



The Danger of Takfir (Excommunication): Exposing IS' Takfiri Ideology

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Introduction

The Islamic State (IS) terrorist group has attracted wide condemnation from mainstream Muslim scholars for its misrepresentations and misinterpretations of Islamic doctrines.¹ These range from the concepts of *jihad* and *hijrah* (emigration) to the resurrection of the 'caliphate', treatment of non-Muslims and punishment of opponents and offenders. In September 2014, over 120 prominent Muslim scholars issued an Open Letter to IS leader al-Baghdadi, his fighters and followers, denouncing IS for committing numerous religious transgressions and abominable crimes.² The letter pointed out that IS has "misinterpreted Islam into a religion of harshness, brutality, torture and murder" and committed "a great wrong and an offence to Islam, to Muslims and to the entire world".

IS also faces criticism from fellow jihadists, notably Al Qaeda Central and other rival groups such as Jabhah Al-Nusrah (now part of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham) and Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).³ One of the many criticisms directed against IS is its permissiveness in the practice of *takfir* (declaring a Muslim as apostate). This makes IS a *takfiri* group that can be equated with the Kharijites, a rebellious group which has been denounced by Sunni Muslims since its emergence in 7th century Arabia.

This article will focus on the declaration of a Muslim as an apostate to highlight IS' exploitation of the concept to justify the killing of fellow Muslims, including Muslim rulers, political leaders, scholars and clerics. It is divided into two parts: the first part provides an overview of mainstream Sunni Islam's position on *takfir* that

will become a basis for countering IS' warped understanding and application of the concept, while the second part analyses IS' *takfir* doctrine, exposing its deviation from mainstream Sunni Islam and its own doctrine.

Part One: Mainstream Position on *Takfir*⁴

Takfir is a theological declaration that a Muslim has become an apostate or a person is an infidel or an act or idea constitutes a disbelief in Islam. Engaging in *takfir* is a serious matter in Islam because it is considered a great sin with punishment in the afterlife.⁵ In this sense, *takfir* has serious consequences for both the accuser and the accused. For the latter, it has possible adverse impact on relations with the person's Muslim spouse, rights to inheritance, and other aspects. For the accuser, *takfir* obligates the person to provide clear evidence, failing which the person would have committed a sin as grave as committing apostasy, as warned by the Prophet in the following *hadiths*:

"When a person calls his brother (in Islam) a disbeliever, one of them will certainly deserve the title. If the addressee is so as he has asserted, the disbelief of the man is confirmed, but if it is untrue, then it will revert to him" (narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

"Whoever calls a man '*kafir*' [disbeliever] or said 'O, enemy of Allah', when he is not one, (the accusation) will rebound to him" (narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

“A man does not call another as *fasiq* or *kafir*, except that he will be the apostate if the other is actually not” (narrated by Al-Bukhari).

Given the serious implications, mainstream Muslim scholars have always exercised caution on the subject.⁶ *Takfir* is only permissible if it is based on clear and indisputable evidence.⁷

Despite *takfir* being a grave issue, extremist groups have taken liberties and misused the concept by declaring various categories of Muslims as *kafir* as enumerated below:

- Muslims who commit sins;
- Rulers who do not rule according to the *Shari`ah*, and their followers;
- Muslims who are not members of their group (e.g. IS);
- Muslims who refuse to label others extremist groups consider as *kafir*;
- Muslims who live in an ‘un-Islamic’ society and do not migrate; and
- Muslims residing in *dar al-harb* (lands ruled by non-Muslims).

They also declare the whole Muslim society as *jahiliyah* (in a state of disbelief as per the Arabs before the prophet hood of Muhammad).⁸

Understanding *kufr* (disbelief)

The above declarations of disbelief ignore the different types and grades of *kufr* which do not always result in a Muslim being excommunicated or ceasing to be a Muslim. Mainstream Muslim scholars hold that there are two types of *kufr*. The first type of *kufr* involves acts such as disparaging the fundamental teachings of Islam or denouncing any of the articles of faith. This is known among scholars as major *kufr*.

