

Socratic Seminar on ISIL

October 16, 2014

In order for this exercise to be effective, you must do all the assigned reading. The discussion will only be productive and meaningful if everyone understands and is informed about the topic. Also, **please bring a discussion question of your own to the meeting**. Be prepared to speak at least once during the discussion. Perhaps write down in advance what you would like to contribute to the discussion.

Be thinking of:

- The Responsibility to Protect:
*“Each individual State has the **responsibility to protect** its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. This responsibility entails the prevention of such crimes, including their incitement, through appropriate and necessary means. We accept that responsibility and will act in accordance with it. The international community should, as appropriate, encourage and help States to exercise this responsibility and support the United Nations in establishing an early warning capability. The international community, through the United Nations, also has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means, in accordance with Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter, to help to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.”*
-Outcome Document of the 2005 United Nations World Summit ([A/RES/60/1, para. 138-140](#))
- U.S. interventions: what types, if any
- Role of social media
- Implications of U.S. interference on international relations

Required Readings:

1. Obama: US misjudged ISIL threat, Iraqi army

September 28, 2014 12:51PM ET Updated September 29, 2014 2:00AM ET

President Barack Obama acknowledged during a "60 Minutes" interview on CBS on Sunday that U.S. intelligence agencies underestimated the threat from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and overestimated the ability and will of Iraq's army to fight. Also on Sunday, Republican House Speaker John Boehner said the U.S. may have "no choice" but to send American troops to fight ISIL if Obama's strategy fails to destroy the group.

Obama added that the U.S.-led military campaign against ISIL and the Nusra Front, an Al-Qaeda affiliate in Syria, is helping Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, whom the United Nations has accused of war crimes.

"I recognize the contradiction in a contradictory land and a contradictory circumstance," Obama said. "We are not going to stabilize Syria under the rule of Assad," whose government has committed "terrible atrocities," Obama said.

"On the other hand, in terms of immediate threats to the United States, ISIL, the Khorasan group — those folks could kill Americans."

Obama said his first priority is degrading the extremists who are threatening Iraq and the West. To defeat them, he acknowledged, will require a competent local ground force, something no analysts predict will surface anytime

soon in Syria, despite U.S. plans to arm and train moderate rebels. The U.S. has said it will not cooperate with the Assad government.

"Right now, we've got a campaign plan that has a strong chance for success in Iraq," the president said. "Syria is a more challenging situation."

Obama described the U.S. intelligence assessments in response to a question asked during the interview. He was asked about how ISIL fighters had come to control so much territory in Syria and Iraq and whether it was a surprise to him.

He said that during the Iraq War, U.S. military forces, with the help of Iraq's Sunni tribes were able to quash Al-Qaeda fighters, who went "back underground."

"During the chaos of the Syrian civil war, where essentially you have huge swaths of the country that are completely ungoverned, they were able to reconstitute themselves and take advantage of that chaos," Obama said, according to an excerpt released before the show aired.

He noted that his director of national intelligence, James Clapper, has acknowledged that the U.S. "underestimated what had been taking place in Syria." Obama said it was "absolutely true" that the U.S. overestimated the ability and will of the Iraqi army.

Obama called Syria ground zero for jihadis around the world and said military force was necessary to shrink their capacity, cut off financing and eliminate the flow of foreign fighters.

The White House has cited its intelligence weaknesses before, although Obama was less adamant about the threat in the past. In an interview published early this year by The New Yorker, he appeared to minimize ISIL by comparing it to a junior varsity basketball team. The White House at the time said he was speaking about a different threat posed by a range of extremists across the world.

Obama pushed back against the remarks by Boehner, who told ABC's "This Week" during a Sunday appearance that he doesn't believe Obama's approach will succeed and that it will take more than airstrikes to destroy ISIL. He criticized Obama for saying he won't send in American ground troops.

Boehner said he would recommend sending in Americans if no one else was able to step up. "We have no choice," he said, because "if we don't destroy them first, we're gonna pay the price."

