

Name: ISIS

Type of Organization:

- Insurgent
- territory-controlling
- religious
- terrorist
- violent

Ideologies and Affiliations:

- Islamist
- jihadist
- pan-Islamist
- Salafist
- takfiri

Place of Origin:

Iraq

Year of Origin:

Al-Qaeda in Iraq: 2004; ISIS: 2013

Founder(s):

Al-Qaeda in Iraq: Abu Musab al-Zarqawi; ISIS: Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi

Places of Operation:

ISIS has declared wilayas (provinces) in Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Turkey, Central Africa, Mali, Niger, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, and the North Caucasus. Beyond this, the terror group has waged attacks in Lebanon, France, Belgium, Bangladesh, Morocco, Indonesia, Malaysia, Tunisia, and Kuwait.

Overview

Executive Summary:

ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) is an extremist group formed from [al-Qaeda](#) offshoots in Iraq and Syria. Since its formation in 2013, ISIS has worked to sustain a self-declared caliphate in eastern Syria and western Iraq. Ultimately, ISIS seeks to unite the world under a single caliphate, and to that end the group has begun to establish satellite operations in nine countries. Initially, ISIS gained support within Iraq as a Sunni insurgency group fighting what some Sunnis viewed as a partisan Shiite-led Iraqi government. The group has since garnered additional momentum as a result of the Syrian civil war, and has recruited up to 33,000 fighters from around the world. Thousands of foreign ISIS fighters are estimated to have been killed in battle, while some have returned—or are reportedly planning to return—to their home countries.¹

ISIS finds its origins in al-Qaeda forerunner al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), formed by sectarian extremist [Abu Musab al-Zarqawi](#). During the Iraq War and its aftermath, the group experienced a series of setbacks and restructurings, for a while going by the name the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI). In June 2014, the group—then led by Iraqi extremist [Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi](#)—unilaterally declared a caliphate spanning eastern Syria and western Iraq, naming Baghdadi as its “caliph.” In his first speech as “caliph,” Baghdadi made clear that ISIS’s aspirations were not limited to any one region, saying that the group sought to establish governance over all Muslims. Consequently, the organization changed its name from the “Islamic State in Iraq and Syria” (or the “Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham”) to simply the “Islamic State.”

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Although ISIS controlled large swaths of territory across Iraq and Syria at the peak of its territorial control in the summer of 2014, the group lost the last of those territorial holdings over the course of 2017.² At its height, ISIS controlled almost 40 percent of Iraqi territory. By April 2017, U.S.-backed Iraqi forces had reduced ISIS's control of the country to less than 7 percent.³ On July 10, 2017, the Iraqi government announced the liberation of Iraq's second largest city of Mosul, where Baghdadi had declared ISIS's caliphate three years earlier.⁴ Following the November 17 recapture of Rawa, the last ISIS-held town in Iraq, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi declared military victory over ISIS in the country.⁵ In June 2017, U.S.-backed forces began an offensive to drive ISIS out of its declared capital in Raqqa, Syria.⁶ On October 17, 2017, American-backed forces announced the liberation of Raqqa, and on November 21, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani declared that ISIS had been driven out of Syria by Iranian-backed forces.⁷ By December 2018, ISIS retained only a small foothold in the Syrian town of Baghuz along the Syrian-Iraqi border.⁸ In March 2019, the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) launched an assault on ISIS forces in Baghuz and retook the town.⁹

Notwithstanding ISIS's territorial losses, security officials expect ISIS to remain a threat and lead an ongoing insurgency in the region.¹⁰ In February 2021, Mazloum Abdi, general commander of the SDF, reported that ISIS is "trying to revive itself" and continues to threaten regional and global security.¹¹ According to a February 2021 report by the U.S. Department of Defense Office of Inspector General, ISIS remained a "cohesive organization and continued to operate as a low-level insurgency in Iraq and Syria," while its strategy, capabilities, and group cohesion "remained largely unchanged."¹² The report also determined that while the international Coalition and its local partners have prevented ISIS from resurging, they have been unable to degrade ISIS to the point it no longer poses a threat.¹³ Observers in Europe allege ISIS remains a threat on the continent, though to a lesser extent than it did when it maintained its caliphate. ISIS no longer has the capabilities to launch large-scale attacks in Europe, but it continues to inspire individuals to carry out smaller attacks such as stabbings and vehicle attacks.¹⁴

Despite its territorial losses in Iraq and Syria, ISIS continues to maintain and expand its global presence. The group has declared *wilayat* (provinces, governorates) in Iraq, Syria, Egypt,¹⁵ Libya,¹⁶ Algeria,¹⁷ Yemen,¹⁸ Saudi Arabia,¹⁹ Nigeria,²⁰ Afghanistan,²¹ and the North Caucasus.²² Within the first seven months of 2019, ISIS announced new provinces in India, Pakistan, Turkey, and Central Africa as it sought to reassert itself after the loss of its territory in Iraq and Syria.²³ Citing ISIS's violent activities in Africa, the United States in March 2021 designated ISIS's provinces in Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.²⁴ Beyond this, the terror group attracts considerable sympathy or has waged attacks in Turkey,²⁵ Morocco,²⁶ Tunisia,²⁷ the Philippines,²⁸ Lebanon,²⁹ Bangladesh,³⁰ Indonesia,³¹ and the Palestinian territories.³² ISIS sympathizers have also carried out lone-wolf attacks in a variety of Western countries such as France³³ and Belgium.³⁴ In January 2020, ISIS announced a "new phase" that would shift its focus from the remains of its caliphate onto Israel.³⁵

ISIS has historically funded itself through extortion, robbery, human trafficking, and the highly lucrative oil industry. However, ISIS lost approximately \$500 million in income between 2014 and 2015 due to loss of territory and military setbacks amid sustained coalition airstrikes.³⁶ The group has also lured significant numbers of recruits through online propaganda, including videos and magazines produced in English, French, German, and a variety of other languages.³⁷ ISIS recruiters have also been successful on social media platforms and encrypted messaging services such as Telegram.³⁸

Under its self-proclaimed caliphate, ISIS imposed sharia (Islamic law) and was notorious for killing civilians en masse, often by public execution and crucifixion. Since losing its territory in Syria and Iraq, ISIS has shifted its strategy in those countries from holding territory to insurgency against the state. ISIS encourages followers to undertake lone-wolf attacks using inexpensive means such as vehicles, knives, and homemade explosives. Despite ISIS's territorial losses, its propaganda continues to inspire lone-wolf attackers such as Khalid Masood, who killed seven people in a ramming-and-stabbing attack in London in March 2017. While ISIS's dreams of a global caliphate are unlikely to ever be realized, the group will continue to cause significant damage wherever it is able to gain a foothold. After the fall of Baghuz, defense officials in the region reported that ISIS modified its strategy. Without centralized control, the insurgency has been carrying out small-scale attacks throughout rural territory along the porous border of Iraq and Syria and the informal border of Iraqi Kurdistan and the rest of Iraq.³⁹

On October 26, 2019, U.S. forces carried out an operation in Syria's Idlib province that resulted in the death of Baghdadi. U.S. officials confirmed Baghdadi's identity using DNA tests of his remains after he detonated an explosive vest.⁴⁰ On October 31, ISIS's Amaq News Agency acknowledged Baghdadi's death and announced [Amir Muhammad Sa'id Abdal-Rahman al-Mawla a.k.a. Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi](#) as his successor and ISIS's new caliph.⁴¹ On February 3, 2022, U.S. special forces launched a raid in Atmeh, northern Syria, targeting al-Mawla. At the beginning of the operation, al-Mawla detonated a bomb, killing himself and his family members.⁴² On March 10, 2022, ISIS released an audio recording confirming al-Mawla's death and announcing the appointment of new ISIS leader, Abu Hasan al-Hashemi al-Qurashi. According to the recording, al-Mawla, as well as ISIS's former spokesman, Abu Hamza al-Qurashi, were "killed in recent days."⁴³

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Despite losing its self-proclaimed caliphate in Iraq and Syria in 2019, ISIS remains active beyond the borders it once claimed. According to the U.S. Department of State, ISIS's affiliates outside of Iraq and Syria caused more casualties in 2020 than in any previous year.⁴⁴ U.S. intelligence reports claimed ISIS still had up to 18,000 fighters in Iraq and Syria at the time of Baghdadi's death.⁴⁵ ISIS has also led a low-level insurgency in Iraq and Syria, remaining a "determined and dangerous enemy," according to the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS.⁴⁶ American military officers believe that ISIS is a growing problem in Afghanistan and, if their operations are not curbed as soon as possible, that the militant group could expand their attacks against the West. Afghan generals have even mentioned the increasing difficulty in fighting off the rebels. On August 17, 2019, a suicide bomber infiltrated a wedding in western Kabul and killed at least 63 people while also injuring another 182. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack. The explosion came days before Afghanistan's 100th Independence Day on August 19, 2019, and also coincided with on-going peace talks between the U.S. government and the Taliban.⁴⁷ Since the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan in August 2021, ISIS has continued to target the country's Shiite minority and strike at civilian and government targets alike. In response, the Taliban government has launched counterterrorism campaigns against ISIS.⁴⁸

Internally displaced people (IDP) camps have reportedly become ISIS's new frontier for recruitment and radicalization. Tens of thousands of former ISIS fighters and their families live in IDP camps in the Levant, which has provided former militants the opportunity to regroup. At the Kurdish-run al-Hol refugee camp in northeastern Syria, ISIS reportedly exerts more control than the guards stationed there and have enforced sharia law on all of the camp's inhabitants. In some cases, women are reportedly enforcers for the camp's "morality brigade," or have even taken up arms in battle.⁴⁹ Women and children, who made up a majority of al-Hol's 62,000 residents as of early 2021, are particularly vulnerable to deferring to the fundamental agenda that ISIS espouses. The United Nations has condemned the deteriorating security situation at al-Hol and other camps, where residents face starvation, violence, exploitation, and other forms of abuse. Nonetheless, foreign governments have been slow to repatriate their citizens residing in the camps.⁵⁰ In early March 2021, Belgium's government announced it would begin to repatriate children of Belgian jihadists living in al-Hol, noting that the longer children remained in the camp, the greater the chance they would become "the terrorists of tomorrow."⁵¹ That same month, Kurdish authorities in northeastern Syria began putting captured ISIS fighters on trial while calling for the creation of an international tribunal in Syria to judge foreign fighters whose countries refuse to repatriate them.⁵²

Doctrine:

ISIS's overarching goals center on the reestablishment of a global, Islamic caliphate and fostering violent conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims.⁵³ In October 2015, ISIS's then-spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani issued a statement urging Muslims around the world to engage in a "holy war" against Russia and the United States, which he claimed were leading a "crusaders' war against Muslims."⁵⁴ Since the loss of Mosul in Iraq and its self-declared capital in Raqqa, Syria, in 2017, ISIS has transitioned from a territory-holding group to an insurgency in both those countries.⁵⁵ Yet unlike al-Qaeda, which views a global caliphate as a long-term goal, establishing an Islamic caliphate remains ISIS's core objective.⁵⁶ Since its official founding in June 2014, this doctrinal commitment led ISIS to hold territory for more than three years across Iraq and Syria, and continue to hold territory in Afghanistan, Libya, and Nigeria.

In his June 2014 speech announcing the creation of the caliphate, ISIS's late spokesman and director of external operations [Abu Muhammad al-Adnani](#) declared that "Without [the caliphate], authority becomes nothing more than kingship, dominance and rule, accompanied with destruction, corruption, oppression, subjugation, fear, and the decadence of the human being and his descent to the level of animals."⁵⁷ On the cover of the first issue of ISIS's online English magazine *Dabiq*, the title "The Return of Khilafah" is superimposed over an image of the Arabian Peninsula, literally illustrating the group's top priority.⁵⁸ Its slogan, *baqiya wa tatamaddad* (remaining and expanding), similarly underscores the point.⁵⁹

ISIS's self-proclaimed caliphate cannot function without a caliph, the key figurehead. That role was initially reserved for Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, whose so-called legitimacy was likewise established in ISIS's doctrine.⁶⁰ ISIS asserted that Baghdadi was a member of the Islamic prophet Muhammad's Quraysh tribe, "one of the key qualifications in Islamic history for becoming the caliph."⁶¹ In his "inaugural speech" launching the Islamic State on June 29, 2014, Baghdadi expanded further on the significance of the caliphate. Most important, he claimed, was that all Muslims submit and pledge allegiance (*bay'a*) to the caliphate.⁶² U.S. forces killed Baghdadi in a raid by U.S. forces in Syria on October 26, 2019.⁶³ ISIS appointed Amir Muhammad Abdal-Rahman al-Mawla, a.k.a. Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Quraishi, as Baghdadi's successor.⁶⁴

In January 2020, ISIS released an audio message featuring spokesman Abu Hamza al-Qurashi on behalf of al-Mawla. The spokesman called on followers around the world to launch a "new phase" focused on "fighting the Jews and reclaiming what they have stolen from the Muslims...." He called on ISIS fighters in Syria and Egypt's Sinai to turn Jewish settlements into a "testing ground" for their weapons.⁶⁵

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Underpinning the allegiance to the caliphate, ISIS adheres to a literalist interpretation of Sunni Islam, specifically embracing beliefs according to an extremist Salafi vision.⁶⁶ Salafis believe that Islam has been tainted by centuries of human revision and interpretation. They call for a reversion to the practices and beliefs of the *salaf*, the first few generations of Muslims immediately following the Prophet. While Salafism under the Gulf monarchies tends to non-violent “quietism,” ISIS is explicitly willing to use violence in an attempt to return to the days of the *salaf*. This willingness is based on the conviction that violence is divinely ordained.⁶⁷

ISIS supplements its Salafist worldview with a belief in the revival of takfirist practices. As a Salafi-Takfiri group, the “enemies of Islam” may be Muslim too. Thus, according to ISIS doctrine, almost 200 million Shiite Muslims—as well as Sufis, Yazidis, and Ba’hai—are all apostates and deserving of death.

ISIS also cleaves to a form of millenarianism with the ultimate hope of “bringing about the apocalypse,” according to journalist Graeme Wood.⁶⁸ Indeed, ISIS frequently refers to the apocalypse in its various recruitment materials, including magazines, videos, and speeches.⁶⁹ According to ISIS’s aptly-named English-language magazine *Dabiq*, the apocalypse will be preceded by “One of the greatest battles between the Muslims and the crusaders” in the town of Dabiq, located northeast of Aleppo in the Syrian countryside.⁷⁰

Organizational Structure:

ISIS is led by its emir (commander, chieftain, or prince), whom the group proclaimed caliph of ISIS’s self-declared Islamic State in June 2014.

⁷¹ Beneath the emir are two chief deputies, who oversaw ISIS territory in Syria and Iraq, respectively.⁷² These two deputies and a cabinet of advisers are reported to comprise ISIS’s executive branch, called “Al Imara” or “The Emirate.”⁷³ Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi served as ISIS’s caliph from 2014 until his death in a U.S. raid in Idlib, Syria, on October 26, 2019.⁷⁴ Baghdadi’s likely successor, ISIS spokesman Abu Hassan al-Muhajir, was reportedly killed in a U.S. strike in Syria the day after Baghdadi’s death.⁷⁵ ISIS’s Amaq News Agency eulogized Baghdadi on October 31, and announced Amir Muhammad Sa’id Abdal-Rahman al-Mawla, a.k.a. Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Quraishi, as his successor. The appointment came after consultations of ISIS’s leadership council, according to Amaq. Amaq did not provide other details of Quraishi’s identity other than referring to him as “emir of the believers” and “caliph.”⁷⁶ Al-Mawla killed himself during a raid launched by U.S. Special Forces in Syria on February 3, 2022.⁷⁷ On March 10, ISIS announced the appointment of Abu Hasan al-Hashemi al-Qurashi as the group’s new leader.⁷⁸ Shortly after, on November 30, ISIS released a statement claiming al-Qurashi was killed in action. The statement also declared Abu al-Hussain al-Hussaini al-Qurashi as the new leader of the terrorist group.⁷⁹ Abu al-Hussain had a short-lived career as ISIS’s head. According to Ankara, Abu al-Hussain was killed by Turkey’s National Intelligence Organization (MIT) on April 29, 2023, in Syria’s Afrin province. Abu al-Hussain reportedly detonated a suicide vest to evade detainment.⁸⁰ However, on August 3, 2023, ISIS released an audio statement in which the group’s spokesman confirmed Abu al-Hussain was killed in clashes with a rival group, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). Details regarding the location and timeline of his death remain unclear, although HTS controls part of northwest Syria. The group also announced the appointment of Abu Hafs al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi as the group’s new leader.⁸¹

Directly under the caliph, but not part of the executive branch, are ISIS’s legislative councils, the Shura Council and Shariah Council. The nine-member Shura Council is reportedly responsible for ensuring that lower councils adhere to ISIS’s religious doctrine,⁸² and is also responsible for relaying the caliph’s orders through the rest of the organization.⁸³ According to terrorism analyst Jasmine Opperman, the council approves lower council decisions that impact the caliphate. It also has the authority to force the caliph to step down if he deviates from ISIS doctrine.⁸⁴

ISIS’s six-member Shariah Council is the group’s “most powerful” body, according to Richard Bennett of the Soufan Group. It was responsible for enforcing its interpretation of sharia (Islamic law) within ISIS’s territory, as well as selecting the caliph.⁸⁵ When ISIS conquered new territory, the group’s Shariah Council was responsible for creating a sharia police force and courts to enforce its interpretation of Islamic law.⁸⁶

According to a January 2015 report by CNN, Baghdadi’s two deputies each oversaw 12 governors in their respective territories in Iraq and Syria. The deputies also oversaw ministry-like councils that were responsible for day-to-day functions:⁸⁷

- Financial Council: ISIS’s treasury, which oversees oil and weapons sales and other revenue.
- Leadership Council: responsible for the organization’s laws and policies. The council’s decisions are approved by Baghdadi. The council also has the authority to depose al-Baghdadi if he strays from ISIS’s ideology.
- Military Council: responsible for the organization’s military operations.
- Legal Council: responsible for decisions on executions and recruitment. It also handles family disputes and religious transgressions.
- Fighters Assistance Council: responsible for providing aid and housing to foreign fighters who come to ISIS’s territory, including moving them into and out of the territory.

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- Security Council: responsible for police and security oversight of ISIS’s territory. It also carries out executions.
- Intelligence Council: ISIS’s intelligence-gathering wing.
- Media Council: manages ISIS’s media strategy, including social media.

In addition to governing bodies, ISIS operates a secret service wing, previously run by the late Abu Muhammad al-Adnani. This wing, referred to as the Emni, reportedly serves as both an internal police and external operations unit, whose members seek to export terror abroad. According to an August 2016 report by the *New York Times*, multiple lieutenants are responsible for planning attacks in three distinct target regions: Europe, Asia, and the Arab world.⁸⁸ The unit is reportedly responsible for deploying operatives back into Europe, for the purpose of connecting with local ISIS sympathizers and plotting domestic attacks.⁸⁹

At its height in 2014, ISIS controlled approximately 40 percent of Iraq, dwindling down to 6.8 percent by April 2017.⁹⁰ In June 2017, ISIS blew up the historic Great Mosque of al-Nuri, where Baghdadi had declared his caliphate in 2014. Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi called ISIS’s destruction of the over-800-year-old mosque “an official announcement of their defeat.”⁹¹ Also in June 2017, U.S.-backed forces began an offensive to drive ISIS out of its declared capital in Raqqa, Syria.⁹² U.S.-backed forces in Iraq and Syria liberated Mosul and Raqqa on July 10 and October 17, 2017, respectively. On November 17, Abadi declared a military victory over ISIS in Iraq following the recapture of Rawa, the last ISIS-held town in the country.⁹³ In Iraq, the United Nations estimated that ISIS used 100,000 people as human shields, and more than 1,000 Syrians were killed in American-led airstrikes during the liberation of Raqqa.⁹⁴ Despite these territorial losses, Iraqi security officials expected ISIS to revert to guerrilla warfare and continue carrying out sporadic attacks in the region as part of an insurgency.⁹⁵

ISIS continued to capture and hold new territory in Syria through early 2018 as it engaged rebel and regime forces. On November 21, 2017, ISIS launched a new offensive targeting the rebel group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) in north Hama, Syria.⁹⁶ HTS accused the Syrian regime of aiding ISIS fighters against the rebel group in northern Hama in October 2017, a claim that the Carter Center finds “likely” to be true since the ISIS fighters that attacked HTS first traveled through regime-held territory in large numbers.⁹⁷ According to the Carter Center, Russian and regime planes have regularly bombed HTS along its frontline with ISIS while not attacking ISIS fighters in the area.⁹⁸ Nonetheless, ISIS has continued its offensive against the Syrian regime, expanding into Idlib in November,⁹⁹ and capturing regime-held villages along the Euphrates river in early December.¹⁰⁰

In May 2018, the U.S.-led coalition began Operation Roundup to eliminate ISIS’s remaining presence. By December 2018, ISIS retained only a small foothold in the Syrian town of Baghuz along the Syrian-Iraqi border.¹⁰¹ In March 2019, the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) launched an assault on ISIS forces in Baghuz. Hundreds of ISIS fighters and their families reportedly surrendered to the SDF, which declared days later that the battle to retake Baghuz was as “good as over.”¹⁰²

ISIS’s October 31, 2019, announcement of Quraishi as its new “caliph” signified that though the group had lost its territorial caliphate in Iraq and Syria, it still remained committed to the concept of an expansive caliphate.¹⁰³ According to the United Nations, as of 2023, 1.2 million Iraqis remained displaced by ISIS’s insurgency, and more than 6.8 million Syrians remain internally displaced due to the conflict.¹⁰⁴

Wilayat

Before its military defeats in Syria and Iraq in November 2017, ISIS controlled wilayat (provinces) in both countries including in Raqqa, Idlib, and Hama in Syria, and Ninawa, Kirkuk, and Anbar in Iraq.¹⁰⁵ The terror group also controls provinces across the Middle East and Africa. These provinces begin as local jihadist groups, which then pledge allegiance to ISIS’s caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Since ISIS lost its last territorial hold in Iraq and Syria, ISIS has shifted its focus to its provinces in what could be an attempt to decentralize the group while reaffirming its global presence. In May 2019, ISIS announced the creation of new provinces in India and Pakistan.¹⁰⁶ That July, ISIS announced the creation of a province in Turkey.¹⁰⁷ ISIS’s affiliates in Egypt and West Africa renewed their allegiances to Baghdadi in June 2019.¹⁰⁸ ISIS fighters in Mali and Burkina Faso also renewed their allegiance to Baghdadi that month.¹⁰⁹

Before accepting a pledge of allegiance and forming a new wilaya, ISIS must receive a proposal detailing the group’s military and governance strategy, as well as identifying a collectively chosen leader. Issue 7 of ISIS’s *Dabiq* magazine described the process in detail:

“This [approval] process includes documenting their bay’at [pledge of allegiance], unifying the jam’at [assembly] who have given bay’ah, holding consultations to nominate a wali [governor] and members for the regional shura assembly, planning a strategy to achieve consolidation in their region for the Khilafah [caliphate] so as to implement the Shar’ah [Islamic law], and presenting all this to the Islamic State leadership for approval.”¹¹⁰

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Below is a list of official wilayat outside of Syria and Iraq:

Afghanistan, Iran, and Central Asia: Wilayat Khorasan

Jihadists in Afghanistan and Pakistan pledged allegiance to ISIS in November 2014. ISIS accepted the pledge in January 2015, officially forming Wilayat Khorasan, and appointed former Pakistani Taliban commander Hafiz Said Khan as leader.¹¹¹ The province also included parts of India, Iran, and other parts of Central Asia.¹¹² A September 2015 U.N. report alleged 70 ISIS militants traveled from Iraq and Syria to Afghanistan to form the core of the new wilaya.¹¹³ Other members include former Taliban insurgents and dozens of foreign fighters.¹¹⁴ In August 2015, the Afghanistan-based jihadist group Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) pledged allegiance to ISIS and was subsumed into Wilayat Khorasan.¹¹⁵

