



The Islamic State – Origins, Popular Support, Structures and Functioning

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The Islamic State – 4 misconceptions and 4 assumptions

1. The Islamic State is a product of the Syrian civil war and has to be defeated in Syria
2. The Islamic State disposes over the support of the Sunni Arab population of Iraq and Syria
3. The Islamic State functions as a state in Syria and Iraq
4. The direct influence of the IS leadership is global as they are conquering the world

1. The Islamic State is a product of the Syrian civil war and has to be defeated in Syria

- ISIS emerged after the breakout of the Syrian civil war in 2013
- Ar-Raqqa is the capital of the Islamic State (captured in 2013)

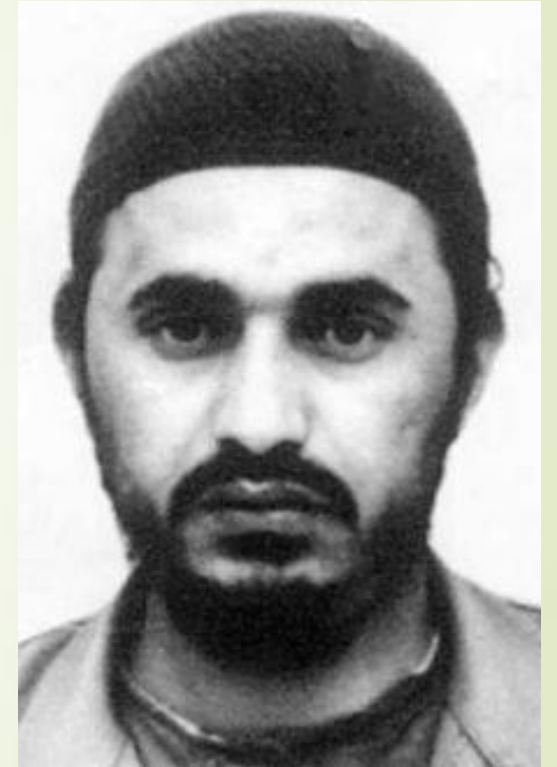


1. The Islamic State emerged in Iraq....

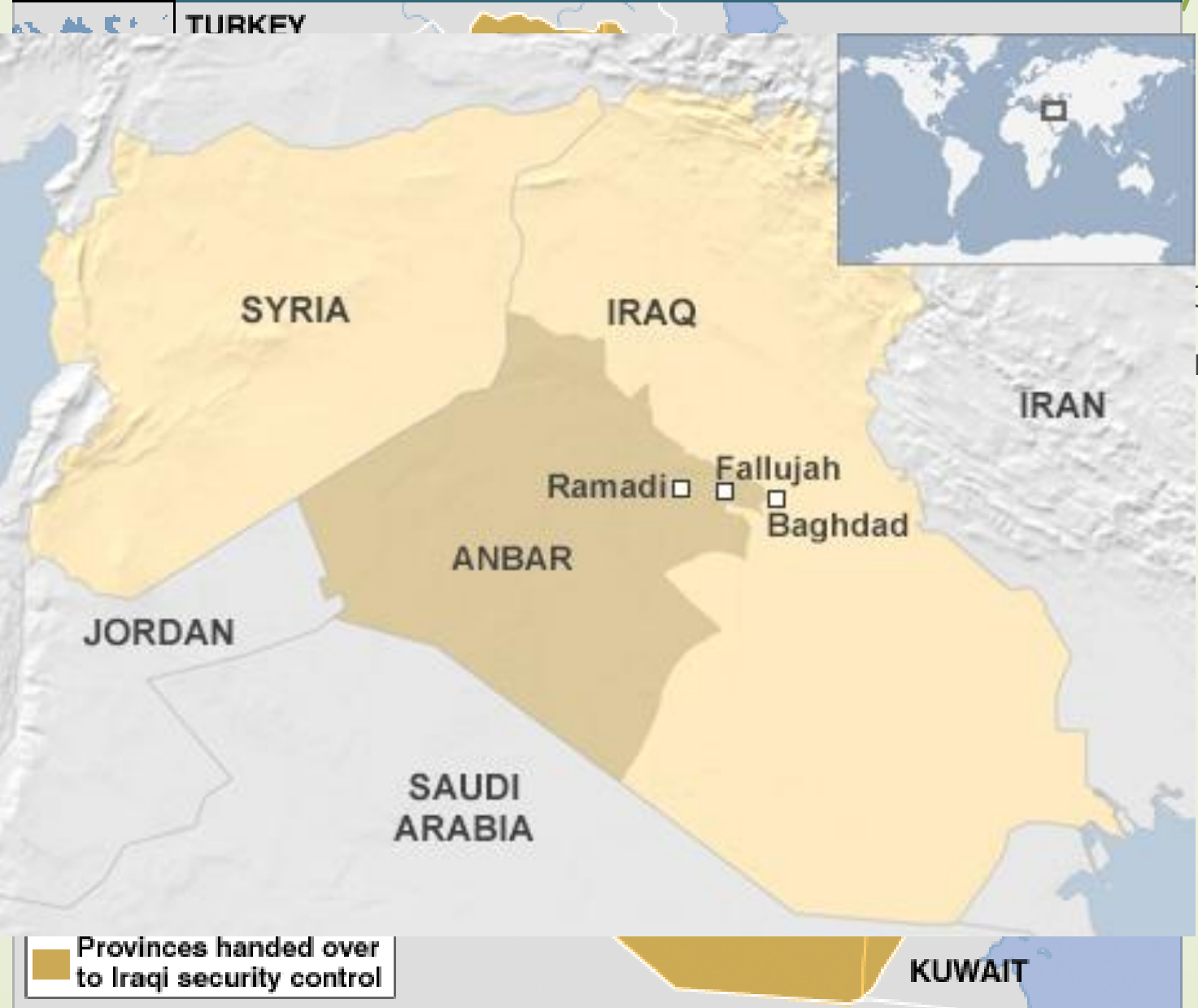
Names in English	Names in Arabic	Period of activity
Organization of Monotheism and Jihad	جماعة التوحيد والجهاد	1999-2004
Organization of Jihad's Base in Mesopotamia Al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia Al-Qaeda in Iraq	تنظيم قاعدة الجهاد في بلاد الرافدين	2004-2006
Mujahideen Shura Council	مجلس شورى المجاهدين في العراق	2006
Islamic State of Iraq	دولة العراق الإسلامية	2006-2013
Islamic State of Iraq and Syria	الدولة الإسلامية في العراق والشام	2013-2014
Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant		
Islamic State	الدولة الإسلامية	2014-

Abu Musab az-Zarqawi (1966-2006)

- Jordanian citizen
- Primary aim to overthrow the Jordanian Hashemite Kingdom
- 1980s: foreign fighter in Afghanistan
- 1990s: creative differences with bin Laden
- 2003: relocated to Iraq



PROVINCES HANDED OVER TO IRAQI SECURITY CONTROL



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2. The Islamic State disposes over the support of the Sunni Arab population

- The rise of the ISIS is due to the sectarian and ethnic tensions in Iraq and Syria
- Its identity is strongly linked to Arabism and Sunniism
- The IS provides social service as well (healthcare, education, gifts for children)



