



The rise and fall of ISIS: Its role in the Syrian conflict and its impact on global terrorism.

BY MAZAHIR

What is ISIS

- ISIS, or the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, is a militant terrorist organization that emerged in the early 2000s. It is known for its extreme interpretation of Islam and its goal of establishing a caliphate, a form of Islamic governance, in the regions it controls. ISIS gained international notoriety for its brutal tactics, including mass killings, beheadings, and acts of terrorism, as well as its use of social media for propaganda and recruitment. The group was effectively driven from its territorial holdings in Iraq and Syria by a coalition of forces, but it still poses a security threat through its affiliates and inspired attacks globally.

The rise of ISIS

1-Post-Iraq War Environment:

After the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, the destabilization of the country and the dismantling of the Iraqi army created a power vacuum. Discontent and sectarian tensions escalated, providing fertile ground for extremist groups.

2-Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI):

ISIS originated as Al-Qaeda in Iraq, founded by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The group gained notoriety for its brutal tactics and was responsible for significant violence against both U.S. forces and Iraqi civilians.

3-Syrian Civil War:

The outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011 allowed ISIS to exploit the chaos. They expanded into Syria, taking advantage of the conflict to gain territory and resources.

4-Proclamation of a Caliphate:

In June 2014, ISIS declared the establishment of a caliphate, claiming authority over Muslims worldwide. This declaration attracted fighters and supporters from various countries.

5-Brutal Tactics and Propaganda:

ISIS was effective in using social media and propaganda to recruit members and spread its ideology. Their shocking acts of violence drew significant media attention, which they used to further their narrative and attract followers.

