

ISIS in perspective:

A history of the terrorist organization

JOE WISEWELL
Staff Writer

The Islamic State did not spontaneously pop into existence in early 2014, but has evolved slowly since the 1990s. Its current form represents a new stage of terrorism with ruthless attacks both on Iraq's majority Shiite population and on its government.

The ideas and tactics put on display by the Islamic State were formed shortly after the end of the Soviet War in Afghanistan in the early 1990s but were not utilized until the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. During 2003, al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), which was a mostly Sunni group, utilized tactics of killing Shiites on a large scale.

This deepened the massive rift between Sunni and Shiite sects in Iraq. By 2006 this movement was mostly dead, but the rift remained and in 2011 these ideas were reborn.

The United States had facilitated the creation of a new government in Iraq before the troop withdraw in 2011. The rift between Sunnis and Shiites, however, still lingered and Iraq's Prime Minister furthered this polarization by flooding the police force with Shiites and humiliating Sunni politicians.

The AQI, rebranded as The

Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) and led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi capitalized on this rift, this time siding with Shiites. ISI gained strength from a growing number of former soldiers

the creation of this new front, the group was once again relabeled as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). ISIS quickly grabbed land in Syria, but its harsh control soon led

the world ISIS was ready to take and hold land, instead of making random attacks.

With this victory, ISIS was once again renamed "The Islamic State" (IS) and

Islamic State in the Middle East until 661.

It is Baghdadi's goal to reestablish that state and create a new golden age of Islam. There is an idea in IS that with the establishment of Caliph, people will flock to join them, marketing their cause through a heavy influence in social media.

This influence has been created from IS's heavy documentation of their own atrocities, ironic because most massacres and human rights violations are covered up, yet for almost every execution IS has had film makers on site.

In early 2014, IS seemed like a power to be reckoned with. Its advances were crushing the Iraqi military. Low morale and discipline in the military spawned reports of thousands of troops fleeing garrisons as IS approached, some of which were never actually overrun.

Years of sectarian violence and foreign intervention have brought little change to the war ravaged country and it is now clear that the U.S. war on terror there has been a total failure. Recently, American air strikes have slowed IS's advance to a tentative standstill, but if international work will ultimately bring peace to Iraq is unclear.



Baghdadi, leader of ISIS, releases a press statement in Mosul. He is wearing a Rolex watch; after robbing financial institutions in Mosul, ISIS' net worth grew to over \$2 billion, making them the wealthiest terrorist group in the world.

Photo Courtesy of The Guardian

and commanders of Saddam Hussein's army.

These military-style soldiers powerful enough to expand its already ruthless attacks in Iraq to the mostly then secular Syrian Civil War and the battle against Bashar al-Assad. With

to rebellion and Assad's forces drove them out.

Baghdadi, however, had different plans for ISIS than a long war in Syria and quickly moved to strike his home country of Iraq. In early 2014, ISIS took the city of Mosul in northern Iraq, showing to

Baghdadi declared himself Caliph. These titles give insight into the nature of the organization. The term Caliph refers to four original Caliphs, who were followers of the prophet Muhammad. After the death of Muhammad in 632 they ruled and expanded the

NCSSM initiates Safe Zone training, Spectrum marches in Durham Pride Parade

BY AJ GOREN
Staff Writer

September was a big month for one of NCSSM's most colorful cultural clubs - Spectrum, NCSSM's LGBTQ-straight alliance, participated in the NC Pride Festival as well as sponsored Safe Zone Training during I-Week.

Spectrum meets approximately once a month and is an open forum for LGBTQ students to address issues which affect themselves and their community, and an opportunity for non-LGBTQ students to learn more about the community, express support, and engage in discussion.

Safe Zone participants learn to be sensitive and empathetic LGBTQ allies while gaining more information about the LGBTQ community and the issues they face.

These training sessions took place during Innovation Week, for faculty/staff and students.

Sue Anne Lewis, SLI for Reynolds 1E, 2E, and 2D; and Ross Knight, SLI for 2 West, led the three-hour sessions, which were discussion-based and included a range of

illustrative activities designed to facilitate understanding.

Participants were not required to disclose their identity to participate, but many LGBTQ participants chose to do so in order to speak from personal experience.

Trainees received a handbook and signed a pledge to agree that they will be an understanding and accepting resource for LGBTQ peers. LGBTQ students in need of support can look for rainbow unicorn door decorations all over residence halls.

Sarah Daugherty, co-president of Spectrum, spoke to the importance of LGBTQ visibility and said, "It helps LGBTQ students feel comfortable and safe in our community. Seeing the safe space door decorations reassures students that they are accepted and celebrated here at NCSSM. It's especially crucial because a lot of people come from schools where it wasn't safe to be open about their identity."

Co-president Erick Aguilar noted that Safe Zone addresses a wide variety of intertwining

minority groups. "It's about raising awareness about trans-

gender issues, about the complexity of sexuality, about queer people of color. I want to raise awareness about these even more marginalized groups, and Safe Zone lightly touches on this by teaching appropriate terminology," said Aguilar.

Spectrum also participated in this year's NC Pride Festival, on Saturday, Sept. 27.

NCSSM students were able to walk to the festival which started at 10 a.m. on Duke East Campus.

Students also

marched with Spectrum in the parade, which began at



Daugherty poses in front of protesters at the 28th NC Pride Parade, the event ending four days of NC PrideFest.

Photo courtesy of Sarah Daugherty

1:00 PM at East Campus and marched north up Broad Street to Green Street and back south down 9th Street.

The Pride Festival also included a 5K run at 8:30 AM, a rally at noon, and speeches from relevant community members at 2:30 PM.

Daugherty and Aguilar are excited that NCSSM had a group marching in the parade with iNSIDEoUT, a youth-led network of LGBTQ student groups.

According to Daugherty, "It's very important for LGBTQ students to be able to attend Pride and experience an environment where they are celebrated and surrounded by other LGBTQ-identified people. Many students from other regions of North Carolina don't have similar opportunities at home, so we're excited to help them have this experience."

Spectrum, which is sponsored by Ground Reynolds SLI Kim Howell and 1st Hunt SLI Michael Newbauer, can get more information about Spectrum from through the organization's Facebook page.