


# Muslims Solidity and Its Obstacles

Yacob Mechrian Mandabayan  <sup>1</sup>

## Correspondence:

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Paramadina, Indonesia  
 [yacob.mandabayan@students.paramadina.ac.id](mailto:yacob.mandabayan@students.paramadina.ac.id)

## Article's History:

Received: 23 February 2022  
Accepted: 23 April 2022  
Published: 30 April 2022

## Abstract

The strength of Muslim solidity in the world, especially in the Middle East, is lacking. The Islamic Cooperation Organization (OIC) presence also creates two different arenas for Islamic countries to prioritize their sectoral interests. In the economic and socio-cultural arena, Islamic countries in the region can improve the performance of cooperation in improving the economy maintaining cultural values in the region. The type of research used in this research is qualitative research written descriptively. However, in other arenas, they allow different cultural and religious philosophies and traditions to break their solidity and solidarity. This article describes the form of solidity and external and internal challenges faced and responding to conflicts that have led to civil wars in Islamic countries in the region.

**Keywords:** muslim solidity; islam; islamic organization; islamic countries

## Introduction

The religion of Islam is one of the beliefs that have a growing and increasing population in the world. Developing the growth of the world's Muslims, which started in the Middle East, provides a lot of historical evidence (Bakker & Singleton, 2016). Since the emergence of Islam in the Middle East, the inhabitants have happily accepted successive Caliphates and Dynasties (Umayyad, Abbasid, Fatimid, Mamluk, and Ottoman) that have allowed a coherent ideological evolution of the region even though they belonged to a varied group of ethnicities or religious orientations (Sunnite, Shiite).

The historical evidence shows how the Islamic nations struggle under the occupation of western countries to their freedom from the hands of the invaders. After spending years fighting for independence, most colonial territories had arrived at independence and a particular form of sovereignty. Islamic countries that have become independent formed an organization as a forum for the Islamic countries of the world to unite and strengthen solidarity among the world's Muslims (Sivan, 1989).

The sense of solidity and Islamic identity of Muslim countries provides a solid conscience to unite in an organization known as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) was formed after the leaders of several Islamic countries held a conference in Rabat, Morocco, on September 22-25,

1969. The Islamic countries that were present at that time agreed to the Rabat Declaration, which emphasized the belief in Islam, respect for the UN Charter, and human rights (Ashour, 2007). The formation of the OIC was initially driven by the concerns of Islamic countries over the various problems faced by Muslims, especially after Zionist elements burned part of the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque on August 21, 1969 (Khatib, 2015).

This occurred because, at the end of the nineteenth and especially in the twentieth century, there was a paradigm change in understanding religion from ideals to historicity, from doctrine to sociological entities, and from essence discourse to existence. In other words, religion must explain not only the link between humans and God but also the consciousness of living in communities (sociological), the awareness of the quest for religious beginnings (anthropological), and the fulfillment of humans' urge to build a strong personality (psychological) (Hussain et al., 2022).

## Research Methods

The type of research used in this research is qualitative research written descriptively. The data collection technique was carried out by literature study by collecting data from the sources of journal articles, books, reports, and research results. The data analysis techniques used in this study are reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

## Results and Discussions

In its development, Islamic countries have produced values reflected in the unity of Islam to create solidarity, which is the urgency of human nature in humans themselves. In a sense, the principle of humanity embedded in the hearts and behavior of humans is a solid basis for gathering and uniting.

### Economic Cooperation

One of the main objectives of establishing the OIC is to strengthen economic cooperation between Islamic countries (Sharqieh, 2012). For example, cooperation in the field of trade aims to achieve economic integration that leads to the formation of an Islamic public market. Accordingly, the form of solidity and togetherness of the Islamic countries of the OIC is by creating a form of economic cooperation among members of the OIC, which is known as The Standing Committee for Economic and Trade Cooperation (COMCEC) which was formally formed at The Third Islamic Summit in Mecca on January 1981. COMCEC functions to follow up on implementing resolutions in the economic and trade fields, examine all possible means to strengthen cooperation in this field and establish a proposed program to enhance the capacity of member countries in the economic and trade fields (Orhan, 2019).