The second type of *kufr*, known as minor *kufr*, involves the commission of vice. Any individual who commits acts such as fornication, murder and theft will be guilty of sin but he will not cease to be a Muslim. There is significant scriptural evidence that points to this second type of *kufr*. For example, the Qur’an says:

“Verily, We have shown him the way: [and it rests with him to prove himself] either grateful or ungrateful [*kufr*].” (The Qur’an, 76:3)

“...However, he who is grateful [to God] is but

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grateful for his own good; and he who is ungrate-ful [*kufr*] [should know that], verily, my Sustainer is self-sufficient, most generous in giving! (The Qur’an, 27:40)

Muslim scholars understand the word *kufr* used in the above verses to mean ingratitude. In Islam, being ungrateful to God by committing a sinful act does not lead to excommunication. The same meaning can also be found in many *hadiths*. For example, the Prophet had said, “Do not detest your fathers; he who detested his father committed *kufr*” (narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim). In this *hadith*, the Prophet used the word *kufr* to denote ungratefulness, which does not cause a person to be excluded from the religion; it is only considered a sinful act.

The Prophet had also said, “Abusing a Muslim is *fusuq* (an evil doing) and killing him is *kufr* (disbelief).” (narrated by Al-Bukhari and Al-Turmuzi). *Kufr* here does not mean falling out of the religion because it is stated in the Qur’an, “Hence, if two groups of believers fall to fighting, make peace between them...” (The Qur’an 49: 9). In this verse, the two groups that are fighting with one another are still regarded as believers (*mu`min*). As such, *kufr* in the *hadith* denotes sin rather than falling out of the religion.

Several pertinent positions of mainstream Muslim scholars on *takfir*

The following are several pertinent positions of mainstream Muslim scholars on *takfir*:

- Since not all acts of *kufr* will cause a person to be excommunicated, it is important to be careful in understanding the Quranic verses that judge certain actions as *kufr*.⁹
- As *kufr* exists in the heart, prudence is required when judging matters related to

the unknown. Given that *kufr* can only be ascertained by the heart's intentions, physical or outward acts alone cannot justify *takfir*; the only exception is when there is indisputable evidence to support it¹⁰ because the Qur'an says:

“And never concern thyself with anything of which thou hast no knowledge...” (The Qur'an, 17:36);

“O you who have attained to faith! Avoid most guesswork [about one another]....” (The Qur'an, 49:12).

One of Prophet Muhammad's companions caught someone during battle and the man quickly declared his conversion to Islam. Suspecting that the man's declaration was done out of fear of being killed, the companion proceeded to kill him. When the Prophet found out, he reprimanded the companion with this retort repeatedly, “Did you cut open his heart to know whether his heart uttered it or not?” (narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim). Hence, where *takfir* is concerned, the benefit of the doubt must be given to the accused.

- It is not permissible to rule a person as a disbeliever (*kafir*) for committing vice as long as he does not declare the vice as *halal* (permissible).¹¹ This is applicable for sinful acts like adultery and drinking alcohol.¹² This is a known position of the Sunnis as opposed to the Kharijites and Muktazilites.¹³
- It is not permissible to unequivocally declare a Muslim ruler as *kafir* just because he does not rule according to the *Shari'ah*. Similarly, the people who do not try to change such a ruler cannot be deemed as *kafir*. Mainstream Muslim scholars regard the declaration of *kafir* in such instances as extremism.¹⁴ They do not automatically rule such Muslim rulers as *kafir* as the Qur'an distinguishes such rulers into three categories: disbeliever (*kafir*), oppressor (*zalim*) or corrupt (*fasiq*).¹⁵ Ibn Abi Al-'Iz in *Sharh Al-'Aqidah Al-Tahawiyah* wrote:

“If he [the ruler] believes that ruling by what Allah revealed is not

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obligatory or that he has an option in the matter or he is showing disdain for it while he is certain that it is the rule of Allah, then that is the greater *kufr*. If he believes that it is obligatory to rule by what Allah revealed and he is aware of that fact, however, he abstains from doing so while admitting that he is deserving of punishment, then he is a sinner. He is called a *kaafir* (disbeliever) in a metaphorical sense or [in other words] it is the lesser *kufr*.¹⁶

In this respect, Muslim scholars point out that the Prophet did not condemn King Najasyi (Negus) for not judging by the *Shari'ah*, neither did God condemn Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) for serving in the government of a non-Muslim king.¹⁷

