

## Islamic State's views on the Muslim Brotherhood

This short briefing reviews IS' newsletter, *al-Naba'*, and the three magazines *Dābiq*, *Rumīyyah* and *Dār al-Islām*, to analyse the group's view of the *Ikhwān* or Muslim Brotherhood.

In IS' discourse, the *Ikhwān* are called 'apostates', *Murtaddīn*, referring to those Muslims who rejected to pay *Zakat* (charity), to Caliph Abū Bakr (*Rumīyyah* 3, p. 6; *Dābiq* 14, p. 28). Moreover, IS discredits the Islamic credential of the *Ikhwān* by putting the word 'Muslim' in quotation marks in reference to Brotherhood (*Dābiq* 8, p. 25 and 53; *Dābiq* 14, p. 35).

IS argues that the *Ikhwān* do not follow Islam, and that their religion is "a hodgepodge of deviance bequeathed by the Ottomans combined with the various tenets and rites of democracy, liberalism, pacifism, and socialism borrowed from the pagans of the West and the East" (*Dābiq* 14, p. 28). According to IS' former spokesperson al-'Adnānī, "The *Ikhwān* are nothing but a secularist party with an 'Islamic' cloak. Rather, they are the wickedest of the secularists" (cited in *Dābiq* 14, p. 43).

In a fifteen-page article published in *Dābiq* (14, pp. 28-43), the group listed the many reasons why the *Ikhwān* is not an Islamic group. The article starts, "Over the last few decades, a devastating cancer has emerged, mutated, and spread, attempting to drown the entire Ummah in apostasy" (*Dābiq* 14, p. 28). The same reasons were stated in a long article of *al-Naba'* (11, p. 14).

The first reason is the Muslim Brotherhood's alliances with Western countries. *Rumīyyah* explains, "the Murtādd Brotherhood has emerged as a poisoned spearhead carried by the Crusaders in their war against the [Khilafah]" (3, p. 6). *Dābiq* echoes this criticism, accusing them of having hosted "Western intelligence agents in the 'Islamic' centers of the West to partake in the war against [jihad]!" (*Dābiq* 14, p. 28).

Likewise, IS accuses the Muslim Brotherhood of historical support to the "[taghūt] kings of Egypt" (*Dābiq* 14, p. 38), namely Fuad I and Farouk I, who IS believes were secularists, corrupt and subservient to British rule. The *Ikhwān* are also accused of supporting Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak: "the *Ikhwān* would defend him and his government, even cooperating with his regime against the Muslims" (*Dābiq* 14, p. 39).

IS also points out the alliance between the Muslim Brotherhood and other sects of Islam and other religions. The group argues that the *Ikhwān*'s call to interfaith peace and dialogue destroys the obligation of war on the Jews and Christians until they pay the *Jiziyah* [tax] (*Dābiq* 14, p. 31). Furthermore, IS blames the *Ikhwān* for trying to bring all different sects of Islam together, especially the Sunni and Shi'a, in an attempt to unite and strengthens Muslims against potential enemies. This, IS sees, as diluting of the community and leading to the destruction of the true Ummah.



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A second main argument used by IS to delegitimize the Islamic nature of the Muslim Brotherhood is the latter's participation in the political process, namely in "legislature", "democracy", "constitutional rule" and "pluralism" (*Dābiq* 14, pp. 33-35; *Dār al-Islām* 8, p. 59). As they engage in such activities, IS argues, the *Ikhwān* compete with God's rule. *Dābiq* continues, "the *Ikhwān* call Muslims to commit apostasy by choosing individuals to represent them in the parliaments as legislators besides Allah!" (*Dābiq* 14, p. 34). It concludes, "The *Ikhwān* did not only admire an existing [tāghūt] constitution, but even penned their own for Egypt in '1952'" (*Dābiq* 14, p. 35). This is an interesting reference to the transition from monarchy to republicanism in Egypt.

Finally, IS claims that the Muslim Brotherhood rejects two of the most important obligations in Islam: *irja'* and *jihād*. *Irja'* is the implementation of *takfīr*, the fact of excommunicating somebody from the Muslim community, or to declare another Muslim a disbeliever. Indeed, the Muslim Brotherhood are strong opponents of *irja'*. Worse, IS argues, "They even disavow former members merely because those members declared *takfīr* upon [tāghūt] [tyrant] regimes!" (*Dābiq* 14, p. 40).

Moreover, instead of encouraging *jihād*, the *Ikhwān* are blamed for promoting pacifism and censuring "terrorism" (quotation marks are used by IS). This, according to IS, makes "the swords on their logo and the slogan of 'Prepare' – in reference to the 60th verse of *Sūrat al-Anfāl* – completely meaningless" (*Dābiq* 14, p. 38).

IS coined the expression "Ikhwānization of [Jihad]" (*Dābiq* 11, p. 53) to describe the politicization of Iraqi tribal factions who militarily supported the Iraqi government and the Western alliance in the war against the Islamic State. *Dābiq* explains, "their [the tribal factions] 'jihād' became the releasing of political statements having no reality on the ground. Their only active war was against the Islamic State [sic: when it should have fought those endangering the *Sunnah*]" (*Ibid*). According to IS, this "Ikhwānization" also took place in Palestine, Libya, Egypt, Somalia and Afghanistan.

IS deplores the penetration of the *Ikhwān*'s jihadi doctrine into the Salafī movements. Abu Muṣab as-Surī and az-Zawahiri – two main ideologues of Salafī *jihād* – are criticized for cooperating with the *Ikhwān*, in spite of their un-Islamic nature (*Dābiq* 14, pp. 40-42).

For IS, to conclude, "it is obligatory upon all Muslims to perform [Hijrah] to the *Khilāfah*, which is the only body standing in the way of the [Murtadd] Brotherhood [...] who altogether [with the Iranian regime] attempt to destroy the religion of Islam" (*Dābiq* 14, p. 43).

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