



Rise of ISIS: A Threat We Can't Ignore

By Jay Sekulow

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THE DEFINITIVE BOOK ON ISIS

Jay Sekulow, one of America's most influential attorneys, closely examines the rise of the terrorist groups ISIS and Hamas, explains their objectives and capabilities and how, if left undefeated, their existence could unleash a genocide of historic proportions.

Recently, the world has been shaken by gruesome photos and videos that have introduced us to the now infamous terrorist group known as ISIS. The world's wealthiest and most powerful jihadists, ISIS originated within Al Qaeda with the goal of creating an Islamic state across Iraq and Syria and unrelenting jihad on Christians. Separate from ISIS, the terrorist group Hamas has waged an equally brutal war against Israel. Both groups, if left undefeated, have the potential to unleash a catastrophic genocide.

Rise of ISIS gives a better understanding of the modern face of terror, and provides an overview of the laws of war and war crimes. These laws differentiate between the guilty and innocent, and explain why the US military and the Israeli Defense Forces are often limited in their defensive measures.

The authors' firsthand experience, including multiple appearances before the Office of the Prosecutor, International Criminal Court at The Hague, along with direct contact battling jihadists during operation Iraqi Freedom lends insight into this important geopolitical issue.

A must-have for anyone who wants to better understand the conflict that exists in the middle east, this well-researched and fully annotated volume is invaluable in revealing how this new brand of terrorism poses a very real threat to Americans and the world at large. It also serves as a guide to what we as individuals—and as a nation—can do to stop this escalating violence, prevent jihad, and protect Israel and America from this imminent threat.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Jay Sekulow is widely regarded as one of the foremost free speech and religious liberties litigators in the United States, having argued twelve times before the US Supreme Court in some of the most groundbreaking First Amendment cases of the past quarter century. As Chief Counsel of the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), he is a renowned constitutional attorney and an acclaimed and distinguished broadcaster. He is also a popular talk radio host and Fox News commentator and the author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Rise of ISIS* and *Unholy Alliance*. Visit him online at ACLJ.org.

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Rise of ISIS

CHAPTER ONE

THE HORROR OF JIHAD

It was the video no one wanted to see, that few people could bear to watch.

A young American, James Foley, was on his knees next to a masked, black-clad jihadist. The jihadist was holding a knife. Foley began reciting a prepared text—delivered under the ultimate duress—condemning America. When he finished, he visibly braced himself.

We all knew what was coming.

The Foley beheading video was too graphic for YouTube. Twitter banned users who tweeted its horrific images. And while few Americans actually watched the horrifying act, everyone knew what happened.

It was ISIS, a new and horrifying jihadist force that had been unleashed in the Middle East. And now they had slaughtered an American.

Except ISIS wasn't new. These horrible images weren't unusual.

Some of us had seen them before.

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The DVD was lying in the dust.

Still weary from a midnight air assault where they'd attacked enemy-held objectives for hours throughout the evening and early morning, the troopers of the Second ("Sabre") Squadron, Third Armored Cavalry Regiment almost missed the evidence as they searched an abandoned village south of Balad Ruz, Diyala Province, Iraq.

The village may have been abandoned, but people had recently been there. Clothes were scattered on floors,

cars and trucks were still parked outside homes, and there was blood, lots of blood. And it seemed fresh.

It was a chilling sight. Soldiers stepped gingerly over children's sandals and little girls' dresses. They walked past bullet holes in walls, and they picked up cell phones left lying on tables in one- and two-room houses.

Our soldiers looked for anything that would provide a clue to the fate of the villagers, but the more experienced knew they were looking for one item in particular—a DVD.

In many ways, the DVD was a jihadist's calling card, his method of bragging about his deeds in the years before smartphones and instant YouTube uploads. Terrorists would compile "greatest hits" compilations, showing IED strikes on Americans, mass executions of Iraqis, and the detonation of suicide bombs. DVDs were so common that our soldiers were trained to expect an imminent attack if a civilian was spotted filming them with a video camera.

And there it was, in a courtyard, in plain view. The troopers picked it up and kept it safe until it could be airlifted out, along with fourteen terrorist detainees, to Forward Operating Base Caldwell, a small American base just miles from the Iranian border.

As soon as the DVD arrived, intelligence officers rushed it to their office, put it on computers set aside for reviewing terrorist material (which could always contain viruses or other malware), and started watching.

What they saw was nothing short of horrifying.

As with all jihadist videos, the camera work was shaky, and the sounds were chaotic and loud. While the cameraman yelled "Allahu Akhbar!" (God is great) into the microphone, a group of about thirty Iraqi men, women, and children were led at gunpoint into a field, a field our soldiers recognized as being near the abandoned village.