In its continuation, at the OIC Extraordinary Summit in Mecca, 14-15 August 2012, the President of Turkey, as the Permanent Chair of COMCEC, ratified the COMCEC Strategy, consisting of two main instruments. First, the formation of Working Groups to facilitate cooperation on six priority issues, namely trade; transport and communication; tourism; agriculture; poverty alleviation; and finance; second, encourage activities in the form of projects (Project Cycle Management/PCM) which are expected to support the success of COMCEC cooperation in the 6 Working Groups (WG) (Cheterian, 2015).

In recent developments, the Framework Agreement on the Trade Preferential System Among The Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (TPS-OIC), the Protocol on the Preferential Tariff Scheme for TPS-OIC (PRETAS), and the Rules of Origin (RoO) have been agreed. In 1990, 2005, and 2009. The three instruments are an integral part of the tariff reduction program (Phillips, 2013).

For member countries that have not signed and ratified the TPS-OIC, PRETAS and RoO (including Indonesia) must sign and ratify it. The goal of TPS-OIC is that the target of increasing trade in OIC countries by 25% by 2025 can be realized. The Government of Indonesia signed the TPS-OIC Framework Agreement on February 4, 1992, and ratified it through Presidential Regulation No. 31/2011, dated 20 May 2011. Indonesia has also signed PRETAS and RoO on 6 September 2011 by the Indonesian Ambassador in Riyadh but has not ratified them (Tan & Perudin, 2019). I believe that OIC member countries are growing trading partners for Indonesia. Through the implementation of TPS-OIC, the utilization of trade cooperation can be optimized so that Indonesia's capacity and competitiveness will increase. The vast potential of the halal market in OIC member countries also provides excellent export opportunities for Indonesian trade. It is supported by numerical data provided by the Indonesian Ministry of Trade. Where the provisions regulated in Articles 4 and 5 of PRETAS are tariff reduction modalities covering 7% of HS lines whose tariff is above 10% with the following programs:

1. Above 25% should be lowered to 25%;
2. Above 15% - 25% should be lowered to 15%;
3. Above 10% - 15% should be lowered to 10%;
4. The reduced tariff is paid in installments every year in four stages and six stages for LDCs;
5. Tariffs must be reduced by applying a Margin of Preference (MOP) based on the MFN level applicable to the national HS Tariff code;
6. MOP must increase to 50% in 5 stages starting from 90 days after the entry into force of PRETAS, while for LDCs, it is seven stages;
7. Developing countries should increase the MOP to 50% for LDCs in 3 stages, and;
8. In the 5th year of TPS-OIC implementation, state parties can negotiate to develop product coverage and concession lists.

While based on PRETAS modality Classification of Indonesian HS 2012 Tariffs can be seen in the following table 1:

**Table 1.** PRETAS Modality Classification of Indonesian HS 2012 Tariffs

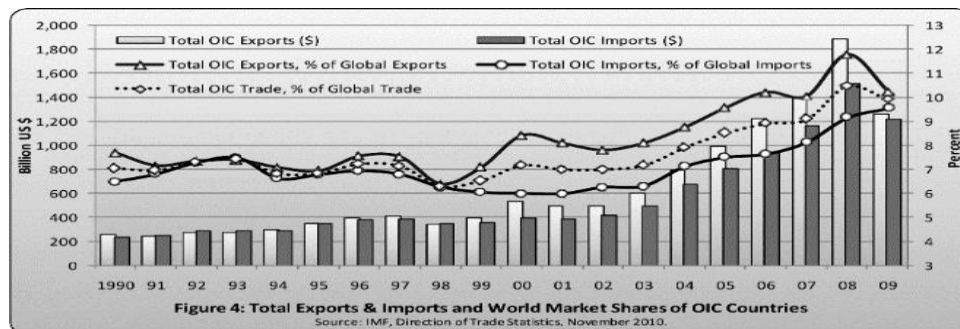
Import Duty Rates	Number of Tariff Posts
x ≤ 10 %	7.141
10 < x ≤ 15 %	1.286
15 < x ≤ 25 %	112
X > 25 %	210
Total	8.749
Modalities = X>10%	1.608
7% from X>10%	112

Source: Directorate General of International Trade Negotiations, Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia.