Wilayat Khorasan claimed its first attack on Afghan forces in September 2015 when it killed three policemen at a checkpoint in eastern Afghanistan.¹¹⁶ The group has since continued to carry out deadly attacks and maintain a small stronghold in the region.¹¹⁷ On March 8, 2017, the group launched a suicide bomb and gun attack at a hospital in Kabul, killing 30 people.¹¹⁸ As for intended targets, ISIS declared war on Afghanistan's Shi'ite, mostly Hazara, population and has regularly claimed responsibility for attacks against the ethnic and religious minority.¹¹⁹

There were approximately 1,300 ISIS fighters in Afghanistan as of September 2016, according to General John Nicholson, the highest-ranking U.S. military commander in the country. Nicholson said on September 23, 2016, that ISIS leaders in Syria provide the Afghanistan fighters with money, guidance, and communications support. According to Nicholson, ISIS's fighters are largely former members of the Pakistan Taliban and primarily based in Afghanistan's Nangarhar region.¹²⁰

ISIS restructured the Khorasan Province in May 2019 when it announced the creation of separate Pakistani and Indian provinces.¹²¹ ISIS Khorasan continued to operate, claiming responsibility that month for several attacks in Afghanistan.¹²² The U.N. Security Council designated the Khorasan Province in May 2019.¹²³

Following the Taliban's takeover of the Afghan government on August 15, 2021, and ahead of the impending full withdrawal of U.S. military forces by August 31, on August 22, 2021, U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan announced that ISIS posed a significant threat to Americans in Afghanistan. According to reports from U.S. intelligence and military officials, ISIS would seek to exploit Afghanistan's security vacuum and plot attacks against American targets as the Biden administration attempted to evacuate American citizens and U.S. personnel from Afghanistan.¹²⁴

On August 26, a suicide attack was carried out at the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul. The attack began when a suicide bomber—who possessed 20 pounds of explosives packed with ball bearings—detonated himself outside of the airport, near Abbey Gate. According to media reports, as many as 170 people and 13 U.S. service members were killed, with an additional 200 wounded. The Taliban condemned the attack, later launching an investigation into the perpetrators. That evening, ISIS-K issued an official statement on Telegram claiming responsibility for the attack.¹²⁵

The next day, Marine General Kenneth "Frank" McKenzie, head of U.S. Central Command told reporters that U.S. troops in Kabul are preparing for more ISIS-K attacks. U.S. forces are allegedly sharing information with Taliban fighters stationed outside of Kabul's airport in anticipation of future ISIS attacks that could include car bombs or rocket fire. That same day, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby announced that the Taliban had released "thousands" of ISIS-K militants from U.S. prisons in Afghanistan following their takeover of the country. Kirby did not reveal how many prisoners remain at Bagram Air Base.¹²⁶

On the evening of August 27, 2021, the U.S. military carried out a drone strike in Nangarhar, targeting and killing two "high profile" ISIS-K targets. According to Kirby, the targets were "ISIS-K planners and facilitators." Another ISIS-K member was wounded in the attack.¹²⁷

As of November 2021, ISIS reportedly had between 2,000 and 3,500 fighters in Afghanistan.¹²⁸ On November 17, 2021, U.N. Special Representative Deborah Lyons told the U.N. Security Council ISIS-K had to date carried out 334 attacks in Afghanistan that year while establishing a presence in every Afghan province. According to Lyons, the Taliban have been unable to stop ISIS-K's growth.¹²⁹

Since seizing power in Afghanistan in August 2021, the Taliban have increased offensive military strikes against ISIS-K targets around Afghanistan.¹³⁰ In November 2021, the Taliban began conducting background checks to purge ISIS infiltrators from the Afghan military.¹³¹ On November 15, 2021, the Taliban announced the launch of Operation IS, a crackdown on suspected ISIS hideouts in Afghanistan.¹³² That month, the Taliban deployed more than 1,300 fighters to Nangarhar province to disrupt ISIS-K operations.¹³³

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On February 4, 2022, U.S. military officials briefed reporters on the results of an investigation into the ISIS-K bombing at Abbey Gate. The investigation, led by Brigadier General Lance Curtis, interviewed more than 130 people and spanned five countries over three and a half months. The investigation found that none of the casualties were injured or killed by gunfire, contradicting previous claims that casualties were a result of both a suicide bomber and ISIS-K gunmen. According to media sources, the report also determined that a single suicide bomber carried out the attack alone.¹³⁴

Algeria: Wilayat al-Jazair

In 2014, ISIS accepted the pledge of allegiance from Algeria-based terrorist group Jund al-Khilafah, and announced that the establishment of an Algerian governorate, Wilayat al-Jazair.¹³⁵ By December 2014, however, Wilayat al-Jazair leader Abd al-Malik Guri (a.k.a. Khalid Abu Sulayman) was killed by the Algerian military.

Wilayat al-Jazair is credited with the September 24, 2014, beheading of French tourist Hervé Gourdel but has been minimally active there in the months since. On October 21, 2015, Wilayat al-Jazair released an audio statement attempting to reassure its supporters that ISIS's presence in Algeria was secure. During the same statement, however, an ISIS militant urged fighters not to risk their lives unnecessarily, appearing to indicate the underlying vulnerability of ISIS's Algerian governorate.¹³⁶

Central Africa: Wilayat Central Africa

Baghdadi first mentions a Central Africa province in an August 2018 speech. On April 18, 2019, ISIS claimed responsibility through its Amaq News Agency for a shooting attack in Kamango, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), that killed three. ISIS credited the attack to its affiliate, Wilayat Central Africa, or Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP). It was the group's first attack claimed in the Congo and the first attack credited to the Central Africa province. ISIS also credited an April 25 attack in the DRC to the group. That attack killed three soldiers. Later in the month, ISIS released a video featuring Baghdadi, who called on ISIS's supporters to seek revenge for the loss of the group's caliphate. Baghdadi was seen in the video handling documents, including one called Wilayat Central Africa.¹³⁷ Although ISIS-affiliated media portrayed ISCAP as a wilayat encompassing units across central, east, and southern Africa, ISCAP has become synonymous with Islamic State in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (ISIS-DRC).¹³⁸

Democratic Republic of the Congo: ISIS-DRC

Locally known as the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), ISIS-DRC is led by Seka Musa Baluku. ISIS-DRC has carried out attacks across North Kivu and Ituri provinces in eastern DRC targeting Congolese citizens and regional military forces. In 2020 alone, ISIS-DRC reportedly killed more than 849 civilians. ISIS-DRC is also known as the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and Madina at Tauheed Wau Mujahedeen. The U.S. Department of the Treasury first sanctioned ADF and six of its members including Baluku in 2014 for their roles in significant human rights abuses. ISIS-DRC was also designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on March 10, 2021.¹³⁹

Mozambique: ISIS-Mozambique

Led by Abu Yasir Hassan, ISIS-Mozambique pledged allegiance to ISIS in approximately April 2018. Also known as Ansar al-Sunna, the group has killed more than 1,300 civilians since October 2017. ISIS-Mozambique's attacks have caused the displacement of nearly 670,000 people within northern Mozambique. The United States designated ISIS-Mozambique as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on March 10, 2021.¹⁴⁰ That same month, U.S. forces began training Mozambican troops to fight against an ISIS-driven insurgency that had already killed at least 2,000 people and displaced 670,000.¹⁴¹

Egypt: Wilayat Sinai

In November 2014, Egypt's Ansar Beit al-Maqdis—a jihadist group based in the Sinai Peninsula—pledged allegiance to ISIS and became Wilayat Sinai, ISIS's Sinai province. The group grew amid the chaos of Egypt's 2011 revolution, and is known for killing hundreds of Egyptian soldiers and police officers.¹⁴²

Since its pledge of allegiance, Wilayat Sinai has accrued an estimated "several hundreds, if not over a thousand" fighters in the Sinai region, according to CIA Director John Brennan.¹⁴³ The group has claimed responsibility for an attack on an Egyptian vessel¹⁴⁴ and the downing of a Russian airliner over the Sinai that killed all 224 people on board.¹⁴⁵ On February 9, 2017, Wilayat Sinai claimed responsibility

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for a number of rocket attacks targeting an Israeli resort in Eilat, an attack that caused no damage or casualties.¹⁴⁶ Following the attack, Wilayat Sinai took to Telegram to claim responsibility and warn that “what is coming is graver and more bitter.”¹⁴⁷

Beginning in December 2016, Wilayat Sinai launched a campaign against Egypt’s Coptic Christian community. On December 11, 2016, ISIS claimed a suicide bombing at a chapel adjacent to St. Mark’s Cathedral in Cairo, killing at least 28 people during Sunday Mass.¹⁴⁸ On April 9, 2017, ISIS claimed a bombing of St. George’s Church in Tanta and a suicide bombing at St. Mark’s Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Alexandria that altogether killed at least 45 people.¹⁴⁹ On May 26, ISIS launched its first attack against a monastery when gunmen attacked two buses and a truck carrying Coptic Christians to the monastery of St. Samuel the Confessor south of Cairo, killing 29 people.¹⁵⁰ In February 2017, Wilayat Sinai released a propaganda video declaring Christians to be their “favorite prey.”¹⁵¹

On November 24, 2017, militants carrying the ISIS flag carried out a bomb and gun attack on the al Rawdah mosque in Bir al-Abed in Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula, killing at least 305 people and wounding at least 128 others in the deadliest attack in the country’s history.¹⁵² Although Egyptian authorities suspect ISIS’s Wilayat Sinai is responsible, the group has not claimed responsibility.¹⁵³

Israeli intelligence has accused Wilayat Sinai of cooperating with Hamas in the neighboring Gaza Strip. Hamas has reportedly used its underground tunnel system beneath the Gaza-Egypt border to transport aid to Wilayat Sinai, while also providing military training and medical aid to ISIS militants in the Sinai.¹⁵⁴ Nonetheless, on January 4, 2018, Wilayat Sinai released an execution video of an alleged Hamas member and called on supporters to attack Hamas in Gaza because the group failed to stop U.S. President Donald Trump’s recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital in December 2017.¹⁵⁵

India: Wilayat al-Hind

On May 10, 2019, ISIS’s Amaq News Agency announced the creation of a new province in India called Wilayah al-Hind, based in India-administered Kashmir.¹⁵⁶ ISIS claimed credit for clashes with Indian police earlier in the week. Indian police in Kashmir dismissed the claim of a new ISIS province based in Kashmir as propaganda. India formerly fell under the jurisdiction of ISIS’s Khorasan Province, which former members of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan formed in 2015 after pledging allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The Khorasan Province previously also included Afghanistan, Pakistan, parts of Iran, and other parts of central Asia. ISIS announced a separate province in Pakistan the following week.¹⁵⁷

Libya: Wilayat al-Tarabulus, al-Barqa, and al-Fezza

ISIS caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced the creation of Libya’s wilaya in November 2014.¹⁵⁸ Since then, ISIS in Libya has divided its control into three provinces: Wilayat al-Tarabulus (a.k.a. Wilayat Tripolitania) in the west, Wilayat Barqa in the east, and Wilayat Fezza in the south.¹⁵⁹ In January 2015, Wilayat al-Tarabulus attacked the five-star Corinthia hotel in Tripoli, killing nine people including five foreign nationals.¹⁶⁰ The U.S. Department of State designated ISIS’s Libya branch as a Foreign Terrorist Organization and a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in May 2016.¹⁶¹ Since then, a combination of Libyan forces and U.S. airstrikes are believed to have driven many ISIS fighters from its former stronghold in Sirte. Despite losing ground in Sirte, the group has a presence in other parts of the country.¹⁶²

In 2015, Baghdadi appointed Abul-Mughirah al-Qahtani to oversee ISIS’s provinces in Libya.¹⁶³ Qahtani was killed in a November 2015 U.S. airstrike in Derna. In March 2016, ISIS announced Abdul Qadr al-Najdi as its new leader in Libya.¹⁶⁴ Al-Najdi reportedly died in September 2020.¹⁶⁵ In March 2021, forces loyal to Libyan military leader Khalifa Haftar arrested the “most prominent leader” of ISIS in Libya, Mohamed Miloud Mohamed, a.k.a. Abu Omar.¹⁶⁶ Mohamed had participated in ISIS’s 2015 takeover of Sirte and reportedly had close ties with al-Najdi.¹⁶⁷

ISIS’s roots in Libya can be traced back to the spring of 2014, when a group of Libyans fighting for ISIS in Syria and Iraq—the “Battle Brigade”—returned to Libya and established the Islamic Youth Shura Council, which then pledged allegiance to ISIS.¹⁶⁸

Mali and Niger: Islamic State Sahel Province (IS Sahel), formerly Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS)

ISGS is based in Mali and Niger and has carried out multiple attacks in northern Mali as well as neighboring Burkina Faso. In May 2015, [Adnan al-Sahrawi](#) and his followers split from al-Mourabitoun and pledged allegiance to ISIS. ISIS’s Amaq News Agency recognized the pledge in October 2016.¹⁶⁹ The ISGS reportedly includes members of the Peul ethnic group from the Mali-Niger border region. Sahrawi and the ISGS have reportedly carried out several attacks on military targets in Niger.¹⁷⁰ The U.S. government sanctioned Sahrawi and ISGS in May 2018.¹⁷¹ The United Nations sanctioned ISGS in February 2020.¹⁷² During a meeting of G5 Sahel leaders in January 2020, France declared Sahrawi a

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“major enemy.”¹⁷³ The French government estimates ISGS is responsible for the deaths of 2,000 to 3,000 people in the region. French forces killed Sahrawi in a drone strike in August 2021.¹⁷⁴

On the night of June 11, 2022, French forces deployed under Operation Barkhane, France’s counterterrorism mission in the Sahel, carried out an operation on the border between Mali and Niger, capturing ISGS senior leader Oumeya Ould Albakaye in the process. According to the French Armed Forces Ministry, Albakaye was found with several mobile phones, weapons, and “numerous resources.”¹⁷⁵ According to media sources, Albakaye will be held by French forces for questioning and then handed to the Malian authorities.¹⁷⁶ Albakaye is an explosives expert and served as ISGS’s chief in Gourma, Mali and Oudalan, Burkina Faso.¹⁷⁷ The French army stated that Albakaye is believed to have carried out terrorist attacks against soldiers and civilians in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso to undermine French forces within Mali.¹⁷⁸ Despite successful operations against ISGS, the last of the French forces withdrew from Mali on August 15, 2022, due to ongoing political and security hostilities between Mali’s military government and their now former Western allies.¹⁷⁹

Since March 2022, ISGS—which had recently rebranded under the name Islamic State Sahel Province (IS Sahel) as the group was declared a separate province—battled with the al-Qaeda affiliate Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) in the region of Menaka and Gao, the insurgent-heavy areas of Mali’s north. Their fighting from March until October 2022 resulted in around 1,000 civilian deaths and the displacement of tens of thousands. Furthermore, according to U.N. analysts, IS Sahel has shifted their operations further south, having seized the town of Talataye in early September 2022.¹⁸⁰ As of August 2023, IS Sahel has not been ousted from Talataye,¹⁸¹ and continues to be a heavy threat to Mali and Burkina Faso as the two countries, and increasingly Niger, are unable to sustainably curtail the extremist group’s activities.¹⁸² According to the United Nations in August 2023, IS Sahel has doubled the amount of territory they control in Mali since 2022. In particular, the group controls rural areas in eastern Menaka and large parts of the Asongo area in northern Gao.¹⁸³

Nigeria: Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP)

ISIS accepted Nigerian-based terror group [Boko Haram](#)’s pledge of allegiance in March 2015.¹⁸⁴ Boko Haram, now called Wilayat Gharb Ifriqiyya or the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), has waged an insurgency to impose sharia in northern Nigeria since 2009, resulting in the death of approximately 4,000 civilians in 2015 alone.¹⁸⁵ Boko Haram split into two groups when ISIS appointed Abu Musab al-Barnawi as the head of the ISWAP in August 2016. Although Boko Haram founder [Abubakar Shekau](#) did not win the endorsement of ISIS, he refused to relinquish his authority and has continued to lead a group of followers under the banner of Boko Haram. Shekau has maintained his allegiance to ISIS and, in March 2017, began including ISIS logos in official Boko Haram videos.¹⁸⁶

Since the split, the attacks carried out by each faction are sometimes difficult to differentiate. One difference, however, is that ISWAP controls territory in the Lake Chad Basin area in northern Borno State whereas Shekau’s faction controls land in central and southern Borno State, including Boko Haram’s historical territorial stronghold of the Sambisa Forest.¹⁸⁷

In February of 2019, al-Barnawi was reportedly replaced as the leader of ISWAP.¹⁸⁸ On March 4, 2019, Boko Haram announced that al-Barnawi was demoted to a member of the group’s Shura council, and that Abu Abdullah Ibn Umar al-Barnawi (a.k.a. Ba Idrissa) replaced him as leader.¹⁸⁹ The specific reason for this leadership shake-up is unknown, but it occurred against the backdrop of larger internal disputes within the organization. In early 2020, infighting within Boko Haram continued, and al-Barnawi’s successor Ba Idrissa was similarly purged. It is currently unclear if al-Barnawi survived the infighting and if he is currently alive.¹⁹⁰

ISIS reinstated al-Barnawi as leader of ISWAP in April 2021.¹⁹¹ ISWAP and Boko Haram continued to violently clash, resulting in the death of Boko Haram leader Shekau the following month in a confrontation with ISWAP fighters.¹⁹² In June 2021, ISWAP released an audio message of al-Barnawi confirming Shekau’s death, which he said had been directly ordered by ISIS leader al-Quraishi.¹⁹³

On October 14, 2021, Nigeria’s military confirmed al-Barnawi had been killed. The military did not provide details of the location of or circumstances leading to al-Barnawi’s death.¹⁹⁴ Following al-Barnawi’s death, Malam Bako, a member of ISWAP’s Shura Council, allegedly assumed leadership of ISWAP.¹⁹⁵ Nigerian security forces killed Bako, and another prominent member of ISWAP in an undisclosed location on October 20.¹⁹⁶ In November 2021, Sani Shuwaram was appointed the new leader of ISWAP.¹⁹⁷ On March 20, 2022, Nigerian media reported Shuwaram had been killed, along with multiple other ISWAP fighters, in a Nigerian airstrike in the Sabon Tumbuns general area of Lake Chad. Mallam Bako Gorgore was reportedly named as Shuwaram’s replacement.¹⁹⁸

According to U.N. analysts, as of early 2022, ISWAP has between 4,000 and 5,000 fighters.¹⁹⁹

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Despite the Nigerian military's success in targeting Boko Haram members, ISWAP has carried out significant attacks in 2022. On July 5, 2022, ISWAP militants raided the Kuje maximum prison in Abuja, Nigeria's capital. According to media sources, the militants detonated "very high-grade explosives" killing a security officer and injuring three others. While 879 inmates fled, more than half were returned to the prison while 443 inmates remain at large. The raid occurred a month after ISWAP gunmen detonated explosives and opened fire on a Catholic church in Ondo State, southwestern Nigeria on June 5. The assailants shot and killed at least 40 to 50 people and injured 87 others. The attack was the first time ISWAP—which regularly carries out attacks in the northeast or northwest of the country—had been blamed for an attack in the southwest.²⁰⁰

North Caucasus: Wilayat Qawqaz

In June 2015, ISIS announced the creation of a governorate in Russia's North Caucasus, after months of garnering support in the region. The governorate is reportedly comprised of former al-Qaeda militants in the region who pledged allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in the months leading up to the announcement.²⁰¹ More than a dozen suspected ISIS fighters have been arrested in Russia since the announcement.²⁰²

Pakistan: Wilayat Pakistan

On May 14, 2019, ISIS's Amaq News Agency announced the creation of a Pakistan province, which claimed credit for killing a Pakistani police officer earlier in the week. Pakistan's government denied that ISIS had created a base in the country. Pakistan formerly fell under the jurisdiction of ISIS's Khorasan Province, which former members of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan formed in 2015 after pledging allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The Khorasan Province previously also included Afghanistan, India, parts of Iran, and other parts of central Asia. ISIS announced a separate province in India the previous week.²⁰³

Saudi Arabia: Wilayat al-Haramayn

ISIS declared a governorate in Saudi Arabia in November 2014.²⁰⁴ Since then, ISIS has been involved in a number of attacks in Saudi Arabia, including the November 2014 targeting of a Shiite shrine in al-Dalwa village, the November 2015 shooting of a Danish resident in Riyadh, and a thwarted multiple car bombing attack east of Riyadh in April 2015.²⁰⁵ In May 2015, ISIS claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing at a Shiite mosque in eastern Saudi Arabia, killing more than 20 people and wounding more than 120 others.²⁰⁶ In August 2015, the group claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing at a mosque in southern Saudi Arabia, killing 15 people.²⁰⁷

The U.S. Department of State designated ISIS's Saudi branch as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in May 2016.²⁰⁸

Turkey: Wilayat Turkey

On July 10, 2019, ISIS released a video of a group of fighters in Turkey pledging allegiance to Baghdadi and declaring a new province in Turkey. The speaker, identified as Abu Qatada at-Turki, threatens both Turkey and the United States. The militants appear in front of the ISIS flag with RPGs, machine guns, grenades, and assault rifles. ISIS has long had a presence in Turkey, which had previously served as a transit point for foreign fighters traveling to Syria. In the September 2015 edition of its propaganda magazine *Dabiq*, ISIS labeled the Turkish government apostates and called the country a "priority for ... jihad."²⁰⁹

In August 2022, the BBC reported details of an ISIS smuggling network in Turkey facilitated by a Canadian intelligence agent during the height of ISIS's physical caliphate. Prior to his arrest by Turkish authorities in 2015, Mohammed Al Rasheed had smuggled multiple Britons into Syria for at least eight months while sharing their passport information with Canadian authorities through the Canadian embassy in Jordan. Rasheed often photographed identification papers or filmed travelers on his phone. He reportedly mapped the locations of the homes of Western foreign fighters in Syria. He also collected IP addresses and the locations of Internet cafes in ISIS-held territory. Rasheed told Turkish authorities he was collecting information on foreign fighters and passing it to the Canadians in exchange for asylum.²¹⁰

Prior to declaring a wilayah in Turkey, the Turkish government has suspected ISIS of responsibility for numerous attacks, including a triple suicide bombing at Ataturk Airport on June 28, 2016, that killed 45, and an August 21, 2016, suicide bombing that killed 51 people at a wedding.²¹¹ ISIS claimed responsibility for a January 1, 2017, shooting at a nightclub in Turkey that killed 39.²¹²

Yemen: Wilayat Sana'a

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A self-proclaimed ISIS affiliate, calling itself “Wilayat Sana’a” claimed responsibility for a deadly mosque bombing in Yemen in March 2015, in which at least 142 people were killed.²¹³ In late April 2015, the group formally announced itself as an ISIS governorate. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi confirmed the group’s status as a governorate in November 2015.²¹⁴ The U.S. Department of State designated ISIS’s Yemeni branch as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in May 2016.²¹⁵

ISIS has not gained as much traction among Yemenis as al-Qaeda, according to Yemeni officials. Many of the leaders of ISIS in Yemen are Saudi nationals. Compounded with ISIS’s centralized authority based in Syria, many in Yemen’s tribal areas reportedly view the terror group as foreign and disconnected from Yemeni interests. Furthermore, AQAP has forged alliances and worked with local tribal authorities in power-sharing agreements while ISIS leadership has failed to make inroads in Yemeni tribal structure.²¹⁶

General Directorate of Provinces (GDP)

ISIS’s General Directorate of Provinces (GDP) are structures that were put in place to maintain the group’s global network, tactical capacity, and reputation following the defeat of the territorial “caliphate” in Iraq and Syria.²¹⁷ There are nine regional networks that were developed between 2017 and 2019. The operational capacity of each regional network varies widely. However, given constantly evolving challenges, each network plans accordingly and adapts to the security changes in their immediate environment.²¹⁸

In terms of the GDP, within ISIS’s core area, the terror group maintains two distinct organizational structures for Iraq and Syria. The Iraq office is presumably called the Bilad al-Rafidayn office,²¹⁹ and the Syrian outpost is known as the al-Sham office. Turkey’s division within the GDP, the al-Faruq office, managed Turkey, the Caucasus, the Russian Federation, and parts of Eastern Europe. However, Turkish police have reportedly targeted and arrested key al-Faruq officials, leading ISIS’s network in Turkey to now be managed by the al-Sham office.²²⁰

ISIS boasts three well-established offices within the GDP. Afghanistan’s Al-Siddiq office covers South Asia and Central Asia. Somalia’s al-Karrar office covers Somalia, Mozambique, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. ISIS’s regional division in the Lake Chad basin is called al-Furqan and oversees ISIS activity in Nigeria and the western Sahel.²²¹

There are three offices that are less active or are struggling to enforce their influence in their objective areas. The Libya-based al-Anfal office reportedly covered northern Africa and the Sahel; the Yemen-based Umm al-Qura office directs and coordinates activity in the Arabian Peninsula; and the Sinai Peninsula based Zu al-Nurayn office is responsible for Egypt and the Sudan.²²²

The U.S. Department of State has identified Abdallah Makki Muslih al-Rufay’i and Abu Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn ‘Ali al-Mainuki as two high-ranking officials within the GDP network. Rufay’i, who previously served as the wali of ISIS’s Iraq province, is the emir of Iraq’s Bilad al-Rafidayn Office, and Al-Mainuki as a senior leader of ISIS’s al-Furqan Office.²²³

Financing:

At the height of its power in Iraq and Syria, ISIS was been called the richest terrorist organization in the world.²²⁴ Months after the caliphate’s formation in June 2014, analysts estimated the group’s assets at \$1.3–2 billion, with a daily income of \$3 million.²²⁵ Since then, coalition airstrikes, military setbacks, and loss of territory have dampened the group’s profits.²²⁶ ISIS’s annual revenue reportedly fell from \$2.9 billion in 2014 to \$2.4 billion in 2015, according to the European think tank Center for the Analysis of Terrorism.²²⁷ In 2016, ISIS was estimated to have taken in \$870 million, according to findings by the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation.²²⁸ By June 2017, ISIS had reportedly lost 80 percent of its revenue sources. The group reportedly had a revenue stream of just \$16 million during the second financial quarter of 2017, compared with \$81 million during the same period in 2015, according to global data-monitoring company IHS Markit.²²⁹ The lost revenue forced ISIS to cut its fighters’ wages by 50 percent in February 2016.²³⁰ As ISIS’s physical caliphate collapsed in 2018, the terror group sought different avenues of financing.