Obama, however, made clear he has no interest in a major U.S. ground presence beyond the 1,600 American advisers and special operations troops he already has ordered to Iraq.

"We are assisting Iraq in a very real battle that's taking place on their soil, with their troops," the president said. "This is not America against ISIL. This is America leading the international community to assist a country with whom we have a security partnership."

While an "overwhelming majority of Muslims are peaceful," Obama said, "in the Muslim world right now, there is a cancer that has grown for too long that suggests that it is acceptable to kill innocent people who worship a different God. And that kind of extremism, unfortunately, means that we're going to see for some time the possibility that in a whole bunch of different countries, radical groups may spring up, particularly in countries that are still relatively fragile, where you had sectarian tensions, where you don't have a strong state security apparatus."

But "rather than play whack-a-mole and send U.S. troops wherever this occurs, we have to build strong partnerships," Obama said. "We have to get the international community to recognize this is a problem. We've got to get Arab and Muslim leaders to say very clearly, 'These folks do not represent us. They do not represent Islam.'"

Nusra Front vows revenge

Meanwhile, airstrikes believed to have been carried out by U.S.-led forces hit three makeshift oil refineries in Syria's Raqqa province early on Sunday as part of an assault to weaken ISIL, a monitoring group said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which is based in Britain, said the attacks occurred shortly after midnight, adding that they also hit a plastics factory.

ISIL fighters have control over oil produced in eastern Syria and have set up small makeshift refineries to distill the crude into fuel, one of their main sources of income.

"These so-called refineries are not a real target, and they do not weaken Islamic State, as they do not have any financial value for them," Rami Abdelrahman of the Observatory told Reuters. "They are composed of trucks with equipment to separate diesel and petrol used by civilians."

He said that destroying the makeshift refineries has led to a sharp increase in the price of diesel, adding that for residents in Syria's northern Aleppo province, for example, the price has more than doubled. "The price went up from 9,000 Syrian pounds to 21,000 in Aleppo. Hitting these refineries has affected ordinary people," he said.

The effect of the strikes on the group's capabilities was not immediately clear. ISIL has gained support among other fighters after the attacks, including from rival groups.

Scores of fighters have left the Nusra Front and other armed groups in Syria to join ISIL since the strikes started.

The Nusra Front is coming under increasing pressure from its members to reconcile with ISIL.

On Saturday the group gave its first reaction to the strikes, vowing to retaliate against Western and Arab countries that took part in the coalition.

"These countries have done a despicable act that will put them on the list of those targeted by jihadist forces all over the world," Nusra spokesman Abu Firas al-Suri said in an audio message published on the group's social media network.

Kurds cross back to fight

Near the Turkish border in Syria, the U.S.-led airstrikes have failed to stop the advance of ISIL fighters on Syria's Kurdish town of Kobane, triggering an exodus of more than 150,000 refugees into Turkish territory.

A senior official in Syria's dominant Kurdish political party welcomed the U.S.-led coalition that bombed ISIL positions around the town Saturday and said that Kurds were ready to work with the alliance to fight ISIL. Asya Abdullah of the Democratic Union Party (PYD) said that Turkey should provide them with weapons.

"Turkey should arm the PYD ... Kobane is right at the border. If these gangs enter Kobane, nothing will stop them from going to Turkey next," she told Reuters via phone from Kobane.

On Sunday 300 to 400 Syrian Kurds crossed back into Syria from Turkey to help fight ISIL, a soldier on the border told Reuters, adding that Turkish authorities were not allowing any Turkish Kurds to go to Kobane.

Several hundred Kurds were waiting at Mursitpinar, on the Turkish side of the border, in the hope of being allowed to fight in Syria, a Reuters witness said.

"Of course we want to go and fight," said Mustafa Durdu, a Turkish Kurd who has not been permitted to leave Turkey by Turkish authorities. "Our brothers are there," he said, pointing to Kobane.