- It is also not permissible to make an absolute declaration of *kufr* upon all the people under the rule of a government that does not judge by the *Shari'ah*. Here again, Muslim scholars refer to the past examples of Najasyi (Negus), Prophet Yusuf (Joseph), and the stay of the Companions in Abyssinia, which was not ruled by the *Shari'ah*.¹⁸
- It is not permissible to rule a person as *kafir* for not being with an Islamic group or for leaving the group.¹⁹
- It is not permissible to perform *takfir* on people for residing in a non-Muslim country and refusing to migrate from there.²⁰
- It is also not permissible to perform *takfir mu'ayyan* (on specific person or group) without indisputable evidence, authority and due process. Although Muslim

scholars often issue rulings (*fatwa*) on whether a certain thinking or deed is *kufr*, they avoid passing such judgment on specific individuals or groups. In their view, it is preferable to give them the benefit of the doubt rather than err in *takfir*.

Furthermore, the responsibility for determining whether a person is a *kafir* lies with the appropriate judicial authority. The accused person has to be tried in court and accorded the right to defend himself; the judgment regarding the person is based not just on evidence presented by the accuser but other considerations as well.²¹

- It is not permissible to rule another as *kafir* just because the person refuses to refer to another person declared by an unauthorised person or group as *kafir*. As mentioned above, judgement of *kufr* is not the right of any individual or group, but that of an Islamic judicial authority. If there is no Islamic judicial body that is able to try people who are accused of being apostates, that right is not transferable to any other party as this will cause chaos in society. This is especially so when such accusations of *kufr* are open to various possibilities. Therefore, if one does not agree to accuse another of *kufr*, then he cannot be ruled as *kafir* for refusing to do so. On this, Ibn Taimiyah said:

“...declaring another person a disbeliever is a right of Allah. Hence, one cannot declare a person an unbeliever save for that person whom Allah and His Messenger have declared a disbeliever [that is, by having a clear proof from the Quran and Sunnah that such a person is a disbeliever].”²²

- It is also not permissible to rule the whole Muslim community as *jahiliyah*.²³ Tellingly, Al-Bukhari named a chapter in his book *Sahih Al-Bukhari* as ‘*Vice is part of ignorance (jahiliyah); an offender cannot be judged as kafir, unless the vice is shirk (associating God with others)*’. One cannot judge all mankind or all Muslims today as living in ignorance (*jahiliyah*), as the term refers to ignorance in the times before the prophets. Such a view also contradicts the Prophet’s hadiths:

“..the responsibility for determining whether a person is a kafir lies with the appropriate judicial authority.”

“There will always be a group of my followers who will fight for the truth, till the Day of Resurrection” (related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim);

“Allah will not let my followers agree on deviation” (narrated by Al-Turmuzi).

These are some of the relevant points on the subject of *takfir* held by mainstream Muslim scholars that differentiate them from extremists.

Part Two: *Takfir* according to IS²⁴

IS’ position on *takfir* is publicly enumerated online in ‘*Aqidah Wa Manhaj Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah Fi Al-Takfir* (IS’ Creed and Methodology of *Takfir*),²⁵ *Muqarrar Fi Al-Tawhid Li Al-Mu`askarat* (Standard Text for Islamic Creed for Military Camps)²⁶ and *Hazih `Aqidatuna Wa Haza Manhajuna* (This is our creed and our way).²⁷ These documents classify various categories of Muslims as *kafir*; they include:

- all Twelver Shiites – both ordinary persons and scholars;²⁸
- those who reject the *takfir* of Twelver Shiite scholars as disbelievers;
- all parties based on communism, secularism, nationalism and liberalism;²⁹
- proponents of democracy and those who participate in its process;
- all governments that do not rule by the *Shari`ah* and members of its military, police officers, intelligence, executive and judiciary apparatuses;³⁰ and
- all those who seek to judge by civil laws.³¹

IS claims that its method of *takfir* on a specific person or organisation is premised on the following conditions:

- it must be based on clear and strong evidence that are soundly established, not speculations;
- it must meet all the necessary requirements required by the *Shari'ah*;
- it must be free from inhibitions recognised by the *Shari'ah*;
- the person involved must be presented with evidence; and
- it must be issued by IS' authorised bodies.³²

IS also asserts that its stand on *takfir* is based on the creed of the Sunni and guided by the tradition of noble Sunni scholars. In addition, the group claims that it regards all who proclaim the *Shahadah* (Testimony of Faith) as Muslims, until proven otherwise.