Militant financing expert Patrick Johnson of the RAND Corporation credited ISIS’s survival and evolution to its strong, diversified fundraising apparatus.²³¹ As the group expanded through 2013 and 2014, ISIS derived the largest part of its revenue from the spoils of war, particularly as the group commandeered oil fields and weapons caches.²³² While ISIS controlled territory in Iraq and Syria between 2014 and 2017, the group reportedly derived its income primarily from taxation, oil, looting, and extortion.²³³

For years, ISIS controlled oil fields in its strongholds of eastern Syria and northern Iraq, smuggling crude oil by truck in exchange for cash and refined petroleum.²³⁴ Customers reportedly included ISIS sympathizers, as well as those who formally opposed ISIS, including the Turkish

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and Syrian governments.²³⁵ For financial purposes, the group also targeted for seizure key infrastructure, including factories and power plants.²³⁶ ISIS's exploitation of the energy assets under its control was hamstrung by maintenance needs, which it reportedly addressed by intimidating on-site engineers.²³⁷

ISIS also reportedly fills its coffers through extortion, including bank looting, taxation, and kidnapping for ransom.²³⁸ The group has also collected profit from the sale of women and children as sex slaves.²³⁹ In 2014, ISIS allegedly collected at least \$25 million in ransom payments, a figure that may in fact be much higher.²⁴⁰ By December 2015, ISIS reportedly collected \$45 million annually through kidnapping ransoms, and more than \$360 million annually from tax collection.²⁴¹ However in mid-2017 ISIS lost its last major population centers in Iraq and Syria, thus losing all tax revenue.²⁴²

ISIS has also illegally exported valuable antiquities from Iraq and Syria to Turkey.²⁴³ In May 2015, the United Nations estimated that ISIS earned as much as \$100 million annually from the illegal sale of antiquities looted from captured territories.²⁴⁴ Professor Michael Danti of Boston University noted that Islamic law specifies "exactly what to do with antiquities when you find them. You sell them and 20% of the profits goes as a tax."²⁴⁵ The United Nations has condemned ISIS's antiquities looting as "a form of violent extremism that seeks to destroy the present, past and future of human civilization."²⁴⁶

The group has also attracted donations from terrorist sympathizers worldwide. Wealthy individuals in the Gulf reportedly provided funding that helped to launch ISIS and other jihadist groups amid the turmoil of the Syrian civil war.²⁴⁷ For example, U.S.-designated Qatari national ['Abd al-Rahman bin 'Umayr al-Nu'aymi](#) provided significant financial support to al-Qaeda in Iraq, ISIS's forerunner, according to the U.S. Treasury.²⁴⁸ Beyond that, ISIS uses its extensive presence on social media platforms to solicit both small- and large-scale donations.²⁴⁹

The loss of its physical caliphate has freed ISIS from its financial responsibilities in maintaining a state. While ISIS can no longer steadily rely on the sale of oil or taxes for income, the group has nonetheless continued to exploit revenue streams established during the caliphate, including ransoms and extortion. Raids on ISIS-linked businesses in Iraq have also shown that ISIS launders its cash reserves through investments in legitimate businesses across the Middle East such as hotels, car dealerships, and real estate. ISIS leaders reportedly smuggled approximately \$400 million in Western currencies and gold out of Syria and Iraq as they fled their former strongholds.²⁵⁰ Iraqi officials allege ISIS transferred the majority of its wealth Turkey, where it has been invested in gold when not held by individuals. In Iraq and Syria, ISIS reportedly also continues to take advantage of corrupt government officials and extortion to profit from the billions of dollars flow into the countries for reconstruction efforts.²⁵¹

ISIS has also taken advantage of the anonymity provided by digital cryptocurrencies to raise and transfer funds globally. According to a 2018 Europol report, ISIS has used cryptocurrencies to fund online terrorist activities but had not yet used it to directly fund a terrorist attack.²⁵² In November 2018, for example, Zoobia Shahnaz of Long Island, New York, pleaded guilty to converting money from a credit card scam to bitcoin to send to ISIS.²⁵³ On April 20, 2019, the day before ISIS's Easter bombing in Sri Lanka, Israeli blockchain intelligence company Whitestream recorded an increase in ISIS-held bitcoin holdings on the Canadian digital coin platform CoinPayments from approximately \$500,000 to \$4.5 million. That balance returned to \$500,000 the day after the attack.²⁵⁴ The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has created guidelines for nations to address the use of digital currencies by terrorist and criminal organizations, which FATF called "serious and urgent."²⁵⁵

After a pair of earthquakes across Syria and Turkey on February 6, 2023, regional observers questioned what became of ISIS's fortune. In the aftermath of the earthquakes, approximately 20 ISIS fighters escaped a military prison, known as the "Black Prison," in Rajo, Syria. The escapees reportedly paid between \$1,000 and \$10,000 for help in their escape from the prison, which was damaged during the earthquake.²⁵⁶ The incident renews questions among regional observers over how the prisoners got hold of such large sums, as well as who accepted the money.²⁵⁷

Recruitment:

Online/Digital Recruitment

Since its inception, ISIS has maintained a powerful online media campaign aimed at recruiting members internationally.²⁵⁸ According to national security pundit John Little, ISIS "launched [its] offensive with a... media campaign well planned in advance. [The campaign] wasn't an afterthought."²⁵⁹ Recruitment methods include slickly produced videos,²⁶⁰ an online magazine,²⁶¹ and the use of social media outlets.²⁶²

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ISIS's Al-Hayat Media Center is responsible for much of the group's marketing and recruitment. The group has also released propaganda materials through media centers Al-Furqan and Al-I'tasim Media, news agencies Amaq Agency and Bayan Radio, as well as through more than a dozen regional media outlets that produce content on behalf of the group's various wilayas. The center's explicit goal is to "convey the message of the Islamic State in different languages with the aim of unifying Muslims under one flag."²⁶³ In addition to pursuing fighters, recruiters seek to attract doctors, accountants, engineers, and wives, in the interest of building a "new society."²⁶⁴

Social Media

ISIS recruiters have utilized social media outlets to "field questions about joining" the group, a process which resembles an "online version of [a] religious seminar."²⁶⁵ CEP has documented as ISIS recruiters exploit online platforms such as Twitter,²⁶⁶ Facebook,²⁶⁷ YouTube,²⁶⁸ Tumblr,²⁶⁹ Ask.fm,²⁷⁰ and Askbook,²⁷¹ to advertise and recruit for ISIS. Recruiters also use instant-messaging services such as Telegram,²⁷² WhatsApp,²⁷³ Wickr,²⁷⁴ KiK,²⁷⁵ and YikYak²⁷⁶ to provide advice about logistical issues—such as transportation and finances—regarding the trek to Syria as well as instructions on how to carry out domestic attacks on behalf of the terrorist group.²⁷⁷

Canadian national Mubin Shaikh, a Taliban recruiter turned security operative, claims that recruiters interview potential jihadists to ensure commitment to the cause, as well as to weed out spies.²⁷⁸ According to Shaikh, recruiters use whatever means possible. "If they can Skype you, they'll Skype you. They want to see what you look like. You can't be that secretive with them."²⁷⁹ Common interview tactics include testing the recruit's knowledge of Islamic scholars.²⁸⁰ Shaikh also describes a large net of jihadists, claiming that recruiters often contact established ISIS sympathizers within a potential recruit's city in order to vet recruits, "whether [the recruit is] American, Canadian or British."²⁸¹ To avoid detection, recruiters use encryption software and proxy servers during the interview process.²⁸²

High-Production Videos

ISIS's Al-Hayat Media Center produces much of the recruitment material disseminated by the terror group, though the group also releases high-production video content through Al-Faruq Media, Al-I'tasim Media, and through regional video producers dispersed throughout the group's various wilayas.²⁸³ In May 2014, the media center launched a video series called the Mujatweets, shot in HD quality, to show "snippets of day-to-day life in the Islamic State."²⁸⁴ The Mujatweets serve as explicit propaganda, aimed at depicting life in the Islamic State as bountiful and heroic.

In the first episode of Mujatweets, an ISIS fighter appeals to Western jihadists by singing in German.²⁸⁵ In the sixth episode, a member of ISIS speaks in French, claiming that it is an obligation for Muslims to immigrate to the Islamic State.²⁸⁶ In the third and seventh episodes, shots of a sandwich shop and a bustling marketplace aim to attract newcomers with scenes of abundance.²⁸⁷ According to the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), "the purpose [of the Mujatweets] is to show that life under ISIS rule is peaceful and normal, and to shatter the image of the jihad fighters as fierce religious fanatics by presenting them as ordinary, friendly people eager to help the local population."²⁸⁸

In addition to the Mujatweets series, the al-Hayat media center produces longer recruitment videos, the infamous beheading videos, and online propaganda magazines.²⁸⁹ Al-Hayat media center is notable for high video production quality and consistent circulation. *Long War Journal* editor Bill Roggio commented on the fast turnout of the al-Hayat's videos. "Al-Qaeda will issue a propaganda statement, what, once every month? With the Islamic State, I saw the aftermath of the battle of Tabqa that gave them full control of a province in Syria — I saw that video two days after the battle."²⁹⁰

Online Magazines and Newsletters: Dabiq, Rumiyyah, and al-Naba

Both *Dabiq* and *Rumiyyah* serve as another recruitment tool for the terror group. The group also releases text missives through its al-Naba newsletter, and through text releases from the group's propaganda news agency, Amaq.

ISIS's released its first online, multi-language magazine on July 5, 2014, just one month after capturing the Iraqi city of Mosul. *Dabiq* was named after a small town in northern Syria where Islamic scriptures prophesized the final apocalyptic battle between Christians and Muslims would be held. The magazine provided English-language readers with battlefield updates, administrative reporting, and religious commentary.²⁹¹ ISIS also used *Dabiq's* 15 issues to promote religious propaganda to justify its crimes, such as enslaving and selling Yazidi women as sex slaves.²⁹² The magazine was available via pro-ISIS Telegram accounts, widely shared on Twitter and Facebook, and briefly available for purchase on Amazon.²⁹³

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In September 2016, as it appeared that the town of Dabiq would soon fall to Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army forces, ISIS replaced its magazine with a new one, *Rumiyah*. The name change sought to shift emphasis away from a mythical final battle between Muslims and Christians that was to take place in Dabiq. The name *Rumiyah* refers to two hadiths that calls for Islam to conquer Constantinople and then Rome on its path to conquering the West, which ISIS referenced in a eulogy of its recently deceased spokesman Abu Muhammed al-Adnani in *Rumiyah*'s first issue.²⁹⁴ ISIS has used the magazine to call for lone-wolf attacks in Western countries, including the United States and Australia.²⁹⁵ ISIS releases *Rumiyah* via pro-ISIS Telegram accounts and social media accounts.²⁹⁶

ISIS also releases a weekly newsletter called al-Naba. Distributed as a PDF via Telegram and other social media sites, Al-Naba often covers battlefield updates and interviews with high-ranking ISIS members.²⁹⁷

To reach a wide range of audiences, ISIS magazines are translated into a variety of languages, including Arabic, English, French, German, and Russian.²⁹⁸ ISIS's online magazines—released en masse through Telegram, Twitter, and other online outlets—are filled with propaganda detailing the group's strategy. *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* initially encouraged all Muslims to migrate to the Islamic State or carry out domestic attacks, but the messaging has since shifted to encourage more domestic and lone-wolf-style attacks.²⁹⁹

Recruiters' Psychological Tactics

Some psychologists believe that potential jihadists joined ISIS in their quest for “personal significance” or due to the existential desire to matter and be respected, according to psychology professor Arie W. Kruglanski.³⁰⁰ According to this theory, ISIS recruitment measures directly appeal to disaffected and disillusioned individuals seeking to “make their mark.”³⁰¹ MEMRI deputy director Eliot Zweig concurred, stating, “You see messages of camaraderie” rather than difficulty, gore and suffering. “It is ‘come and join us, join me and we'll fight the good fight together.’”³⁰² Others claim that recruits are simply “thrill seekers,” or young people craving a “fresh identity.”³⁰³ According to terrorism expert Max Abrahms, recruitment over social media lures “ignorant people with respect to religion... [who] would probably fail the most basic test on Islam.”³⁰⁴

The depiction of the Islamic State as a free and open society is another recruiting approach. According to John Horgan, a psychologist who studies terrorists, the exploitation of this image “makes radicalization and recruitment much easier.” Recruits believe that ISIS “is an equal opportunity organization.” Indeed, its recruitment tactics appeal to “everything from the sadistic psychopath to the humanitarian to the idealistic driven,” says Horgan.³⁰⁵ Andrew Poulin, a Canadian who converted to Islam and immigrated to the Islamic State, was featured in one of the group's propaganda videos, saying: “Before I come here to Syria, I had money, I had a family, I had good friends. It wasn't like I was some anarchist or somebody who just wants to destroy the world and kill everybody. I was a regular person. We need the engineers, we need doctors, we need professionals. Every person can contribute something to the Islamic State.”³⁰⁶

Recruiters also radicalize by exploiting grievances, declaring that the Muslim world has endured humiliation and victimization at the hands of the West.³⁰⁷ The recruiters paint the choice of every Muslim individual in black and white: either join ISIS and live in dignity, or continue living as a victimized Muslim in a secular land. ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, in his speech introducing the creation of the “caliphate,” declared, “by Allah's grace—you have a state and Khilafah [caliphate], which will return your dignity, might, rights, and leadership.”³⁰⁸ This Manichean approach feeds into the message of obligation. According to terrorism expert Paul Cruickshank, ISIS recruiters flood social media with the message of “you have to join. It's your religious duty.”³⁰⁹ However, as ISIS lost its territory in Syria and Iraq, its propaganda shifted to encourage more domestic and lone-wolf-style attacks.³¹⁰

On-the-ground Recruitment

ISIS's on-the-ground recruitment strategies have been growing due to a mounting crackdown on the group's online recruitment methods.³¹¹ Operating mostly in European, American, and Canadian cities, on-the-ground recruiters are believed to include preachers, jihadist sympathizers, and fighters returning from Syria.³¹² According to a leaked police report, recruiters operate out of mosques, cafes, restaurants, gyms and private homes and apartments.³¹³ Similar to online recruitment, on-the-ground recruiters act as radicalizing agents who provide logistical support to those who wish to immigrate to the Islamic State.³¹⁴

Some reports suggest that young Muslims are radicalized at “pop-up” meetings, which are never held in the same place twice.³¹⁵ Others include extremists leafleting in European Muslim communities.³¹⁶

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On-the-ground recruitment is believed to take place in Canada also. Imam Syed Soharwardy, founder of the Islamic Supreme Council of Canada, claims that potential recruits are paired up with “jihadi mentors.”³¹⁷ According to Soharwardy, the mentor-recruit relationship can form at “religious seminars, community activities or classes that might look normal to the average Westerner.”³¹⁸ Other possible venues for radicalization include “student groups” at colleges and high schools.³¹⁹

On-the-ground radicalization can be instigated by one’s emotional or physical proximity to an extremist. For example, U.S. citizen [Douglas McCain](#)—who died in Syria as an ISIS fighter—had lived in the same building as a classmate who joined Somali militant group [al-Shabab](#).³²⁰ Similarly, a group of 10 Minnesotan acquaintances were found to have co-conspired to join ISIS abroad in a radicalization process that appeared in to have taken place largely in person.³²¹

Training:

The training to become an ISIS soldier is believed to include both ideological and physical components.³²² During religious training, referred to as *sharii*, ISIS members receive what ISIS-affiliated Syrian cleric Abu Moussa referred to as “the basics about religion... [during which ISIS trainers] cleanse you from religious innovations and Ba’athist ideas.”³²³ New recruits are also believed to undergo physical training. A video released by ISIS’s al-Hayat Media Center in October 2014 depicted recruits participating in training exercises in Iraq’s Nineveh province. The jihadists-in-training were filmed while completing weapons training, hand-to-hand combat exercises, and live-fire training.³²⁴

At its peak in 2014 and 2015, foreign fighters arriving in ISIS-controlled territory reportedly complete anywhere between a few days of basic weapons training to a year-long intensive training course. The training program for an elite fighting unit, for example, is reported to require 10 levels of training. The first level is believed to include hours of strenuous physical activity such as running, jumping, pushups, and crawling, while higher levels may comprise aquatic training and celestial navigation.³²⁵

In addition to training voluntary recruits, ISIS also reportedly forced captured Syrian pilots to train ISIS fighters using stolen aircraft.³²⁶ In October 2014, eyewitness reports claimed that ISIS had three military aircraft in its possession, and that its fighters had been flying the airplanes over captured military bases in northern Aleppo, Syria.³²⁷

ISIS also has forced children to train as fighters, a war crime under international human rights law.³²⁸ This training reportedly took place in camps with names such as “Zarqawi Cubs Camps,” in tribute to al-Qaeda in Iraq founder Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.³²⁹ According to global security firm Flashpoint Intelligence, there have been multiple youth training camps in and around Mosul, as well as in Damascus, Aleppo, and al-Bukamal in eastern Syria.³³⁰

ISIS fighters have also trained children how to use AK-47s and have reportedly used dolls to demonstrate beheadings. “Sometimes they force them to carry [real human] heads in order to cast the fear away from their hearts,” one Iraqi security official told NBC News.³³¹ A September 2014 United Nations report found that ISIS deployed children in “active combat during military operations, including suicide bombing missions.”³³² In February 2016, the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point warned that ISIS was mobilizing children at an “increasing and unprecedented rate.”³³³

Also known as:

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- Al-Qa'ida Group of Jihad in Iraq³³⁴
- Al-Qa'ida Group of Jihad in the Land of the Two Rivers³³⁵
- Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)³³⁶
- Al-Qa'ida in Iraq – Zarqawi³³⁷
- Al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia (AQM)³³⁸
- Al-Qa'ida in the Land of the Two Rivers³³⁹
- Al-Qa'ida of Jihad Organization in the Land of the Two Rivers³⁴⁰
- Al-Qa'ida of the Jihad in the Land of the Two Rivers³⁴¹
- Al-Qaeda Separatists in Iraq and Syria (QSI)³⁴²
- Al-Tawhid³⁴³
- Al-Tawhid and al-Jihad³⁴⁴
- Al-Zarqawi Network³⁴⁵
- Ansar Beit al-Maqdis³⁴⁶
- Battar Brigade³⁴⁷
- Brigades of Tawhid³⁴⁸
- Daesh³⁴⁹
- Dawla al-Islamiya³⁵⁰
- Dawla al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq wa as-Sham³⁵¹
- Islamic Caliphate³⁵²
- Islamic Caliphate State³⁵³
- Islamic State (IS)³⁵⁴
- Islamic State in Iraq (ISI)³⁵⁵
- Islamic State of Iraq (ISI)³⁵⁶
- Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS)³⁵⁷
- Islamic State in the Greater Sahara³⁵⁸
- Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS)³⁵⁹
- Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS)³⁶⁰
- Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)³⁶¹
- Islamic State of Iraq and Syria-Mozambique³⁶²
- Islamic State of Iraq and Syria – Democratic Republic of the Congo³⁶³
- Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)³⁶⁴
- Islamic State Pakistan Province³⁶⁵
- Islamic Youth Shura Council³⁶⁶
- Jam'at al-Tawhid Wa' al-Jihad (JTJ)³⁶⁷
- Kateab al-Tawhid³⁶⁸
- Monotheism and Jihad Group³⁶⁹
- Mujahidin Shura Council³⁷⁰
- Organization Base of Jihad/Mesopotamia³⁷¹
- Organization of al-Jihad's Base in Iraq³⁷²
- Organization of al-Jihad's Base in the Land of the Two Rivers³⁷³
- Organization Base of Jihad/Country of the Two Rivers³⁷⁴
- Organization of al-Jihad's Base of Operations in Iraq³⁷⁵
- Organization of al-Jihad's Base of Operations in the Land of the Two Rivers³⁷⁶
- Organization of Jihad's Base in the Country of the Two Rivers³⁷⁷
- Qaida of the Jihad in the Land of the Two Rivers³⁷⁸
- Southern Province³⁷⁹
- Tanzeem Qa'idat al Jihad Bilad al Raafidaini³⁸⁰
- Tanzim Qa'idat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn³⁸¹
- Unity and Holy Struggle³⁸²
- Unity and Holy War³⁸³
- Unity and Jihad Group³⁸⁴
- Wilayah al-Hind (India)³⁸⁵
- Wilayah Badiya³⁸⁶
- Wilayah Barakah (Hasaka)³⁸⁷
- Wilayah Kheir (Deir al Zour)³⁸⁸
- Wilayah Raqqa³⁸⁹
- Wilayah al-Tarabulus³⁹⁰
- Wilayah Anbar³⁹¹
- Wilayah Barqa³⁹²
- Wilayah Coast (Al Sahel)³⁹³
- Wilayah Damascus (Dimashq)³⁹⁴
- Wilayah Diyala³⁹⁵
- Wilayah Fezza³⁹⁶
- Wilayah Gharb Ifriqiyya³⁹⁷
- Wilayah Halab (Aleppo)³⁹⁸
- Wilayah Hama³⁹⁹
- Wilayah Idlib⁴⁰⁰
- Wilayah Khorasan⁴⁰¹
- Wilayah Kirkuk⁴⁰²
- Wilayah Ninawa⁴⁰³
- Wilayah Salahuddin⁴⁰⁴
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- Wilayah Turkey⁴⁰⁶
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**COUNTER
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Key Leaders



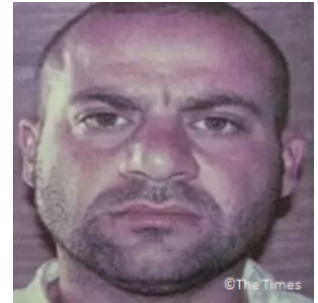
Abu Hafs al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi
Caliph