Accordingly, economic ties among the OIC member countries would strengthen the relationship and bring prosperity to the people of the member countries. As a result, if we could see from the explanation above, we could find that OIC member countries has been placed their attention on trade as the

cooperative action of their solidity and solidarity to developing economic growth in Islamic countries (Halim & Salleh, 2012).

The growth of performance in trade experience among the OIC member countries could be seen in this figure 1:



**Figure 1.** Total Exports and Imports and World Market Shares of OIC Countries

The world market share of OIC countries in trade, having fluctuated around 7 percent between 1990 and 2003, increased rapidly in the following years to reach 10.5 percent in 2008 before sliding down to 9.9 percent in 2009 (Abidin, Bakar, & Sahlan, 2013). Their share in global imports increased from around 6 percent to 9.2 percent in 2008. However, unlike in the case of exports, this share continued to increase in 2009, reaching 9.6 percent. The developments in 2009 indicate that total exports (imports) of OIC countries were of more (less) negatively affected by the crisis as compared to the world (Halim & Salleh, 2012).

Nevertheless, the trade shares of OIC member countries on the chart above have shown us the recent years where the OIC member countries maintain economic relations and provide concrete evidence of performance in implementing the solidity and maintaining their solidarity among OIC member countries. Regarding this, the private sector in the OIC member countries and its government should be encouraged to make more connections and increase the trade within the OIC region.

### Social-Culture Cooperation

social-culture cooperation is also essential in fostering solidity and solidarity among OIC member countries. Standing Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs (COMIAC) is the body primarily responsible for the follow-up and ensuring the passage of the resolutions adopted by the Islamic Conference, especially on Information and Cultural Affairs, and for examining all possible ways to strengthen social culture cooperation among OIC member countries. Considering the importance of its mission, the Committee must be endowed with sufficient means to fulfill its role fully. To that effect, the Decennial Action Program (DAP) adopted by the Third Extraordinary Islamic Summit that was held in Makkah in 2005 encourages, among other recommendations, the reinforcement of COMIAC in order to give an increasing interest to matters concerning information, cultural affairs, social issues of the State members of OIC.

Indeed, COMIAC has an essential role in maintaining solidity and solidarity regarding cultural affairs among the OIC member countries. It has been stated in the Resolutions on Cultural Affairs on the 11th Session of the Standing Committee on Information and Cultural Affairs, held in Dakar, Republic of Senegal, 14-15 May 2018. Which resulted:

1. Resolution No. 1/45-Congeneral Cultural Matters
2. Resolution No. 2/45-Compalestinian Cultural Affairs

3. Resolution No. 3/45-Conprotection of Islamic Holy Places
  4. Resolution No. 4/45-Consubsidiary Organs
    - a. The Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA)
    - b. International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA)
  5. Resolution No. 5/45-Conspecialised Institutions
    - a. The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)
  6. Resolution No. 6/45-Conaffiliated Institutions
    - a. Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation (ISSF)
    - b. Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC)
  7. Resolution No.7/45-Conthe Protection and Preservation of The Islamic and World Historical and Cultural Heritages
  8. Resolution No.8/45-Conpromotion of Cooperation Among Oic Member States in The Cultural Domain and Supporting Cinematographic Production
- According to the explanations above, we could see some steps taken by the OIC institution such as COMIAC to deal with cultural affairs among the Islamic member countries in order to maintain the solidity and solidarity and also to handling the social issues of the state members.