2. The authority of the Islamic State has always been contested by the Sunni Arab population

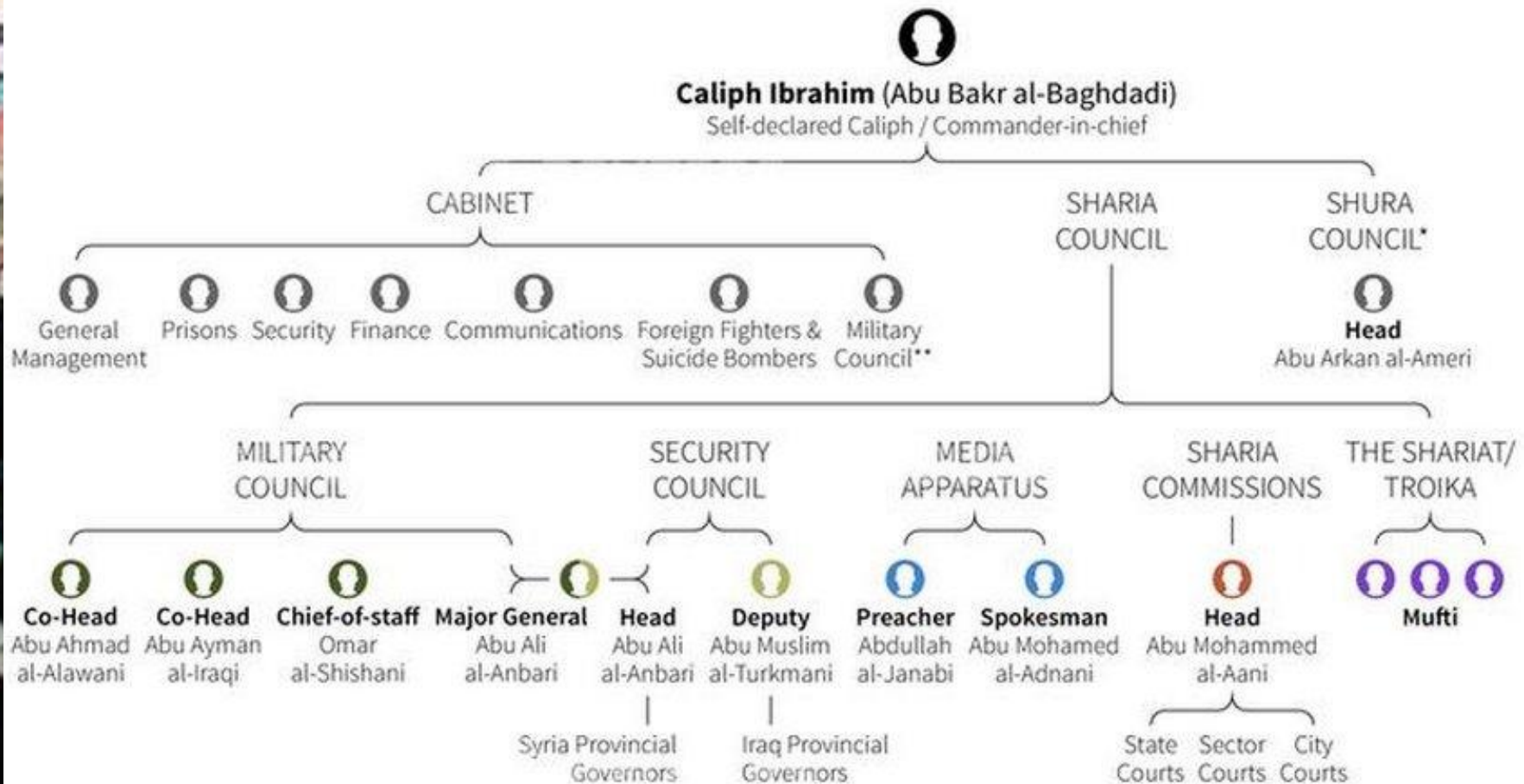
- ▶ The rule of governance of the IS is based on terror and intimidation, not public consensus
- ▶ 2006: Anbar Awakening campaign (30 Sunni Arab tribes against ISI)
- ▶ 2014: Second revolution of Syria (Hussein Suleyman)