Abu al-Hussain al-Hussaini al-Qurashi
Caliph (deceased)



Abu Hasan al-Hashimi al-Qurashi
Caliph (deceased)



Amir Muhammad Sa'id Abdal-Rahman al-Mawla a.k.a. Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Quraishi
Caliph (deceased)



Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi
Caliph - deceased



Abu Luqman
ISIS-appointed director of security and intelligence, Syria and Iraq



Abu Muhammad al-Shimali
Border Chief, Immigration and Logistics Committee, Leader of operations outside of Iraq and Syria



Faysal Ahmad Bin Ali al-Zahrani
Lead oil and gas division official in al-Barakah Governorate, Syria



Abu Fatima al-Jaheishi

Senior military leader and Emir of Iraq



Abu Ahmad al-Alwani

Chief of General Staff



Abdul Qadr al-Najdi

Emir in Libya - deceased



Abu Sufyan Bin Qumu

Senior leader in Libya



Abu Muhammad al-Adnani

Former spokesman, emir of ISIS in Syria, and head of ISIS's Emni unit - deceased



Omar al-Shishani

Former senior military commander, former member of ISIS's Shura Council - deceased



Abu Ayman al-Iraqi

Former military commander; former emir of Latakia province, Syria; former governor of ISIS's Anbar Province in Iraq - deceased



**Shaker Wahib al-Fahdawi
a.k.a. Abu Wahib**

Former military emir of Anbar - deceased



Wael Adel Salman al-Fayad
Former minister of information -
deceased



Hafiz Saeed Khan
Former emir in AfPak - deceased



Abu Duaa al-Ansari
Former emir in Egypt - deceased



Abu Bilal al-Harbi
Emir in Yemen



Abu Muslim al-Turkmani
Former deputy of ISIS-controlled
Iraq - deceased



Turki al-Binali
Former senior official, chief
religious advisor, author, recruiter -
deceased



Rustam Aselderov
Former leader in the Caucasus -
deceased



Ayad al-Jumaili
Former senior leader - deceased



Abu Suleiman al-Naser
Former minister of war - deceased



Gulmurod Khalimov
Minister of war - deceased



Abu Hassan al-Muhajir
Spokesman - deceased



Abu Hamza al-Qurashi
Spokesman - deceased



Abdallah Makki Muslih al-Rufay'i

Emir of Bilad al-Rafidayn Office



**Abu Bakr ibn Muhammad
ibn 'Ali al-Mainuki**

Senior leader

History:

- **May 7, 2024:** The U.S. government repatriates a family of 11 American citizens who were held in ISIS detention centers in northeastern Syria. The State Department claims none of the returnees are former ISIS fighters, but one of the returnees is arrested upon the group's arrival at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York and charged with training with ISIS abroad. The suspect, Halima Salman, reportedly learned how to use an assault rifle and completed ISIS military training while in Syria. A document confirming Salman's military training in ISIS's all-female military battalion was recovered in a phone belonging to Salman's husband. Sources: Hannah Rabinowitz, "American woman repatriated from Syria accused of training with ISIS," CNN, May 7, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/07/politics/repatriated-american-accused-isis-training/index.html>; Charlie Savage, "U.S. Repatriates 11 American Citizens From ISIS War Camps in Syria," *New York Times*, May 8, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/07/us/politics/americans-repatriated-syria-war-camps.html>.
- **April 29, 2024:** Mali's armed forces launch an operation targeting and killing Abu Huzeifa, a senior commander of IS Sahel in Liptako region, a tri-border area that encompasses parts of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. Further details of the operation are not reported. The U.S. Department of State previously offered a \$5 million bounty for information leading to Abu Huzeifa's capture. The United States accused Abu Huzeifa of participation in the October 4, 2017, IS Sahel attack in Tongo Tongo, Niger, which killed four U.S. soldiers and four Nigerian soldiers. Sources: "Abu Huzeifa," Rewards for Justice, accessed May 9, 2024, <https://rewardsforjustice.net/rewards/abu-huzeifa/>; Ruth Maclean, "Mali Claims Death of Terrorist Who Helped Lead Deadly Ambush in Niger," *New York Times*, April 30, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/30/world/africa/mali-isis-niger-attack.html>.
- **April 15, 2024:** The U.S. Army Central (ARCENT) releases its findings from a supplemental review of the terror attack at Abbey Gate within Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport on August 26, 2021. More than 50 service members involved in the evacuation at Abbey Gate were interviewed to uncover whether appropriate measures were taken to prevent the attack. The two-year review, which was completed on January 16, 2024, concluded that the attack could not have been prevented and that there were no prior opportunities for service members to identify and engage the perpetrator from conducting the attack. The new information did not impact the findings from an initial Abbey Gate review in November 2021. The review also revealed Rahman al-Logari as the perpetrator. The Taliban reportedly freed Logari from Bagram prison during the U.S. withdrawal process. The investigation noted that even if Logari had not been released, another ISIS-K operative would have readily carried out the attack. Sources: Courtney Kube and Mosheh Gains, "Kabul airport bomber was an ISIS operative freed from prison by the Taliban," NBC News, April 15, 2024, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/kabul-airport-bomber-was-isis-operative-freed-prison-taliban-rcna147810>; "Abbey Gate Supplemental Review Findings," U.S. Central Command, April 15, 2024, <https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/3740934/abbey-gate-supplemental-review-findings/>.
- **March 29, 2024:** On the 10-year anniversary of ISIS declaring a caliphate in Iraq and Syria, ISIS spokesman Abu ?udhayfah Al-Ansari releases a statement congratulating the Muslim community in their observance of Ramadan and also calling for lone-wolf attacks. He states "there is no better worship in this month than jihad." He further encourages ISIS's following to "reach the land of Palestine to fight the Jews face to face, in a religious war that does not spare nor leave anything." Sources: "[By Allah], Allah Will Bring This Matter To Its Consummation," Al-Furqan Media Group, March 29, 2024; David Averre, "ISIS calls for 'lone wolves' to carry out Ramadan massacre of Christians and Jews across Europe, US and Israel," *Daily Mail* (London), March 29, 2024, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-13251719/ISIS-calls-lone-wolves-carry-Ramadan-massacre-Christians-Jews-Europe-Israel.html>.
- **March 28, 2024:** Iraqi forces carry out an operation targeting and killing senior ISIS leader Samir Khader Sharif Shihan Al-Nimrawi. Reportedly responsible for violent killings across western Iraq, Nimrawi was also responsible for transferring fighters, weapons, and explosives between Iraq and Syria. Details of the location of the operation are not revealed. Source: Adam Lucente, "Iraq says it killed prominent ISIS leader as group resurfaces," Al-Monitor, March 28, 2024, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2024/03/iraq-says-it-killed-prominent-isis-leader-group-resurfaces>.
- **March 27, 2024:** Police arrest Haris Farooqi and Anurag Singh in Bidar, Assam, India. Farooqi, a chemical engineer and teacher, is charged for reportedly serving as the head of Islamic State in India while Singh served as an unspecified senior figure in the group. Farooqi was reportedly instrumental in setting up ISIS cells across Karnataka, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, and Goa. The police also allege that Farooqi maintained communication with handlers across the border in Pakistan and had also funded ISIS terror activities with Singh. Authorities have been aware of Farooqi and his activities for five years and allege the two suspects "radicalised and recruited gullible youths to form different modules" via social media Source: Ananya Bhardwaj, "'Engineer & teacher', a 'govt servant' — who are Haris Farooqi & Rehan, arrested for being part of ISIS," *The Print*, March 27, 2024, <https://theprint.in/india/engineer-teacher-a-govt-servant-who-are-haris-farooqi-rehan-arrested-for-being-part-of-isis/2016615/>.
- **March 12, 2024:** The pro-ISIS Sarh Al-Khilafa media outlet releases a poster titled "Fight All The Polytheists." The poster encourages Muslims across the world to fight all Jews, Christians, and their allies, claiming "a Jew in Palestine or in China is an infidel whose blood is permissible." The poster further claims "our fire wo"t be extinguished until we avenge our brothers...we will kill the men, capture the women and enslave the children." Source: "Pro-Islamic State (ISIS) Media Outlets Call On Muslims To Attack Jews And Christians In The West During Ramadan," Middle East Media Research Institute, March 12, 2024, https://www.memri.org/jtm/pro-islamic-state-isis-media-outlets-call-muslims-attack-jews-and-christians-west-during#_edn1.
- **January 4, 2024:** ISIS spokesman Abu ?udhayfah Al-Ansari releases a statement via the Al-Furqan media wing. The message, which is disseminated across ISIS's affiliate Telegram channels, claims responsibility for the explosions occurring a day earlier on January 3 that killed at least 84 people in Iran. The statement, titled "And Kill Them Wherever You find Them," further urges Sunni Muslims to continue carrying out violence against non-Sunni Muslims, including Shiite Muslims and Jews. The statement also encourages Palestinian fighters in Gaza to join the ranks of jihad and discredits Hamas for their "alliance" with Iran's Shiite regime. Sources: "Islamic State (ISIS) Spokesman Instructs Muslims To Renew Lone Wolf Attacks In U.S., Europe, In Support Of Gaza; Discredits Palestinian Factions For Their Alliance With Iran, Calls On Arabs To Rebel Against Their Rulers," Middle East Media Research Institute, January 4, 2024, https://www.memri.org/jtm/islamic-state-isis-spokesman-instructs-muslims-renew-lone-wolf-attacks-us-europe-support-gaza#_edn2.
- **December 28, 2023:** The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) launch an operation in Syria's al-Hol detention camp where they target and kill Abu Obeida al-Iraqi, a senior ISIS official. Al-Iraqi was reportedly responsible for planning "terrorist activities" in the detention center that would target security and military personnel and nongovernmental organizations. Source: Wladimir van Wilgenburg, "SDF kills senior ISIS official in al-Hol camp," *Kurdistan 24*, December 28, 2023, <https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/story/33585-SDF-kills-senior-ISIS-official-in-al-Hol-camp>.
- **November 29, 2023:** The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), publishes leaked documents by Project Raven, a confidential surveillance initiative that assists the United Arab Emirates in surveilling other governments, militants, and human rights activists. According to the document, in 2011, the Emir of Qatar instructed that \$15 million be allocated to burgeoning Islamist movements across northern Mali and the Sahel. The funds were reportedly marked as humanitarian support and were allocated via the state security service under the representation of Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Nue'eimi, a Qatari official. It has yet to be confirmed if Islamic State affiliates received any of those funds; however, their activity in the region escalated in 2012. Source: "The Raven Project Leaks: \$15 Million Reportedly Paid To Islamist Movements In Northern Mali And The Sahel In 2011," Middle East Media Research Institute, November 29, 2023,

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https://www.memri.org/reports/raven-project-leaks-15-million-reportedly-paid-islamist-movements-northern-mali-and-sahel#_edn1.

- November 13, 2023:** The Central Criminal Court in London sentences Aine Davis, one of the “ISIS Beatles” who tortured and killed hostages in Syria, to eight years imprisonment. Davis was found guilty of possessing firearms for terrorism purposes and fundraising for ISIS. The U.K. national first traveled to Syria in 2012 where he committed serious terror acts and was subsequently arrested in 2015. Source: “Friend of ‘IS Beatle’ jailed for terrorism offences,” BBC News, November 13, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-67379065>.
- October 25, 2023:** Police in Belgium and Germany arrest two men in Anderlecht and Duisburg on suspicion of plotting terror attacks. The Belgian suspect sought to carry out a revenge attack following news of his family’s death in an airstrike in Gaza, and the German suspect was a known Islamist radical who previously traveled to Syria to fight with ISIS. He reportedly sought to drive into a pro-Israel demonstration with a truck. Sources: Tim Hume, “Two Men Arrested Over Alleged Terror Attack Plots in Europe ‘to Avenge Gaza,’” October 25, 2023, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/wxj7gz/two-men-arrested-over-alleged-terror-attack-plots-in-europe-to-avenge-gaza>.
- October 20, 2023:** ISIS releases a statement in their weekly magazine, *Al-Naba*, advocating for violence and murder against Jewish people worldwide. The statement, which is issued in response to the ongoing Israel-Hamas war, is accompanied by an infographic entitled “Practical ways to support Muslims in Palestine” and calls for increasing attacks against Jewish people and Israel in order to return “land to the House of Islam.” Source: Aliss Higham, “ISIS Calls for Jewish Attacks Around the World,” Newsweek, October 20, 2023, <https://www.newsweek.com/isis-calls-jewish-attacks-antisemitism-1836504>.
- October 17, 2023:** Italian authorities arrest two men suspected of online recruitment of ISIS members in Milan. The men, both Italian residents of Egyptian origin, had been under investigation since August 2021. The suspects had both pledged allegiance to ISIS in 2022 and were active on social media. They are also suspected of financing propaganda and other initiatives for the jihadist group. Source: Amy Kazmin, Giuliana Ricozzi, and Silvia Sciorilli Borrelli, “Italian authorities arrest two suspected Isis recruiters,” *Financial Times*, October 17, 2023, <https://www.ft.com/content/5b5d083b-6195-4b91-a192-365c0829afe6>.
- October 13, 2023:** A knife-wielding man stabs a teacher in Arras outside of Paris. The suspect, a Chechen immigrant who is reportedly on France’s extremist watchlist, also wounds two others. Prior to the attack, the suspect shouted “Allahu Akhbar [God is Great]!” French authorities suspect the assailant, Mohammed Moguchkov, was motivated to carry out a terror attack amid the ongoing conflict on the Gaza Strip between Hamas terrorists and Israel. Prior to the attack, Moguchkov posted a video online where he declared allegiance to ISIS. Sources: Michael Ruiz, “Knife-wielding attacker shouts ‘Allahu akbar’ and kills teacher in French school amid Hamas-Israel war: report,” Fox News, October 13, 2023, <https://www.foxnews.com/world/knife-wielding-attacker-shouts-allahu-akbar-kills-teacher-french-school-amid-hamas-israel-war-report>; Snejana Farberov, “Stabbing suspect swore allegiance to ISIS before killing teacher in France on ‘day of jihad’: prosecutor,” *New York Post*, October 17, 2023, <https://nypost.com/2023/10/17/suspect-declared-loyalty-to-isis-before-killing-french-teacher-prosecutor/>.
- September 28, 2023:** American and Syrian-Kurdish forces carry out a joint operation resulting in the capture of Mahmdouh Ibrahim Al Haji, also known as Abu Youssef, in Raqqa. Abu Youssef was reportedly a senior ISIS member and one of the group’s key facilitators in expanding terror cells throughout the region. Source: “US-backed Syrian-Kurdish fighters capture senior ISIS militant,” *The National*, September 29, 2023, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/mena/syria/2023/09/29/us-backed-syrian-kurdish-fighters-capture-senior-isis-militant/>.
- September 23, 2023:** The U.S. launches a helicopter raid in northern Syria, ultimately capturing Abu Halil al-Fad’ani, an ISIS operational and facilitation official. Al-Fad’ani reportedly had affiliations with the ISIS network not only in Syria, but all throughout the region. Source: Haley Britzkey, “US military announces it captured ISIS official in Syria helicopter raid,” CNN, September 25, 2023, <https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/25/politics/us-military-isis-raid-syria/index.html>.
- September 14, 2023:** The Criminal Court in Baghdad sentences an ISIS member to death due to his involvement in a 2014 suicide bombing that killed 17 Shia Muslim pilgrims in Baghdad. Source: “Iraq sentences ISIS member to death over 2014 pilgrim bombing,” *Al Arabiya*, September 14, 2023, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2023/09/14/Iraq-sentences-ISIS-member-to-death-over-2014-pilgrim-bombing>.
- August 31, 2023 - September 8, 2023:** French intelligence services launch a multi-country raid targeting an ISIS cell plotting multiple attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets in Europe. The cell, comprised of teenagers from various nationalities who met online, notably plotted a gun attack against an Israeli embassy near Brussels. Three suspects are indicted in Paris between August 31 and September 8 for “criminal terrorist association.” The fourth suspect is indicted for terrorism in Brussels, however the exact date of his indictment is unknown. Source: “Three ISIS-supporting teens were arrested for planning to attack the Israeli embassy in Paris,” *i24 News*, October 22, 2023, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/europe/1697992691-three-isis-supporting-teens-were-arrested-on-suspicion-of-planning-to-attack-the-israeli-embassy-in-paris>.
- August 30, 2023:** The Kyrgyz Republic repatriates 95 wives and children of ISIS fighters who were held at detention camps in Syria. This operation was the third of repatriation missions facilitated by the Kyrgyz Republic. An additional 59 nationals were repatriated in February 2023, and another 79 were repatriated from Iraqi detention camps in March 2021. Source: “Kyrgyzstan brings back 95 ISIL wives, children from Syrian internment camps,” *Al Jazeera*, August 30, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/8/30/kyrgyzstan-brings-back-95-isis-wives-children-from-syrian-internment-camps>.
- August 30, 2023:** The FBI announces it is investigating more than a dozen migrants from Uzbekistan and other countries who attempted to seek asylum at the U.S.’s southern border with Mexico. The migrants were reportedly assisted by a smuggler with ties to ISIS. Although not a member of the group, U.S. officials believe the facilitator is an ISIS sympathizer. Source: Katie Bo Lillis, Evan Perez, Priscilla Alvarez, and Natasha Bertrand, CNN, August 30, 2023, <https://www.cnn.com/2023/08/29/politics/migrants-us-southern-border-smuggler-isis-ties/index.html>.
- August 29, 2023:** Iraq executes three ISIS members convicted of orchestrating a 2016 car bombing in Baghdad that killed more than 300 people.

Source: "Iraq executes three for 2016 ISIL blast that killed hundreds," Al Jazeera, August 29, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/8/29/iraq-executes-three-for-2016-isil-blast-that-killed-hundreds>.

- **August 3, 2023:** According to the United Nations, IS Sahel has doubled the amount of territory they control in Mali since 2022. In particular, the group controls rural areas in eastern Menaka and large parts of the Asongo area in northern Gao. Source: "Letter dated 3 August 2023 from the Panel of Experts on Mali established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) addressed to the President of the Security Council Letter dated 3 August 2023 from the Panel of Experts on Mali established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) addressed to the President of the Security Council," United Nations Security Council, August 3, 2023, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_2023_578.pdf.
- **August 3, 2023:** ISIS releases an audio statement in which the group's spokesman confirms the death of ISIS leader, Abu al-Hussain al-Hussaini al-Qurashi. According to the statement, Abu al-Hussain was killed in clashes with HTS. ISIS's statement differs from Turkey's previous claim from several months prior that Abu al-Hussain had been killed in a Turkish intelligence operation in northern Syria. The group also announces the appointment of Abu Hafis al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi as the group's new leader. Source: Jared Malsin, "Islamic State Confirms Top Leader Is Dead," *Wall Street Journal*, August 3, 2023, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/islamic-state-confirms-top-leader-is-dead-dfc114a3>; Ayaz Gul, "UN Awaits Confirmation of Killing of IS-Khorasan Chief in Afghanistan," *Voice of America*, July 28, 2023.
- **July 25, 2023:** The U.N. issues a report casting doubts whether Shahab al-Muhajir, the late leader of ISIS-K, had been killed by Taliban security services in June 2023. The U.N. has yet to confirm the terrorist leader's death, although Pakistani intelligence officials confirm with Voice of America that al-Muhajir, who led ISIS-K since June 2020, was killed under "mysterious circumstances." The U.N. further states that ISIS-K, which reportedly boasts 6,000 members, remains the "most serious terrorist threat" for Afghanistan and the region. Source: "Letter dated 24 July 2023 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council," United Nations Security Council, July 25, 2023, <https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=S%2F2023%2F549&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>.
- **July 21, 2023:** The U.S. Department of the Treasury designates 38 members and entities belonging to ISIS in the Maldives as specially designated nationals. Among the members designated are financial facilitators, operatives, and senior leaders who have been in direct communication with ISIS-K and have also provided financial support to Maldivian ISIS fighters in Syria. Source: "Treasury Designates Leaders and Financial Facilitators of ISIS and al-Qa'ida Cells in Maldives," U.S. Department of the Treasury, July 31, 2023, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy11659>.
- **July 13, 2023:** A Tampa federal court sentences U.S. citizen Mohammed Al-Azhari to 18 years imprisonment for attempting to provide material support to ISIS. Al-Azhari had pleaded guilty in February 2023, and also admitted that he scouted potential locations in Tampa to conduct terror attacks. Al-Azhari, who admired the 2016 Orlando Pulse nightclub shooter, was arrested in May 2020 after trying to procure weapons from an FBI informant. Source: "Florida man gets 18 years in federal prison for supporting Islamic State extremist group," *Associated Press*, July 13, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/islamic-state-terrorism-support-prison-sentence-2c79a598a7d7108505ba726051f529ad>.
- **July 10, 2023:** Brothers Muhammad Abdul Haleem Heyder Khan and Muhammad Hamzah Heyder Khan plead guilty to terror offenses at Birmingham Crown Court in the U.K. The two previously encouraged others to "shed" the blood of non-believers and used the Telegram messaging app to promote jihad. The pair were arrested in November 2022. They are expected to be sentenced in September 2023. Source: Matthew Lodge, Brothers, 21, and 18, who plotted to join ISIS from their bedroom in Birmingham and threatened former Prime Minister David Cameron admit terror charges," *Daily Mail*, July 10, 2023, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12284715/Brothers-plotted-join-ISIS-room-threatened-David-Cameron-admit-terror-charges.html>.
- **July 7, 2023:** U.S. Central Command carries out an airstrike that kills Usamah al-Muhajir, an ISIS leader in eastern Syria. Source: "U.S. Airstrike Targets ISIS Leader in Eastern Syria," U.S. Central Command, July 9, 2023, <https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/3452128/us-airstrike-targets-isis-leader-in-eastern-syria/>.
- **June 23, 2023:** The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reports that following the Taliban's takeover in of Kabul in August 2021, 1,095 civilians have been killed and 2,679 have been wounded in bombings and other violence. The majority of deaths were caused by suicide bombings targeting busy public spaces, such as mosques, education centers, and markets. Of the casualties, 1,700 were attributed to attacks perpetrated by ISIS-K. Source: "Unama Report Records Heavy Toll On Afghan Civilians By Ied Attacks," United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, June 27, 2023, <https://unama.unmissions.org/unama-report-records-heavy-toll-afghan-civilians-ied-attacks>.
- **June 16, 2023:** Poland's Internal Security Agency, ABW, arrests an 18-year-old Polish citizen for planning an attack on a government office in southwestern Poland. The suspect, who was inspired by ISIS, intended to use an explosive belt for the attack. Additionally, the suspect planned on carrying out additional attacks on government administration offices with a group of other ISIS supporters. If convicted, he faces up to 10 years in jail. Source: "Polish man arrested for planning terrorist attack inspired by ISIS," *Associated Press*, July 14, 2023, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2023/07/14/Polish-man-arrested-for-planning-terrorist-attack-inspired-by-ISIS>.
- **June 15, 2023:** Cole Bridges, a former U.S. Army Soldier, appears at a Manhattan federal court and pleads guilty to attempting to assist ISIS on how to ambush fellow soldiers in the Middle East. Shortly after enlisting with the army in 2019, Bridges became radicalized by ISIS online propaganda. Upon facing frustration at the army, Bridges began to provide guidance on planning attacks and sent over an Army training manual on combat tactics to an undercover FBI agent posing as an ISIS supporter. He faces up to 10 years imprisonment. Source: Louis Casiano, "Georgia Army soldier pleads guilty to attempting to help ISIS ambush US forces in Middle East," *Fox News*, June 15, 2023, <https://www.foxnews.com/us/georgia-army-soldier-pleads-guilty-isis-ambush-us-forces-middle-east>.
- **June 8, 2023:** The U.S. Department of State designates Abdallah Makki Muslih al-Rufay'i and Abu Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Mainuki as Specially Designated Global Terrorists. Rufay'i, who previously served as the wali of ISIS's Iraq province, is the emir of the Bilad al-Rafidayn Office, ISIS's Iraq division. Al-Mainuki is a Sahel-based senior leader of ISIS's al-Furqan Office, ISIS's regional division in Nigeria and the Sahel. Source: "Treasury Sanctions Syrian Financial Facilitators Under the Caesar Syrian

Civilian Protection Act,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, May 30, 2023, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1508>.

