

# Fortnightly links: understanding ISIS, democratic leadership, Australian generosity, and more...

by Camilla Burkot and Terence Wood

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The Paris terrorist attacks and escalating calls for military intervention in Syria have further complicated the question of how to address the European refugee crisis. On the Crooked Timber blog, Chris Bertram and Sarah Fine [warn](#) against allowing outrage to lead to unjust and counterproductive migration policies.

Part of this outrage is likely driven by a lack of understanding of the origins of ISIS and its objective. Vox's [explainer](#) covering '9 questions about ISIS you were too embarrassed to ask' provides a more nuanced view. And *Huffington Post's* Highline has a compelling story on 'The Mothers of ISIS' — profiling, in heartbreaking detail, mothers whose children left their (mostly middle-class, Scandinavian) homes to join the caliphate.

*The Washington Post's* Wonkblog also offered a [summary](#) of Thomas Piketty's argument that economic inequality is a fundamental driver of terrorism in the Middle East. To that end, the *New Yorker's* John Cassidy [summarises](#) the facts about terrorism, noting that ending terrorism is not just a matter of 'destroying and degrading IS' (as Western politicians have frequently put it), but also requires addressing the forms of marginalisation and discrimination that give rise to it.

What difference does a Western education make for leaders of developing countries — or does it make any difference at all? A recent study by Daniel Krmaric and Thomas Gift examined the educational backgrounds of 500 developing country leaders, and the extent to which they led democratically, finding that Western-educated leaders are more likely to preside over democratic reforms. Full [gated] journal article [here](#); summary on The Monkey Cage blog [here](#).

On AidSpeak, anonymous blogger J. [writes](#) that a recent ruling in the Norwegian courts which found the Norwegian Refugee Council guilty of "gross negligence" in its handling of the 2012 kidnapping of four of its staff in Kenya should be regarded as a "game-changer" for the humanitarian industry.

What lessons can contemporary activists take away from the history of campaigning? Duncan Green (who, incidentally, is speaking at ANU this morning — details [here](#)) [reports](#) from a recent seminar which delved into a number of UK campaigns dating back more than 100 years.

## DEVPOLICYBLOG

*The Guardian* offers a [long read](#) on the origins and controversies surrounding the development of REDD+ in Papua New Guinea, and the difficult tradeoffs posed between deforestation and economic development.

And lastly, in the wake of the publication of the [World Giving Index 2015](#) — which shows Myanmar to be the most generous country in the world — Fairfax Media asks “[how generous are Australians really?](#)” While Australia still ranks highly in the World Giving Index, coming in at number six, there are concerns around data suggesting that Australians are volunteering less for the first time in 20 years, and that economic donations have flatlined since the global financial crisis.

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Link:

<https://devpolicy.org/fortnightly-links-understanding-isis-democratic-leadership-australian-generosity-and-more-20151204/>