

US NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER

# COUNTERTERRORISM

9-15 AUGUST 2018

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## PARTING SHOTS

The Counterterrorism Digest is a compilation of UNCLASSIFIED open source publicly available press material, to include relevant commentary on issues related to terrorism and counterterrorism over the past seven days. It is produced every Wednesday, excluding holidays. Counterterrorism Digest is produced by the National Counterterrorism Center in conjunction with its international partners in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, and contains situational awareness items detailing on-going terrorism-related developments which may be of interest to security personnel. Comments and requests for information pertaining to articles featured in Counterterrorism Digest may be directed to [nctcpao@nctc.gov](mailto:nctcpao@nctc.gov).

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# COUNTERTERRORISM DIGEST

9-15 August 2018

## HIGHLIGHTS



- 1 **ARIZONA:** On 8 August, a grand jury indicted two refugee applicants on charges they provided false information, including denial of association with members of a terrorist organization. [\[pg. 4\]](#)
- 2 **ILLINOIS:** As of 10 August, a USPER was charged with attempting to support ISIS. The suspect and two co-conspirators allegedly began conspiring to join the group in 2014. [\[pg. 4\]](#)
- 3 **SOUTH CAROLINA:** On 8 August, a USPER pleaded guilty to attempting to support ISIS. The man sought to travel to Syria or Egypt and provided a video pledge to the group. [\[pg. 4\]](#)
- 4 **MINNESOTA:** On 10 August, a court upheld the convictions and sentences of three USPERs convicted in 2016 of conspiring to join ISIS overseas. [\[pg. 4\]](#)
- 5 **CANADA:** On 27 June, a man filed an appeal on his extradition to the US for terrorism charges. The man was charged with conspiring with individuals in the US and Canada to support terrorists in Syria. [\[pg. 6\]](#)
- 6 **UK:** On 14 August, a man drove a car into cyclists and pedestrians before crashing into security barriers outside the Houses of Parliament. Police arrested the man and stated they considered the incident as terrorist-related. [\[pg. 7\]](#)
- 7 **UK:** On 10 August, an ISIS supporter admitted to planning a vehicle ramming attack targeting London's shopping district, hoping to kill 100 people. [\[pg. 7\]](#)
- 8 **UK:** On 9 August, Met Police arrested three individuals on suspicion of terrorism, including disseminating terrorist publications. The arrests were part of an ongoing operation. [\[pg. 7\]](#)
- 9 **GERMANY:** On 9 August, federal prosecutors stated they would allow a man—convicted in relation to the 9/11 attacks—to be released a few weeks early in October on the condition that he would be deported to Morocco. [\[pg. 8\]](#)
- 10 **ALGERIA:** On 11 August, authorities announced veteran violent extremist Sultan Ould Bady surrendered. Bady joined ISIS in the Grand Sahel after defecting from JNIM. [\[pg. 9\]](#)

## SPOTLIGHT SUMMARY

**ISIS IN AFRICA: ESTIMATING FIGHTING NUMBERS IN CELLS ACROSS THE CONTINENT:** In an effort to understand the broader landscape of ISIS' existence in Africa, the Combating Terrorism Center (CTC) at West Point presented the first overview of the approximate number of fighters in various ISIS cells in Africa as of July. CTC at West Point leveraged a compilation of available open source data along with interviews with subject matter experts to estimate there were approximately 6,000 ISIS fighters in Africa as of July, spread over a total of nine ISIS "cells." (CTC)

# SPOTLIGHT

This section provides a comprehensive look at a terrorist group(s) or leader(s), and/or CT tools and literature.

## ISIS in Africa: Estimating Fighter Numbers in Cells Across the Continent

In an effort to understand the broader landscape of ISIS' existence in Africa, the Combating Terrorism Center (CTC) at West Point presented the first overview of the approximate number of fighters in various ISIS cells in Africa as of July. CTC leveraged a compilation of available open source data along with interviews with subject matter experts to estimate there were approximately 6,000 ISIS fighters in Africa as of July, spread over a total of nine ISIS "cells." (**NOTE:** The word "cells" is used consciously due to the varying degrees of "officialness" of these groups to ISIS. Here "cells" is used an umbrella term to refer to those groups which are both official, recognized ISIS wilayats (province) and those groups which are not officially affiliated but have pledged allegiance to ISIS and act on its behalf.)

### ISIS' Transition Into Africa

In September 2014, according to CTC, Algerian-based violent extremist group Jund al-Khilafa, or the "Soldiers of the Caliphate," pledged allegiance to ISIS and became the first African ISIS affiliate. Between 2014-2016, various other ISIS "cells"—either official wilayats or unofficial affiliated groups—emerged across Africa. Following the late 2017 collapse of ISIS' "caliphate" in Syria and Iraq after the liberation of Mosul, these African ISIS "cells" began to receive more attention in popular discourse; however, there was still little analysis of the strength of these groups from a comparative perspective, according to CTC.

### Limitations in Gathering ISIS Fighter Data

Scarcity of detailed open source data on many—though not all—ISIS cells in Africa is the primary limitation in determining accurate information regarding the number of fighters serving in each group. In addition, when open source accounts do provide estimates on numbers of fighters, there are methodological issues surrounding how these estimates were derived. In general, it is difficult to arrive at estimates, particularly for small groups, because fighter numbers are constantly changing in environments in which information was limited, and groups often try to prevent information about their sizes from becoming public.