Exposing IS' False Claims

In practice, however, IS' application of *takfir* is contrary to the above claims which appear to have been made to counter criticisms that it is a *takfiri* movement, and to project itself as an authentic Sunni movement deserving support. Accusations of *takfirism*, which come together with the Kharijite label, are levelled against IS not only by prominent mainstream scholars and Muslim organisations all over the world, but also by jihadist circles such as leaders of Al-Qaeda. Abu Mus'ab Al-Zarqawi who led Al-Qaeda in Iraq – the forerunner of IS – was counselled by his religious mentor Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi on, among other things, the former's blatant use of *takfir* to justify his group's indiscriminate killing of Iraqi civilians.³³

Takfir on Muslim scholars and leaders

A close examination of IS' position on *takfir* reveals several instances of contradictory statements and erroneous claims of its purported adherence to mainstream Sunni tradition and doctrines. For instance, IS' pronouncements of *takfir* on respected Muslim scholars, leaders and activists through its official magazine *Dabiq* (now replaced by *Rumiyah*) are without basis or justification and not in accordance with the *Shari'ah*.

IS had declared Muslim scholars like Hamzah Yusuf (who heads Zaytuna College in Berkeley, California),³⁴ and Yasir Qadhi (who holds a teaching position in the Religious Department of Rhodes College and is also the Dean of Academic Affairs at Al-Maghrib Institute),³⁵ as

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“*murtad*” (apostate) for their condemnation of the terrorist attack on the French weekly newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* in January 2015 in which 12 people were killed.³⁶ Other prominent Muslim scholars and clerics whom IS has denounced include Dr Abdullah Hakim Quick (prominent scholar, UK), Hisham Kabbani (prominent scholar and Sheikh of Nashabandi Sufi Order, US), Muhammad Al-Yaqoubi (prominent scholar, Syria) and Tawfique Chowdhury (scholar and Executive Chairman of Mercy Mission, Australia).

IS did not explain the process that was adopted to make such pronouncements, and whether the group had communicated its ruling to them and allowed them to refute the charges; neither did the group disclose who were the scholars involved in making such rulings. Based on its *takfir* methodology, *takfir* cannot be made based on speculation and must go through proper processes; no Muslim should be judged otherwise, except with evidence that is beyond doubt (*yaqin*). IS' failure to adhere to its own doctrine of *takfir* constitutes a serious non-compliance with the *Shari'ah*.

Takfir over Democracy

Another example of IS' failure to adhere to mainstream Sunni doctrines is its pronouncement of *takfir* on all Muslims who accept democracy and regard it as compatible with Islam. This pronouncement is problematic

on two grounds.

First, although there is some disagreement among Muslim scholars on the issue, many of them today would support a democratic system and permit Muslims participating in its process, regardless whether they live in a Muslim country or a non-Muslim country or participate as voters, election candidates or members of parliament.³⁷ This position is supported by many scholarly works,³⁸ as well as by the participation of Islamic parties (which include Muslim scholars) in democratic processes and governments in many Muslim-majority countries. IS' pronouncement, therefore, go against the mainstream position of Sunni scholars, and is tantamount to pronouncing *takfir* on them and hundreds of millions of ordinary Muslims.³⁹

Second, it is an established Sunni doctrine to refrain from *takfir* on contentious theological issues where differences of opinion arising from *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) are inevitable. This includes the issue of democracy in Islam. Due to the serious consequences of *takfir*, some conservative scholars who reject the compatibility of democracy with Islam and discourage Muslims' participation in it, prefer prudence and refrain from pronouncing *takfir* on those who disagree with them.⁴⁰ They are also guided by a *hadith* that says, "Avert the legal penalties from the Muslims as much as possible, if he has a way out then leave him to his way, for if the Imam makes a mistake in forgiving it would be better than making a mistake in punishment" (narrated by Al-Turmuzi). IS' pronouncement of *takfir* therefore contradicts its own claim in its *Muqarrar Fi Al-Tawhid* that its creed and doctrine are based on Sunni doctrines.⁴¹

