

## **Tuer au nom d'Allah. Radicalisation ou subculture? Les combattants européens en Syrie**

*Rik Coolsaet (Ghent University & Egmont-Royal Institute for International Relations)*

Some 500 Belgians, mostly in their 20s, left their home country for Syria, where they joined the most brutal terrorist group IS, also known by its Arabic acronym *Daesh*. So did thousands of other Europeans. This phenomenon raises difficult questions. Rik Coolsaet (UGent) will give a conference on the subject on Wednesday 25 May at CegeSoma.

### **A Religious Drive?**

Why are people with different social backgrounds feel attracted by IS? Contrary to a widespread opinion, religion is not of the essence. As of lately, Europol too has begun to acknowledge the declining role of religion in the foreign fighters issue. Religion has systematically decreased as a driver of terrorism as the waves of foreign fighters succeed one another.

### **Radicalisation**

Radicalisation too is often invoked as the key concept to understand why individuals embark on a journey to terrorism. But unfortunately, even after more than a decade of research, this process remains as elusive as it was from the start. There simply is no straightforward 'conveyor belt' from radical beliefs and radical action.

### **'No Future'. The Search for Prospects**

The current, fourth, wave of foreign fighters is essentially an alternative pathway for deviant behaviour or, for some, a journey to Utopia, rooted in a 'no future' subculture. More than any other reason, 'no future' is the essence of the youth subculture that drives the current foreign fighters wave. Going to Syria is an escape from a life seemingly without prospects.

### **Practical Information**

**What?** « *Tuer au nom d'Allah. Radicalisation ou subculture? Les combattants européens en Syrie* » : conference by Rik Coolsaet, professor at Ghent University, in association with Egmont Institute (Royal Institute for International Relations)

**Who ?** Rik Coolsaet is professor of International Relations at Ghent University and Senior Associate Fellow at Egmont. He has recently published his study « Facing the Fourth Foreign Wave » ([http://www.egmontinstitute.be/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/egmont.papers.81\\_online-versie.pdf](http://www.egmontinstitute.be/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/egmont.papers.81_online-versie.pdf)). He is a well-known specialist on the issue of terrorism and foreign fighters in Syria (<http://www.rikcoolsaet.be>) and of Belgian foreign policy.

**When?** On Wednesday 25 May at 14:30

**Where?** CegeSoma conference room, Square de l'Aviation 29, 1070 Brussels  
The conference will take place in French. Attendance is free, please register in advance: [ambar.geerts@cegesoma.be](mailto:ambar.geerts@cegesoma.be) or 02/556 92 11