



# The Islamic State: A Brief Introduction

*Charles R. Lister*

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**The Islamic State: A Brief Introduction** Charles R. Lister

An authoritative guide to the rise of the Islamic State and its senior leadership.

How did the Islamic State grow from regional terrorist group to a brutal multinational bureaucratic machine? What are its goals? How can it be stopped?

In 2014 the Islamic State seemingly appeared out of nowhere, routing Iraqi forces, conquering Iraq's second-largest city, boldly announcing the establishment of a caliphate, and declaring itself the Islamic State (IS). Today, IS controls thousands of square miles and is attempting to govern millions of people.

In this definitive guide to the Islamic State and its senior leadership, Charles R. Lister traces its roots from the release of its notorious father figure, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, from a Jordanian prison and the group's formation in Afghanistan in the late-1990s, and finally to its stunning maturation in Iraq and Syria.

The West knows IS through its unrelenting propaganda war, with its deft use of social media and videos of horrific acts. Lister shares details of IS's sophisticated revenue machine, attempts at governing, and its formidable military.

With IS knocking on the doors of Lebanon, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, Lister's portrait helps us understand what to expect next and recommends a course of action to defeat IS, extinguish extremism, and encourage a tolerant Islam across the Middle East.

This book includes a Who's Who in the Islamic State's senior leadership.

From the foreword by Ahmed Rashid

"The Islamic State is the best basic understanding available of the ISIS phenomena and how to deal with it."

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