2. US steps up air strikes on ISIL in Syria

US-led planes conduct raids on ISIL around besieged Kurdish town of Kobane as well as targets across Syria and Iraq.

Last updated: 09 Oct 2014 03:57

US-led coalition warplanes have intensified bombing raids to push back the armed group Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) intent on seizing the Kurdish town of Kobane in Syria, the US military said.

US and Jordanian aircraft conducted eight additional strikes on ISIL around Kobane, for a total of 14 coalition strikes for the day and 19 bombing raids near the town since Tuesday, the US Central Command, which is overseeing the air war and American forces in the Middle East, said on Wednesday.

The latest strikes near Kobane destroyed five armed vehicles, an ISIL supply depot, a command center, a logistics compound, and eight occupied barracks, the Central Command said.

Another air raid southwest of the Syrian city of Raqqa destroyed four armed vehicles and damaged two more, it said.

US fighter jets and other aircraft also kept up bombing runs in Iraq, with one attack northwest of Ramadi, one in Mosul and another raid south of Kirkuk, it said.

"Indications are that Kurdish militia there continue to control most of the city and are holding out against ISIL," Central Command said in a statement.

Al Jazeera has also learned that some ISIL fighters have pulled out from the town after a push by Kurdish forces, but ISIL's flag is still seen on a hill overlooking Kobane.

Latest reports said around 200,000 people have already fled Kobane and surrounding villages since the fighting began.

'Difficult mission'

On Wednesday, US President Barack Obama said that the US will keep making progress against ISIL.

"It remains a difficult mission," Obama said as he joined Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel and his military commanders at the Pentagon. "As I've indicated from the start, this is not something that is going to be solved overnight."

Two months after the US began launching air strikes in Iraq that later expanded to Syria, ISIL is far from crippled, keeping control of most of the territory it has seized in Iraq and Syria, and threatening to capture Kobane near the Turkish border.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Pentagon acknowledged that Kobane could still fall and said ISIL could seize additional territory elsewhere.

The armed rebels could only be decisively defeated by "capable" local forces including moderate rebel fighters in Syria and Iraqi government troops and Kurdish forces, spokesman Rear Admiral John Kirby told reporters.

He said it would take time to train and arm forces that could fight effectively and work with US military advisers and aircraft.

"We don't have a force inside Syria that we can cooperate with and work with," Kirby said.

At the White House, officials conceded that air power alone would be insufficient, but they denied US Secretary of State John Kerry's statement that the US is willing to examine the possibility of creating a "buffer zone" within Syria

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/10/us-steps-up-air-strikes-isil-syria-201410903939944707.html>

3. Cats and Kalashnikovs: Behind the ISIL social media strategy

June 24, 2014. Rose Powell, journalist

The jihadist group ISIL, which is threatening to overrun Iraq, operates a sophisticated social media strategy that is designed to spread fear, solicit funding and recruit new members.

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant group, also known as ISIL or ISIS, feeds updates from the front lines through several platforms including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube accounts.

Jihad experts say ISIL has one of the most sophisticated social media strategies of any extremist group and that the recent surge in social media posts, in a variety of languages including English, is not simply an organic groundswell of support.

A tweet by an ISIL supporter in Iraq. *Photo: Twitter*

The group has had to play a cat and mouse game as it attempts to develop their online following, evade censorship and keep information flowing out.

This means constantly creating and swapping "official" accounts and the use of third parties to disseminate live updates and images.

There's an app for that

The campaign's core was an Android app called The Dawn of Glad Tidings. It was launched in April and was available on the Google Play store for months. It is understood that Google has recently removed the app.



After signing up, a stream of tweets selected by ISIL's social media operatives would be posted to the user's account, staggered in order to evade detection by Twitter's anti-spam algorithms.

Earlier this month the group was live tweeting updates and images of its capture of the strategic town of Mosul in northern Iraq. The insurgents, under the leadership of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, have launched a campaign to conquer much of Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Israel and Jordan and unite the region into a caliphate, a kingdom under Sharia law.

