

# What is a caliphate?

■ Deriving from Arabic word *khalifa* “succession”, **caliphate** describes Islamic state ruled by single political and religious leader, or caliph

■ Caliphs are regarded by their followers as successors to Prophet Muhammad and sovereign over all Muslims

■ First caliphate led by four immediate successors to Muhammad. Known as Rashidun, or “rightly guided”, Caliphs **Abu Bakr**, **Umar I**, **Uthman** and **Ali** expanded Islam, ruling vast lands under Sharia law

■ Over following centuries, caliphates expanded dominion in Middle East and North Africa under **Umayyad** (661-750) and **Abbasid** (749-1258) dynasties



■ Last widely accepted caliphate abolished in 1924 by Turkish leader **Kemal Ataturk** after collapse of Ottoman Empire (1301-1922) and removal of Caliph **Abdulmecid II**



■ **June 30, 2014: ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant)** announces creation of caliphate in territories under its control in Iraq and Syria

ISIS, renamed **IS (Islamic State)**, has proclaimed leader **Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi** as “Caliph Ibrahim” and “leader for Muslims everywhere”

■ *Boundaries of caliphate envisioned by ISIS – as posted on Twitter, March 2014*