At Odds With Contemporary Muslim Scholars' Standpoint

IS' failure to live up to its own claims of abiding by Sunni precepts is clearly demonstrated in the letter signed by more than 120 Muslim scholars from all over the world denouncing IS. The letter, signed by renowned scholars such as Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah (President of the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies), Sheikh Shawqi `Allam (Grand Mufti of Egypt), Hamzah Yusuf and Dr. Din Syamsudin (President of Muhammadiyah and Chairman of the Indonesian Council of Ulama), lists down more than 20 points of IS' serious transgressions of Islamic teachings. *Takfir* is one of the points addressed

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by the letter:

“.....disbelief requires the intention of disbelief, and not just absentminded words or deeds. It is not permissible to accuse anyone of disbelief without proof of the intention of disbelief. Nor is it permissible to accuse anyone of being a non-Muslim without ascertaining that intention. ...

It is forbidden to interpret the implications of a person's deeds; only the person himself or herself may interpret their own deeds - particularly when there is a difference of opinion among Muslims regarding that particular deed. It is also forbidden to declare others as non-Muslim based on any matter in which there is a difference of opinion among Muslim scholars. It is forbidden to declare an entire group of people non-Muslim. Disbelief applies only to individuals depending on their deeds and intentions... scholars - including Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Al-Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah - distinguish between the actions of a disbeliever (*kafir*) and declaring people non-Muslim (*takfir*). Even if a person performs a deed that has elements of disbelief, this does not necessitate that that person be judged as a disbeliever for the reasons presented earlier. Al-Dhahabi related that his teacher, Ibn Taymiyyah, used to say near the end of his life: 'I do not

declare any member of the ummah non-Muslim ... The Prophet said: "Anyone who maintains his ablution is a believer", so whoever observes the prescribed prayers with ablution is a Muslim.'...."⁴²

The above categorical statement clearly refutes IS' pronouncement of *takfir* against Muslim scholars and masses. The statement also challenges IS' use of *takfir* in contentious theological issues, such as the compatibility of democracy with Islam. IS' indiscriminate application of *takfir* against a wide range of people and organisations also goes against the prudence recommended in the final part of the above letter. IS has so far failed to respond to the criticisms of these scholars.

Contradicting the Amman Message and Mardin Declaration

IS' *takfir* doctrine and declaration of all Shiites as disbelievers are also at variance with the Amman Message (issued in 2005) that has been endorsed by hundreds of eminent Muslim scholars and thinkers, such as the late Sheikh Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi (former Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar), Sheikh Ali Gomaa (former Grand Mufti of Egypt), Professor Kamal Hassan (former President of International Islamic University of Malaysia), and Prof. Ingrid Mattson (former President of Islamic Society of North America). The Amman Message pronounces:

"(1) Whosoever is an adherent to one of the four Sunni schools (Mathahib) of Islamic jurisprudence (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali), *the two Shi'i schools of Islamic jurisprudence (Ja'fari and Zaydi)*, the Ibadi school of Islamic jurisprudence and the Thahiri school of Islamic jurisprudence, *is a Muslim. Declaring that person an apostate is impossible and impermissible. Verily his (or her) blood, honour, and property are inviolable* [emphasis added]. Moreover, in accordance with the Shaykh Al-Azhar's fatwa, it is neither possible nor permissible to declare whosoever subscribes to the Ash'ari creed or whoever practices real Tasawwuf (Sufism) an apostate. Likewise, it is neither possible nor permissible to declare whosoever subscribes to true Salafi thought an apostate.

Equally, it is neither possible nor

"IS' takfir doctrine and declaration of all Shiites as disbelievers are also at variance with the Amman Message.."

permissible to declare as apostates any group of Muslims who believes in God, Glorified and Exalted be He, and His Messenger (may peace and blessings be upon him) and the pillars of faith, and acknowledges the five pillars of Islam, and does not deny any necessarily self-evident tenet of religion."⁴³

This declaration also refutes IS' claim that Sunni Muslim scholars are in consensus regarding the disbelief of all Shiite scholars. IS is shown to be clearly wrong in using this false reason to justify *takfir* against Sunni scholars who refuse to *takfir* Shiite scholars. In Islamic jurisprudence, any claim of consensus (*ijma'*) among scholars is hardly uncontested, be it in the classical period or current times, as shown by the present Declaration. As such, IS owes the Sunni world an explanation as to why it deviates from the pronouncement endorsed by hundreds of contemporary distinguished scholars.

