCE: AL-HAYAT MEDIA CENTRE

WHITE PAPER

ADDRESSING THE THREAT OF THE ISLAMIC STATE GROUP

APPENDIX F (Continued)



KILLING OF BRITISH CITIZEN, ALAN HENNING (3 OCTOBER 2014)
SOURCE: AL-HAYAT MEDIA CENTRE



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MALAYSIA**