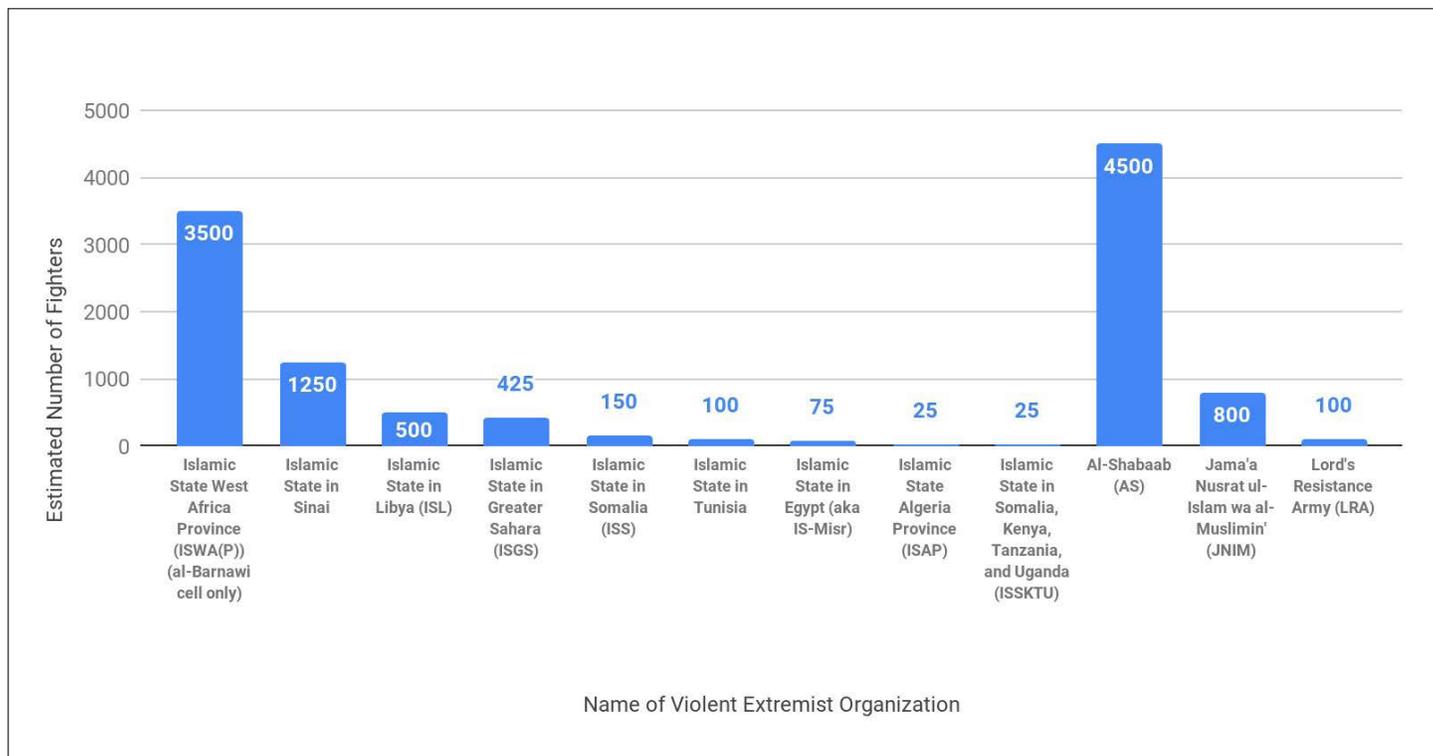
Despite these limitations, CTC gathered open source information from news organizations, think tanks, governments, and international organizations, identifying minimum and maximum estimates of the number of fighters in various ISIS cells for all months for which data was available, from an individual cell's founding to the present (July 2018). CTC then conducted informal interviews with subject matter experts to formulate the best current estimate of fighter numbers. In regards to the ISIS groups presented in the graphic on page 4, the estimates are for ISIS fighters involved in active fighting as opposed to individuals involved in non-kinetic operations, such as supporters, recruiters, financiers, or those living under the rule of an ISIS affiliate. The graphic also depicts significant terrorist groups in Africa who are not affiliated with ISIS.

### The Future of ISIS in Africa's Fighters

CTC assessed the larger ISIS cells in Africa were not likely to experience significant growth moving forward. ISIS-West Africa has been effected by CT efforts made by the Nigerian government and the Multinational Joint Task Force. In Egypt, ISIS-Sinai has experienced reduced recruitment as the Egyptian government has also implemented increased CT tactics. In Libya, geography and the presence of rival organizations have been barriers to ISIS' growth.

Instead, CTC assessed ISIS' greatest opportunity for growth will be in the smaller cells in Sub-Saharan Africa: namely ISIS in the Greater Sahara and ISIS in Somalia. These groups could experience significant proportional growth due to their smaller sizes and because they are less targeted when compared to the larger cells. Both groups have also proven to be capable of meaningful violence; however, while proportional growth may occur, neither of these cells is likely to match ISIS-West Africa or ISIS-Sinai in total fighter numbers. ([CTC WEST POINT](#))

# SPOTLIGHT



Estimated numbers of fighters in various violent extremist organizations across Africa (July 2018), according to CTC. **NOTE:** When assessing ISWAP's (ISIS-West Africa's) estimated fighter numbers, the authors only take into account those fighters in Barnawi's ISWAP group, even though no evidence exists that Shekau has ever fully renounced his affiliation with ISIS. If one were to count Shekau's faction, this would add another 1,500 fighters. (CTC WEST POINT)

# ON POINT

This section consists of in-depth counterterrorism press articles including context and background information.

## 1 ARIZONA: Authorities Arrest Tucson Refugees for Immigration Fraud

On 8 August, a federal grand jury in Tucson returned an 11-count indictment against Mohamed Abdirahman Osman\*, 28, and Zeinab Abdirahman Mohamed\*, 25, both living in Tucson, for perjury in an immigration matter and false statements to a government agency. The statements included Osman's true name and nationality and denial of his association with members of a designated terrorist organization.