- **June 6, 2023:** Taliban security forces launch an intelligence-led operation, targeting Shahab al-Muhajir, the emir of ISIS-K, in Kunar, Afghanistan.
Al-Muhajir, along with six other ISIS militants, is killed in an ensuing raid. Al-Muhajir led ISIS-K since June 2020. Source: Ayaz Gul, “IS-K Leader in Afghanistan Reported Dead,” Voice of America, June 9, 2023, <https://www.voanews.com/a/is-k-leader-in-afghanistan-reported-dead-/7130444.html>.
- **May 26, 2023:** A British court in High Wycombe sentences Shabazz Suleman to nine and a half years imprisonment for traveling to Syria and joining ISIS.
Suleman became an active member of ISIS in 2014, and in September 2021, he was arrested at Heathrow airport and charged with multiple terror offences. Suleman, who claimed he went to Syria to not fight but help its citizens, was reportedly active on social media where he documented his experiences with ISIS. Source: “High Wycombe man jailed for travelling to Syria to join IS,” BBC News, May 26, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-65728322>.
- **May 17, 2023:** Sayfullo Saipov, the perpetrator of the October 2017 terrorist attack in New York, is sentenced by a U.S. federal court to eight consecutive life sentences, two concurrent life sentences, and a consecutive sentence of 260 years for carrying out an attack on behalf of ISIS. Saipov used a truck to murder eight victims, injure 18 others, and attempt to harm many others on a bike path in lower Manhattan. Source: “High Wycombe man jailed for travelling to Syria to join IS,” BBC News, May 26, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-65728322>.
- **May 5, 2023:** Mohammad Azharuddin Chhipa appears at a federal court in Alexandria, Virginia, where he is charged with providing material support to ISIS.
From late 2019 to summer 2022, Chhipa reportedly purchased \$172,000 in virtual currency and collected \$15,000 in digital funds, of which more than \$18,000 “went to wallets known to be used by ISIS women located in Syria.” Chhipa, who used social media to raise funds for women held at al-Hol detention center, faces up to 20 years in prison if found guilty. Source: Salvador Rizzo, “Va. man charged with sending money to ISIS women overseas,” *Washington Post*, May 5, 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2023/05/05/va-man-charged-isis-al-hol/>.
- **May 5, 2023:** The Nigeria army rescues 131 civilians in northeast Nigeria.
Along with those rescued, a reported 510 Boko Haram and ISWAP terrorists and their family members surrender to Nigeria troops at different locations. Source: Njadvara Musa, “Troops arrest 19 terrorists, rescue pregnant Chibok schoolgirl,” *Guardian*, May 2, 2023, <https://guardian.ng/news/troops-arrest-19-terrorists-rescue-pregnant-chibok-schoolgirl/>.
- **May 4, 2023:** Belgian authorities arrest seven people in Belgium on suspicion of planning a terrorist attack in the country.
The Belgian nationals, most of which were of Chechen origin, reportedly belonged to a group of “strong supporters” of ISIS. Source: “Belgian authorities detain 7 suspected ISIS sympathizers for terrorist plot,” *Associated Press*, May 4, 2023, <https://www.foxnews.com/world/belgian-authorities-detain-7-suspected-isis-sympathizers-terrorist-plot>.
- **April 29, 2023:** Turkey’s MIT intelligence agency carries out an operation resulting in the death of ISIS leader Abu al-Hussain al-Hussaini al-Qurashi in Syria’s Afrin province.
MIT agents reportedly surrounded a house harboring Abu al-Hussain, leading the ISIS leader to detonate a suicide vest to evade capture and detention. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan confirmed the death of Abu al-Hussain the next day. Sources: “Turkey Offers Details Of Islamic State Chief’s Death,” *Agence France Presse*, May 1, 2023, <https://www.barrons.com/news/turkey-offers-details-of-islamic-state-chief-s-death-cf5480ac>; “ISIS chief killed in Syria by Turkey’s intelligence agency, Erdogan says,” *CBS News*, April 30, 2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/isis-leader-abu-hussein-al-qurashi-killed-erdogan-syria-turkey-intelligence-agency/>.
- **April 25, 2023:** Media sources report that in the past few weeks, Taliban fighters in Afghanistan killed the militant responsible for carrying out the August 2021 suicide bombing at Kabul airport.
The assailant, a senior ISIS-K operative, remains unnamed. Further details of the operations, including where and when the event took place, also remain classified. Source: Gordon Lubold and William Mauldin, “Taliban Said to Kill Islamic State Militant Behind Attack That Killed 13 Americans,” *Wall Street Journal*, April 25, 2023, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/taliban-said-to-kill-islamic-state-militant-behind-2021-kabul-airport-attack-7c068d27>.
- **April 17, 2023:** The U.S. carries out a helicopter raid in northeast Syria, targeting and killing Abd-al-Hadi Mahmud al-Haji Ali, a senior ISIS leader.
Ali, who was killed alongside two other ISIS members, was responsible for planning terror attacks in both the Middle East and Europe. According to U.S. Central Command, the raid was launched after the U.S. discovered that ISIS planned to kidnap officials abroad. Source: Oren Lieberman, “US helicopter raid kills senior ISIS leader in Syria,” *CNN*, April 17, 2023, <https://www.cnn.com/2023/04/16/politics/isis-leader-targeted-syria/index.html>.
- **April 8, 2023:** U.S. forces launch a helicopter raid in eastern Syria, later capturing senior member Hudayfah al-Yemeni and two of his associates in eastern Syria.
Al-Yemeni is reportedly an “ISIS attack facilitator.” Source: Hayley Britzky, “US forces capture ‘ISIS attack facilitator’ in helicopter raid in Syria,” *CNN*, April 12, 2023, <https://www.cnn.com/2023/04/12/politics/us-military-central-command-syria-isis-operative-capture/index.html>.
- **April 7, 2023:** Xavier Pelker pleads guilty in a U.S. District Court in Bangor, Maine to conspiracy to provide material support to ISIS.
In November 2021, Pelkey and two minors conspired to carry out a mass shooting in the Chicago area. Pelkey planned to provide firearms, ammunition, and explosives that would be used in the attack. In February 2022, the FBI searched Pelkey’s residence in Waterville where they discovered homemade explosives and material in support of ISIS. Pelkey faces up to 15 years in prison. Source: “Waterville Man Faces Up to 15 Years for Conspiring to Provide Material Support to Terrorists,” U.S. Department of Justice, April 7, 2023, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-me/pr/waterville-man-faces-15-years-conspiring-provide-material-support-terrorists>.
- **April 6, 2023:** Upon landing at Montréal–Trudeau International Airport, two women are arrested on terrorism peace bonds following their return from a detention camp in Syria.
Two other women returned from Syria, but they do not face any criminal charges. Peace bonds impose a list of conditions on suspects that vary anywhere from wearing a tracking ankle bracelet to taking part in a deradicalization program. Source: Stewart Bell, “RCMP arrests 3 women after they return to Canada from ISIS camps in Syria,” *Global News*, April 6, 2023, <https://globalnews.ca/news/9607059/rcmp-arrests-women-isis-camps-syria/>.
- **April 3, 2023:** U.S. forces launch a drone strike in Killi, northwest Syria, killing ISIS senior leader Khalid 'Aydd Ahmad al-Jabouri.

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Al-Jabouri had reportedly helped develop ISIS's leadership network and was responsible for planning attacks targeting Europe and Turkey. Sources: "US strike kills 'ISIS senior leader' in Syria," ABC News, April 4, 2023, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/us-strike-kills-isis-senior-leader-syria/story?id=98343372>; Chantal Da Silva, "U.S. says drone strike kills senior ISIS leader who plotted attacks in Europe," NBC News, April 4, 2023, [nbcnews.com/news/us-news/us-drone-strike-kills-senior-isis-leader-plotted-attacks-europe-rcna78065](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/us-drone-strike-kills-senior-isis-leader-plotted-attacks-europe-rcna78065).

- **March 31, 2023:** A Miami court sentences U.S. citizen Emraan Ali to 20 years in prison for conspiring to provide material support to ISIS. Ali traveled to Syria with his family in 2015 to fight alongside ISIS and later provided material support to ISIS by overseeing the construction of homes for ISIS members as well as buying and selling various cars, weapons, and telephones. Ali surrendered to the Coalition Forces in March 2019. Source: "Emraan Ali Fought for ISIS and Provided his Minor Sons as ISIS Fighters While Financially Supporting the Terrorist Group," U.S. Department of Justice, March 31, 2023, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdfl/pr/american-man-who-joined-isis-syria-sentenced-20-years>.
- **February 28, 2023:** The Court of Kolding in southern Denmark sentences a 38-year-old woman to four years imprisonment on charges of "promoting" ISIS via acting as a housewife and wife of persons active in ISIS. The court also strips the dual Danish-Bosnian national of her Danish citizenship. Source: Wilhelmine Preussen, "Denmark jails ISIS wife and strips her of citizenship," Politico, February 28, 2023, <https://www.politico.eu/article/denmark-jail-isis-bride-strip-citizenship/>.
- **February 27, 2023:** Taliban security forces launch a raid in Kabul, killing two senior members of ISIS. Among the two killed was Qari Fateh, the regional ISIS intelligence and operations chief. Source: "Taliban Says Senior IS Member Killed In Kabul Raid," Radio Free Europe, February 28, 2023, <https://www.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-taliban-is-leader-killed/32291625.html>.
- **February 24, 2023:** Muhammed Momtaz Al-Azhari, an American citizen, pleads guilty to a federal court in Florida to charges of attempting to provide material support or resources to ISIS, a designated terrorist group. The FBI began to investigate Al-Azhari in 2018 and arrested him in May 2020 after he disclosed his support and plans for an attack to an FBI undercover employee. Source: "Tampa Man Pleads Guilty To Attempting To Provide Material Support To ISIS," U.S. Department of Justice, February 24, 2023, [mdfl/pr/tampa-man-pleads-guilty-attempting-provide-material-support-isis](https://www.justice.gov/usao-mdfl/pr/tampa-man-pleads-guilty-attempting-provide-material-support-isis).
- **February 16, 2023:** The U.S. military along with the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) carry out a helicopter raid in northeast Syria, killing senior ISIS leader Hamza al-Homsi. Homsi, who reportedly oversaw ISIS's network in eastern Syria, detonates a suicide vest once discovered, wounding four American service workers. Source: "Senior ISIS leader killed, 4 U.S. troops and working dog wounded in northeast Syria raid," CBS News, February 17, 2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/isis-leader-killed-us-troops-wounded-in-ne-syria-raid/>.
- **February 6, 2023 - February 7, 2023:** In the aftermath of two February 6 earthquakes in Syria and Turkey, approximately 20 ISIS fighters escape a military prison known as the "Black Prison" in Rajo, Syria. The prison is damaged during the earthquake and prisoners begin a mutiny, taking control of parts of the prison. During the mutiny, the escapees reportedly pay between \$1,000 and \$10,000 for help in their escape. Source: Joseph Rachman, "Twenty members of ISIS escape Syria's 'Black Prison' after earthquake devastates area," *Independent* (London), February 7, 2023, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-prison-earthquake-syria-turkey-b2277451.html>; James Rothwell and Abbie Cheeseman, "Islamic State militants break out of prison during Syria earthquake chaos," *Telegraph* (London), February 7, 2023, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2023/02/07/islamic-state-militants-break-prison-syria-earthquake-chaos/>.
- **February 6, 2023:** An ISIS-affiliated channel on Telegram calls for attacks on Christians around the world in response to Quran burnings in Europe. The campaign is a response to Quran burnings launched by Swedish far-right politician Rasmus Paludan in January. Acolytes say Muslims should view the Quran burnings as an insult to their religion and "shed the blood of the perpetrator." Source: Miriam Kuepper, "ISIS calls for attacks on Christians around the world in the wake of Koran book-burning stunts in Sweden," *Daily Mail* (London), February 10, 2023, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11735411/ISIS-calls-attacks-Christians-world-wake-Koran-book-burning.html>.
- **February 3, 2023:** Taliban security forces launch an operation in Kabul, killing three ISIS members. Among the members killed was senior leader, Ijaz Amin Ahingar. Source: Rahim Faiez, "Taliban: 2 senior IS members killed in Afghanistan," Associated Press, February 28, 2023, <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/taliban-2-senior-members-killed-afghanistan-97511736>.
- **February 2, 2023:** On February 2, Saudi Arabia closes its embassy in Afghanistan and relocates its staff to Pakistan in the wake of threats from ISIS-K. On February 9, ISIS-K threatens to target Indian, Chinese, and Iranian embassies in Afghanistan as part of an attempt to isolate the Taliban government from its few allies. According to a U.N. report, ISIS-K is attempting to "undermine the relationship between the Taliban and member states in the region." Sources: Eltaf Najafizada, "ISIS Threatens to Target Chinese Embassy in Afghanistan, UN Says," *Bloomberg*, February 9, 2023, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-02-09/isis-threatens-to-target-chinese-embassy-in-afghanistan-un-says>; "Saudi diplomats leave Afghanistan, relocate to Pakistani capital -sources," Reuters, February 6, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/saudi-diplomats-leave-afghanistan-relocate-pakistani-capital-sources-2023-02-06/>.
- **January 26, 2023:** Sayfullo Habibullaevic Saipov, an Uzbek national who killed eight people and injured 12 others after racing his truck down a Hudson River bike path in New York in 2017, is convicted of murder charges by a federal jury in New York. Saipov was found guilty of all 28 charges, including eight counts of murder and one count of providing material support to ISIS. Nine of his charges carry a maximum sentence of death or life imprisonment. Source: Benjamin Weiser and Lola Fadulu, "Man Convicted in Terror Attack That Killed 8 on a Manhattan Bike Path," *New York Times*, January 26, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/26/nyregion/saipov-convicted-bike-path-truck-attack.html>.
- **January 25, 2023:** The U.S. carries out a helicopter raid in northern Somalia, killing a senior ISIS leader and 10 other members of the terror group. The U.S. sanctions-designated senior leader, Bilal al-Sudani, reportedly supported and grew ISIS's operations across Africa and assisted in funding the group's activities worldwide, including in Afghanistan. The operation was unusual as U.S. military operations in Somalia usually target al-Shabaab fighters. Source: Haley Britzky and Sam Fossom, "US military operation kills senior ISIS leader in Somalia," CNN, January 26, 2023, <https://www.cnn.com/2023/01/26/politics/us-isis-leader-killed-somalia/index.html>.

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- **January 19, 2023:** Germany’s Bundestag recognizes as genocide ISIS crimes against the Yazidi people in Iraq in 2014.
Source: “German lawmakers recognise Islamic State crimes against Yazidis as genocide,” Reuters, January 19, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/german-lawmakers-recognise-islamic-state-crimes-against-yazidis-genocide-2023-01-19/>.
 - **January 12, 2023:** Kevin Iman McCormick pleads guilty at a federal court in Connecticut, to charges of providing material support to ISIS.
Between August and October 2019, McCormick reportedly expressed a desire to travel to Syria and fight with ISIS and even made a video pledging allegiance to ISIS leader Baghdadi. McCormick was arrested in late October 2019 following an attempt to fly to Canada, and then presumably travel to Syria or Iraq. McCormick is expected to be sentenced on April 6, and faces up to 20 years imprisonment. Source: “Connecticut Man Admits to Attempting to Travel to Fight for ISIS,” U.S. Department of Justice, January 12, 2023, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/connecticut-man-admits-attempting-travel-fight-isis>.
 - **January 5, 2023:** The Kingston Crown Court sentences Tarek Namouz to 12 years imprisonment after an investigation by the U.K. Metropolitan Police discovered that he used COVID-19 business loans to send more than £25,000 (\$29,808) to ISIS.
Namouz ran a barbershop and received loans from London’s Hammersmith and Fulham Council to offset the financial losses caused by COVID-19. Namouz then took those funds and transferred them to a friend who fought with ISIS in Syria. He was arrested in May 2021 by counter terrorism officers. Source: Nicky Harley, “Barber who used UK Covid-19 loans to send more than £25,000 to ISIS jailed for 12 years,” The National, January 5, 2023, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/uk-news/2023/01/05/barber-who-used-uk-covid-19-loans-to-send-more-than-25000-to-isis-jailed-for-12-years/>.
 - **December 4, 2022:** Australian police arrest Neil Christopher Prakash on six terrorism charges including engaging in hostile activity overseas, supporting a terrorist organization, and advocating terrorism.
Two days prior, Prakash—who was allegedly one of ISIS’s “key financiers or organizers”—was extradited from Turkey, where he was arrested in 2016 after attempting to enter the country from Syria. Prakash was stripped of his Australian citizenship in 2018, and in 2019, a Turkish court sentenced Prakash to seven years in prison for belonging to a terrorist organization. Source: “Islamic State suspect extradited to Australia, charged with terror-related offenses,” Agence France Presse, December 4, 2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/islamic-state-suspect-extradited-to-australia-charged-with-terror-related-offenses/>.
 - **December 1, 2022:** The Syrian democratic forces (SDF) announce that its joint anti-ISIS military operations with the U.S. have stopped due to the threat of a Turkish ground offensive and airstrikes.
The next day, a spokesperson for U.S. CENTCOM announces that the agency has paused all partnered operations against ISIS in Syria. The SDF reportedly has fears that the Turkish ground offensive will weaken the security of ISIS detention facilities and refugee camps in Northern Syria, leading to the potential escape of thousands of ISIS fighters into Syria and the West. Source: “Syrian rebels say anti-ISIS operations with the U.S. have stopped and ISIS fighters may escape from prisons and a refugee camp,” NBC News, December 2, 2022, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/syria-rebels-warn-isis-escape-rcna59853>.
 - **November 30, 2022:** ISIS announces the death of leader Abu Hasan al-Hashimi al-Qurashi.
In an official statement, the group claims the deceased leader was killed in action but offered no other explanation regarding his death. The statement also declares Abu al-Hussain al-Hussaini al-Qurashi as the new leader of the terrorist group. That same day, the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) confirmed that al-Qurashi was killed in an operation conducted by The Free Syrian Army in Dar’a province in mid-October. Sources: Rachel Hagan, “ISIS leader ‘killed in action’ as murderous group names its new caliph,” Mirror, November 30, 2022, <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/breaking-isis-leader-killed-action-28621464>; “Death of ISIS Leader,” U.S. Central Command, November 30, 2022, <https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/3232259/death-of-isis-leader>.
 - **November 8, 2022:** According to a report released by the U.N. Security Council, evidence confirms that ISIS committed crimes against humanity and war crimes against the Christian community in Iraq in 2014.
Among the crimes committed were transferring and persecuting Christians, seizing property, engaging in sexual violence, enslavement, forced conversion, and the destruction of cultural and religious sites. In July and August 2014, ISIS took over three predominantly Christian towns—Hamdaniyah, Karamlays, and Bartella. Sources: Letter dated 7 November 2022 from the Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da’esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant addressed to the President of the Security Council, “United Nations Security Council,” November 8, 2022, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3995879?ln=en#record-files-collapse-header>; Edith M. Lederer, “UN: Iraq Christians were victims of Islamic State war crimes,” Associated Press, December 1, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/islamic-state-group-religion-crime-middle-east-war-crimes-fbd3629899879210ea4adf14f7a6fd6>.
 - **November 7, 2022:** The U.S. Department of the Treasury designates four South Africa-based members of ISIS for their role in transferring funds from ISIS leadership to ISIS affiliates across Africa and for attempting to plot attacks targeting mosques and commercial retail buildings in South Africa.
The four men designated—Nufael Akbar, Yunus Mohamad Akbar, Mohamad Akbar, and Umar Akbar—are all associates of Farhad Hooper, the leader of the Durban-based ISIS cell who was also designated by the Treasury Department on March 1, 2022, for his role in organizing and beginning the operations for ISIS in South Africa. Sources: “Treasury Designates Members of ISIS Cell in South Africa,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, November 7, 2022, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1084>; “Treasury Sanctions South Africa-based ISIS Organizers and Financial Facilitators,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, March 1, 2022, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0616>.
 - **November 1, 2022:** The Dutch government announces that 12 women and 28 children will be repatriated to the Netherlands from detention camps in northern Syria.
Upon their return, the women will face charges for joining a designated terrorist group. According to media sources, 120 Dutch nationals remain in detention centers in northern Syria, Iraq, and Turkey. Source: “Netherlands to repatriate 40 ISIS-linked women and children from Syrian camps,” Agence France Presse, November 1, 2022, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2022/11/01/Netherlands-to-repatriate-40-ISIS-linked-women-and-children-from-Syrian-camps>.
 - **November 1, 2022:** The U.S. Department of the Treasury designates seven individuals linked to ISIS-Somalia.
A number of those designated—including Liibaan Yousuf Mohamed, Abdirahman Mohamed Omar, Mahad Isse Aden, Isse Mohamoud Yusuf, and Mohamed Ahmed Qahiye—were formerly members of al-Shabaab before joining ISIS-Somalia. However, they continue to facilitate weapons, equipment, and financial transfers between the two groups. Source: “Treasury Sanctions Terrorist Weapons Trafficking Network in Eastern Africa,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, November 1, 2022, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1066>.
 - **October 29, 2022:** The Australian government repatriates four women and their 13 children from al-Roj camp, an ISIS detention center in northeastern Syria, to New South Wales state.
While allegations of illegal activity will be investigated by state and federal law enforcement authorities, Australian officials have stated that currently, New South Wales is committed to providing “extensive support services,” to assist the group to reintegrate into Australia. Source: “Australia repatriates 17 women and children from Syrian camp,” Al Jazeera, October 29, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/10/29/australia-repatriates-17-women-and-children-from-syrian-camp>.
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- October 25, 2022 - October 26, 2022:** Canadian police arrest two women upon their arrival to Montreal from a detention camp in northeastern Syria.
On October 25, police arrest Oumaima Chouay on terrorism charges, and the next day, police arrest Kimberly Polman. Chouay reportedly traveled to Syria to join ISIS and participated in terrorist activities, whereas Polman allegedly traveled to Syria in 2015 to marry an ISIS fighter she met online. Chouay is scheduled to appear at a Montreal courthouse, whereas Polman's lawyers are seeking a peace bond—a court order that keeps people from committing or recommitting crimes which requires them to agree to specific conditions to keep the peace. Source: Ashely Burkey, "2 women arrested in Canada after coming home from Syrian camp for ISIS fighters' families," CBC News, October 26, 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/two-women-two-children-repatriated-syrian-detention-camps-1.6629838>.
- October 22, 2022:** Taliban security forces launch a raid on an ISIS-K hideout in Kabul, Afghanistan.
The forces kill six members. The militants were reportedly involved in a September 23 blast that killed seven and wounded 40 in Wazir Akbar Khan, and another blast on September 30 at a Kabul tutoring institute that killed 53. Source: "Taliban kill six Islamic State members in raid in Kabul," Reuters, October 22, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/taliban-kill-six-islamic-state-members-raid-afghan-capital-spokesman-2022-10-22/>.
- October 18, 2022:** Lafarge SA, a French-owned building material manufacturer, pleads guilty to paying \$10.24 million to ISIS, al-Nusra Front, and affiliates of the group from August 2013 through October 2014.
The payments were made to keep a cement plant operating in Syria. Although no individuals have been charged in the case, a federal court in New York charged the company with one count of conspiring to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization. Lafarge was indicted by French authorities in 2018 on charges of being complicit in crimes against humanity. The company agrees to pay \$777.8 million to resolve the U.S. federal criminal charge. Source: Eamon Javers and Dan Mangan, "French company fined \$777 million and pleads guilty to paying ISIS as terror group killed Westerners," CNBC, October 18, 2022, <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/10/18/lafarge-cement-to-plead-guilty-pay-more-than-700-million-on-charges-of-bribing-isis-as-terror-group-killed-westerners.html>.
- October 6, 2022:** The United States carries out an airstrike in northern Syria, killing Abu-Hashum al-Umawi and Abu Mu'ad al Qahtani.
Umawi was the deputy leader of ISIS in Syria, and Mu'ad was a senior leader. Sources: "3 ISIS leaders killed in separate U.S. military operations in Syria," CBS News, October 6, 2022, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/isis-leaders-abu-ala-abu-muad-al-qahtani-rakkan-wahid-al-shamman-killed-u-s-military-operations-syria/>; "U.S. says Syria raid killed ISIS official Rakkan Wahid al-Shammri," Reuters, October 6, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/us-says-syria-raid-killed-isis-official-rakkan-wahid-al-shammri-2022-10-06/>; "U.S. Forces Successfully Strike ISIS Leaders in Northern Syria," U.S. Central Command, October 6, 2022, <https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/3182748/us-forces-successfully-strike-isis-leaders-in-northern-syria/>.
- October 5, 2022:** U.S. forces conduct a raid near the village of Qamishli, northeastern Syria.
The military operation results in the death of Rakkan Wahid al-Shammri—a senior ISIS leader who was known to facilitate the smuggling of weapons and fighters in support of ISIS operations. Another ISIS member is killed, and two other ISIS members are captured during the raid. Sources: "3 ISIS leaders killed in separate U.S. military operations in Syria," CBS News, October 6, 2022, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/isis-leaders-abu-ala-abu-muad-al-qahtani-rakkan-wahid-al-shamman-killed-u-s-military-operations-syria/>; "U.S. says Syria raid killed ISIS official Rakkan Wahid al-Shammri," Reuters, October 6, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/us-says-syria-raid-killed-isis-official-rakkan-wahid-al-shammri-2022-10-06/>; "U.S. Forces Successfully Strike ISIS Leaders in Northern Syria," U.S. Central Command, October 6, 2022, <https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/3182748/us-forces-successfully-strike-isis-leaders-in-northern-syria/>; Karoun Demirjian, "U.S. conducts back-to-back raids in Syria, killing key ISIS operatives," *Washington Post*, October 6, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/10/06/us-raid-isis-syria/>.
- September 30, 2022:** Turkey's National Intelligence Organization (MIT) arrests 19 ISIS members in northern Syria.
The members reportedly belonged to a cell that sought to conduct terrorist attacks on Turkish armed forces and Turkish institutions in Syria. Source: "Turkish Intelligence arrests 19 Daesh terrorists planning attack in Syria," *Daily Sabah*, September 30, 2022, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/war-on-terror/turkish-intelligence-arrests-19-daesh-terrorists-planning-attack-in-syria>.
- September 19, 2022:** Switzerland's federal criminal court convicts a Swiss-Italian woman of attempted murder and ties to ISIS after she stabbed and injured two women in a Lugano department store on November 24, 2020.
The woman, who reportedly praised ISIS while carrying out the attack, is sentenced to nine years in prison. Source: "ISIS supporter jailed for department store stabbing in Switzerland," *The National*, September 19, 2022, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/europe/2022/09/19/isis-supporter-jailed-for-department-store-stabbing-in-switzerland/>.
- September 19, 2022:** The Vienna state court announces that six men with links to Kujtim Fejzulai, an ISIS sympathizer who carried out a shooting in November 2020 will go on trial on October 18.
On November 2, 2020, Fejzulai went on a shooting rampage in Austria's capital city, killing four and injuring 20 others. Fejzulai, who was previously convicted of trying to join ISIS, was shot dead by police following the attack. The six men face charges of participation in terrorist crimes and membership in a terrorist organization. Source: "6 men face trial over links to gunman in 2020 Vienna attack," *Associated Press*, September 19, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/islamic-state-group-crime-shootings-vienna-def593e2f04d26e76e8aac72072fb1f>.
- September 12, 2022 - July 25, 2023:** Nine alleged jihadists appear at a Brussels court where they face charges for their connection to the March 2016 suicide bombings in Brussels.
The explosions, which took place at Brussels airport and a crowded underground metro station, killed 32 and over 900 were hurt or suffered mental trauma. Among the defendants is Salah Abdeslam, the sole surviving member of the ISIS cell that launched the attacks. Abdeslam refuses to take the stand as he claims the glass-enclosed cubicles used in the trial prevent the defendants from being able to effectively speak with their lawyers. A few months later on December 5, the 10 defendants appear at Brussels court. A Brussels court also finds eight other suspects guilty of "terrorist murder" and participating in the activities of a terrorist organization on July 25, 2023. The six suspects found guilty of murder face up to life in prison. Sources: "Brussels bombing accused Salah Abdeslam refuses to take stand," *Agence France Presse*, September 12, 2022, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2022/09/12/Brussels-bombing-accused-Salah-Abdeslam-refuses-to-take-stand/>; "Brussels Bombing Accused Abdeslam Denounces 'Unfair' Trial," *Agence France Presse*, September 12, 2022, <https://www.barrons.com/news/brussels-bombing-accused-abdeslam-denounces-unfair-trial-01662984007>; Mark Carlson, "Trial of 10 accused over Brussels suicide attacks underway," *Associated Press*, December 5, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/islamic-state-group-france-paris-bombings-belgium-9da108a907b5227c727f950161e8a944>; Monika Pronczuk, "8 Men Are Convicted in 2016 Terrorist Bombings in Brussels," *New York Times*, July 25, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/25/world/europe/brussels-terror-attacks-trial-2016.html>.
- September 9, 2022 - September 12, 2022:** On September 9, James Bradley appears at a federal court in Manhattan, New York, where he pleads guilty to attempting to provide material support to ISIS.
On September 12, Bradley's wife, Arwa Muthana entered a guilty plea to the same charge. Muthana and Bradley were arrested in New Jersey in March 2021 after paying an undercover police officer \$1,000 for what they thought would be transportation costs to Yemen. Prior to their arrest, both had posted and distributed extremist content online, including material supporting ISIS. Both are scheduled to be sentenced in February 2023. Source: "New York City Man and Alabama Woman Plead Guilty to Attempting to