One by one, the Iraqis were separated from the group and placed in the middle of a small group of jihadists. The first one was a woman, not more than forty years old. As the camera zoomed in, she had a vacant, hopeless look in her eyes—a look of utter despair.

The shouts of "Allahu Akhbar!" intensified until they all blended into one long, loud cheer, like the frenzy after a goal is scored at a soccer match. Then—as the shouting reached its peak and the camera zoomed close—the terrorists beheaded the woman.

They didn't do it with a clean chop of a sword like one sees on television or in movies, but instead by sawing furiously through her neck with knives. It wasn't over immediately. As she choked on her own blood, the jihadists kept sawing, and sawing, and sawing.

Finally, they pulled her head off, waved it to the camera, shouted in victory, and motioned for the next terrified victim to come forward.

How do we know this event occurred—one the mainstream media never knew about or reported? Because one of the authors of this book, a member of the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) Law of War team who was deployed to Iraq at the time, saw the video with his own eyes. He walked through the streets of that village himself, stepping over bloody clothes. And he remembers. In fact, he can never forget.

What was the name of that terrorist organization?

Al-Qaeda in Iraq, or AQI.

And after al-Qaeda rejected AQI because of tactics such as this, tactics so depraved and brutal that they even repulsed al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, what did AQI become?

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

It became ISIS.

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The sirens were some of the loudest noises I'd ever heard. They blasted apart the stillness of the day, assaulted my eardrums, and made me involuntarily duck.

I was in Israel in 2008, just outside of the Hamas-held Gaza Strip. As chief counsel of the American Center for Law and Justice, I was there (along with my son and coauthor of this book, Jordan) to meet with Israeli officials to discuss a response to utterly frivolous claims that Israel's acts of self-defense against Hamas constituted "war crimes."

To help us make our case, I wanted to see Gaza with my own eyes, to see what life was like in southern Israel under rocket fire.

I got more than I bargained for.

When the warning siren went off, I knew I was safe. I was in a command bunker, meeting with key Israeli leaders. But my immediate thought wasn't for my own safety; it was the same thought any father would have in the same circumstance.

"Where's Jordan?"

"Where's my son?"

He hadn't come down to the command bunker. Instead, he was outside, waiting, while I finished my meeting. From the moment the siren sounded until the moment the rocket hit, he had fourteen seconds to get to safety.

Those were the longest fourteen seconds of my life.

The rocket arced high into the air over Gaza. The Hamas rockets were less powerful back then, but the Iron Dome system that protects Israeli civilians today did not exist.

In other words, that rocket wasn't going to be shot down. It was going to land, somewhere close to us. Somewhere close to Jordan.

It hit seventy-five yards from my son. By the grace of God, the angle of the impact combined with the shape of the charge drove the blast away from Jordan. He was unharmed.

But for a few terrifying seconds, I lived the reality of Israeli fathers and mothers—someone was trying to kill my child.

Not just trying, but exerting maximum possible effort.

Hamas has sworn not just to destroy Israel, the world's only Jewish nation, but to kill Jews, to slaughter them. Its intentions mirror those of Hitler, even if its forces are not yet capable of the same kind of destruction.

That is life in southern Israel in the shadow of Hamas, a terrorist organization that digs tunnels with openings near homes and schools. The tunnels are designed to allow squads of terrorists to run out, kill, or capture sleeping families, and dash back to Gaza before even the most rapid-reacting and elite soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces can respond.

Hamas kidnaps and murders children, sends suicide bombers to restaurants, and summarily executes anyone it believes has ties to Israel.

Hamas hides its rockets and bombs in schools and mosques, builds tunnels under United Nations facilities, and often surrounds its fighters with children and other civilians, using them as human shields. It hopes that Israel will either refrain from firing on known terrorists or that, if Israel does fire, enough children will die for the world to express outrage against Israel. In other words, this organization launches rockets hoping to kill children, and when Israel responds, it does all it can to make sure that only Palestinian children die.

Either way, the goal is to kill the most innocent and vulnerable.

Hamas has sworn not just to destroy Israel, the world's only Jewish nation, but to kill Jews, to slaughter them. Its intentions mirror those of Hitler, even if its forces are not yet capable of the same kind of destruction.

It seeks arms from Iran (as Iran is busy building a nuclear bomb), it backs jihadists in Syria, and it is—bizarrely enough—cast as a heroic freedom fighter by millions of Europeans and even a distressing number of Americans.

.....

The goal of this book is simple: to understand the horrific jihadist threat to Christians and Jews in the Middle East, a threat that will undoubtedly come to the United States if it is left unchecked abroad. Through ISIS and Hamas, Christians and Jews face a wave of persecution and violence that is, quite simply, genocidal in scope and intent. But the situation—while grave—is not hopeless. Unlike in dark times before, America actually has strong allies on the ground, willing to take the fight to the jihadists. Even Israel isn't as alone as it has been, with Egypt proving to be even more helpful at times than the Obama administration. In other words, the means exist to stop genocide—if only we have the will to use them.