The Mardin Declaration is another major source exposing the divergence of IS' doctrine of *takfir* from Sunni Islam's position. It was adopted in 2010 by a group of prominent Muslim scholars, such as Sheikh Mustafa Ceric (Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Habib Ali Aljifri (Director of Tabah Foundation), at a conference in Mardin (in Turkey) to deliberate on the exploitation of Ibn Taimiyah's *fatwa* by extremist groups to justify *takfir*, killing of 'apostates' and waging perpetual war against non-Muslims. The Declaration stated *inter alia* that:

"(1) Ibn Taymiyya's fatwa concerning Mardin can under no circumstances be appropriated and used as evidence for levelling the charge of *kufr* (unbelief) against fellow Muslims, rebelling against rulers, deeming game their lives and property, terrorising those who enjoy

safety and security, acting treacherously towards those who live (in harmony) with fellow Muslims or with whom fellow Muslims live (in harmony) via the bond of citizenship and peace. On the contrary, the fatwa deems all of that unlawful, notwithstanding its original purpose of supporting a Muslim state against a non-Muslim state. Ibn Taymiyya agrees with all of this, and follows the precedent of previous Muslim scholars in this regard, and does not deviate from their position. Anyone who seeks support from this fatwa for killing Muslims or non-Muslims has erred in his interpretation and has misapplied the revealed texts....

7) The notion of loyalty and enmity (*al-wala wa al-bara*) must never be used to declare anyone out of the fold of Islam, unless an actual article of unbelief is held. In all other cases, it actually involves several types of judgement ranging according to the juridical five-fold scale: (permissible, recommended, not-recommended, non-permissible, and required). Therefore, it is not permissible to narrow the application of this notion and use it for declaring a Muslim outside the fold of Islam.”⁴⁴

Although the Amman Message and Mardin Declaration precede IS which was established in June 2014, its predecessors Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and later the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI), were already in existence and applying *takfir* indiscriminately. IS should explain its *takfir* doctrine *vis-à-vis* these major declarations and live up to its claim of honouring Muslim scholars and adhering to Sunni traditions.

Conclusion

The Letter to Al-Baghdadi, the Amman Message and the Mardin Declaration, endorsed by hundreds of eminent Muslim scholars, constitute sufficient evidence that IS' doctrine and practice of *takfir* are contrary to Sunni creed and tradition. Mainstream scholars are circumspect on dealing with *takfir* in view of its serious implications. IS in contrast adopts a cavalier attitude, declaring large numbers of Muslims as *kafir*. In view of IS' deviation from established Sunni positions, its claims of holding mainstream scholars in high esteem and following the Sunni tradition are erroneous and deceptive. More importantly, IS'

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position deviates from the well-known advice of the Prophet (narrated by Ibn Majah): “My people/followers will not be in agreement over misguidance. When you differ in opinions, be with the *Al-Sawad Al-A`zham* (the majority).” Not only is IS not with the majority, it is trying hard to undermine their unity and position of moderation, tolerance and peaceful co-existence with others.