Queensland University senior international relations lecturer Dr Andrew Phillips told Fairfax Media that jihadists have been using social media for years and that al-Qaeda and now ISIL have been particularly effective early adopters.

“Seizing Mosul is a major propaganda coup, which catapults ISIS over al-Qaeda, with whom they are now estranged, as Iraq and the region's number one threat,” Dr Phillips said.

Beyond intimidating their opponents, the two key target markets for groups like ISIL are donors and recruits, particularly disenfranchised second and third generation Muslim migrants in Western countries (including Australia), who Dr Phillips says are high priority potential recruits.

“Social media appeals to jihadists for the same reason it appeals to non-violent political parties and other social movements: it provides cheap, global platforms that enable non-state actors to reach out to geographically dispersed global constituencies while refining their message to tap into local grievances,” Dr Phillips said.

Coordination is the key

Extremism and social media analyst J M Berger says the group is deploying a coordinated and effective social campaign.

For example, as the attacks on Mosul began, many accounts tweeted a similar message: “We are coming Baghdad” with an image of an ISIL flag above the capital.

“This is a combination of an extremely ambitious military campaign with an extremely ambitious PR campaign. Social media is most of that PR campaign,” Mr Berger told CBS News.

ISIL insider and spokesperson Abu Bakr al Janabi confirmed the group's extensive social media strategy to Vice News.

“There are different types of ISIS divisions on social media: the ISIS official media account, which publishes all its video releases, ISIS province accounts, which publish live feed info and pictures, the ISIS mujahideen accounts, where fighters talk about their experience and daily life, and ISIS supporters, who counter Western, Shia, and tyrants' propaganda and lies.”

Twitter activity by ISIL supporters and the wider jihadist online community increased drastically in recent weeks with over 40,000 tweets sent.

Mr Berger tracked almost 3 million tweets from 7500 accounts involved in jihadist networks that were hashtagged with four popular jihadist hashtags: #isis, #jabhatalnusra, #islamicfront and #daash.

Tweets tagged #isis doubled during the Mosul attacks, as did tweets tagged Syria. Those tagged Iraq increased tenfold.

The significant increase of tweets among these communities indicates how far reaching and active many of these groups are online.

The tag that saw the highest growth was Daash, which Mr Berger says is a derogatory reference to ISIL used by its critics, in this case jihadist groups chasing the same donors such as Jabhat al Nusra.

Gaining momentum

Analysts say even if they lose ground won in the recent spate of battles, the recognition and online momentum will be invaluable to ISIL.

The United States and its allies run continuous interference against jihadist social media campaigns. But as fast host sites or social media accounts containing propaganda are taken down, similar ones usually pop up very quickly.

“This is not to say that efforts to suppress jihadist social media campaigns are futile - far from it,” Dr Phillips said. “But it is to stress that while the internet remains a 'Wild West'.

This includes the sharing of horrific photos of victims, as well as genuine accounts from "fan boys" to young people involved in the fighting sharing their experiences and posting images of everyday life from the front lines.

<http://www.smh.com.au/world/cats-and-kalashnikovs-behind-the-isil-social-media-strategy-20140625-zsk50.html>

4. Please visit this site as well: <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/09/16/world/middleeast/how-isis-works.html>
5. Active Listening
Pages 60-62 of Student Ambassador notebook

Optional Readings:

1. **Editorial** [OPINION PIECE]

Mr. Erdogan’s Dangerous Game: Turkey’s Refusal to Fight ISIS Hurts the Kurds

By [THE EDITORIAL BOARD](#) OCT. 8, 2014

Turkey’s president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, once aspired to lead the Muslim world. At this time of regional crisis, he has been anything but a leader. Turkish troops and tanks have been standing passively behind a chicken-wire border fence while a mile away in Syria, Islamic extremists are besieging the town of Kobani and its Kurdish population.