Let's begin with ISIS. As of the writing of this book, the terrorists of ISIS—once known as al-Qaeda in Iraq—control territory as large as an entire nation-state, with much of northern Syria and northern Iraq under its control. It is threatening Baghdad and the Kurdish capital city of Erbil, and it recently controlled (and still threatens) a poorly constructed dam near Mosul (one of Iraq's largest cities). If that dam is blown, it would drown an entire region in a wall of water, killing hundreds of thousands.

ISIS is brutal beyond imagination to anyone—Christian, Jew, Yazidi, and even Shiite Muslim—who is not aligned with its jihadist form of Sunni Islam. In Syria, ISIS has slaughtered Shiites, Christians, and Alawites (an obscure Islamic sect). In Iraq, it has done the same, giving Christians in conquered territories a chilling

ultimatum: “Convert, leave your homes, or die.”

Tens of thousands of Christians have fled. ISIS fighters have marked their homes and businesses in much the same way that Nazis marked the Jews of Germany and occupied lands, using an Arabic symbol that has come to mean “Nazarene”—a pejorative Middle Eastern term for Christians. They have sold Christian women as sex slaves, and there are numerous reports that they’ve beheaded children. None of this is a surprise. All of this is completely consistent with their behavior in Iraq when America previously fought them.

By late 2008, jihadists in Iraq were largely defeated, their leaders killed or captured, along with tens of thousands of their terrorist foot soldiers. Many had fled into Syria, and Iraq became a more stable and more humane place to live than it was when America invaded in 2003.

But now, only six years later, ISIS is stronger than any jihadist group in world history. Americans have long—and rightly—feared al-Qaeda. After all, it carried out the most devastating attack ever on American soil. But if we have feared and fought al-Qaeda, consider the following facts about ISIS:

- ISIS is more brutal than al-Qaeda, so brutal that al-Qaeda tried to persuade ISIS to change its tactics.¹
- ISIS is the “world’s richest terrorist group.”²
- ISIS controls more firepower and territory than any jihadist organization in history.³
- ISIS has reportedly seized “40kg of radioactive uranium in Iraq,” raising fears that it could construct a “dirty bomb” that could spread deadly radiation in the atmosphere, rendering entire areas uninhabitable and killing or sickening everyone within the radius of its radiation cloud.⁴

And as if that weren’t enough, ISIS’s leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, reportedly told his American captors as he was released (we briefly detained him during the Iraq War), “I’ll see you guys in New York.”⁵ And now an ISIS spokesman has pledged to raise the black flag of jihad over the White House.⁶

ISIS is not the only radical terrorist group in the Middle East. While al-Qaeda still has a presence, Hezbollah threatens Israel in the north, and myriad other terrorist groups fight in Syria, Yemen, Lebanon, and elsewhere. But the one terrorist organization that is making a concerted, daily effort to kill as many Jews as possible is Hamas, the rulers of the Gaza Strip.

Why focus on ISIS and Hamas? Aren’t they separate organizations fighting separate enemies? After all, Hamas—a designated terrorist organization under U.S. law—focuses its efforts on Israel while ISIS is fighting virtually everyone except Israel. It has launched attacks (moving from west to east) in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq, and its fighters are now turning up in Iran.

But it is a mistake to think of these groups as entirely separate. Indeed, they are motivated by the same hate, the same faith, and employ many of the same tactics. But they share something else in common, something strategically significant: they do not want to just spread terror; they want to establish terror-run nation-states, permanent bases from which to wage unrelenting jihad.⁷

In fact, the organizations are so similar in goals and tactics that one has only to look to the Christians of Iraq to see what would happen to the Jews of Israel if Hamas were ever to gain the upper hand in its war against Israel. The only difference between the experience of the Christians of Iraq and the Jews of Israel is that the

Jews of Israel have the F-16s and tanks of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to protect them, while the Christians of Iraq are largely defenseless.

Yes, the Peshmerga militia in Kurdistan has done its best to defend Kurdistan (where tens of thousands of Christians have fled), but it has not been able to stand against the armored vehicles and artillery that ISIS captured from the Iraqi Army. Further, the small and limited American air strikes that defend Iraq pale in comparison to the Israeli bombardment of Gaza that helps protect Israel from Hamas.

In other words, without the means of self-defense, the Christians of Iraq and the Middle East may well be slaughtered. Without their self-defense, the people of Israel certainly would be.

When jihad is on the march, only overwhelming force can stop it.

.....

And that brings us to the next great challenge described in the book, the struggle against the jihadists' allies in the U.N., Europe, and elsewhere—people who would argue that Israel and America must not be allowed to effectively fight jihad.