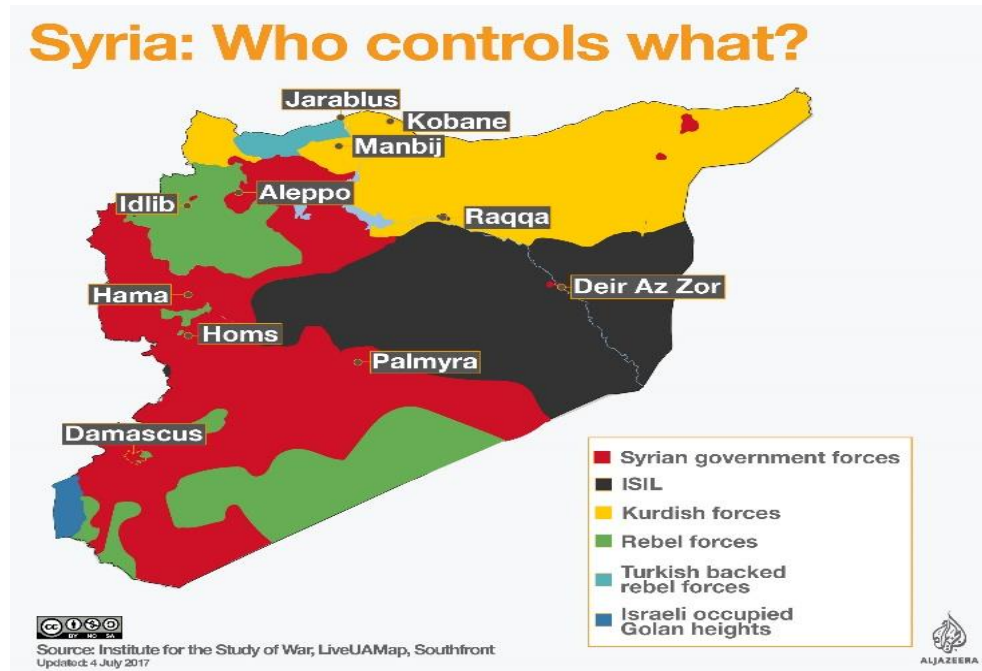
Indeed, this shows how OIC member countries cooperate through the Institutions body to address social-cultural affairs in the Islamic state region.

### **Solidity Obstacles**

Indeed, in maintaining its development, an organization is never separated from obstacles internally or externally. In the OIC body, I could tell that several obstacles could affect solidity and solidarity among the OIC member countries. Internal obstacles According to my literacy observations, I have found that Civil War between tribes and groups has become one of the several obstacles to the Muslim solidities and solidarities growth among the Islamic countries. Cultural Differences in Islamic culture and the interests of radical groups in Islamic countries in the Middle East region often give a dynamic pattern to a number of civil wars in Islamic countries (Ashour, 2007).

On this occasion, I take the example of the civil war in Syria, which the civil war in Syria is an armed conflict between various parties with international intervention taking place in Syria. The unrest has grown since the Arab world's revival protests in 2011 and escalated into armed conflict after violence over protests against President Bashar al-Assad's government to pressure his resignation (Orhan, 2019). The war involved the Syrian Government, Syrian Arab rebel groups, the Syrian Democratic Forces, Salafi jihadist groups (including al-Nusra Front), and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). What is very strange here is that all parties involved in this war receive great support from foreign actors, so many are directed to label it as a proxy war launched by major regional and world countries (Phillips, 2013).

For many in the press corps reporting on the Syrian civil war, the characterization of the rebel forces as an essentially democratic ideology dedicated to inclusivity and pluralism is questionable. The conflict has been prolonged in Syria and has become more sectarian and more faith-based, with hardline groups growing in number and influence, whether jihadi or Islamist.



**Figure 2.** Map of Group’s Controls in Syria

Source: The Secretariat of the World Congress against Extremism and Takfiri Movements

According to the map information above, each group has its territories. Syrian opposition groups form the Free Syrian Army and control the area around Aleppo and southern Syria (Cheterian, 2015). Over time, factions of the Syrian Opposition broke away from genuine moderate politics to pursue an Islamic vision for Syria, such as the al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL); in the north, Syrian government forces are mostly pulling out to fight the FSA, which has allowed the Kurdish YPG to move in and make a de facto claim to autonomy. Led by the mainly Aleppo-based brigade Liwa al-Tawhid, the 13 factions, including the al-Qa'ida affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra, pledged to fight under an "Islamic framework" based on "the rule of Sharia"—an apparent rejection of Western-style democracy. I can say here that the internal factors that become obstacles to solidity and solidarity are civil wars that can last for years. The ideology and culture of each group, which is then wrapped by the group's interests, gives a powerful desire for the groups to defend their respective interests. It is miserable; so many Muslims who are their Muslim brothers were affected by the civil war, which claimed many lives (Cheterian, 2015).