- The indictment alleged that Osman and Mohamed, while living in China, applied for and were granted refugee status in 2014. The husband and wife entered the US and have been living in Tucson since the time of their entry. In June 2015, Osman and Mohamed submitted applications for legal permanent residence status to US Citizenship and Immigration Services.
- The indictment further alleged that material submitted in support of their refugee applications and their applications for legal permanent residence status contained false, fictitious, and fraudulent statements. ([DOJ](#))

## 2 CALIFORNIA: Man Receives Additional 20 Years for Attempted Murder

On 13 August, Uzbek refugee Fazliddin Kurbanov—who was serving 25 years in prison for plotting to help a foreign terrorist group—was sentenced to an additional 20 years for attempted murder of a federal prison warden.

- Prosecutors claimed Kurbanov acknowledged fashioning a knife and trying to kill the warden at a federal prison in Victorville.
- In March, Kurbanov pleaded guilty to attempted murder of a federal officer. Kurbanov's new sentence will run consecutively with his current sentence for trying to provide material support to, a terrorist group.

- In May 2013, a federal grand jury in Boise, Idaho, returned a three-count indictment charging Kurbanov with one count of conspiracy to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization, one count of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists and one count of possessing an unregistered destructive device. ([AP](#))

## 3 ILLINOIS: Man Indicted for Attempting to Join ISIS

As of 10 August, <sup>USPER</sup>Faress Muhammad Shraiteh\*, 21, was charged for attempting to provide material support and resources to ISIS. According to the indictment, Shraiteh and two other individuals began conspiring to join ISIS in November 2014.

- In May 2015, the men traveled from Chicago to Egypt, where they allegedly spent time in Cairo and Sharm El-Sheik before flying to Istanbul, Turkey.
- Shraiteh was denied entry into Turkey, while the two others were allowed in. Shraiteh went to Israel, where he has family, and later communicated with one of the other individuals that he planned to renew his passport and join them. ([DOJ](#))

## 4 SOUTH CAROLINA: Man Pleads Guilty to Attempting to Support ISIS

On 8 August, <sup>USPER</sup>Zakaryia Abdin, 19, pleaded guilty to attempting to provide material support to ISIS.

- In January 2017, Abdin created a social media account to join ISIS. He met with an FBI special agent who advised him about FBI's role in conducting CT investigations, provided the definitions for terrorism, and specifically told Abdin ISIS was a designated foreign terrorist organization and supporting it was illegal.
- Following the interview with FBI, Abdin sought to travel to Syria or Egypt to make contact with the group. During online conversations, Abdin expressed continued loyalty to ISIS and provided a video pledge. On 30 March 2017, authorities arrested Abdin as he attempted to board a plane and travel overseas to join ISIS.
- Abdin faced up to 20 years in prison when he is sentenced. ([DOJ](#))

\* The charges listed are currently allegations. As in any criminal case, the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

# ON POINT

## 5 MINNESOTA: Terrorism Convictions Upheld for Three Men

On 10 August, a federal appeals court upheld the convictions and sentences of three men serving decades-long terms after being convicted in 2016 of conspiring to murder abroad on behalf of ISIS.

- <sup>USPER</sup>Mohamed Abdihamid Farah, 24, <sup>USPER</sup>Abdirahman Yasin Daud, 24, and <sup>USPER</sup>Guled Ali Omar, 23, were part of a plot to follow several other friends overseas to join ISIS. In all, nine men from Minnesota were sentenced as part of the plot. ([STAR TRIBUNE](#))

## 6 UNITED STATES: Department of State Increases Reward for Information on Al-Qa'ida Leaders

On 8 August, the US Department of State's Rewards for Justice Program increased reward offers for information leading to the location, arrest, or conviction of al-Qa'ida key leaders Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah and Sayf al-Adl to US \$10 million.

- The increase represented a doubling of the previous reward offers of US \$5 million—announced in December 2000—to US \$10 million.
- Both individuals serve as members of al-Qa'ida's leadership council.
- In November 1998, Abdullah and al-Adl were charged by a federal grand jury for their role in the bombings of the US Embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya. ([DOS](#))

## 7 UNITED STATES: Department of State Designates Qassim Abdullah Ali Ahmed as Global Terrorist

On 13 August, the Department of State designated Qassim Abdullah Ali Ahmed, a.k.a. Qassim al-Muamen, as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) under Section 1(b) of Executive Order 13224, which imposes sanctions on foreign persons who have committed, or pose a significant risk of committing, acts of terrorism.

- The designation seeks to deny al-Muamen the resources to plan and conduct terrorist attacks. Among other consequences, all of his property and interests subject to US jurisdiction are blocked, and US persons are generally prohibited from engaging in any transactions with him.
- Al-Muamen is an Iran-based leader of al-Ashtar Brigades (AAB), a US-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and SDGT that seeks to overthrow the Bahraini Government. Al-Muamen has recruited terrorists in Bahrain, facilitated training on weapons and explosives for AAB members, and supplied AAB members with funding, weapons, and explosives to conduct attacks. ([DOS](#))

## 8 CANADA: Man Appeals Extradition to US for Terrorism Charges

On 27 June, <sup>CANPER</sup>Abdullahi Ahmed Abdullahi, 33, filed to appeal his extradition to the US for terrorism charges.

- On 12 January, the US unsealed a two-count indictment and Abdullahi was charged with providing and conspiring with individuals in the US and Canada to provide material support to terrorists engaged in violent activities in Syria. ([CBC](#), [DOJ](#))

## 9 CANADA: Mosque Loses Charity Status for Possible Violent Extremist Involvement

On 14 July, the Canadian Government revoked the charity status of a Mosque over "activities that promote hate and intolerance."

