

The Kerala Story

Few historians of India recognize that Britain gave India its secular structure, its modern infrastructure, its English language, modern science, railways and the opportunity of the Hindu majority to regain control over a country that had been conquered by Turks from Central Asia in the 16th century. There are groups in India who just cannot accept this kind of modernity. We in the West must take note.



Ashlyn Davis reviews *The Kerala Story* at [Frontpage](#):

After *The Kashmir Files*, *The Kerala Story* has become the second movie to have rattled Islamic supremacists and apologists in India. The movie's plot follows a group of women from Kerala who converted to Islam and eventually joined the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, (ISIS). This has triggered the "moderate Muslims" in the media and the political realm alike. They argue that the movie targets Islam and Muslims in general. Leaders of political parties known for their unapologetic pandering to Muslims have denounced the movie's

veracity. It is baffling how they can deny proven facts with such unabashed shamelessness and surrender to the Islamic voting bloc.

What about the four Indian women from Kerala who were [accompanied](#) by their Muslim husbands, who first encouraged them to convert to Islam and then join ISIS? These women, identified as Sonia Sebastian, alias Ayisha; Raffeala; Merrin Jacob, alias Mariyam; and Nimisha, alias Fathima Isa, are imprisoned in Afghanistan. Indian agencies interviewed them in Kabul in December 2019. They ended up as ISIS affiliates who surrendered to authorities after their husbands died in different attacks in Afghanistan. These are not movie plots, but stark facts documented by official sources of multiple countries.

According to India's National Investigation Agency (NIA), Sebastian, an engineering graduate, left India in May 2016 with her husband, Abdul Rashid Abdulla. She took private classes in support of the Islamic State and jihad during the last part of Ramadan.

Merrin Jacob was married to Palakkad resident Bestin Vincent. They escaped to Afghanistan in 2016, converted to Islam, and lived in Islamic State-controlled territory. Nimisha was married to Vincent's brother Bexon. They also converted to Islam and accompanied Merrin and Bestin to Afghanistan.

Raffeala was married to a 37-year-old physician, Ijas Kallukettiya Purayil; he is identified as one of the Islamic State terrorists who stormed an Eastern Afghanistan prison in August 2020 as a participant in an attack that killed 30 individuals.

These four ISIS brides are not the only recruits to the Islamic State from Kerala. In 2016, over 20 Muslim youths disappeared from Kerala, and at least eleven were suspected of reaching the Islamic State terror camps in Syria. The same

year, the famous Indian media house, *India Today*, [observed](#): “If these well educated professionals from Kerala indeed set out to join the Islamic State, it is an issue the governments, both the central and the state, should immediately look into and curb.”

In 2021, the NIA started investigating the alleged anti-national activities of Mohammed Ameen, alias Abu Yahya. He had been running several channels dedicated to ISIS propaganda on various social media platforms. The probe revealed that Ameen was in touch with one Deepthi Marla from Kerala, “a converted Muslim” who was married to Mangalore-based man, Anas Abdul Rahiman. In 2015, Deepti went to Dubai to pursue higher studies; there, she met Mizha Siddeeqe; both women developed an inclination towards ISIS. The NIA [said](#): “They both returned to India, and Deepthi got in touch with Ameen, Obaid Hamid Matta, Madesh Shankar alias Abdullah and others and made plans to undertake ‘Hijrah’ to ISIS-administered territory.”

In July 2022, an NIA special court [sentenced](#) three men, identified as Midhilaj, Abdul Rasdaq and Hamsa from Kerala, to over five years in jail after finding them guilty in the Valapattanam Islamic State (IS) case. They were promulgating ISIS ideology, recruiting youth for the Islamic outfit, and planning to migrate to Syria.

The number of recruits to the terror outfit from India increased sharply during the first quarter of 2023. While the Islamic State [recruited](#) 21 youths in December 2022, the number spiked to 28 in January, 37 in February, 36 in March and 68 in April, according to counterterror experts tracking the group. This time, youth from other states, including Rajasthan and Karnataka, were also seen to join the Islamic state. ISIS recruited these members through virtual channels and indoctrinated them with the jihad ideology through terror training on the dark web Academy set up by the outfit. ISIS is known to identify its targeted recruits by contacting them on social media platforms.

Undeniably, India is at risk of losing many of its youth to ISIS in the coming years, and gullible girls who get easily convinced to convert to Islam and join the terror outfit are the easiest targets.

The movie *The Kerala Story* may not exercise creative freedom in the treatment of the plot. But the intellectual clique that is writing it off as absolute nonsense, as well as influential people demanding that the courts take action to ban it, and pro-Muslim governments that are banning its screening in their states suggest that the film has indeed exposed the uncomfortable truth, and the Islamic faction in India has been thrown off balance.