On the other hand, the Arab civil war is a conflict between relatives. This is because social groups tend to be partisan, whether a sectarian, ethnic, party or ethnic. Here I see the critical difference between these two types of conflict is that Arab civil wars have no end. If you look at the civil wars in the non-Arab world, conflicts end when one ideology is defeated, while if you look closely, it is different from the Arabs; victory does not close the story. The Sunnis, Shiites, Alawites, and Christians will remain, as will the Arabs, Kurds, or South Sudanese.

**External Obstacles**

On an equally important part, external factors also significantly influence maintaining solidity and solidarity in the Islamic world. In this section, I find that the International System has an external impetus for the division of Muslims in the Middle East. One of them is the issue of Western-Style Modernization, to which many Islamic groups from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds

respond to this with their radical actions (Thomas, 2014).

Each Islamic country in the Middle East holds firmly the traditions they inherited from their ancestors as a culture passed down from generation to generation and is wrapped in religious or Islamic understanding, which is also different from each group. For many years, the modernity that has plagued the Middle East has influenced traditional cultures and societies. Conflicts and reactions occur everywhere due to the interaction between modernity and the old traditions of society, which are still firmly held in some community groups (Hallaj, 2017).

In another part, as reported by Deutsche Welle 2018, the politicization of social groups occurs in two forms. At a visible level, in the case of Political Islam, for example, whether Shia, Sunni, or Maronite Christianity, sectarian affiliations are politicized. However, there is also a mysterious, invisible phenomenon where the current Syrian regime and the Iraqi government in the Saddam Hussein era, not to mention the Lebanese Progressive Socialist Party, carry modern ideologies but still rely on social ties as the driving force (Tayyab, Afridi, & Hamid, 2020).

When indirectly see the existence of the political interest that is invisible. The politics of modernization is used as an instrument by big countries outside the region to achieve their interests. Modernization politics, which interest groups also use, has had a significant impact on the shift in the political compass in the Middle East. However, we can often find that in every split between Islamic countries in the Middle East, there must be a great power that comes from outside the region.

## Conclusion

Referring to the explanation above, I see that different arenas can unite Islamic countries and arenas that separate or divide the solidity and solidarity of Muslims. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), a forum for the unification of Islamic countries, is often an arena where there are unity and difference. In the framework of economic and trade cooperation relations, I see that the Islamic countries that are members of the OIC have performed exceptionally well in improving the economy in the region.

However, in understanding the diversity among Muslims in the region, I still see a considerable gap. Where religious traditions and culture have a role in framing religious understanding in each Islamic country in the region. on the one hand, I see in another arena that Islamic countries reject radicalism and inter-group feuds that lead to civil wars. However, Islamic countries have entered and fallen into conflict in another arena. It has caused a substantial decline in value and solidarity among Muslims. Of course, this is not easy to ignore because solid solidarity is fundamental in fighting for peace and security in the region. Especially with the interests of major powers outside the region, Islamic countries in the region must be able to put sectoral interests and prioritize their solidarity and solidity in the region.

## References

- Abidin, I. S. Z., Bakar, N. A., & Sahlan, R. (2013). The Determinants of Exports between Malaysia and the OIC Member Countries: A Gravity Model Approach.