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Provide Material Support to ISIS," U.S. Department of Justice, September 12, 2022, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/new-york-city-man-and-alabama-woman-plead-guilty-attempting-provide-material-support-isis>.

- **August 25, 2022 - September 17, 2022:** U.S.-backed Syrian fighters conduct a 24-day sweep at al-Hol camp during which they discover ISIS sleeper cells that were indoctrinating new generations of ISIS fighters.
The U.S.-backed forces also detained 226 extremists and confiscated weapons in the camp housing tens of thousands of women and children linked to ISIS. The operation was launched due to increasing violence carried out by ISIS cells within the camp. Since the beginning of 2022, extremists reportedly killed 44 camp residents and humanitarian workers. Source: Bassem Mroue, "US-backed Syrian forces free women in 3-week raid of IS camp," Associated Press, September 17, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/islamic-state-group-middle-east-syria-iraq-66a5977f03d6bf792de211fbc217f148>.
- **July 11, 2022:** According to a report released by the U.N. Security Council, ISIS supporters in Uganda and Kenya generate wealth in countries abroad, such as South Africa, and launder those proceeds to the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) an ISIS-affiliated rebel group in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
Furthermore, the report mentions that although ISIS's strength has been diminished in Iraq and Syria, the terror organization has directed its propaganda to focus on groups that have pledged allegiance to ISIS, particularly affiliated groups in Afghanistan and Africa. Notably, the report also mentions how ISIS in Somalia hosts the Al-Karrar office, a financial hub that allocates substantial funds to ISIS-K by way of Yemen, with a potential link to Kenya or even a cell in the United Kingdom. ISIS-K reportedly uses these funds to acquire new weapons and pay the salaries of fighters. Sources: "Letter dated 11 July 2022 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council," United Nations, July 15, 2022, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N22/394/29/pdf/N2239429.pdf?OpenElement>; Matthew Hill, "Islamic State Groups Use South Africa to Channel Funds, UN Says," Bloomberg, July 22, 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-22/islamic-state-groups-use-south-africa-to-channel-funds-un-says>.
- **July 12, 2022:** U.S. forces carry out a drone strike outside of Jindayris, northwest Syria.
The strike kills Maher al-Agal—the leader of ISIS in Syria and one of the top five leaders of the terror network—and injures another senior ISIS leader. The senior official later succumbs to his wounds. Sources: Oren Liebermann, "ISIS leader in Syria killed in drone strike, US says," CNN, July 12, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/12/politics/us-isis-leaders-syria/index.html>; "Strike conducted in Syria U.S. Central Command Public Affairs," U.S. Central Command, July 12, 2022, <https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/3089938/strike-conducted-in-syria/>.
- **July 7, 2022:** A Florida court sentences Romeo Xavier Langhorne to 20 years in prison, followed by 15 years of supervised release, on charges of attempting to provide material support to ISIS.
Langhorne reportedly pledged his allegiance to ISIS in 2014, and frequently voiced his support of the terror group on social media. In 2019, Langhorne sought to create and disseminate an instructional video on making triacetone triperoxide (TATP), but was arrested in Virginia by the FBI in November of that year. Source: "Man Sentenced to 20 Years in Prison for Attempting to Provide Material Support to ISIS," U.S. Department of Justice, July 7, 2022, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/man-sentenced-20-years-prison-attempting-provide-material-support-isis-1>.
- **July 1, 2022:** A federal court in San Antonio, Texas sentences two men for conspiring to provide material support to ISIS.
Kristopher Sean Matthews, a.k.a. Ali Jibreel, was sentenced to 20 years in prison, and Jaylyn Christopher Molina, a.k.a. Abdur Rahim, was sentenced to 18 years in prison. The suspects reportedly sought to administer a chat group for ISIS supporters that would disseminate ISIS propaganda and provide instructional material to chat group members and others. Source: "Men Sentenced to Federal Prison for Conspiring to Provide Material Support to Terrorists," U.S. Department of Justice, July 1, 2022, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/men-sentenced-federal-prison-conspiring-provide-material-support-terrorists>.
- **June 16, 2022:** Swiss federal prosecutors issue an indictment for murder and other charges against a Swiss-Turkish man in connection with a "jihadist-motivated attack" that occurred on September 12, 2020.
The man reportedly stabbed to death a Portuguese man in Morges, western Switzerland, with the aim of "exacting revenge for the victims of the war between the coalition states and the 'Islamic State'." The suspect is apprehended the next day and has been in pre-trial detention since. According to the indictment, the suspect is also accused of attempting to carry out an arson attack on a gas station on behalf of ISIS in Lausanne in 2019, and he allegedly traveled to Italy in an attempt to reach combat zones in Syria, also in 2019. Source: Jamey Keaten, "Swiss indict Turkish-Swiss man over alleged jihadist murder," Associated Press, June 16, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/islamic-state-group-middle-east-switzerland-homicide-579120f6699c9bef5ad24474e2766737>.
- **June 15, 2022:** U.S.-led coalition forces launch an operation in northern Syria, eventually capturing Hani Ahmed al-Kurdi, a senior leader of ISIS.
Al-Kurdi is reportedly a bomb maker and one of ISIS's top leaders in Syria. Sources: Gordon Lubold and Nancy A. Youssef, "Senior ISIS Leader Captured in Syria, U.S. Military Officials Say," *Wall Street Journal*, June 16, 2022, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/senior-isis-leader-captured-in-syria-u-s-military-officials-say-11655347828>; Michael Callahan and Devan Cole, "US-led coalition fighting ISIS says it's detained a senior ISIS leader in Syria," CNN, June 16, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/15/politics/us-coalition-isis-detain-senior-leader-bomb-maker-syria/index.html>.
- **June 13, 2022:** German authorities detain a man, Aleem N., on charges of having prepared a serious act of violence endangering the state and of membership in a foreign terrorist organization.
Police detained the defendant in Roemerberg, southwest of Heidelberg. Aleem N. originally sought to travel to Syria with intentions of receiving military training in September 2020. However, he returned to Germany in October of that year where he instead carried out propaganda activities including translation documents and videos from Arabic to German for ISIS. That same day, Swiss authorities detain three people in Zurich, St. Gallen, and Lucerne. The three Swiss men were reportedly in contact with Aleem N. Sources: Rebecca Perring, "Four 'ISIS terrorists' arrested after 'plan for serious act of violence' against Germany," *Express*, June 14, 2022, <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1625073/isis-islamic-state-isis-terrorists-arrested-over-serious-act-of-violence-plan-germany>; "German, Swiss authorities detain 4 accused of supporting IS," Associated Press, June 14, 2022, https://apnews.com/article/islamic-state-group-politics-germany-switzerland-27ed8bedd6e720703c8734ac012aece8?utm_source=iterable&utm_.
- **June 11, 2022:** French forces deployed under Operation Barkhane, France's counterterrorism mission in the Sahel, carry out an operation on the border between Mali and Niger, capturing IS Sahel senior leader Oumeya Ould Albakaye in the process.
According to media sources, Albakaye will be held by French forces for questioning and then handed to the Malian authorities. Albakaye is an explosives expert and served as IS Sahel's chief in Gourma, Mali and Oudalan, Burkina Faso. The French army stated that Albakaye is believed to have carried out terrorist attacks against soldiers and civilians in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso to undermine French forces within Mali. Sources: "France captures Islamic State group leader in Mali," *France 24*, June 15, 2022, <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20220615-france-captures-islamic-state-group-leader-in-mali>; "France says it has captured a senior Islamic State figure in Mali," *Euronews*, June 15, 2022, <https://www.euronews.com/2022/06/15/france-says-it-has-captured-a-senior-islamic-state-figure-in-mali>; "France says it has captured Islamic State bigwig in Mali," *Al Jazeera*, June 15, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/6/15/france-says-it-captured-islamic-states-senior-leader-in-mali>.

- **June 7, 2022 - November 1, 2022:** Allison Fluke-Ekren appears at the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia where she pleads guilty to charges of organizing and leading an all-female military battalion in Syria on behalf of ISIS. Fluke-Ekren, a former resident of Kansas, traveled overseas around September 2011 until May 2019 where she engaged in terrorism-related activities in Syria, Libya, and Iraq. Fluke-Ekren ultimately served as the leader of Khatiba Nusaybah, an ISIS military battalion, where she trained around 100 women and girls on the use of AK-47 rifles, grenades, and suicide belts. It is unreported when Fluke-Ekren was captured. However, she was transferred custody to the Eastern District of Virginia on January 28, 2022. Fluke Ekren was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment on November 1, 2022. Sources: “American Woman Who Led ISIS Battalion Pleads Guilty,” U.S. Department of Justice, June 7, 2022, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edva/pr/american-woman-who-led-isis-battalion-pleads-guilty>; Holmes Lybrand, “Kansas woman who led all-female ISIS battalion sentenced to 20 years in prison,” CNN, November 1, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/01/politics/isis-kansas-woman-who-led-battalion-sentenced/index.html>.
- **June 3, 2022:** A U.S. federal court in New York sentences Dilkhayot Kasimov, an Uzbek national and Brooklyn resident, to 15 years in prison for conspiring to and attempting to provide material support to ISIS. Kasimov was arrested by federal agents on February 25, 2015 in New York, along with three other men—Uzbek national Abdurasul Hasanovich Juraboev, Kazakh national Akhror Saidakhmetov, and Uzbek-born Abror Habibov. Kasimov and Habibov allegedly collected funds from multiple individuals to send Juraboev and Saidakhmetov to Syria to fight for ISIS. On October 27, 2017 and December 20, 2017, Juraboev and Saidakhmetov were sentenced to 15 years imprisonment for conspiring to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization. Sources: “Funder of ISIS Foreign Fighter Sentenced to 15 Years in Prison,” U.S. Department of Justice, June 3, 2022, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/funder-isis-foreign-fighter-sentenced-15-years-prison>; “Jury Finds Brooklyn Man Guilty of Conspiracy and Attempting to Provide Material Support to ISIS,” U.S. Department of Justice – Office of Public Affairs, September 25, 2019, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/jury-finds-brooklyn-man-guilty-conspiracy-and-attempting-provide-material-support-isis>; “Brooklyn Man Sentenced to 15 Years’ Imprisonment For Conspiring to Provide Material Support to Terrorists,” U.S. Department of Justice, December 20, 2017, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edny/pr/brooklyn-man-sentenced-15-years-imprisonment-conspiring-provide-material-support>; “Brooklyn Man Sentenced to 15 Years in Prison for Conspiring to Provide Material Support to Terrorists,” U.S. Department of Justice, October 27, 2017, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edny/pr/brooklyn-man-sentenced-15-years-prison-conspiring-provide-material-support-terrorists>; “Fourth Brooklyn, New York, Resident Charged With Attempt and Conspiracy to Provide Material Support to ISIL,” U.S. Department of Justice, April 6, 2015, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/fourth-brooklyn-new-york-resident-charged-attempt-and-conspiracy-provide-material-support>.
- **May 31, 2022:** A German court sentences five Tajik men for their membership in an ISIS cell that planned terrorist attacks in Germany and abroad. The men are given jail term terms between three years and eight months to nine and a half years. Sunatullokh K. is handed the longest sentence for planning to shoot dead a YouTuber critical of Islam. The assault was foiled by investigators. Farhodshoh K. receives eight-and-a-half years for plotting a contract murder in Albania, but it was never carried out. Muhammadali G., Azizjon B., and Komron B. are convicted for their participation in a terrorist organization. Source: “Germany sentences five Tajiks to jail over ISIS plots,” Agence France Press, May 31, 2022, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2022/05/31/Germany-sentences-five-Tajiks-to-jail-over-ISIS-plots>.
- **May 30, 2022 - July 22, 2022:** A Special Criminal Court in Dublin, Ireland finds Lisa Smith guilty of membership in a foreign terrorist organization. Smith was a former Irish Defense Forces member who moved to ISIS-held territory in Syria and married a foreign fighter in 2015 after converting to Islam and radicalizing online. Smith was eventually caught by Turkish-backed militia in 2019 and was deported to Ireland from Turkey on December 1, 2019, where she was charged with terrorism offenses. Smith was later released on conditional bail in January 2020, but was charged with financing terrorism on July 24, 2020. Although Smith is found not guilty of trying to finance ISIS, Smith is handed a formal sentence for membership in a terrorist organization on July 22, 2022. Smith, who is the first person to be convicted in an Irish court of an Islamist terrorist offense committed abroad, is expected to serve 15 months in prison. Sources: Eoin Reynolds, “COURT FINDING Lisa Smith found GUILTY of membership of terror organisation ISIS by Special Criminal Court,” Irish Sun, May 30, 2022, <https://www.thesun.ie/news/8873262/lisa-smith-terrorist-membership-isis/>; Michelle Hennessy, “Lisa Smith will be subject to security assessment on arrival in Ireland,” *The Journal* (Dublin), November 12, 2019, <https://www.thejournal.ie/lisa-smith-security-assessment-4888274-Nov2019/>; Paul Reynolds, “Lisa Smith charged with committing terrorist offence,” RTÉ News, December 4, 2019, <https://www.rte.ie/news/courts/2019/12/04/1096941-lisa-smith/>; Tom Tuite, “ISIS suspect Lisa Smith handed additional charge of terrorist financing,” *Irish Examiner* (Cork), July 24, 2020, <https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/courtandcrime/arid-40021364.html>; Eoin Reynolds and Conor Gallagher, “Lisa Smith sentenced to 15 months for membership of Islamic State,” *Irish Times*, July 22, 2022, <https://www.irishtimes.com/crime-law/courts/2022/07/22/lisa-smith-sentenced-to-15-months-for-membership-of-the-islamic-state/>.
- **May 26, 2022:** Media sources report that ISIS leader Abu Hasan al-Hashimi al-Qurashi is allegedly captured in a raid by Turkish anti-terrorism police and intelligence agents in Istanbul. The information of al-Qurashi’s capture was allegedly provided by senior Turkish officials. According to media reports, the senior officials claimed the operation was conducted following a lengthy police surveillance of a house al-Qurashi was staying in. Confirmation of the capture is not immediately reported, but media sources claim Turkish officials have informed Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of al-Qurashi’s capture. Sources: Firat Kozok, “Turkey Has Detained Islamic State’s New Leader, Officials Say,” Bloomberg, May 26, 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-05-26/turkey-has-detained-islamic-state-s-new-leader-officials-say>; Chris Matthews, “New ISIS leader ‘is captured in Istanbul raid’ three months after previous chief was killed in US operation,” Daily Mail, May 26, 2022, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10857583/New-ISIS-leader-captured-Istanbul-raid-three-months-boss-killed-operation.html>.
- **May 20, 2022:** The U.S. Department of State announces the revocation of several Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs). Included among the group is Farah Mohamed Shirdon, a former ISIS member who was killed in a U.S. airstrike in Iraq in July 2015. Shirdon, a Somali-Canadian who left Calgary in 2014 to join ISIS where he was a combatant, recruiter, fundraiser, and propagandist. Although Shirdon was killed in 2015, the U.S. Department of State designated Shirdon as a SDGT on April 13, 2017. Sources: “Revocation of Five Foreign Terrorist Organizations Designations and the Delisting of Six Deceased Individuals as Specially Designated Global Terrorists,” U.S. Department of State, May 20, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/revocation-of-five-foreign-terrorist-organizations-designations-and-the-delisting-of-six-deceased-individuals-as-specially-designated-global-terrorists/>; “Counter Terrorism Designations Removals and Updates,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, May 20, 2022, <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/financial-sanctions/recent-actions/20220520>; “E.O. 13224 Designation of Farah Mohamed Shirdon, aka Farah Shirdon, aka Abu Usamah, aka Abu Usamah Somali, aka Abu Usama al Somali, aka Abu Usamah as-Somali, as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist,” Federal Register, April 19, 2017, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/04/19/2017-07911/eo-13224-designation-of-farah-mohamed-shirdon-aka-farah-shirdon-aka-abu-usamah-aka-abu-usamah-somali>; Stuart Bell and Andrew Russell, “Canadian jihadi Farah Mohamed Shirdon killed in Iraq airstrike in 2015: U.S. military,” Global News, September 7, 2017, <https://globalnews.ca/news/3722685/canadian-jihadi-farah-mohamed-shirdon-killed-in-iraq-airstrike-in-2015-u-s-military/>.
- **April 29, 2022:** A U.S. federal court sentences Alexanda Kotey to life in prison for his role in the kidnap and killing of western hostages. Kotey, who was a member of the brutal ISIS cell called “the Beatles” in Syria, pleaded guilty to the eight charges against him in September 2021. The charges were one count of conspiracy to commit hostage taking resulting in death; four counts of hostage taking resulting in the deaths of the four Americans—American journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff and American aid workers Peter Kassig and Kayla Mueller; one count of conspiracy to murder U.S. citizens outside of the United States; one count of conspiracy to provide material support or resources to terrorists resulting in the deaths of U.S., British, and Japanese nationals; and one count of conspiracy to provide material support or resources to a designated foreign terrorist organization resulting in the deaths of U.S., British, and Japanese nationals. Prosecutors agreed that in exchange for his admission of guilt, after serving 15 years in a U.S. prison Kotey may serve the rest of his sentence in the United Kingdom, where he was born. Additionally, if Kotey is transferred to the United Kingdom, he agreed to plead guilty and will also face a life sentence there. If ever released by the U.K., Kotey will be returned to the United

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States. Kotey's plea is the first time a member of ISIS has been held accountable in a U.S. court for the killings of the four American victims. Sources: Rachel Weiner and Tom Jackman, "ISIS militant admits involvement in torture, killings of American hostages," *Washington Post*, September 2, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/legal-issues/islamic-state-hostage-plea/2021/09/02/669d2b2c-0b56-11ec-9781-07796ffb56fe_story.html; "ISIS Militant Pleads Guilty to Role in Deaths of Four Americans in Syria," U.S. Department of Justice, September 2, 2021, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edva/pr/isis-militant-pleads-guilty-role-deaths-four-americans-syria>; Adam Goldman, "British Terrorist Receives Life Sentence for Role in Americans' Deaths," *New York Times*, April 29, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/29/us/politics/isis-beatles-kotey-sentenced.html>.