This is an indictment of Mr. Erdogan and his cynical political calculations. By keeping his forces on the sidelines and refusing to help in other ways — like allowing Kurdish fighters to pass through Turkey — he seeks not only to weaken the Kurds, but also, in a test of will with President Obama, to force the United States to help him oust President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, whom he detests.

It is also evidence of the confusion and internal tensions that affect Mr. Obama’s work-in-progress strategy to degrade and defeat the Islamic State, the Sunni Muslim extremist group also called ISIS or ISIL. Kurdish fighters in Kobani have been struggling for weeks to repel the Islamic State. To help, the Americans stepped up airstrikes that [began to push](#) the ISIS fighters back, although [gun battles](#) and explosions continued on Wednesday.

But all sides — the Americans, Mr. Erdogan and the Kurds — agree that ground forces are necessary to capitalize on the air power. No dice, says Mr. Erdogan, unless the United States provides more support to rebels trying to overthrow Mr. Assad and creates a no-fly zone to deter the Syrian Air Force as well as a buffer zone along the Turkish border to shelter thousands of Syrian refugees who have fled the fighting.

No one can deny Mr. Assad's brutality in the civil war, but Mr. Obama has rightly resisted involvement in that war and has insisted that the focus should be on degrading ISIS, not going after the Syrian leader. The biggest risk in his decision to attack ISIS in Syria from the air is that it could put America on a slippery slope to a war that he has otherwise sought to avoid.

President Obama and his advisers display clear signs of 'inside the beltway syndrome' in relation to the Mideast conflict and how to fight...

Unfortunately President Obama is not a miracle worker who is able to solve the centuries-old Shia-Sunni conflict in one news cycle as the US...

"One has to wonder why such a profound dispute was not worked out before Mr. Obama took action in Syria." A good question. But isn't the most...

Mr. Erdogan's behavior is hardly worthy of a NATO ally. He was so eager to oust Mr. Assad that he enabled ISIS and other militants by allowing fighters, weapons and revenues to flow through Turkey. If Mr. Erdogan refuses to defend Kobani and seriously join the fight against the Islamic State, he will further enable a savage terrorist group and ensure a poisonous long-term instability on his border.

He has also complicated his standing at home. His hesitation in helping the Syrian Kurds has enraged Turkey's Kurdish minority, which staged protests against the Turkish government on Wednesday that reportedly led to the deaths of [21 people](#). Mr. Erdogan fears that defending Kobani would strengthen the Syrian Kurds, who have won de facto control of many border areas as they seek autonomy much like their Kurdish brethren in Iraq. But if Kobani falls, Kurdish fury will undoubtedly grow.

The Americans have been trying hard to resolve differences with Mr. Erdogan in recent days, but these large gaps are deeply threatening to the 50-plus-nation coalition that the United States has assembled. One has to wonder why such a profound dispute was not worked out before Mr. Obama took action in Syria.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/09/opinion/turkeys-refusal-to-fight-isis-hurts-the-kurds.html?emc=eta1c>

2. 'No ransom' hostage policy: Our view Editorial board

European nations that pay kidnappers undermine United States.

"Kidnapping hostages is an easy spoil," one al-Qaeda leader wrote to another in 2012, marveling over the amount of money terrorist groups can extort from the West with little effort.

Indeed, al-Qaeda and its franchises have taken in more than \$125 million in ransom since 2008, according to an estimate by *The New York Times*, including \$66 million in the last year alone. The money makes terror groups bigger and more difficult to defeat — and more likely to take additional hostages.

This lesson is coming into acute focus at a time when the U.S. is confronting a vicious terror group, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. ISIS has now killed two kidnapped American journalists, James Foley and Steven Sotloff. The al-Qaeda offshoot is believed to hold at least one more American and is demanding \$6.6 million in ransom.

What to do? The story of the Somali pirates is instructive. When pirates were first seizing ships off the East African coast, ship owners treated ransom payments as a cost of doing business. But that just encouraged more piracy. Eventually, owners began hardening their vessels and putting armed teams onboard to fight back. The number of hijacked ships fell dramatically.