- According to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), the mosque speakers expressed views that were "misogynistic, homophobic, racist, and/or promoted violence." CRA was also concerned "radicalized individuals" attended the mosque.
- According to CRA, individuals who spoke at the mosque called women deficient, said Christians and Jews were enemies, spoke about throwing homosexuals off a mountain, and said those who left the Islamic faith should be killed. ([GLOBAL NEWS](#))

# ON POINT

## 10 UNITED KINGDOM: Authorities Arrest Man Following Incident in Westminster

On 14 August, <sup>UKPER</sup>Salih Khater, 29, drove his car into a group of cyclists and pedestrians, before crashing into barriers outside the Houses of Parliament.

- No weapons were recovered from the vehicle and Khater was arrested on suspicion of terrorist offenses. Khater was also arrested for attempted murder.
- Three people required treatment, and only two were transported to the hospital.
- In 2010, Khater came to the UK from Sudan and successfully applied for citizenship in the past two years.
- Met's Counter Terrorism Command was conducting searches at two addresses in Birmingham and one address in Nottingham. ([MET PD, BBC](#))



Video of incident ([BBC](#))

## 11 UNITED KINGDOM: ISIS Supporter Admits to Plotting Oxford Street Attack

On 10 August, ISIS supporter <sup>UKPER</sup>Lewis Ludlow, 26, planned a vehicle ramming attack targeting London's shopping district or Madam Toussauds, hoping to kill 100 people.

- Ludlow allegedly formulated his plan after he was stopped by police at Heathrow Airport in February as he attempted to board a flight to the Philippines.
- Prior to his attempted travel, Ludlow first came to the attention of police in 2010 when he attended a demonstration led by now detained preacher Anjem Choudary and his banned al-Muhajiroun group.
- Following his attempted travel, police recovered scraps of papers from Ludlow's trash detailing his attack plans as well as his cell phone which contained videos of Ludlow swearing allegiance to ISIS and pictures of crowded areas. ([ITV](#))

**JCAT:** Situational awareness of vehicle design mitigation principles serves as a vital component in officer safety – which may be difficult to disrupt due to their opportunistic nature, with little or no planning. Even in plots with reduced attack planning, enhanced collaboration can help reinforce the importance of reporting suspicious activities and behaviors which may be indicative of attack planning and can lead to further investigation into the reported activity, potentially disrupting an attack. (**JCAT**)

## 12 UNITED KINGDOM: Authorities Arrest Three on Suspicion of Terrorism Offenses

On 9 August, Metropolitan Police's CT Command arrested <sup>UKPER</sup>Ahmed Aweys, 32, of Redbridge, who was charged with three counts of dissemination of terrorist publications. <sup>UKPER</sup>Abdulaziz Omer Munye, 26, of North London was also arrested and charged with one offense under section 2 of Terrorism Act 2006.

- Both men were charged on 9 August and appeared in custody at Westminster Magistrates on 10 August.
- Police also arrested a woman, 30, on suspicion of collection of information, in violation of section 58 of the Terrorism Act 2000. She remained in police custody.
- On 18 April, a man, 29, from East London was arrested on suspicion of terror offenses. He remained on bail to return to a South London police station in mid-August.
- All four arrests were made by Met's CT Command as part of an ongoing operation. ([MET PD](#))

# ON POINT

## 13 GERMANY: Authorities to Release Man Who Assisted 9/11 Attackers

On 9 August, Moroccan national Mounir el-Motassadeq, convicted in 2006 for being an al-Qa'ida member and accessory to murder, was set to be released from prison as early as October.

- Motassadeq was arrested in November 2001 and sentenced in 2006 to 15 years for aiding three of the 9/11 hijackers who lived in Hamburg. He will receive credit for time served after his 2001 arrest.
- German federal prosecutors said they would allow Motassadeq's release a few weeks before his sentence formally ended, on condition that he would be deported to Morocco. ([BOSTON HERALD](#))

## 14 RUSSIA: Authorities Sentence ISIS-Linked Teen for St. Petersburg Bomb Plot

On 9 August, a Russian court sentenced ISIS supporter Yevgeny Yefimov, 18, to five years in prison over a plot to conduct a suicide attack at Saint Petersburg's Kazan cathedral.

- Yefimov rented a shipping container in the center of Saint Petersburg where investigators found chemicals and equipment used to make explosives.
- Yefimov told the court he had been in touch with ISIS fighters in Syria who encouraged him to conduct an attack. He planned to blow himself up during a religious service. ([GULF TIMES](#))

**JCAT:** This Russian court case underscores the importance of coordination during investigative searches, not only to ensure the preservation of evidence, but also the safety of personnel. First responders may observe and recognize IED precursors and components or device testing during follow-up investigations. Guidelines should consider including isolation and evacuation, as some precursor chemicals, rudimentary devices, and components may have inherent dangers and should be treated accordingly until rendered safe by subject matter experts. (**JCAT**)

## 15 SYRIA: Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS) Officials Arrest Leader of French Terror Group

On 12 August, HTS officials arrested Omar Omsen, a.k.a. Omar Diaby, leader of the French group Firqat al-ghuraba, for publishing a communique about a pending case before an Islamic court.

- Omsen was reportedly placed in pre-trial detention because of his latest press release, in which he claimed that the Islamic court had ruled in his favor while the unspecified case was still under investigation.
- Firqatul Ghuraba issued a reaction statement confirming his arrest. ([DAKARACTU](#))

## 16 JORDAN: Bomb Blast Kills One and Wounds Six on Security Patrol

On 10 August, a member of Jordan's security forces was killed and six were wounded when a bomb exploded under a patrol car at a music festival near Amman. Security forces were deployed to the town's annual festival.

- On 11 August, terrorists killed three members of Jordan's security forces in the city of Salt during a raid against their cell which was connected to the prior bomb blast.
- Approximately 20 people were wounded during the operation and authorities eventually arrested three suspects.
- Interior Minister Sameer al-Mobaideen claimed the violent extremists who blew up part of the building when the security forces stormed it, did not belong to a specific group but subscribed to ISIS' ideology. ([NAHARNET](#), [AFP](#))

# ON POINT

## 17 MALI: Al-Mourabitoun Commander and Associates Killed Near Tabankort

On 29 July, French forces of Operation Barkhane conducted a military operation in the Tilemsi Valley and killed al-Mourabitoun commander Himama Ould Lekhweir and at least 13 of his associates.

