

It's not a state and never was a state, so don't call it a state.

Sean David Burke

Sometimes media and governments are just plain stupid. They use names and terms simply because others are using them. It's good, of course, to have a common language. It helps people to communicate efficiently and stay on the same page. When the language used is wrong, however, it can mislead or do harm.

There is a rebel group, arguably a terrorist group, active in Iraq. It calls itself, variously, I.S. (Islamic State), I.S.I.L. (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) and I.S.I.S. (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria).

For whatever reason, governments and media everywhere have accepted the self-bestowed names, and continue to repeat them. Why anyone feels obligated to show such great courtesy to a bunch of murderers is confusing.



Further, the names are incorrect. They are misleading. It is not a state. The Oxford Dictionary defines a state as *an organised community living under one government*. Iraq is a state, so is Syria, regardless of their level of organisation. There is no room for another 'state' there.

IS can call itself a state as long as it likes. It is not a state. It shows no hallmark of being a state and has not been recognised as a state by any.....state.

A new term is required. There can be no reference to a state or a caliphate. The group can be referred to as "Islamic terrorists", or "Islamic jihadists." Better still, why not remove the reference to Islam at the same time (Islam is a proud religion, and shouldn't be lumbered with them), and just call the group "Northern Iraqi Terrorists"? Suddenly, the thugs with guns don't sound so official and legitimate.

Language matters. Using the wrong word to define a person, group or state either supports or does injustice to them or to others.

Every government and every media organisation is challenged; either to stop using the terms I.S., I.S.I.L. and I.S.I.S. or, otherwise, to expressly defend the continued use of those terms.

At the end of the day, it's not a state and it never was a state, so don't call it a state.

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