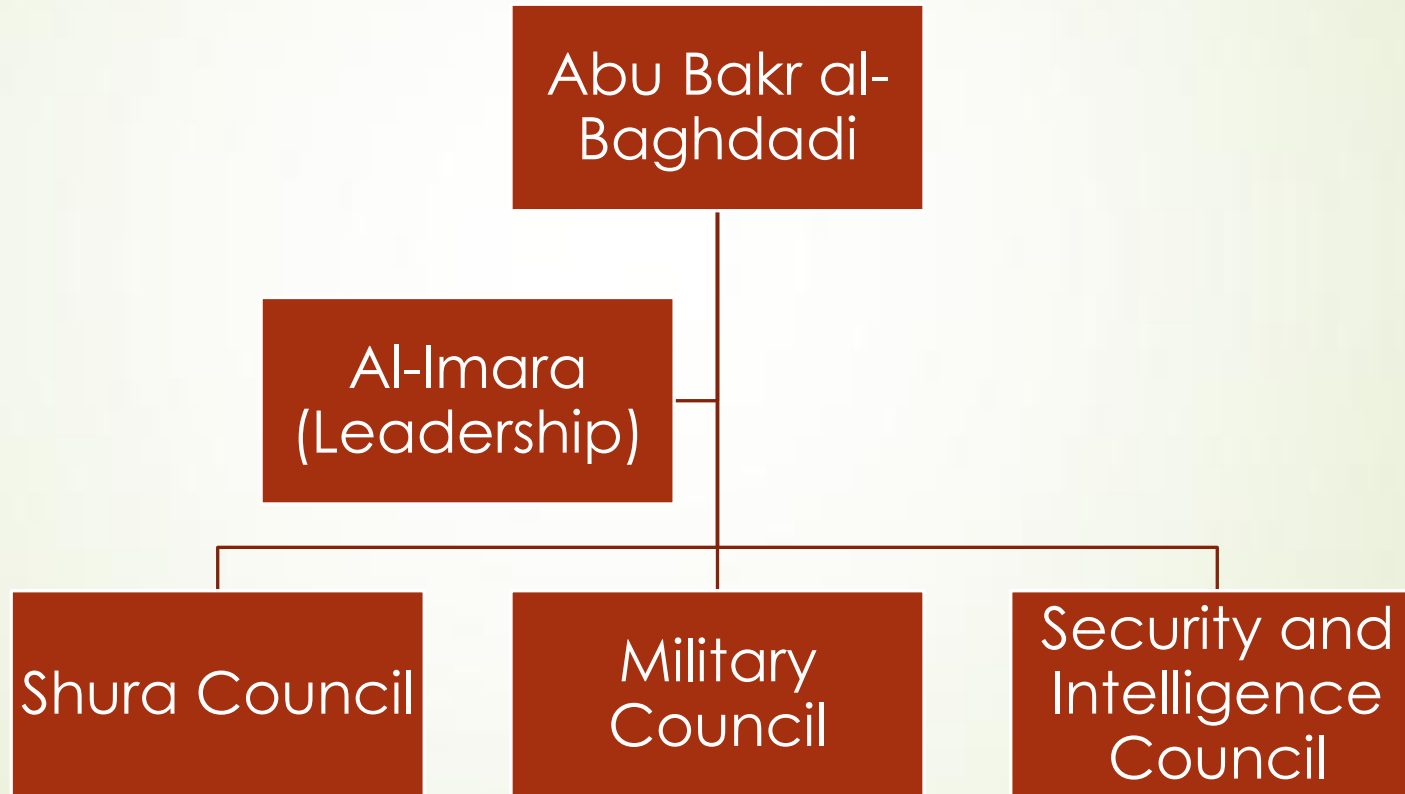
3. The Islamic State functions as a state in Syria and Iraq

Islamic State's leadership structure

Overview of how the militant group is organised based on research by the Terrorism Research & Analysis Consortium.



