

Bonner Querschnitte

Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

Phone: +49 / 4106 / 804806; Fax: +49 / 4106 / 804807
E-Mail: bq@bucer.de; <http://www.bucer.org/bq.html>

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Muslims are the most frequent Victims of Jihadism

Christine Schirmacher speaks to the University of Bonn's Asienhaus university group

(Bonn, 08.06.2016) In her lecture "The Syria conflict: A Power Struggle between Sunnis and Shiites or a Struggle for political Power in the Near East?", Christine Schirmacher labeled jihadism one of the greatest threats for world peace. As a consequence of terror and death in the name of Islam, it is above all Muslims who are counted among the victims. This is due to the fact that in most countries it is primarily



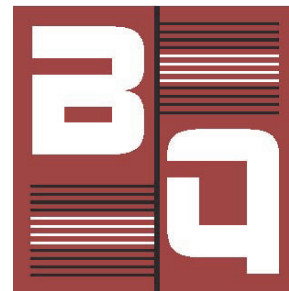
brothers in the faith of those conducting the attacks who die through attacks and executions – as, for instance, in the years and years of fighting in Iraq. At the same time, peaceful Muslims around the world are also suffering under terror and jihad in a way that has done lasting damage to the reputation of Islam as a religion. The following provides an excerpt of the lecture:

For around two years, the cruelty conducted and territorial gains made by the Islamic State (IS) have gripped people in the Near East, although not only them: The caliphate proclaimed by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in June 2014 has had repercussions all the way to Europe. Several thousand Europeans have entered into armed jihad by going to Syria and Iraq, among them over 700 German citizens. Security experts are worried about the prospects that a number of them will return radicalized, battle tested, and brutalized and could possibly conduct attacks in Europe.

How did it come to this outbreak of violence and terror in the Near East? How did it come to the proclamation of an "Islamic State" under the rule of a "caliphate"? What is meant by a "caliphate" and why does it attract sympathizers, fighters, and supports around the world? To which extent does the terror group IS even legitimately draw upon Islam – or are we simply dealing with a form of terrorism? And what are the roles

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Text & Technology:
Titus Vogt (ViSdP)
Vorderer Kamp 52a, D-25479 Ellerau
Phone: +49 / 4106 / 80 48 06
Fax: +49 / 4106 / 80 48 07
E-Mail: Titus.Vogt@bucer.de



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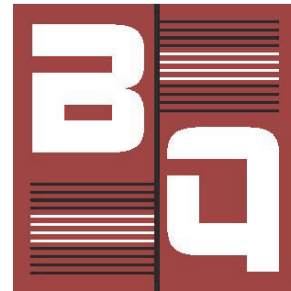
Pro Mundis e. V.
www.thomasschirmacher.net

Theological Commission of "Hope for Europe" (European Evangelical Alliance)
www.hfe.org

Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance
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played by political ambitions on the part of individual power blocks, such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, as well as the traditional enmities which have become more deeply entrenched than ever before between individual Islamic groupings?

The so-called “Islamic State” has within it an awakened hope for a re-emergence of the caliphate abolished in 1923/1924 by Kemal Atatürk. It also has awakened hope for the establishment of just rule which differentiates itself from the despotic, corrupt regimes of the Near East. These regimes established an outer shell of statehood but did not establish rights to equality nor to freedom, nor to women, nor to minorities. They also did not establish adequate educational opportunities for education or for employment. They also did not establish states under the rule of law. For many desperate people, the Arab Spring brought hope that improvements would occur or that even an end would be made to the often catastrophic economic situation and lack of prospects, to the oppression of those who think differently, to the plight of education, and to the misuse of power. There was hope that the rampant corruption could be reigned in and that the rule of law could be produced, that the economic situation could be improved, that the failing educational system could be reformed, that unemployment among young people could be lowered, and that the impoverishment of the masses in the slums found in large cities could be halted. The situation today in most countries is not better than it was prior to the revolutions – that demonstrates that there is a deep crisis in the Near East, and it reveals generally weak states. Strategies to establish civil society are lacking, as are pluralism and a balance between ethnic and religious groups, between men and women, and between religion and the state. Women’s rights, civil liberties, religious freedom with the opportunity to also leave Islam and be able to turn to another religion, forums for the freedom of expression in the public square have also largely remained desiderata in the Near East. All of this produces a substrate for new forms of radicalism – also for the so-called “Islamic State.” This radicalism is kept alive by sectarian wars loaded with power politics between Shiite Iran and Sunni-Wahhabi Saudi Arabia.

Downloads and Links:

- The invitation to the lecture on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/events/264503063890581/>
- [Photo 1](#): Christine Schirmmacher during her lecture at the Asienhaus
- [Photo 2](#): Greeting the audience and the lecturer Christine Schirmmacher

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Titus Vogt (ViSdP)
Vorderer Kamp 52a, D-25479 Ellerau
Phone: +49 / 4106 / 80 48 06
Fax: +49 / 4106 / 80 48 07
E-Mail: Titus.Vogt@bucer.de

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