- **April 22, 2022:** The Taliban arrest Abdul Hamid Sangaryar in Balkh province. According to Afghanistan's interior ministry, Sangayar is an ISIS-K operative who played a key role in planning three bombings on April 21 that targeted Afghanistan's minority Shiite Muslims. The bombings killed 12 and injured 53 others. Source: "Taliban arrest suspected ISIS militant over mosque attack," *The National*, April 22, 2022, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/2022/04/22/taliban-arrests-suspected-isis-militant-behind-mosque-attack/>.
- **April 11, 2022 - April 13, 2022:** On April 11, London's Central Criminal Court finds Ali Harbi Ali, an ISIS supporter who stabbed British lawmaker David Amess to death in October 2021, guilty of murder and preparing terrorist acts. During the trial, Ali claimed he targeted Sir David because of his votes in favor of airstrikes in Syria. On April 13, Ali was sentenced to life imprisonment. Sources: Holly Bancroft, "Sir David Amess: Ali Harbi Ali given whole life sentence for murder and planning terror attacks on other MPs," *Independent*, April 13, 2022, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/sir-david-amess-ali-harbi-ali-murder-terror-attack-b2056986.html>; "ISIS supporter found guilty of killing British lawmaker David Amess," *Associated Press*, April 11, 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/britain-david-amess-killing-verdict-1.6415564>.
- **April 6, 2022:** A federal court for the Eastern District of New York sentences Bernard Raymond Augustine to 20 years in prison for attempting to provide material support to ISIS. In 2016, Augustine reportedly traveled from San Francisco to Northern Africa with the intention of joining ISIS. However, he was detained by local authorities in Tunisia. Augustine was returned to the United States in 2018. Prior to traveling to Tunisia, Augustine had been actively watching ISIS propaganda and had posted numerous statements in support of ISIS and violent extremism. Augustine was convicted by a federal jury in August 2021. Source: "Man Sentenced to 20 Years in Prison for Attempting to Provide Material Support to ISIS," U.S. Department of Justice, April 6, 2022, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/man-sentenced-20-years-prison-attempting-provide-material-support-isis-0>.
- **March 30, 2022 - April 14, 2022:** On March 30, El Shafee Elsheikh—one member of the ISIS "Beatles" cell that kidnapped and abused more than two dozen Western hostages in Syria from 2012 to 2015—faces a federal court in Alexandria, Virginia. Elsheikh faces eight charges of hostage-taking, conspiracy to murder U.S. citizens, and supporting a foreign terrorist organization. On April 14, the federal jury finds Elsheikh guilty of all charges. Although Elsheikh is not accused of carrying out the killing of American hostages James Foley, Peter Kassig, Kayla Mueller, and Steven Sotloff, Elsheikh is charged with participating in the kidnapping and torture that led to the murder of the hostages. During the trial, prosecutors stated that while Foley, Kassig, and Sotloff were beheaded by the ISIS members, Mueller—who ISIS originally claimed was killed in a 2015 airstrike in Syria—was believed to be killed by ISIS after being enslaved and sexually abused by the terrorist group for a year and a half. Elsheikh faces a life sentence. Sources: "US trial for member of Islamic State group begins in Virginia," *Guardian*, March 30, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/mar/30/the-beatles-trial-isis-terror-group-virginia>; "El Shafee Elsheikh: IS 'Beatle' found guilty of hostage-taking and conspiring to murder journalists and aid workers," *Sky News*, April 14, 2022, <https://news.sky.com/story/el-shafee-elsheikh-is-beatle-found-guilty-of-hostage-taking-and-conspiring-to-murder-journalists-and-aid-workers-12589377>; Gillian Morley, "El Shafee Elsheikh, British ISIS member, convicted on all counts for deadly kidnapping plot," *CBS News*, April 14, 2022, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/isis-el-shafee-elsheikh-verdict/>.
- **March 10, 2022:** ISIS releases an audio recording in which the group's spokesperson confirms al-Mawla's death and announces the appointment of new ISIS leader, Abu Hasan al-Hashemi al-Qurashi. According to the recording, al-Mawla, as well as ISIS's former spokesman, Abu Hamza al-Qurashi, were "killed in recent days." The new spokesperson, whose name has not yet been reported, further states that ISIS jihadists "pledged allegiance" to "Abu Hasan al-Hashemi al-Qurashi as an emir over believers and the caliph of Muslims." Source: "IS Names New Leader, Confirms Death Of Abu Ibrahim Al-Qurashi," *Agence France Presse*, March 10, 2022, <https://www.barrons.com/news/is-names-new-leader-confirms-death-of-abu-ibrahim-al-qurashi-01646930407?tesla=y>.
- Around this time, ISGS is renamed to Islamic State Sahel Province (IS Sahel) as the group is declared a separate province. Sources: "Actor Profile: The Islamic State Sahel Province," *Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project*, January 13, 2023, <https://acleddata.com/2023/01/13/actor-profile-the-islamic-state-sahel-province/>; Flore Berger, "The Silent Threat Kidnappings in Burkina Faso," *Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime*, March 2023, <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Flore-Berger-The-silent-threat-Kidnappings-in-Burkina-Faso-GI-TOC-March-2023.pdf>.
- **February 3, 2022:** U.S. special forces launch a raid in Atmeh, northern Syria, targeting ISIS leader Amir Muhammad Sa'id Abdal-Rahman al-Mawla. The raid—which surrounded al-Mawla's house—includes around two dozen American commandos backed by helicopter gunships and armed with Reaper drones and attack jets. Upon the start of the operation, al-Mawla detonates a bomb that kills both himself and his family members. The operation lasts for about three hours, killing at least thirteen people, including four women and six children. At least ten civilians are evacuated, including eight children. According to U.S. President Joe Biden's aides, the operation was planned months in advance and included dozens of rehearsals. Sources: "U.S. Announces Death of ISIS Leader in Raid," *New York Times*, February 3, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/02/03/world/us-raid-syria-isis>; "U.S. says Islamic State leader killed in Syria raid," *Reuters*, February 3, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-led-coalition-operation-northern-syria-targeted-jihadists-2022-02-03/>; Eric Schmitt and Ben Hubbard, "Raid Targeting ISIS Leader Came After Months of Planning," *New York Times*, February 3, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/03/us/politics/isis-leader-killed-syria.html>.
- **January 12, 2022:** The U.S. Supreme Court announces that it will refuse to hear the case of Hoda Muthana, an American-born woman who traveled to Syria to join ISIS in 2014 after becoming radicalized online. Muthana, who was born in New Jersey to a diplomat from Yemen, had her passport canceled in 2019 after a federal judge ruled that as a child of a diplomat, Muthana was not entitled to birthright citizenship. Source: Graeme Massie, "Hoda Muthana: US Supreme Court refuses to hear case of Alabama ISIS bride," *Independent*, January 12, 2022, <https://news.yahoo.com/hoda-muthana-us-supreme-court-231654760.html>.
- **January 10, 2022:** Iraq repatriates 111 Iraqi families linked to ISIS who had been detained at a Kurdish-run camp in northern Syria. Upon arrival to Iraq, the families were transferred to Al-Jadaa camp—which hosts 7,500 internally displaced people—south of Mosul. Source: "Iraq takes back 111 ISIS-linked families from Syria," *Al-Arabiya*, January 10, 2022, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2022/01/10/Iraq-takes-back-111-ISIS-linked-families-from-Syria>.
- **January 9, 2022:** Birmingham Crown Court in the U.K. sentences Rayan Saab to seven and a half years in prison for encouraging acts of terrorism.

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Saab, who was convicted of four charges of disseminating terrorist publications between April 2019 and December 2020, allegedly sent videos of ISIS beheadings and executions to individuals over social media. After sending videos—which included descriptions of suicide missions and how to make a car bomb—to an undercover police officer, Saab was arrested on May 15, 2021. Source: Ross McCarthy and Morgan Johnson, “Man, 22, shared ISIS beheading videos to others on social media,” Coventry Telegraph, January 9, 2022, <https://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/local-news/man-22-shared-isis-beheading-22686665>.

- **January 7, 2022:** Authorities in Sweden and France, with the help of Europe’s crime agency Eurojust, launch a joint team to investigate atrocities committed by ISIS against the Yazidi community. More than 10,000 Yazidis were killed and around 7,000 women and girls were enslaved by ISIS in northern Iraq in 2014. Many Yazidis remain missing. According to Eurojust, the aim of the joint investigation team will be to “identify foreign terrorist fighters who were involved in core international crimes...against members of the Yazidi minority during the armed conflict in Syria and Iraq, in view of potential prosecution.” Additionally, the team, will “focus on identifying victims and witnesses of these crimes committed by foreign terrorist fighters in Syria and Iraq.” Source: Nicky Harley, “Sweden and France launch joint task force to prosecute ISIS fighters over Yazidi genocide,” National, January 7, 2022, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/europe/2022/01/07/sweden-and-france-launch-joint-task-force-to-prosecute-isis-fighters-over-yazidi-genocide/>.
- **November 22, 2021:** The U.S. State Department sanctions ISIS-K emir Sanaullah Ghafari, spokesperson Sultan Aziz Azam, and Kabul province leader Maulaw Rajab as specially Designated Global Terrorists. The Treasury Department also sanctions Ismatullah Khalozai, an international financial facilitator of ISIS-K. Sources: “Taking Action Against ISIS-K,” U.S. Department of State, November 22, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/taking-action-against-isis-k/>; “Treasury Designates Key Financial Facilitator for the Islamic State’s Afghanistan Branch,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, November 22, 2021, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0502>.
- **November 17, 2021:** U.N. Special Representative Deborah Lyons tells the U.N. Security Council Islamic State-Khorasan Province has established a presence in almost every province in Afghanistan. The Taliban have been unable to stop ISIS-K’s growth, according to Lyons. She reports ISIS’s attacks in Afghanistan have increased from 60 in 2020 to 334 to date in 2021. Source: Jonathan Landay, “U.N. envoy says Islamic State now appears present in all Afghan provinces,” Reuters, November 17, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/un-envoy-says-islamic-state-now-appears-present-all-afghan-provinces-2021-11-17/>.
- **November 8, 2021:** The SDF foil an attempted prison break at by a suspected ISIS cell at the Sina’a prison in Hasaka, Syria. One militant is killed, one is wounded, and four are arrested during an ensuing firefight. The SDF seize numerous weapons, including rockets, IEDs, and guns. Source: Sirwan Kajjo, “US-Backed Forces Say They Foiled IS Prison Break in Northeast Syria,” Voice of America, November 8, 2021, <https://www.voanews.com/a/us-backed-forces-say-they-foiled-is-prison-break-in-northeast-syria-6305026.html>.
- **November 1, 2021:** Naser Almadaoji, an Iraqi-born U.S. citizen of Beavercreek, Ohio, pleads guilty to a federal court in Ohio for one count of attempting to join ISIS and ISIS-K. According to court documents, Almadaoji purchased a plane ticket for travel on October 24, 2018, seeking to travel to Kazakhstan to eventually smuggle his way into Afghanistan. However, Almadaoji was arrested after obtaining his boarding pass. Almadaoji sought to gain training from ISIS-K members in “weapons expert training, planning and executing, hit and run, capturing high value targets, [and] ways to break into homes and avoid security guards.” Almadaoji previously attempted to join ISIS in the Sinai Peninsula in February 2018 but was unsuccessful. In August 2018, Almadaoji communicated with an individual posing as an ISIS supporter online and detailed his proposed plot to start a conflict in the United States between the federal government and anti-government militias. Almadaoji is scheduled to be sentenced on January 31, 2022, and faces a maximum penalty of up to 20 years in prison. Source: “Ohio Man Pleads Guilty to Attempting to Provide Material Support to a Foreign Terrorist Organization,” U.S. Department of Justice, November 1, 2021, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/ohio-man-pleads-guilty-attempting-provide-material-support-foreign-terrorist-organization>.
- **October 22, 2021:** Nigeria’s national security adviser Babagana Monguno claims that ISWAP leader Malam Bako, along with another prominent member of ISWAP, was “taken out” by Nigerian security forces on October 20. Sources: “ISWAP militant group says Nigeria’s Boko Haram leader is dead,” Reuters, June 7, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/islamic-state-west-african-province-says-nigerias-boko-haram-leader-is-dead-2021-06-06/>; “ISWAP: NSA confirms killing of Al Barnawi’s successor, Malam Bako,” Premium Times, October 22, 2021, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/491057-ismwap-nsa-confirms-killing-of-al-barnawis-successor-malam-bako.html>.
- **October 15, 2021:** Nigeria’s military confirms that ISWAP leader Abu Musab al-Barnawi is dead. The military does not provide details of the location of or circumstances leading to al-Barnawi’s death and ISWAP has yet to release an official statement confirming the reports. Source: Chinedu Asadu, “Nigerian military says leader of IS-linked group is dead,” Associated Press, October 14, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/africa-chad-nigeria-islamic-state-group-boko-haram-6fcc3b1951a0bec957931e0f80279ab7>.
- **October 12, 2021:** Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi announces the capture of Sami Jasim, ISIS’s former deputy and head of finance. According to Kadhimi, the Iraqi National Intelligence Service captured Jasim in an operation outside of Iraq’s borders. Kadhimi does not confirm where the operation took place, but an Iraqi military source tells media it happened in Turkey. Other military sources say Jasim was captured in northwestern Syria. Turkish intelligence reportedly aided in Jasim’s capture. Sources: “Iraq claims capture of IS financial chief in operation abroad,” BBC News, October 12, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-58868803>; Ahmed Rasheed, “EXCLUSIVE Turkish intelligence helped Iraq capture Islamic State leader, sources say,” Reuters, October 12, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/exclusive-turkish-intelligence-helped-iraq-capture-islamic-state-leader-sources-2021-10-12/>.
- **October 3, 2021:** Taliban government forces destroy an ISIS cell north of Kabul. The operation was launched after ISIS-K claimed responsibility for bombing a Kabul mosque earlier that day. According to media reports, Taliban government forces clashed with ISIS-K fighters for three hours before an explosives-packed car blew up and killed all the ISIS-K fighters in a building they were hiding in. Source: Gibran Naiyyar Peshimam, “Taliban say forces destroy Islamic State cell hours after Kabul blast,” Reuters, October 4, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/taliban-say-forces-destroy-islamic-state-cell-hours-after-kabul-blast-2021-10-04/>.
- **October 2, 2021:** Mohammed Khalifa, a Saudi-born Canadian man, is transferred to FBI custody in Virginia from Syria. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Khalifa was a “leading figure” in the English-language media unit of ISIS where he narrated recruitment videos. Khalifa, who joined ISIS in 2013, was captured by U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces in 2019 before being transferred. On October 4, prosecutors at the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, charge Khalifa for aiding ISIS. If convicted, Khalifa will face up to life in prison. Sources: “U.S. charges Canadian man, alleging he’s an Islamic State fighter, propagandist,” Reuters, October 4, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us-charges-canadian-man-alleging-hes-an-islamic-state-fighter-propagandist-2021-10-02/>; “Leading ISIS Media Figure and Foreign Fighter Charged with Conspiring to Provide Material Support to a Terrorist Organization, Resulting in Death,” U.S. Department of Justice, October 2, 2021, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edva/pr/leading-isis-media-figure-and-foreign-fighter-charged-conspiring-provide-material>.

- **September 29, 2021:** U.K. police arrest Shabazz Suleman at Heathrow airport and charged for his activities in Syria dating back to 2014. According to reports, Suleman is accused of preparing acts of terrorism by traveling from the U.K. to Turkey in order to join ISIS in August 2014. Suleman allegedly trained and fought with ISIS from 2014 until 2017. Suleman's plea hearing is set for February 11, 2022, with a provisional trial expected on September 12. Source: "Ex-grammar school boy, 25, who was arrested at Heathrow airport after travelling to Syria in 2014 to train with ISIS will go on trial at Old Bailey next year," Guardian, October 15, 2021, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10095889/Man-trial-accused-ISIS-member-arrest-Heathrow-airport.html>.
- - : Following the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, media sources report that the group has begun to target and kill ISIS-K members. Hours after seizing Kabul on August 15, the Taliban allegedly killed one of ISIS-K's leaders, Abu Omar Khorasani. Earlier in September, Abu Obaidullah Mutawakkil and Muhammad Nabi Muhammadi—two prominent clerics close to ISIS-K—were also found dead in Kabul. The Taliban denied responsibility for those deaths. Source: Saeed Shah and Yaroslav Trofimov, "Islamic State Attacks in Eastern Afghanistan Challenge Taliban Rule," <https://www.wsj.com/articles/bombings-and-gunfire-challenge-taliban-rule-in-islamic-state-afghan-stronghold-11632333834>.
- **August 29, 2021:** U.S. forces conduct an airstrike against an ISIS-K target in Kabul. The strike targets a vehicle that, according to U.S. Central Command spokesperson, Navy Captain Bill Urban, posed "an imminent threat" to the Kabul airport. The vehicle allegedly contained substantial amounts of explosive material. The driver, a suspected suicide bomber, is killed in the attack. According to media sources, ten civilians are also killed in the airstrike. However, on September 17, the Pentagon acknowledged that the drone strike was instead a tragic mistake. Following an inquiry conducted by the U.S. military's Central Command, the alleged explosives in the vehicle were most likely water bottles, and a second explosion in a Kabul neighborhood was most likely due to a propane or gas tank. The driver of the vehicle, Zemari Ahmadi, was a longtime worker for a U.S. aid group and had no connection to ISIS-K. Ahmadi had a quick interaction with some people in an alleged ISIS safe house which military analysts falsely concluded was a direct connection to the militant group. Sources: Moshah Gains, Courtney Kube and Yuliya Talmazan, "U.S. forces strike ISIS-K target that posed 'imminent threat' to Kabul's airport," NBC News, August 29, 2021, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/u-s-forces-strike-isis-k-target-kabul-evacuations-enter-n1277871>; Sandi Sidhu, Nick Paton Walsh, Tim Lister, Oren Liebermann, Laura Smith-Spark and Saskya Vandoorne, "Ten family members, including children, killed in US strike in Kabul, relative says," CNN, August 30, 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/08/29/asia/afghanistan-kabul-evacuation-intl/index.html>; Eric Schmitt and Helene Cooper, "Pentagon acknowledges Aug. 29 drone strike in Afghanistan was a tragic mistake that killed 10 civilians," *New York Times*, September 17, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/17/us/politics/pentagon-drone-strike-afghanistan.html>.
- **August 27, 2021:** Following twin bombings perpetrated by ISIS-K at Kabul's airport on August 26—in which as many as 170 people and 13 U.S. service members were killed, with an additional 200 wounded—Marine General Kenneth "Frank" McKenzie, head of U.S. Central Command tells reporters that U.S. troops in Kabul are preparing for more ISIS attacks. U.S. forces are allegedly sharing information with Taliban fighters stationed outside of Kabul's airport in anticipation of future ISIS attacks that could include car bombs or rocket fire. That same day, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby announced that the Taliban had released "thousands" of ISIS-K militants from U.S. prisons in Afghanistan following their takeover of the country. Kirby did not reveal how many prisoners remain at Bagram Air Base. That evening, the U.S. military carries out a drone strike in Nangarhar, targeting and killing two "high profile" ISIS-K targets. According to Kirby, the targets were "ISIS-K planners and facilitators." Another ISIS-K member was wounded in the attack. Sources: Eric Garcia, "Pentagon admits 'thousands' of Isis-K militants released from US prisons by Taliban," Independent, August 27, 2021; Jake Epstein and John Haltiwanger, "The Pentagon says thousands of ISIS-K prisoners went free after the Taliban seized Afghanistan," Business Insider, August 27, 2021, <https://news.yahoo.com/pentagon-says-thousands-isis-k-152248921.html>; Rachel Pannett, Ellen Francis and Erin Cunningham, "U.S. forces preparing for more ISIS attacks in Kabul, top commander says," *Washington Post*, August 27, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/08/27/afghanistan-kabul-taliban-live-updates/>; Barbara Starr and Paul LeBlanc, "Two 'high profile' ISIS targets in Afghanistan killed in US drone strike, Pentagon says," CNN, August 28, 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/08/28/politics/isis-k-drone-strike-us-afghanistan/index.html>.
- **August 22, 2021:** According to reports from U.S. intelligence and military officials, ISIS poses a significant threat to Americans in Afghanistan. As the Biden administration is in the process of evacuating American citizens and U.S. personnel from Afghanistan, U.S. officials report that ISIS will likely seek to exploit the security vacuum in the country and plot attacks against American targets. Source: Andrew Restuccia, "U.S. Warns of Islamic State Threat to Americans in Afghanistan," *Wall Street Journal*, August 22, 2021, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-warns-of-islamic-state-threat-to-americans-in-afghanistan-11629648314>.
- **August 18, 2021:** Following the Taliban's takeover of the Afghan government on August 15, the Taliban releases around 5,000 prisoners from Badam Bagh and Pul-e-Charkhi jails in Kabul. Among the released were eight Indian nationals who left for Afghanistan to join ISIS. Source: "ISIS terrorist Nimisha Fathima, other Keralites among 5,000 prisoners set free by Taliban from Kabul jails: Reports," OpIndia, August 18, 2021, <https://www.opindia.com/2021/08/taliban-breaks-kabul-jails-set-free-5000-prisoners-kerala-isis-brides-nimisha-reports/>.
- **August 10, 2021 - August 12, 2021:** A federal court in Michigan sentences Muse Muse to 78 months in prison for conspiring to provide material support to ISIS. On August 12, Muse's brother, Mohamud Abdikadir Muse, was sentenced to 98 months in prison under the same charge. The Muse brothers were arrested by federal agents in January 2019 at Gerald R. Ford International Airport in Grand Rapids, Michigan, after attempting to fly to Mogadishu, Somalia with the goal of joining ISIS. Also arrested was Mohamed Haji, a relative of the Muse brothers, who is set to be sentenced on September 22, 2021. Mohamud received a longer sentence as he was the first to embrace ISIS's ideology and helped to radicalize the two others. Sources: "Mohamud Muse Receives 98 Months In Prison For Conspiring To Provide Material Support To ISIS," U.S. Department of Justice, August 12, 2021, https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdmi/pr/2021_0813_Mohamud_Muse; "Lansing man sentenced for conspiring to provide materials to ISIS," WLNS, August 10, 2021, <https://www.wlns.com/news/lansing-man-sentenced-for-conspiring-to-provide-materials-to-isis/>.
- ISGS leader Adnan al-Sahrawi is killed by a French drone on a motorbike with another jihadist on the border between Mali and Niger. French President Emmanuel Macron announces Sahwari's death on September 15 on Twitter. Sources: Tom Wheeldon, "Sahrawi: The top Sahel jihadist killed in French 'opportunistic hit,'" France 24, September 16, 2021, <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20210916-the-assassinated-abou-walid-al-sahrawi-france-s-major-enemy-in-the-sahel/>; Baba Ahmed and Krista Larson, "France says head of Islamic State in Sahara has been killed," Associated Press, September 16, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/europe-africa-france-niger-emmanuel-macron-145327db93f72ddf1d0d4b223df2d2e0>.
- Coalition officials warn ISIS is reportedly regrouping in Iraq's Diyala province as militants reportedly become more nomadic because they cannot control territory outright. Iraqi Intelligence officers and local tribal leaders warn ISIS is also regrouping in the disputed Kirkuk region in Iraqi Kurdistan. According to the warnings, small groups of ISIS fighters continue to attack military and police checkpoints, assassinate local leaders, and target electricity transmission grids and oil installations. Sources: Hiwa Shilani, "ISIS continues to regroup in Iraq's disputed territories: Report," Kurdistan 24, July 12, 2021, <https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/story/25000-ISIS-continues-to-regroup-in-iraq-s-disputed-territories-Report>; Ghaith Abdul-Ahad, "'They will never let go': Isis fighters regroup in the heart of Iraq," *Guardian* (London), July 11, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jul/11/isis-fighters-regroup-in-the-heart-of-iraq>.