3. The structure of the Islamic State looks more like a tribal system

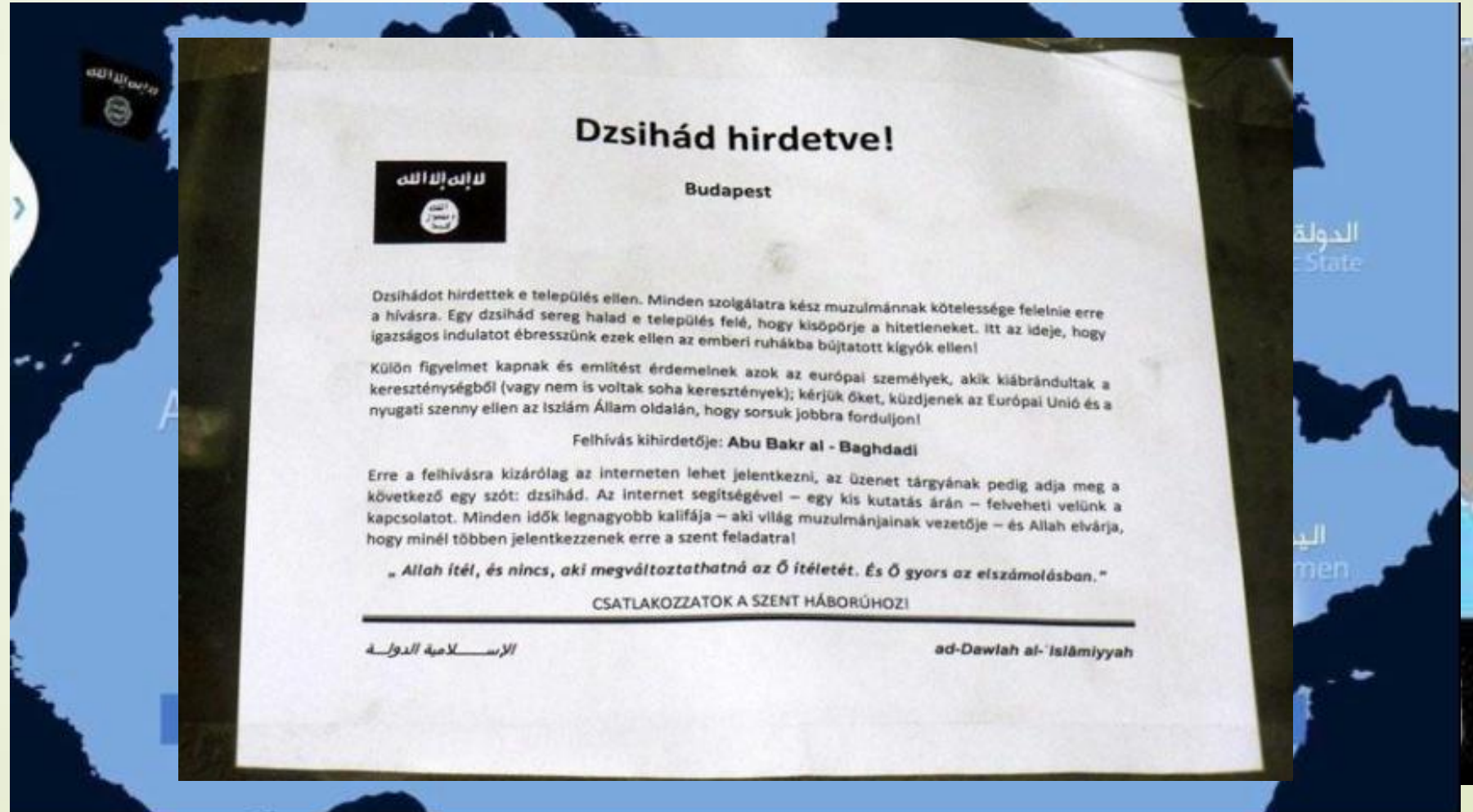




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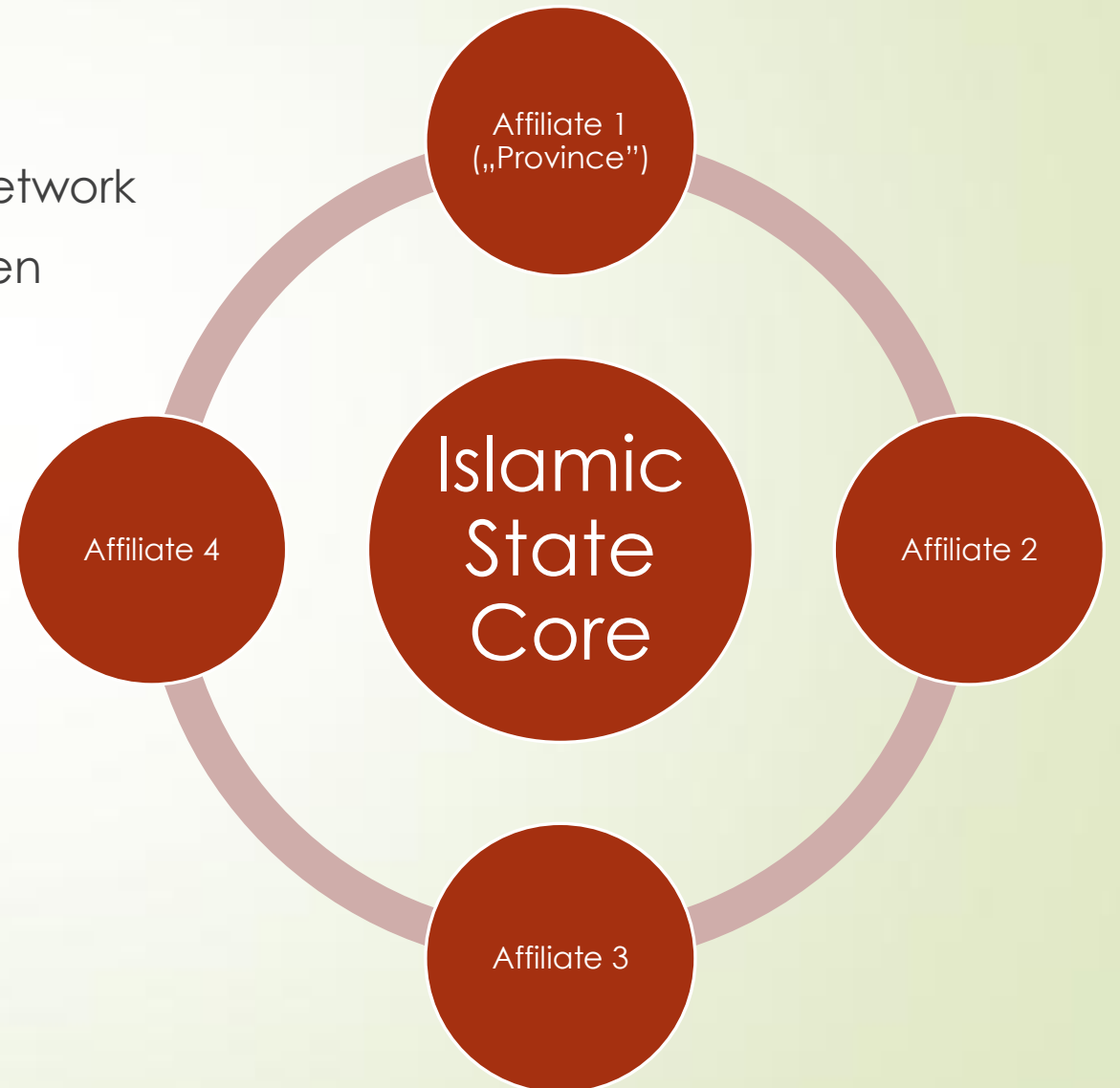
- ▶ The army of the Islamic State constitute of tribes and small militias which pledged their alliance to al-Baghdadi
- ▶ Looks like a banderial army of a medieval feudal empire
 - ▶ A banderial army constitutes of small groups which are loyal to nobleman or a landlord

4. The Islamic State is expanding all over the world



4. The Islamic State expands as a network

- IS expands according to the Al-Qaeda network
- The true nature of the relationship between Affiliate and Core is usually undefinable
- No action implemented by an IS affiliate can be automatically attributed to the IS core





Conslusions



1. To defeat the Islamic State, we have to wipe them out of Anbar province
2. The Sunni Arab population is also a victim of the IS, not supporter or beneficiary (no collective responsibility, hope for public insurgency)
3. The Islamic State's structure is more like a tribal system than that of modern state
4. The Islamic State is a network in which we cannot define the true nature of the relationship between the members