- Ould Lekhweir had a record of trafficking and was arrested in 2010 amidst a counter-trafficking operation in the area of Lemzareb, Mauritania, but subsequently released.
- Lekhweir was a close associate of late al-Mourabitoun amir Abderrahmane Ould El Amar and was considered to be one of the top leaders of JNIM's al-Mourabitoun. ([MENASTREAM](#))

## 18 ALGERIA: Veteran Malian Violent Extremist Surrenders to Authorities

On 11 August, Algeria's Ministry of Defense announced Sultan Ould Bady, a veteran violent extremist from northern Mali, surrendered himself to Algerian authorities in the southern Tamanrasset region.

- According to Algerian authorities, Bady turned himself in along with several weapons in southern Algeria. According to the officials, he surrendered due to efforts by Algeria to influence militants to surrender.
- Bady belonged to al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO). Bady later formed the group Katibat Salahadin, who split from MUJAO, but eventually returned. In early 2017, Bady joined al-Qa'ida's Group for Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM).
- Bady later defected from JNIM and pledged allegiance to ISIS and joined ISIS in the Grand Sahel (ISGS) led by former MUJAO leader Abu Walid al Sahrawi.
- According to Long War Journal, Bady was one of the most senior violent extremist figures in the Sahel to have surrendered to Algerian authorities and it remains to be seen if more members of his group will follow. His departure from the battlefield will likely have serious ramifications for ISGS and its Katibat Salahadin. ([LWJ](#))

## 19 EGYPT: Authorities Stop Attempted Church Bombing

On 11 August, Omar Mostafa, 29, attempted to attack the Virgin Mary Church in Qalioubiya's Mostord, Egypt, but was stopped by security likely enroute to the church. Police arrested six others involved in the plot, including two women.

- Mostafa wore an explosive belt and tried to infiltrate the area as worshipers gathered for service at the church. Due to heavy security surrounding the church, Mostafa's explosives reportedly detonated about 250 meters (275 yards) from the church, killing himself.
- Police found weapons and ammunition at Mustafa's apartment as well as cash and documents on manufacturing explosives.
- On 11 August, authorities arrested six others involved in the case, including two women. ([HAARETZ](#))



Six arrested in connection to attack. (EGYPTIAN AUTHORITIES)

# TRENDS, TACTICS, & PROCEDURES

This section informs readers on methods terrorists are utilizing overseas which could be employed domestically.

## Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Releases Book Titled 'Extremism'

In August, a book titled "Extremism"—the latest in the MIT Press Essential Knowledge series—was published offering an introduction to violent extremist movements, explaining what violent extremism is, how violent extremist ideologies are constructed, and why violent extremism can escalate into violence. The author showed that although the ideological content of extremist movements varies widely, there are common structural elements.

- The author explained that violent extremism arises from a perception of "us versus them," intensified by the conviction that the success of "us" is inseparable from hostile acts against "them." He illustrated his argument with case studies and examples from around the world and throughout history.
- The author described the evolution of identity movements, individual and group radicalization to violence, and more. He said if society understands the causes of violent extremism, and the common elements of extremist movements, it will be more effective in countering it. ([MIT PRESS](#))

## Brooklyn Judge Explains Why Ex-ISIS Member Received Time Served

On 8 August, New York, NY, US District Court judge Honorable Jack B. Weinstein issued a 43-page document which explained why he sentenced an ex-ISIS member to time served and ten years of supervised release. The judge cited the defendant's assistance to US CT efforts and his low risk of recidivism as reasons for the lenient sentence.

- On 26 November 2014, Bangladeshi immigrant and US citizen referred to as John Doe, 29, pleaded guilty to providing material support to a foreign terrorist organization and receiving military-type training from a terrorist organization. He was sentenced on 28 June.
- On 12 June 2014, John Doe boarded a flight from JFK to Turkey and traveled to ISIS-controlled territory in Syria. According to court documents, the defendant joined ISIS in an administrative role, received military training, carried firearms, was introduced to explosive belts, and was present during at least one battle.

- In October 2014, while still in Syria, the defendant felt betrayed and reached out to the FBI and offered to assist the US Government and sought help in returning home to New York. The defendant spent the next four years cooperating with US law enforcement agencies.
- Judge Weinstein claimed that at a time when the inner workings of ISIS were not well understood in the US and the defendant provided valuable detailed information on ISIS's activities.
- Judge Weinstein said the main question before the court during sentencing was how to balance the defendant's personal story, with the need to protect the public from further crimes he could potentially commit while also providing a deterrence of others who might help ISIS. ([BROOKLYEAGLE](#))

## Authorities Remove Australian Citizenship From Five ISIS Supporters

On 8 August, Australian authorities removed the Australian citizenship of five unidentified former dual nationals who were under investigation due to their involvement with ISIS.

- Since 2015, a total of six people lost their Australian citizenship as a change in the law enabled dual nationals to lose their citizenship rights for actions contrary to their allegiance to Australia, according to Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton. ([THE STAR](#))

# TRENDS, TACTICS, & PROCEDURES

## EU Plans Online Terrorist Content Restriction

As of 9 August, the EU wanted to take legal measures to control terrorist content online, according to media reports. EU Security Commissioner Julian King claimed voluntary agreements had not provided citizens with enough protection.

