

My Journey into the Heart of Terror: Ten Days in the Islamic State

By Jürgen Todenhöfer



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An alarming and enlightening first-hand account of what's really going on behind the borders of the Islamic State.

ISIS, IS, the ISLAMIC State. It's an organization that has taken on chilling associations due to the horrific deeds committed in its name. ISIS beheads journalists—and yet one, Jürgen Todenhöfer, was invited to visit its fighters in Mosul, after months of negotiations. Accompanied by his son, Frederic Todenhöfer, who photographed the journey, he asked them to explain their beliefs, motivations, and goals. This book, the most in-depth research conducted on the terror group so far, is the result of those conversations. My Journey into the Heart of Terror shows how the organization grew from its al-Qaeda roots and the role the West has played, both past and present. Along the way, Todenhöfer offers startling insights into what ISIS thinks, what it wants—and how it can be defeated. Only by understanding our enemies, Todenhöfer believes, can we combat ISIS's radical, un-Islamic vision and the terror and destruction it brings.



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My Journey into the Heart of Terror: Ten Days in the Islamic State By Jürgen Todenhöfer Bibliography

• Sales Rank: #674716 in Books

• Brand: imusti

Published on: 2016-04-05Original language: English

• Number of items: 1

• Dimensions: 9.10" h x 1.00" w x 6.20" l, .0 pounds

• Binding: Hardcover

• 288 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

"A rare inside view of ISIS and insight into the terrorist organization's methods and hold on adherents." —Publishers Weekly

"Todenhöfer describes his efforts as a brave journalist willing to risk his life to understand and report on the underpinnings of the Islamic State and its sympathizers ... this book is urgently needed in a world where violence, ideology, and bigotry seem so seductive in the public arena ... Journalism at its best." —Lawrence Krauss

About the Author

Jürgen Todenhöfer is a German author, politician, a former judge, and journalist. He studied law and political science at the Universities of Munich, Paris, Bonn and Freiburg and received his doctorate in law from the University of Freiburg.

Todenhöfer became a judge in 1972 and was elected to the German parliament that same year. During his eighteen years in politics and as party spokesman for development policy and arms control, he attracted as much public attention for his political activities as he did for his humanitarian endeavors. In 1975, he traveled to Chile and met with the then dictator Augusto Pinochet, paving the way for the release of 4,500 political prisoners. In the 1980s he visited Soviet-occupied Afghanistan multiple times and raised money for refugees. After his political career he joined one of Europe's largest publishing companies, Hubert Burda Media.

Following the terrorist attacks of 9/11 he was outspoken in his opposition to the U.S.'s war in Afghanistan and critical of the planned campaign against Iraq. He argued fervently in favor of diplomatic solutions. To better understand the relationship between the Western and the Muslim world, Todenhöfer has traveled with Afghan freedom fighters to Soviet occupied Afghanistan, to Algiers during the Algerian War, and to Tunisia during the crisis of Bizerte. He has visited other Arab and Muslim countries on countless occasions. Thanks to his experience in the courtroom, Todenhöfer firmly believes that you cannot judge a case until you have heard from both sides. He urged the U.S. governments to settle their conflicts with Iraq, with Syria and with Iran through negotiations and took up this matter in direct contact with the governments of Muslim countries.

In 2014 he became the first Western journalist to be granted access to territories controlled by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (formerly referred to as ISIS), where he met with gun wielding child soldiers and interviewed ISIS fighters, prisoners, and members of the public caught up in the battle for Iraq and Syria.

Todenhöfer has published numerous best-selling books in Germany, sharing his conviction that peace should be achieved through negotiations only. He donates the royalties that he receives for his books and the larger part of his private wealth to humanitarian projects for children in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Israel/Palestine, Syria, and the Congo.

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