When paying ransom is the only policy, you'll just pay more of it, enriching and strengthening the kidnapers. What works is refusing to pay. This can seem outrageously callous, but there's evidence that it can reduce the number of kidnappings as long as the target nations stick together.

That's not happening. The U.S. and British governments refuse to pay, but France, Switzerland, Spain and other European nations make payments or arrange for them to be made, while claiming not to do so. This makes kidnapping a profit center.

The cost of U.S. policy is easy to see: the horrific beheadings of Foley and Sotloff by a masked ISIS thug. The benefits are less visible: fewer hostages taken and less funding for terrorist groups.

Just three of 53 hostages taken by al-Qaeda and its affiliates over the past five years have been Americans, according to *The Economist*. This suggests that the extremists realize U.S. citizens aren't lucrative targets. Further, statistics seem to confirm the high cost of paying kidnapers: Two University of Texas researchers found that every hostage ransom produces nearly three new kidnappings.

It's not as if U.S. authorities never negotiate. There's an obvious exception for bringing home captive American servicemembers because the military's no-one-left-behind commitment helps troops face combat.

National policy should make no such exception for civilians, even if families and employers choose another course. What makes sense for a government can be unendurable at a personal level, and blocking family members or colleagues from doing whatever they can to rescue a kidnap victim would betray American values.

In practical terms, though, the price demanded by groups such as ISIS has gotten so high that only government can afford it. That's further proof, if any were needed, that the way to try to save hostages is to send in special forces. And the way to deal with terrorist kidnapers is to kill them, not buy them off.

USA TODAY's editorial opinions are decided by its Editorial Board, separate from the news staff. Most editorials are coupled with an opposing view — a unique USA TODAY feature.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2014/09/02/isis-hostage-ransom-beheading-kidnapping-editorials-debates/14986203/>

3. UN Report on ISIS: 24,000 Killed, Injured by Islamic State; Children Used as Soldiers, Women Sold as Sex Slaves

BY [SAMUEL SMITH](#), CP CONTRIBUTOR

October 9, 2014|8:15 am\

[FROM A RELIGIOUS NEWS SOURCE: CHRISTIAN POST]

A United Nations report highlighting the human rights violations of the Islamic State's jihadist campaign in Iraq found that while over 24,000 Iraqi civilians have been injured or killed by ISIS in the first eight months of 2014, and the extremists have taken up the practices of recruiting 12- and 13-year-old soldiers and forcing women and girls into sex slavery.

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in conjunction with the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq released a report last Thursday that investigated ISIS' violations of human rights by conducting interviews with over 500 internally displaced witnesses. The witnesses told the UN investigators of the atrocious ways in which the terrorists were killing, kidnapping and persecuting citizens of all religious beliefs, including those holding ISIS' own faith of Sunni Islam.

Using information obtained from a variety of governmental, non-governmental and local media sources, the report states that in the first eight months of 2014, ISIS terrorist and militants from associated groups have killed approximately 8,493 Iraqi civilians, while injuring 15,782.

Many of the casualties occurred in the final two months of the reporting as 11,159 casualties and 4,692 deaths were reported from June 1 until Aug. 31, the time period in which ISIS was able to seize the majority of Iraq's northern Nineveh province.

"The actual numbers could be much higher," the report states. "Additionally, the number of civilians who have died from the secondary effects of violence, such as lack of access to basic food, water or medicine, after fleeing their homes or who remained trapped in areas under ISIL control or in areas of conflict are unknown."

As of Aug. 30, the report finds that over 1.8 million Iraqi citizens have been displaced from their home due to the ongoing violence. The report notes that over a million citizens, or two-thirds of those displaced, are in areas that are under ISIS control, making it hard for humanitarian aid workers to access them.

Although the death and injury toll is alarming, what is equally as shocking is how the militants are patrolling the streets. Witnesses in Mosul and Tal Afar also told investigators that they have seen children as young as 12-years-old being trained as soldiers and patrol guards. The witnesses also say these children have been given the ability to arrest people and the majority of the militants' patrol forces in the streets of Mosul are children.