- The EU's Security Commission was working on a legislative proposal to be presented in September to make internet companies such as <sup>USPER</sup>Facebook and <sup>USPER</sup>Google identify terrorist content on their platforms and delete it immediately.
- EU Security Commissioner Julian King believed that “Despite the positive results from previous voluntary agreements, the EU has not seen enough progress, and in order to better protect our citizens, we must now take stronger action on terrorist content.”
- The commissioner previously called on EU member states to work together to tackle the problem. In July, he said every terrorist attack in Europe over the previous year “had a link with online terrorist content. ([DW](#))”

## Somalia Sees Increase in ISIS Activity

As of 9 August, BBC Monitoring collected data on ISIS attacks in Somalia from January to July, which revealed trends about the group's activity in the country. Most of the attacks ISIS claimed in Somalia were labelled as targeted “assassinations” against Somali intelligence and security personnel, with some of them filmed in public.

- The data presented in the report was based exclusively on official ISIS statements released through its channels on the Telegram messaging application. According to the data, ISIS claimed 39 attacks in Somalia between 1 January and 31 July. Twenty-seven of the attacks took place in May, June and July, indicating a sharp rise compared to previous months. This was in contrast to 2017 when ISIS claimed a total of 22 attacks in Somalia throughout the year.

- ISIS in Somalia have shifted from the north east of the country to the southern parts since they emerged. With the shift to the south, they have claimed more attacks in the capital Mogadishu, moving away from nearby southern city of Afgoye.
- Most ISIS statements on Somalia released between January and July were issued by the group's “news agency” Amaq. Amaq reports somewhat mimic mainstream media styles and do not contain unique features of ISIS propaganda such as religious references, victorious rhetoric, derogatory terms for opposing groups, and titles of self-proclaimed provinces.
- In late 2015, ISIS announced having affiliates in Somalia, most of them poached from its arch rival in the country, al-Shabaab. ISIS has not yet upgraded its presence in the country to a “wilayah,” which means an official regional branch. ([BBC](#))

# TRENDS, TACTICS, & PROCEDURES

## ISIS and Tehrik-E Taliban Pakistan (TTP) Claim Attacks During Election Month

For the month of July, as many as 230 people were killed and 417 injured in 22 reported terrorist attacks in during the election month of July. Out of the total 22 reported terrorist attacks, 13 targeted Pakistani political leaders and were election-related targets, according to the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies' (PIPS) monthly security review of Pakistan.

- The attacks included four suicide attacks including one that killed over 150 people in Mastung.
- Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) candidate Nawabzada Siraj Raisani was also a victim of the Mastung blast. Two other suicide attacks targeted political leaders killing Awami National Party and Pakistan Tehreek-E Insaf election candidates Haroon Bilour and Ikramullah Gandapur, respectively.
- Among the total 230 killed in the, 211 were civilians, 15 personnel of security and law enforcement agencies, and four violent extremists; those injured included 398 civilians and 19 security personnel.
- As many as 12 attacks took place in six districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while eight attacks were reported from Balochistan. Most of the casualties were caused by two suicide bombings by ISIS, which targeted political gatherings and security forces, respectively, in Mastung and Quetta. ISIS and TTP claimed responsibility for the attacks. ([PAKISTAN TODAY](#))

## ISIS in the Philippines Claims First VBIED Attack

As of 6 August, ISIS in the Philippines claimed to have conducted a suicide attack on a military checkpoint outside Lamitan City, which is the first known instance of the group's affiliates using a VBIED in the country. Philippine authorities claimed the blast on 31 July killed 10 people and injured nine.

- The same day, ISIS' Telegram channel claimed a Moroccan national named Abu Kathir al-Maghribi had driven the van into a group of soldiers.
- This attack and the presence of foreign fighters in the country could indicate an ISIS initiative to build its East Asian capacity as it comes not long after the suicide attacks in Surabaya, Indonesia, involving families, according to BBC.
- In mid-July, ISIS' weekly newspaper *al-Naba* also featured an infographic with the label "East Asia Wilayah" to denote an official branch.
- This attack was possibly the first official recognition of the pro-ISIS fighters in the region including the claim of the Basilan attack on the group's Nashir channels on Telegram.
- It was unclear if the suicide attack was a centrally-directed operation or ISIS' opportunistic claim over a local group's effort. ([BBC](#))

**JCAT:** Terrorists continue to pursue efforts to use VBIEDs to conduct mass-casualty attacks. VBIEDs offer maximum damage over other types of IEDs because of the amount of explosives they can contain. A VBIED attack can rapidly deplete first responder resources, tax command structures and overwhelm emergency medical services. Effective suspicious activity reporting by alert bystanders, security personnel, or first responders can be part of an effective mitigation strategy. In cases of specific threats, coordination with the intelligence community and federal law enforcement will allow the development to adaptive indicators for countering the threat. (**JCAT**)

# TRENDS, TACTICS, & PROCEDURES

## Family Terrorism: How Terrorists Recruit

As of 9 August, according to a new study by the observatory of Thought Fatwas and Extremist Thoughts in affiliation with the Egyptian Fatwa center, terrorist organizations in Syria and Iraq, and their decreasing sources of financial funding and human resources will cause them to resort to what has become known as family terrorism.

- The study claimed that to recruit more individuals, terrorist organizations will try to spread within family frameworks.
- The observatory explained that a number of international reports confirmed that more than a quarter of foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq have ties of kinship and friendship at varying degrees.
- The study claimed terrorist groups may have family and relatives; however, what is new is that these family members participate in these terrorist attacks, according to the Observatory.
- The study cited multiple terrorist attacks where family members were involved. This included the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings conducted by the Tsarnaev brothers, and the 2015 arrest of three brothers by Saudi authorities believed to be linked to the suicide attack on a Shia mosque in Kuwait.
- The observatory cited the recent May attacks in Indonesia, when a family of three targeted three churches in Surabaya, killing 12 people and injuring 40 others. One day after the attack, another family of five conducted a suicide attack on a police station, injuring dozens of people.
- The studies noted that family terrorism could be linked to issues of racism, discrimination, and non-integration, or rather marginalization, within societies that pushes these individuals into joining terrorist, extremist groups. To them, it could mean some sort of protection and a fulfillment in their ambitions to be part of something.