- Procedia Economics and Finance*, 5(13), 12–19. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s2212-5671\(13\)00004-x](https://doi.org/10.1016/s2212-5671(13)00004-x)
- Ashour, O. (2007). Lions Tamed? An Inquiry into the Causes of De-Radicalization of Armed Islamist Movements: The Case of the Egyptian Islamic Group. *The Middle East Journal*, 61(4), 596–625. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4330450%0A>
- Bakker, E., & Singleton, M. (2016). Foreign Fighters in the Syria and Iraq Conflict: Statistics and Characteristics of a Rapidly Growing Phenomenon BT - Foreign Fighters under International Law and Beyond. In A. de Guttry, F. Capone, & C. Paulussen (Eds.), *Foreign Fighters under International Law and Beyond* (pp. 9–25). The Hague: T.M.C. Asser Press. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6265-099-2\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6265-099-2_2)
- Cheterian, V. (2015). ISIS and the Killing Fields of the Middle East. *Survival*, 57(2), 105–118. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2015.1026089>
- Halim, M. A. A., & Salleh, M. M. M. (2012). The Possibility of Uniformity on Halal Standards in Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) Country. *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 17(SPL.ISS1), 6–10. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mohd-Mahyeddin/publication/303837316\\_Towards\\_the\\_traceability\\_of\\_halal\\_and\\_thoyyiban\\_application/links/596435a0a6fdccc9b1606bcc/Towards-the-traceability-of-halal-and-thoyyiban-application.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mohd-Mahyeddin/publication/303837316_Towards_the_traceability_of_halal_and_thoyyiban_application/links/596435a0a6fdccc9b1606bcc/Towards-the-traceability-of-halal-and-thoyyiban-application.pdf)
- Hallaj, O. A. (2017). Geographies of Absence: Radicalization and the Shaping of the New Syrian Territoriality. *New England Journal of Public Policy*, 29(1), 1–32. Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.umb.edu/nejpp/vol29/iss1/10/>
- Hussain, D. M., Farooq, M. A., Yaseen, M., Husnain, M., Saleem, S., & Rehman, A. (2022). Rise of Muslim Modernist Discourse in the Nineteenth Century India: A Thematic. *Multicultural Education*, 8(1), 211–217. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5914905>
- Khatib, H. (2015). Political Instrumentalization of Islam in a Violent State Crisis: The Case of Syria. *Journal of Applied Security Research*, 10(3), 341–361. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361610.2015.1038769>
- Orhan, M. (2019). Political Violence and Insurgencies in the Middle East: Social Movements, Diffusion of Armed Conflicts, and Proxy Wars. *Irish Journal of Sociology*, 27(3), 251–272. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0791603519835430>
- Phillips, C. (2013). The Civil War in Syria : The Variety of Opposition to the Syrian Regime. *EMed Mediterranean Yearbook 2013*, 24–29. Retrieved from [http://www.iemed.org/publicacions/historic-de-publicacions/anuari-de-la-mediterrania/sumaris/avancaments-anuari-2013/War\\_in\\_Syria\\_The\\_variety\\_of\\_opposition\\_Christopher\\_Phillips\\_Med2013.pdf](http://www.iemed.org/publicacions/historic-de-publicacions/anuari-de-la-mediterrania/sumaris/avancaments-anuari-2013/War_in_Syria_The_variety_of_opposition_Christopher_Phillips_Med2013.pdf)
- Sharqieh, I. (2012). Can the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Resolve Conflicts? *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 19(2), 219–236. <https://doi.org/10.46743/1082-7307/2012.1139>
- Sivan, E. (1989). Sunni Radicalism in the Middle East and the Iranian Revolution. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 21(1), 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743800032086>
- Tan, K. H., & Perudin, A. (2019). The "Geopolitical" Factor in the Syrian Civil War: A Corpus-Based Thematic Analysis. *SAGE Open*, 9(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019856729>



Tayyab, M., Afridi, S. A., & Hamid, M. (2020). Sectarian Divide as a Cause of Protracted Conflict: A Case of Syria (2011-18). *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal (LASSIJ)*, 4(2), 294–305. <https://doi.org/10.47264/idea.lassij/4.2.23>

Thomas, P. (2014). The Syrian Baath Party and Sunni Islam: Conflicts and Connivance. *Crown Center for Middle East Studies*, 5(1), 1–8. Retrieved from <https://www.research.ed.ac.uk/en/publications/the-syrian-baath-party-and-sunni-islam-conflicts-and-connivance>