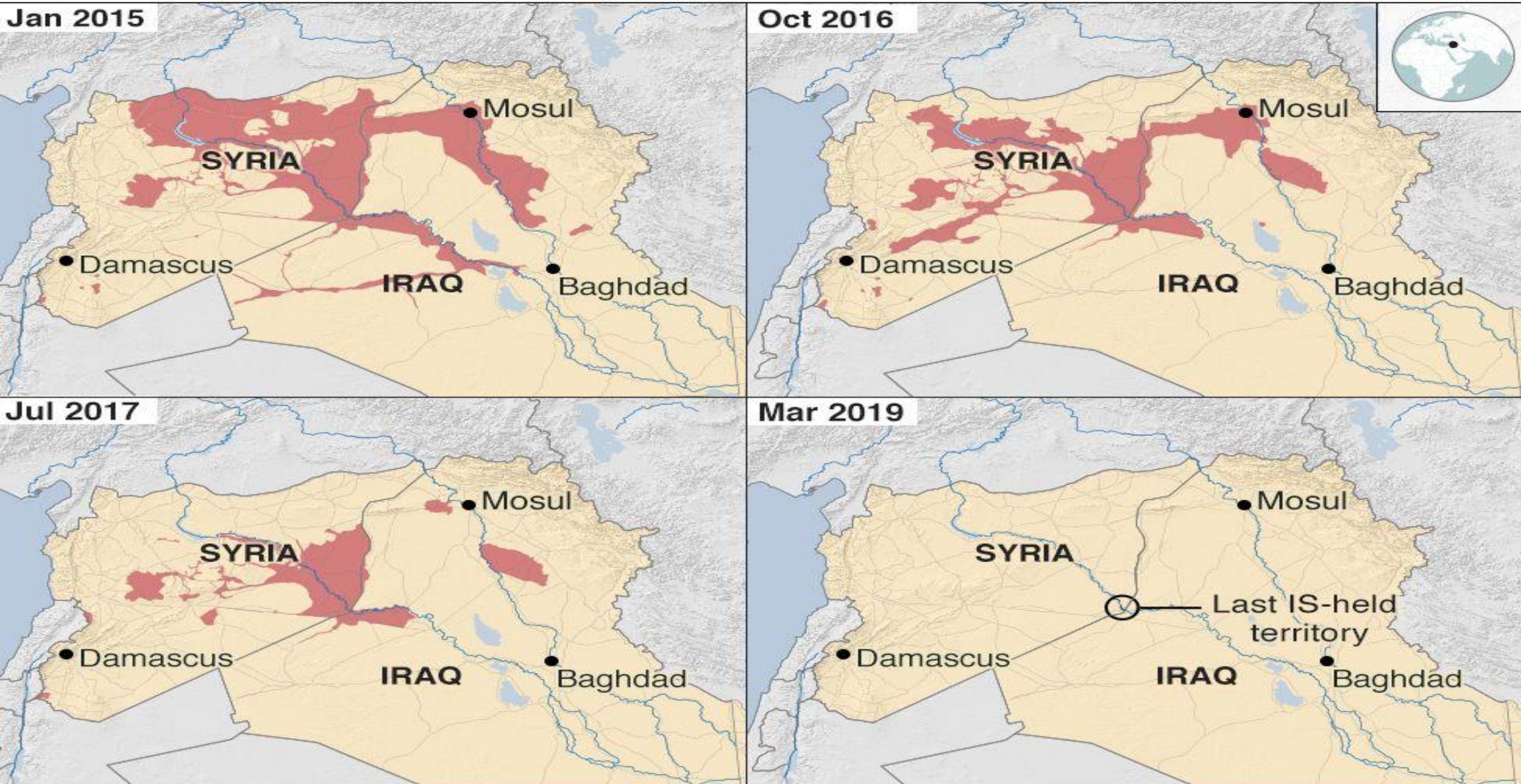
The map of ISIS in 2015



The fall of ISIS

- **Military Campaigns:** A multi-national coalition, led by the United States and including local forces like the Iraqi military and Kurdish fighters, launched extensive military operations against ISIS. Key battles included the liberation of Mosul in Iraq (2016-2017) and Raqqa in Syria (2017), which were significant strongholds for the group.
 - **Loss of Territory:** Over the course of several years, ISIS lost nearly all of the territory it had captured at its peak. By 2019, the group was effectively defeated on the battlefield, losing its last major stronghold in Baghouz, Syria.
 - **Shift to Insurgency:** Although it lost its territorial claims, ISIS has transitioned to a guerrilla warfare model, conducting sporadic attacks in both Iraq and Syria. It continues to pose a security threat, albeit in a different form than during its peak.
-
- **Counterterrorism Efforts:** Ongoing counterterrorism operations and intelligence efforts by various countries aim to prevent the resurgence of ISIS and to address its remaining affiliates and sleeper cells.
 - **Internal Strife:** As territorial losses mounted, ISIS faced internal challenges, including leadership disputes and diminished morale among its fighters. The loss of resources and fighters due to military pressure significantly weakened the organization.

How the area under IS control has shrunk



ISIS role in the Syrian conflict

It began in 2011

- **Exploitation of Chaos:** As the Syrian civil war intensified, ISIS capitalized on the chaos and power vacuum created by the conflict. It initially operated as an extension of Al-Qaeda in Syria, gaining ground amid the fighting between various factions.
- **Territorial Control:** ISIS seized large swathes of territory in Syria, including Raqqa, which it declared its de facto capital. This territorial control allowed ISIS to establish a governance structure and implement its brutal interpretation of Sharia law.
- **Attraction of Foreign Fighters:** The group attracted thousands of foreign fighters from around the world, drawn by its propaganda and the promise of joining a caliphate. This influx bolstered its ranks and capabilities.
- **Brutality and Violence:** ISIS was notorious for its extreme violence, including mass executions, torture, and public beheadings. These acts were used for propaganda purposes, intending to instill fear and assert control.
- **Conflict Dynamics:** ISIS's presence complicated the conflict dynamics in Syria. It fought not only against the Syrian government but also against other rebel groups, leading to a fragmented opposition landscape.
- **International Response:** The rise of ISIS prompted a significant international military response, leading to U.S.-led airstrikes and support for local forces to combat the group. This intervention shaped the course of the conflict.

ISIS impact on global terrorism

Increased Recruitment: The group's aggressive use of social media and propaganda attracted thousands of foreign fighters from around the world. This created a model for how terrorist organizations could recruit and radicalize individuals on a global scale.

Inspiration for Attacks: Even after its territorial defeat, ISIS continues to inspire attacks around the world. Its ideology has led to numerous homegrown terrorist plots and attacks in various countries, demonstrating its lasting influence.

Decentralization of Terrorism: ISIS's model encouraged the rise of affiliates and sympathizers across different regions, from Africa to Southeast Asia. These groups often carry out attacks under the ISIS banner, leading to a more decentralized form of terrorism.

Global Awareness: The visibility of ISIS's brutal tactics and high-profile attacks raised global awareness of the threat posed by extremist groups, leading to increased counterterrorism efforts and international cooperation.

Shift in Tactics: The group's tactics, including the use of vehicles as weapons and coordinated attacks, have influenced other terrorist organizations, adapting strategies to fit local contexts.

THANK YOU