([EGYPT TODAY](#))

## Update on Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines

On 6 August, the Department of Defense Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) released the 3rd report on Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines (OPE-P) to the US Congress.

- The report highlighted how US forces continued to conduct training and intelligence sharing for Philippine forces who engaged in a series of low-level clashes with ISIS' network in the Philippines.
- The Lead IG cited approximately 250 US military advisers supported Philippine CT operations. According to the DoD, the number of violent jihadists who claimed ISIS affiliation dropped to 200 from 1,000 in 2017.
- The DoD reported that ISIS in the Philippines remained weak and continued to lack a formal command and control structure, and the group's operational and financial ties with the core ISIS organization in Syria have been largely severed since October 2017.
- In May, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte met with 27 members of ISIS in the Philippines to accept their surrender and to encourage other violent extremists to lay down their arms.
- Also this quarter, the US Department of the Treasury announced its first sanctions against an ISIS in the Philippines financier since the group was formally designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization. ([DOD](#))

# TRENDS, TACTICS, & PROCEDURES

## Philippines, Indonesia Defense Chiefs Agree to Fight Terror

On 12 August, officials from the Philippines and Indonesia agreed to further tighten security and intensify cooperation between the two states to combat the terror threat in the region. The agreements were reached, according to Philippine Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, during his bilateral dialogue with Indonesian Defense Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu.

- Among the anti-terrorism security agreements the defense chiefs wanted enhanced was intelligence sharing and the ongoing trilateral patrols, which included Malaysia.
- Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines share a porous maritime border, an area being used by local and foreign terrorists to access the three Southeast Asian countries.
- Aside from intelligence sharing and trilateral patrols, both defense chiefs also discussed the possibility of holding joint anti-terrorism training among Philippine and Indonesian security forces. ([PHILSTAR](#))

## UN Security Council Approves Addition to ISIS and Al-Qa'ida Sanctions

On 9 August, the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIS, Al-Qa'ida, and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities approved the addition of ISIS Grand Sahara leader Adnan Abou Walid Al-Sahraoui.

- The committee added Sahraoui to its ISIS and Al-Qa'ida Sanctions List of individuals and entities subject to the assets freeze, travel ban and arms embargo set out in paragraph 1 of Security Council resolution 2368 (2017), and adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.
- Sahraoui was the former spokesperson of the Mouvement pour l'Unification et le Jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest (MUJAO), amir of the Al-Mourabitoun violent extremist group in Mali, and pledged allegiance to ISIS and was listed as Al-Qa'ida in Iraq in May 2015. ([UN](#))

## Sudan, Libya, Chad, Niger Vow to Fight Terrorism on Borders

On 9 August, the third ministerial meeting on enhancing cooperation in the field of securing and monitoring joint borders among Sudan, Libya, Niger and Chad began in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum. Authorities agreed to enhance cooperation in combating security challenges, including terrorism and organized crimes on their borders.

- Sudan's Foreign Minister Al-Dirdiri Mohamed Ahmed underlined the importance of relaunching the joint operation center to exchange information among the four countries. Ahmed claimed the success of the Sudanese-Chadian forces in securing the borders between the two countries gave an example of what joint work can achieve.
- Libya's Foreign Minister Mohamed Taher Siala also underlined the importance of the united efforts by the four countries to deal with the security challenges of terrorism, organized crimes, and illegal immigration.
- Nigerien Defense Minister Kalla Mountari called for speeding up joint coordination to secure the borders. Mountari said the countries of the region are facing challenges that need a common will to tackle, mainly through establishing mechanisms for exchanging information about the border security.
- In June, the four countries signed a framework agreement in the Chadian capital N'Djamena to control and monitor their common borders. The deal stipulated steering joint patrols on the borders, exchanging information, establishing a center for joint operations, and implementing development projects along the joint borders. ([XINHUA](#))

# PARTING SHOTS

This section includes press articles with concise summaries for rapid consumption.

## 1 MINNESOTA: Convicted Terrorist Receives Additional Time at Halfway House

On 7 August, a judge granted a federal probation officer's petition to add 15 days to convicted terrorist <sup>USPER</sup> Abdirizak Mohamed Warne's year-long term at a halfway house for admitting he placed bets on soccer matches, which is a violation of the center's rules. ([STAR TRIBUNE](#))

## 2 WORLDWIDE: ISIS-Linked Group Repeats Call for Vehicle Attacks

On 5 August, ISIS-linked group al-Abd al-Faqir media published a poster depicting its logo on a truck heading towards two police officers and what appeared to be a bus tour operator, and displaying Arabic and English text "We will spare no means to kill you." ([AL-ABD AL-FAQIR](#))

## 3 WORLDWIDE: 'Caliphate News' 24 Telegram Group Releases Recruitment Video

On 7 August, pro-ISIS Telegram group Akbhar al-Khilafah (Caliphate News) 24, which translated ISIS Arabic material and has units in the English, German, Portuguese, Spanish, and Urdu languages, distributed a 57-second recruitment video. The video encouraged supporters to join its translation team and "bring the voice of the Khilafah to the world." ([AKBHAR AL-KHILAFAH](#))

## 4 WORLDWIDE: ISIS-Linked Twitter Group Threatens Telegram CEO

On 10 August, an ISIS-linked Twitter group posted a graphic threatening Telegram CEO Pavel Durov. The graphic featured a masked ISIS fighter standing behind a modified image of Pavel Durov on his knees. ([ISIS](#))



Poster threatening CEO ([ISIS](#))