The report also found that the number of children manning ISIS checkpoints is increasing.

"Witnesses in Mosul and Tal Afar have confirmed seeing children armed and wearing attire similar to ISIL fighters. Sources also spotted underage children accompanying ISIL patrols inside both cities," the report stated. "Children were seen carrying weapons, sometimes too big for them to carry. Other witnesses claimed that the majority of ISIL elements patrolling the streets of Mosul were underage children, aged 13 to 16 years."

The report states that women are treated "particularly harshly" by the militants. Witnesses provided the investigation with some light into the various ways that the extremists are treating women and girls.

The report states that on Aug. 5 over 150 mostly Yazidi and Christian women that were detained by ISIS two days earlier were transported to Syria and were allegedly awarded to ISIS militants or sold as sex slaves.

"On 3 August, ISIL herded approximately 450–500 women and girls to the citadel of Tal Afar in Ninewa where, two days later, 150 unmarried girls and women, predominantly from the Yezidi and Christian communities, were reportedly transported to Syria, either to be given to ISIL fighters as a reward or to be sold as sex slaves," the report stated.

Many females that refuse to wear veils covering their face as ISIS requires, are usually beaten, and sometimes killed, the report stated. For female doctors, they find it hard to do their job while wearing a veil over their face and many of them went on strike. Witness reports said that in some instances ISIS militants would stand outside of the entrance to hospitals and prevent doctors or nurses from entering that were not covered with a veil.

"On one occasion, a female doctor reported that she was stopped from attending to an urgent case because she was not covered properly," the report stated. "After a long heated discussion with the ISIL fighter, she was allowed to perform her duties."

With ISIS' "convert or die" mentality, many of the deaths reported by this investigation were due to failure to pledge allegiance to ISIS. Although ISIS has become notorious for "religious cleansing" as they claim to "properly implement Islam" the investigators found that the militants also kill and persecute other believers of their Sunni faith.

Witnesses say that on July 22, ISIS killed a Sunni Imam because he had denounced the terrorist organization. Then on Aug. 31, witnesses say that 19 Sunnis were executed for failing to pledge allegiance to the group and then on Sept. 9 another Sunni Imam was executed for the same reason.

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/un-report-on-isis-24000-killed-injured-by-islamic-state-children-used-as-soldiers-women-sold-as-sex-slaves-127761/>

Discussion Questions:

Is ISIL a threat to the United States?

What is the role of the US Government in this conflict?

Do you think the United Nations has the responsibility to protect civilians and other religious groups in these areas and stop the extremist group?

How should the US government get involved, if at all? Social media, troops, air strikes, etc.

What is the role of airstrikes? Do you think this is beneficial for the short and/or long term?

Should the U.S. begin paying ransom for hostages? Are European countries wrong for doing so?

How do you see this conflict escalating?

About Fishbowls:

What is a Socratic Seminar? A Socratic Seminar is a structured classroom practice that promotes critical and creative thinking, intellectual curiosity, and collaboration through shared inquiry and dialogue. The main goal of a Socratic Seminar is to build deep conceptual understandings of texts and ideas through dialogue (not debate). In the seminar, the teacher's role is purely that of a facilitator, and students generate and lead their own discussion.

Fishbowl Style

- Inner Circle – Half of the class is in the 'fishbowl', and they will be participating in the discussion for the first 15 minutes.
- Outer Circle – The other half of the class will be observers. They will observe and evaluate their fellow Ambassadors in the inner circle.

After the first 15 minutes, the students switch places, and the new inner circle can either discuss the same questions, or different ones.

Ground Rules:

- Don't raise hands
- Listen carefully
- Address each other respectfully and with eye contact
- Base your opinions on evidence (articles, examples, logic)
- Allow everyone time to speak
- Only those in the Fishbowl can speak in the discussion (not observers!!)
- Observers should take notes on the discussion and give feedback to their partners afterwards