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 21. Ibid, pp. 334-6; Muhammad Khayr Haykal (1996), *Al-Jihad Wa Al-Qital Fi Al-Siyasah Al-Shar'iyah (Jihad and War in Islamic Public Policy)*, Beirut: Dar Al-Bayariq, pp. 133-4, 307-8; Mahmud bin 'Abd Al-Rahman (2012), *Shubuhah Hawl 'Ahdath Misr 25 Yanayar (Confusion Around Egypt's 25 January Incidents)*, Qahirah: Dar Al-Istiqam, pp. 419-20, 425; Nasir Al-Din Al-Albaniy (2011), *Min Juhud Al-'Allamah Al-Albaniy Fi Nush Jama'at Al-Takfir (Al-Albaniy's Efforts to Advice Excommunication Society)*, Beirut: Muassasat Al-Rayyan, pp. 97-102; "Man Yahiqlah Al-Takfir (Who Has the Power of Excommunication)" (2010), *assakina.com*, 20 July, available at <http://www.assakina.com/taseel/5261.html> (23 March 2017); Muhammad bin Husayn Al-Qahtaniy (2003), *Fatawa Al-'Immah Fi Al-Nawazil Al-Mudhalimah (Scholars' Fatwas on Various Issues)*, Riyadh: Maktabat Al-Malik Fahd, pp. 233-8; Ra'id Al Tahir (2008), "Man Lah Haq Al-Takfir?! (Who Has the Power of Excommunication)", *ajurry.com*, June, available at <http://www.ajurry.com/vb/showthread.php?t=4706> (23 March 2017); 'Abd Al-Hakim Al-Khuwayliidiy Balhaj et. al. (2010), *Dirasat Tashihiyah Fi Mafahim Al-Jihad Wa Al-Hisbah Wa Al-Hukm 'Ala Al-Nas (Corrective Study on Jihad, Hisbah and Issue Ruling on People)*, Beirut: Lubnan, pp. 413-8.
 22. Cited in Ibid, p. 338.
 23. *Jahiliyah* is a characteristic that refers to the era before Prophet Muhammad was appointed as Allah's Messenger. That era was full of *kufir*. Therefore, the accusation of being *jahiliyah* means *kufir* and *shirk*.
 24. This part is extracted with some editing from the author's article in Muhammad Haniff Hassan, "A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing: An Analysis of Islamic State's Takfir Doctrine", *Eurasia Review*, 12 August 2015.
 25. 'Aqidah Wa Manhaj Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah Fi Al-Takfir, available at <https://justpaste.it/k5gp> (19 May 2016).
 26. Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah Hai'ah Al-Buhuth Wa Al-Ifta' (1436H), *Muqarrar Fi Al-Tawhid Li Al-Mu'askarat*, available at <http://up.top4top.net/downloadf-105bsrq1-pdf.html> (19 May 2016).
 27. *Hazih 'Aqidatuna Wa Haza Manhajuna*, No place: Maktabat Al-Himmah, available at <http://justpaste.it/matweat> (19 May 2016).
 28. See *Hazih 'Aqidatuna Wa Haza Manhajuna*, p. 4.
 29. See Ibid.
 30. See Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah (1436H), pp. 34-9.
 31. See Ibid.
 32. See Ibid; p. 3.

33. See Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah (1436H), p. 31-2; *Hazih `Aqidatuna Wa Haza Manhajuna*, p. 3-4.
34. See Hamza Yusuf's short biography at <http://shaykhhamza.com/biography/> and <https://www.zaytuna.edu/academics/faculty/> (23 March 2017).
35. See Yasir Qadhi's short biography at <http://almaghrib.org/instructors/yasir-qadhi#profile> and https://www.facebook.com/yasir.qadhi/info?tab=page_info (23 March 2017).
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37. Tauseef Ahmad Parray, "Democracy in Islam: The Views of Several Modern Muslim Scholars", *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, 27:2, pp. 140-8; Yaser Ellethy (2015), *Islam, Context, Pluralism and Democracy*, New York: Routledge; Rashid Al-Ghanushi (2012), *Al-Dimuqratiyah Wa Huquq Al-Insan Fi Al-Islam*, No place: Aljazeera Centre for Studies and Arab Scientific Publishers; Muhammad `Ammarah (2007), *Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah: Bayn Al-`Ilmaniyah Wa Al-Sultah Al-Diniyah*, Qahirah; Dar Al-Shuruq; Muhammad Salim Al-`Awwa (2007), *Fi Al-Nizam Al-Siyasiyah Li Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah*, Qahirah: Dar Al-Shuruq; Muslih Muhammad and Browsers Michaelle. "Democracy", *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*. Oxford Islamic Studies Online, available at <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0185> (23 March 2017).
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41. Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah (1436H), pp. 32-3.
42. See Open Letter to Al-Baghdadi, point 9, Online.
43. See The Three Points of the Amman Message, available at <http://ammanmessage.com/the-three-points-of-the-amman-message-v-1/> (23 March 2017).
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