The U.N. and its leftist friends watch Hamas use human shields and blame Israel when civilians die.

The U.N. and its leftist friends discover that Hamas has been hiding rockets in U.N. facilities, and then applaud as U.N. officials hand those rockets back to Hamas.

The U.N. and its leftist friends watch as Hamas uses its facilities as bases for terror tunnels and then booby-traps U.N. facilities to kill Israeli soldiers, and find no fault.

The U.N. appoints obviously biased “scholars” to investigate alleged Israeli “war crimes,” and the international left uses the results of that biased investigation to deprive Israel of its most basic right of self-defense.

And lest you think this campaign to demonize and restrict Israel applies only to our closest Middle East ally and friend—and not to American forces—think again. By attacking Israel, the U.N. and the international left are trying to establish an entirely new “law of war” that would be used to try to tie America’s hands as it fights terror at home and abroad. These new rules and regulations would be used to brand our own soldiers as war criminals.

After all, when it comes to our own military tactics in the war against jihadist terrorists, our own military is far less restrained than Israel’s.

How do we know? One of my coauthors helped make key decisions in Iraq on when to drop bombs, fire artillery shells, or launch rockets. We know our American rules and practices, and we know Israeli rules and practices, and the Israelis are even more constrained than America.

Before they strike, the Israelis will often call or send text messages to warn citizens to evacuate. Before we strike, we give no warnings. Our drone strikes and air strikes come by surprise, deliberately designed to catch as many of the enemy in one place as possible.

And that’s our right, under the law of war. But if the international left has its way, we will lose that right.

Israel will lose that right. And jihadist terrorists will be left free to fight as savagely as they please—immune from prosecution for war crimes by an indifferent, even sympathetic world.

In the aftermath of the Holocaust, the world vowed, “Never again.” Never again would the great powers sit on their hands while an entire people faced extinction. The world has since failed in that pledge, failing to protect the Cambodians from the killing fields, failing to protect the Tutsis of Rwanda even when minimal force could have stopped the killing of hundreds of thousands, and now we’re largely watching—once again—as genocide unfolds before our eyes.

But if the international left has its way, we will lose that right. Israel will lose that right. And jihadist terrorists will be left free to fight as savagely as they please—immune from prosecution for war crimes by an indifferent, even sympathetic world.

In the chapters that follow, you will first learn about ISIS—where it came from, its goals, and its capabilities. Then you will learn the same about Hamas, as well as the history of its war against Israel. You will learn about the law of war and war crimes, including who is guilty and who is innocent. You will hear stories about the incredible bravery of men and women in uniform who have confronted the horrors of jihad and laid down their lives to protect the innocent.

Finally, you’ll learn what you can do—what our nation can do—to stop an emerging genocide, defeat jihad, and protect Israel. This book is not long, but you’ll notice that it is full of footnotes to our sources. In other words, we’ve done our homework. When you read, you’ll be equipped to raise this issue at home, on social media, in our communities, and when you speak or write to your elected representatives. Ignorance is the enemy not just of our democratic system but also of our moral integrity as a nation, as the land of the free and home of the brave. Read this book and you will be informed.

Earlier in this chapter, I described the shock of hearing the siren warning of a rocket attack in Israel. Treat this book as your own siren, as your warning that jihad is on the march.

It has been thirteen years since September 11, 2001, when al-Qaeda (a less brutal organization than ISIS) flew passenger jets into the Pentagon and World Trade Center and hijacked Flight 93 before courageous Americans fought back, causing the plane to crash before its target. Nearly three thousand Americans died. Since September 11, thousands more Americans have died fighting jihad overseas, with tens of thousands wounded.

After all that loss, after all that expense, jihad is still spreading. Indeed, our own government threw away victory in Iraq and is on the verge of leaving Afghanistan to its fate. It is understandable if Americans are weary of thinking about war, of worrying about war. But enemies do not fight on our timetables.

Now is not the time to grow weary in the face of evil. Now is not the time to allow our hunger for peace to obscure our enemy’s desire for war. Innocent lives are at stake, and immense evil is on the march. Let’s call our nation to action again.

If Americans are war-weary, think about the Israelis. They’ve likely not had a year without combat since modern Israel was founded in 1948 and was immediately attacked by Arab armies bent on destroying the new nation and driving the Jews into the sea. To be an Israeli means being willing to fight for your life against jihad.

Now is not the time to grow weary in the face of evil. Now is not the time to allow our hunger for peace to

obscure our enemy's desire for war. Innocent lives are at stake, and immense evil is on the march. Let's call our nation to action again, before Christians and Jews are slaughtered in the Middle East and before the smoke and flames of terror fill American skies once more.

Users Review

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