## 5 ITALY: Government Deports Suspected ISIS Supporter

On 13 August, Italian authorities deported an unidentified Moroccan, 19, after he expressed support for ISIS during a meeting with a social worker. The man was being held at a facility for alleged crimes he committed against "property and person." He escaped from the facility multiple times, including one instance during which he attempted to reach France. ([ITALIAN GOVERNMENT](#))

## 6 BELGIUM: Mother Charged With Financing Terrorism for Supporting Sons in Syria

As of 13 August, Belgian national, Ghita B. was found guilty of financing terrorism for sending money to her sons who left Belgium to join ISIS in Syria. Ghita reportedly did not support ISIS but wanted to support her sons after unsuccessful attempts to bring them back to Belgium. ([SUDINFO](#), [ITV](#))

## 7 AFGHANISTAN: ISIS-Khorasan Claims Seven Taliban Members Killed in Nangarhar Province

On 8 August, Amaq news agency claimed ISIS-Khorasan killed three Taliban fighters and wounded seven in a "commando attack" in Nangarhar Province. In addition, Amaq reported ISIS-Khorasan killed four Taliban fighters and wounded five in a separate attack in Nangarhar. ([AMAQ](#))

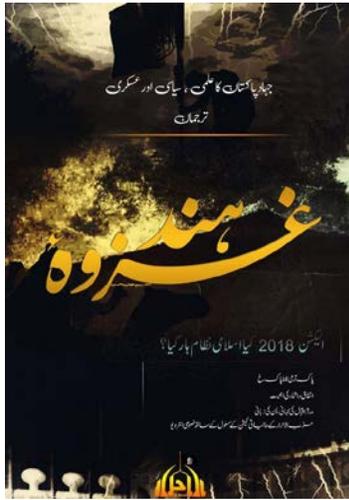
## 8 AFGHANISTAN: Security Forces Target Al-Qa'ida Leaders in Helmand and Nangarhar Provinces

On 7 August, Afghan Special Forces claimed killing al-Qa'ida senior leader Abdul Rahim al-Masri and six of his fighters during a raid on their bomb-making factory in Garmsir District in Helmand Province. On 4 August, Nangarhar's provincial government announced al-Qa'ida member Rahmatullah and four associates were captured in Jalalabad during a raid by the National Directorate of Security, Afghanistan's intelligence service. ([LWJ](#))

# PARTING SHOTS

## 9 AFGHANISTAN: Hizbul Ahrar Announces Launch of Magazine *Ghazwa-E-Hind*

On 11 August, violent extremist group Hizbul Ahrar released its first 36-page issue of its new magazine *Ghazwa-e-Hind*. The magazine featured an article on the recent election in Pakistan, repeated quotes from an old propaganda video of Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, and featured a manifesto of Hizbul Ahrar on the last page. (HIZBUL AHRAR)



*Ghazwa-E-Hind* (HIZBUL AHRAR)

## 10 AFGHANISTAN: Explosion Reported Close to Independent Election Commission in Kabul

On 13 August, according to Kabul police, a suicide bomber targeted the election commission office and detonated his explosives before the security forces could stop him. One person was killed and another sustained injuries. (KHAAMA)

## 11 IRAQ: Military Forces Kill 14 ISIS Fighters in Anbar, Arrest Two in Mosul

As of 9 August, Iraqi military officials claimed security forces conducted operations in Anbar Province, killing 14 ISIS members, and arrested two others in Mosul. In addition, the United Nations Security Council held a special session on Iraq in which Jan Kubis, head of the UN's mission in Iraq, stressed that "the security and protection environment" in Iraq remains "volatile, posing serious protection risks to Iraqi civilians." (KURDISTAN 24)

## 12 SYRIA: Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS) Video Showcases Elite Forces Training Program

As of 8 August, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) released a new video which showcased its "elite forces" training program in Syria. The three minute, 50-second clip also appeared with French subtitles and featured "The Red Bandanas" taking part in a variety of combat exercises. (HTS)



Forces training (HTS)

## 13 SYRIA: Hurras Al-Din Publishes Photos of Attack Against Syrian Military Positions

On 6 August, Hurras al-Din's Sham a-Ribat Media posted an Arabic communique which claimed an offensive on Syrian military positions in the town of Jurin in Syria's Hama governorate and published photos of the attack. According to the message, Hurras al-Din fighters killed and wounded "many" Syrian soldiers in the attack, and claimed the Syrian military conducts daily artillery strikes from Jurin. The photos showed fighters utilizing mortar shells, rifles, and heavy automatic weapons in the operation. (SHAM A-RIBAT MEDIA)

## 14 CHECHNYA: Amir of Junud Al-Sham Jamaat in Syria Addresses Chechen Youth

On 9 August, Muslim Shishani, the amir of the Junud al-Sham in Syria, released a 19-minute video in which he calls on people in Chechnya not to conduct "pointless attacks." Shishani tells the Chechen youth to "sit back, study the situation, think things through, and prepare themselves." (CHECHINSINSYRIA)

# PARTING SHOTS

## 15 **KENYA:** Al-Shabaab Claims IED Attack on Military in Lamu County

On 8 August, al-Shabaab claimed an IED attack which killed five Kenyan soldiers. The group claimed the attack on its Shahada news agency. The statement was later republished and also translated into English by al-Qa'ida's Global Islamic media front. ([LWJ](#))



## NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER (NCTC)

NCTC serves as the primary organization in the US Government for integrating and analyzing all intelligence pertaining to terrorism possessed or acquired by the US Government (except purely domestic terrorism); serves as the central and shared knowledge bank on terrorism information; provides all-source intelligence support to government-wide counterterrorism activities; establishes the information technology (IT) systems and architectures within NCTC and between NCTC and other agencies that enable access to, as well as integration, dissemination, and use of, terrorism information.

NCTC serves as the principal advisor to the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) on intelligence operations and analysis relating to counterterrorism, advising the DNI on how well US intelligence activities, programs, and budget proposals for counterterrorism conform to priorities established by the President.