- June 28, 2021:** The Foreign Ministers of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, co-chaired by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Italian Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio, meet in Rome.
The Global Coalition Ministerial was the group's first in-person meeting in over two years, during which the 83-member coalition discussed expanding advisory, training, and capacity-building missions in Iraq, as well as helping strengthen Iraqi security forces and institutions to better combat the ongoing threat of ISIS. The coalition undertakes five lines of effort which include stabilization, foreign terrorist fighters and their families who still remain in Iraq and Syria, countering the financing of ISIS, political-military consultations, and counter-messaging efforts. Additionally, the Coalition is also engaged in efforts to provide needs-based humanitarian aid assistance to communities destabilized by ISIS. The agenda also included discussions regarding increasing pressure in countering ISIS's global network, particularly ISIS cells in the Sahel Region and East Africa. Sources: "Joint Communiqué by Ministers of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS," U.S. Department of State, June 28, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/joint-communicue-by-ministers-of-the-global-coalition-to-defeat-isis/>; "The Global Coalition To Defeat ISIS," U.S. Embassy and Consulates in Italy, June 28, 2021, <https://it.usembassy.gov/the-global-coalition-to-defeat-isis/>; "NATO Secretary General participates in Global Coalition ministerial meeting in Rome," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, June 28, 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_185545.htm.
- June 28, 2021:** Turkish police arrest 26 people in Ankara for suspected links to ISIS.
After conducting simultaneous operations throughout the capital, Turkish police discovered over 30 suspects were in contact with ISIS members based in conflict zones. Four suspects are still on the run, but among the suspects are 28 Iraqi and two Syrian nationals. Source: Sertac Bulur, "26 Daesh/ISIS terror suspects nabbed in Turkey's capital," Anadolu Agency, June 28, 2021, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/26-daesh-isis-terror-suspects-nabbed-in-turkey-s-capital/2287479>.
- June 21, 2021:** The SDF arrest an alleged ISIS assassination squad in al-Hol camp, northern Syria.
The four male suspects were ISIS members who arrived to al-Hol in 2019. According to ISIS leaders outside of the camp and a confession from one of the suspects, the men have carried out two assassinations within the camp. Among the victims was a woman who worked for the SDF intelligence service. The following week, on June 29, ISIS members kill two Syrian women in al-Hol camp. Sources: Sura Ali, "SDF arrest Iraqi 'assassination squad' in al-Hol," Rudaw, June 21, 2021, <https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/21062021>; Dilan Sirwan, "Syrian sisters killed by ISIS in al-Hol," Rudaw, June 29, 2021, <https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/29062021>.
- June 21, 2021:** ISIS's Al-Furqan Media Foundation releases an audiotape entitled "You are the sublimes ones if you believe."
The audiotape features ISIS spokesman Abu Hamza al-Qurashi addressing and congratulating various provinces of ISIS, with an emphasis on Iraq and Syria. Notably, Qurashi states that ISIS operatives must work to break down prison walls and liberate its imprisoned operatives and calls on Muslims in Palestine to achieve peace through "jihad and bloodshed." Additionally, Qurashi criticizes Hamas for its ties with Iran, calling the group "the brothers of the devil." Additionally, he calls on all Muslims to carry out jihad against Iran's proxies. Source: "ISIS spokesman releases an audiotape calling on the operatives to intensify their attacks, lashing out against Iran, Turkey and the leaders of the Arab states, and expressing support for the Palestinians but not for Hamas," The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, June 29, 2021, <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/isis-spokesman-releases-an-audiotape-calling-on-the-operatives-to-intensify-their-attacks-lashing-out-against-iran-turkey-and-the-leaders-of-the-arab-states-and-expressing-support-for-the-palestini/>.
- June 19, 2021:** Iraqi forces dismantle an ISIS sleeper cell in Kirkuk.
According to the Iraqi Ministry of Interior, the cell included 10 ISIS militants suspected of providing logistical support "for ISIS elements," and some were fighters or support forces in the "Kirkuk sector." Source: Hiwa Shilani, "Iraq's interior ministry announces dismantling of ISIS sleeper cell in Kirkuk," Kurdistan 24, June 19, 2021, <https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/story/24780-Iraq%E2%80%99s-interior-ministry-announces-dismantling-of-ISIS-sleeper-cell-in-Kirkuk>.
- June 9, 2021:** A Michigan court convicts Mohamed Haji after he pleads guilty to conspiring to provide material support to ISIS.
In January 2020, his co-defendants Muse Muse and Mohamed Muse also pleaded guilty to the same offense. The defendants coordinated between December 2018 and January 2019 to travel to Mogadishu, Somalia, where they would join ISIS. The three men were arrested by secret agents of the FBI in early 2019 when Muse attempted to check in for a flight in Grand Rapids. The two others were later arrested as co-conspirators. All three defendants will be sentenced on a later date, but the crime is punishable by up to 20 years in federal prison. Source: "Third And Final Lansing Defendant Convicted Of Terrorism Charge," U.S. Department of Justice, June 9, 2021, https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdmi/pr/2021_0609_Muse_Haij.
- June 1, 2021:** Iraqi authorities in Mosul arrest a woman alleged to be the most wanted ISIS terrorist in the country.
The suspect allegedly supported ISIS sleeper cells. Source: Samir Salama, "Iraq: Most wanted female Daesh terrorist arrested in Mosul," Gulf News, June 2, 2021, <https://gulfnews.com/world/mena/iraq-most-wanted-female-daesh-terrorist-arrested-in-mosul-1.79615815>.
- May 3, 2021:** Iraqi police, in coordination with Kurdish authorities, arrest Abu Ali al-Jumaili, ISIS's so-called governor of Fallujah.
Jumaili is wearing a suicide belt at the time of his capture. He confesses to working with ISIS in both Iraq and Syria and admits involvement in attacks against Iraqi security forces and civilians. Source: "Iraqi authorities nab Islamic State 'governor' of Fallujah," Al-Monitor, May 3, 2021, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/05/iraqi-authorities-nab-islamic-state-governor-fallujah>.
- April 19, 2021:** Russian air forces strike an ISIS training camp in Palmyra, Syria, killing approximately 200 fighters.
The strikes are in retaliation for an ISIS claim of killing two Russian soldiers in Syria. Source: Jared Malsin and Nazih Osseiran, "Russia Strikes Islamic State Strongholds in Syria as Insurgency Gains Ground," *Wall Street Journal*, April 21, 2021, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/russia-strikes-islamic-state-strongholds-in-syria-as-insurgency-gains-ground-11618935951>.
- March 24, 2021:** Federal agents arrest Benjamin Carpenter a.k.a. "Abu Hamza," a U.S. citizen from Knoxville, Tennessee, on charges of attempting to provide material support and resources to ISIS.
Carpenter is the alleged leader of Ahlul-Tawhid Publications, an international organization dedicated to translating and disseminating English translations of pro-ISIS and ISIS media content. On August 12, Carpenter appeared in court, where he was granted the right to defend himself. If convicted, Carpenter will face up to 20 years in prison, a fine up to \$250,000, and a lifetime of supervision after release from prison. Sources: "Knoxville Man Arrested For Attempting To Provide Material Support To ISIS," U.S. Department of Justice, April 5, 2021, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edtn/pr/knoxville-man-arrested-attempting-provide-material-support-isis>; Hannah Moore, "Knoxville man accused of supporting ISIS to represent himself in court," ABC WATE, August 12, 2021, <https://www.wate.com/news/crime/knoxville-man-accused-of-supporting-isis-to-represent-himself-in-court/>.
- Belgium's government announces it will begin to repatriate children of Belgian jihadists living in Syria's al-Hol refugee camp, noting that the longer children remained in the camp, the greater the chance they would become "the terrorists of tomorrow."
Separately, Kurdish authorities in northeastern Syria begin putting captured ISIS fighters on trial. The senior judge overseeing the trials calls for the creation of an international tribunal in Syria to judge foreign fighters whose countries largely refuse to repatriate them. Sources: "Belgium to repatriate children of jihadists held in Syria refugee camp," EuroNews, March 5, 2021, <https://www.euronews.com/2021/03/05/belgium-to-repatriate-children-held-in-al-hol-syrian-refugee-camp>; Mark Stone, "'We have to judge them': The court trying Islamic State fighters left behind in Syria," Sky News, March 15, 2021, <https://news.sky.com/story/we-have-to-judge-them-the-court-trying-islamic-state-fighters-left-behind-in-syria-12246852>.

- **January 19, 2021:** Cole James Bridges, a U.S. Army Soldier, is arrested in Georgia on terrorism charges after communicating online about plots to blow up New York’s 9/11 Memorial and other landmarks, as well as attack U.S. soldiers in the Middle East. Bridges allegedly provided detailed instructions on tactics and manuals and advice about attacking the memorial to an FBI employee posing as an ISIS member. If found guilty of his crimes, Bridges faces up to 40 years in prison. Source: “U.S. Army Soldier Arrested for Attempting to Assist ISIS to Conduct Deadly Ambush on U.S. Troops,” U.S. Department of Justice, Justice 19, 2021, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/us-army-soldier-arrested-attempting-assist-isis-conduct-deadly-ambush-us-troops>.
- **January 13, 2021 - May 1, 2024:** On January 13, 2021, Abelhamid Al-Madioum, a Minnesota resident who once fought for ISIS in Syria, appears at a U.S. federal court in Minneapolis where he pleads guilty to providing material support to a designated terrorist organization. A native of Morocco and naturalized U.S. citizen, al-Madioum reportedly expressed deep remorse for joining the “death cult” in 2014 when he was 18. After being injured in an explosion in Iraq, Al-Madioum utilized his computer skills to aid the group. He ultimately surrendered to U.S.-backed rebels in 2019. On May 1, 2024, federal prosecutors in Minnesota recommend 12 years imprisonment for Al-Madioum. Source: Stever Karnowski, “Sentencing postponed for Minnesota man who regrets joining Islamic State group,” Associated Press, April 1, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/minnesota-islamic-state-syria-iraq-terrorism-ab94e1c1a9bd8a33745575f3e211272>; “Minnesota Man Pleads Guilty to Providing Material Support to ISIS,” U.S. Department of Justice, January 13, 2021, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/minnesota-man-pleads-guilty-providing-material-support-isis>.
- **December 17, 2020:** A Paris court sentences Ayoub El-Khazzani, an ISIS operative who attempted to open fire on a train traveling from Brussels to Paris in August 2015, to life in prison for attempted murder in connection with terrorism, possession of weapons in connection with terrorism and participation in a terrorist group. Source: Kim Willsher, “Terrorist behind foiled 2015 French train attack receives life sentence,” *Guardian*, December 17, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/17/terrorist-ayoub-el-khazzani-2015-thalys-train-attack-life-sentence>.
- **October 28, 2020:** Turjuman al-Asawirti, a prominent ISIS operative, releases a graphic video titled, “Defend him [Prophet Muhammad] by striking off [their] heads,” through Telegram. In the video, al-Asawirti urges ISIS followers to use violence and cut off heads in revenge for the French government’s stance on allowing the publication of controversial cartoons featuring the Prophet Muhammad. The statement was released following French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*’s republication of cartoons featuring the Prophet Muhammad and the October 16 attack in which an ISIS sympathizer decapitated French teacher Samuel Paty for showing caricatures of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad in class as part of a lesson on freedom of speech. Sources: Bel Trew, “Extremist video calling for revenge against France released day before Nice attack,” *Independent*, October 29, 2020, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/isis-video-nice-terror-france-islamic-state-telegram-b1428147.html>; James McAuley, “Teacher in Paris suburb decapitated, allegedly after showing cartoons of prophet Muhammad in class,” *Washington Post*, October 16, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/teacher-in-paris-suburb-killed-and-decapitated-allegedly-after-showing-cartoons-of-prophet-mohammad-in-class/2020/10/16/3d4d8be0-0fd5-11eb-b404-8d1e675ec701_story.html.
- **October 19, 2020:** ISIS publishes images of beheaded French teacher Samuel Paty in their October issue of “Voice of Hind.” The graphic is accompanied by text claiming “If we do not become forceful, then the assaults on our religion... will continue... [our supporters must] take revenge on each and every one who has insulted our beloved Messenger (PBUH).” Paty was decapitated by ISIS sympathizer Abdoulakh Anzorov in the Paris suburb of Conflans-Sainte-Honorine on October 16, after showing caricatures of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad in class as part of a lesson on freedom of speech. Sources: Bridget Johnson, “ISIS Magazine Publishes Photo of French Teacher’s Head, Calls for More Attacks on Free Expression,” *Homeland Security Today*, October 19, 2020, <https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/isis-magazine-publishes-photo-of-french-teachers-head-calls-for-more-attacks-on-free-expression/>; James McAuley, “Teacher in Paris suburb decapitated, allegedly after showing cartoons of prophet Muhammad in class,” *Washington Post*, October 16, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/teacher-in-paris-suburb-killed-and-decapitated-allegedly-after-showing-cartoons-of-prophet-mohammad-in-class/2020/10/16/3d4d8be0-0fd5-11eb-b404-8d1e675ec701_story.html.
- **October 18, 2020:** ISIS spokesman Abu Hamza al-Qurashi releases an audio recording through ISIS’s Telegram channel calling for the overthrow of “tyrannical” Arab rulers. The statement was released in the midst of normalization agreements between the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain with Israel. The move by the UAE and Bahrain promises complete normalization of diplomatic, commercial, security, and other relations with Israel in exchange for Jerusalem suspending annexation of occupied West Bank territory. Qurashi further called on ISIS operatives and supporters in Saudi Arabia and Africa to attack Western citizens and interests. Sources: “Spotlight on Global Jihad (October 15-21, 2020),” The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, October 22, 2020, <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/spotlight-on-global-jihad-october-15-21-2020/>; “In response to normalization ... ISIS calls for attacks in the...,” *Al Khaleej Today*, October 19, 2020, <https://alkhaleejtoday.com/saudi-arabia/5139962/in-response-to-normalization-%E2%80%A6-ISIS-calls-for-attacks-in-the.html>; Jonathan Hoffman, “Why Gulf nations are normalizing ties with Israel,” *Washington Post*, September 24, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/09/24/why-gulf-nations-are-normalizing-ties-with-israel/>; Peter Baker, Isabel Kershner, David D. Kirkpatrick and Ronen Bergman, “Israel and United Arab Emirates Strike Major Diplomatic Agreement,” August 13, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/us/politics/trump-israel-united-arab-emirates-uae.html>.
- **October 15, 2020:** Kurdish-led authorities release 631 ISIS prisoners in northern Syria as part of a general amnesty in the region. According to Amina Omar, the head of the Syrian Democratic Council, the released fighters allegedly have “no blood on their hands” and have repented joining ISIS. Additionally, 253 other former fighters have their terms cut in half. Source: “Syria Kurds free more than 600 ISIL fighters as part of amnesty,” *Al Jazeera*, October 15, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/15/syria-kurds-free-more-than-600-isis-fighters-as-part-of-amnesty>.
- Two U.S. government officials reveal in early October 2020 that Alexandra Kotey and El Shafee Elsheikh—two men part of an ISIS cell called “The Beatles”—would be brought to the United States in mid-October to face charges in a federal court. The U.S. government has accused Kotey and Elsheikh of taking part in the kidnappings of international hostages and in the killing of over 27 people. Despite claiming no involvement in or advance knowledge of executions, in an interview obtained by NBC which aired in July 2020, Kotey and Elsheikh admitted their involvement in the captivity and torture of hostages. On October 7, 2020, Kotey and Elsheikh are flown to the United States from Iraq where they will be prosecuted in a federal court in Alexandria, Virginia. The two are charged with hostage taking resulting in death, conspiracy to murder U.S. citizens outside the United States, conspiracy to provide material support to a foreign organization, and related conspiracy charges. Sources: “ISIS terrorists known as the ‘Beatles’ likely to be brought to U.S. in coming days,” *NBC News*, October 6, 2020, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/justice-department/isis-terrorists-known-beatles-likely-be-brought-u-s-coming-n1242176>; Ryan Lucas, “DOJ To Charge 2 British ISIS Militants Accused Of Role In Killing U.S. Hostages,” *NPR*, October 6, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/10/06/920444181/doj-to-charge-2-british-isis-militants-accused-of-role-in-killing-u-s-hostages>; Rachel Weiner and Ellen Nakashima, “Two ISIS militants charged in deaths of James Foley and other American hostages in Syria,” *Washington Post*, October 7, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/isis-hostages-beheadings-militants-charged/2020/10/07/69762ef2-089b-11eb-859b-f9c27abe638d_story.html.
- **September 26, 2020:** A federal court in the Western District of Texas charges Jaylyn Christopher Molina and Kristopher Sean Matthews with conspiracy to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization.

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The suspects allegedly plotted to bomb or shoot high-profile sites such as the White House and Trump Tower. Molina and Matthews reportedly studied how to build bombs and were a part of an online chat group in 2019 to discuss traveling to Syria to fight with ISIS. Source: Alicia Victoria Lozano, “2 alleged ISIS supporters in U.S. accused of plotting attacks on White House, Trump Tower,” NBC News, September 26, 2020, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/2-alleged-isis-supporters-u-s-accused-plotting-terrorist-attacks-n1241175>.

- **August 25, 2020:** ISIS releases a statement through their magazine, “Voice of Hind,” urging followers to “race” to emulate the January 2015 *Charlie Hebdo* attack, were assailants affiliated with al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) killed 12 people after the French satirical magazine published cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad. ISIS’s statement claims that “the governments you live under are providing full support and protection to every person who attacks our beloved prophet, under the pretext of freedom of expression.” Source: Bridget Johnson, “ISIS Magazine Calls on Supporters to ‘Race’ to Emulate Charlie Hebdo Attack,” Homeland Security Today, August 25, 2020, <https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/isis-magazine-calls-on-supporters-to-race-to-emulate-charlie-hebdo-attack/>.
- **August 13, 2020:** The U.S. Department of Justice seizes \$2 million in cryptocurrency linked to overseas terror groups, including ISIS, al-Qassam Brigades, and al-Qaeda. According to reports, the groups made money through selling counterfeit COVID-19 safety equipment to U.S. hospitals, and then using the profits to buy weapons and train fighters. The seized funds are to be allocated to a fund for victims of terrorist attacks. Source: Frances Mulraney, “US seizes \$2million in cryptocurrency from terror groups including ISIS and the military wing of Hamas in largest ever government takeover of online extremist fundraising,” Daily Mail, August 13, 2020, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8625173/US-seizes-2-million-dollars-cryptocurrency-terror-groups-including-ISIS.html>.
- **August 10, 2020:** [Zachary Clark](#), a 41-year-old man from Brooklyn, New York, pleads guilty in a Manhattan Federal Court to attempting to provide material support to ISIS. His sentencing hearing is scheduled for February 9, 2021. Clark faces up to 20 years in prison. Clark was arrested following an FBI Joint Terrorist Task Force (JTTF) investigation on November 27, 2019 where he was charged with one count of attempting to provide material support to ISIS and one count of distributing information relating to explosives, destructive devices, and weapons of mass destruction. Sources: “Brooklyn Man Pleads Guilty in Manhattan Federal Court to Attempting to Provide Material Support to ISIS,” U.S. Department of Justice, August 10, 2020, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/brooklyn-man-pleads-guilty-manhattan-federal-court-attempting-provide-material-support-isis>; “Brooklyn Man Arrested for Attempting to Provide Material Support to ISIS,” U.S. Department of Justice, November 27, 2019, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/brooklyn-man-arrested-attempting-provide-material-support-isis>.
- **July 28, 2020:** ISIS’s propaganda wing releases a new video called “Incite the Believers,” in which it urges American followers to carry out arson attacks where they will not be detected as retaliation for U.S. combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Source: Chuck Goudie and Barb Markoff, Christine Tressel and Ross Weidner, “New ISIS video calls for arson attacks on U.S.,” ABC 7 Chicago, July 28, 2020, <https://abc7chicago.com/isis-coronavirus-covid-arson-attack/6339412/>.
- **July 23, 2020:** According to a report released by the U.N. Security Council, there has been a significant rise in ISIS attacks in Iraq and Syria due to security gaps caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The invigorated rural insurgency features over 10,000 ISIS fighters in both Syria and Iraq. According to the report, ISIS’s new leader, [Amir Muhammad Sa’id Abdal-Rahman al-Mawla](#), “has not visibly asserted himself in communications, which may prove to be a limiting factor in his influence and appeal, and perhaps that of the group.” Sources: Paul Cruickshank, “ISIS exploiting coronavirus security gaps to relaunch insurgency, UN report warns,” CNN, July 23, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/23/politics/isis-coronavirus-un-terrorism-report/index.html>; “Letter dated 16 July 2020 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da’esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council,” United Nations, July 23, 2020, <https://undocs.org/S/2020/717>.
- **July 13, 2020:** India’s federal anti-terror probe agency, the National Investigation Agency (NIA), files charges against 17 members of a terror group created by ISIS terrorists Mehboob Pasha and Khaja Moideen. According to authorities, the ISIS splinter group, called “Al-Hind in Bengaluru,” sought to perpetrate terror activities in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. According to the NIA, Pasha and Moideen recruited and trained vulnerable young men. Source: “ISIS Karnataka module case: NIA files charge sheet against 17 key conspirators,” Tribune, July 13, 2020, <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/isis-karnataka-module-case-nia-files-charge-sheet-against-17-key-conspirators-112437>.
- **July 3, 2020:** A London court sentences Michelle Ramsden a.k.a Safiyya Shaikh, a 37-year-old supporter of ISIS, to life in prison for plotting a bomb attack at London’s St. Paul’s Cathedral, a nearby hotel, and an underground train station. Ramsden was arrested in October 2019 after discussing the preparation and planting of explosives with two undercover police officers. According to police, Ramsden was also involved in violence propaganda posts online and sought to recruit others to carry out acts of violence. Source: “UK jails ISIL supporter for life for plotting attack in London,” Al Jazeera, July 3, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/07/uk-jails-isis-supporter-life-plotting-attack-london-200703124047643.html>.
- **June 4, 2020 - August 26, 2020:** On June 4, Dzenan Camovic—a Bosnian national—launches a knife and firearm attack on multiple police officers in Brooklyn, New York. The attack kills two officers. According to authorities, Camovic previously posted anti-police writing on social media. On August 4, a federal indictment was returned in Brooklyn federal court, which charged Camovic with robbery and firearms offenses. Prosecutors claim Camovic operated under the guise of anti-police sentiment to carry out the attack. However, upon investigation, authorities discovered that Camovic had a “significant volume of materials that demonstrate his interest in and support for violent Islamic extremism.” Camovic is currently in state custody and will be arraigned at a later date. If convicted, Camovic faces a maximum sentence of life in prison. Source: Joe Marino, Larry Celona, Craig McCarthy and Yaron Steinbuch, “Authorities reportedly probing possible terror link in NYPD officer attack,” *New York Post*, June 4, 2020, <https://nypost.com/2020/06/04/police-probe-possible-terror-link-to-attack-on-cop-in-brooklyn-report/>; “Terror Suspect in NYPD Knife Assault Was Motivated By ‘ISIS-Inspired Ideology’: Feds,” NBC New York, August 26, 2020, <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/terror-suspect-in-nypd-knife-assault-was-motivated-by-isis-inspired-ideology-feds/2587063/>.
- **May 28, 2020:** ISIS releases a statement on Telegram claiming that the ongoing coronavirus pandemic serves as punishment for the forces that have fought against ISIS. Additionally, ISIS spokesman Abu Hamza al-Qurashi asserts that the Taliban has entered an apostate agreement with the United States. The February 29 peace deal saw the United States agree to withdrawing all troops from Afghanistan in 14 months if the Taliban drastically reduces and prevents extremist violence from occurring throughout the country. ISIS alleges that the Taliban delayed the announcement of the peace agreement to prevent Taliban members from joining ISIS. Additionally, Qurashi claims that ISIS will now retaliate against al-Qaeda in Africa due to attacks initiated by the latter insurgent camp. Furthermore, Qurashi suggests that as U.S. forces withdraw from Iraq, ISIS is plotting ways to resurge in the country. Source: Hassan Hassan, “A statement to be released by ISIS shortly, either from the new leader or the spokesman (more likely). It was expected given the recent surge in attacks,” Twitter, May 27, 2020, <https://twitter.com/hxhassan/status/1266019995659702273>.

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- **May 26, 2020:** The United States, aided by Iraq’s intelligence and counterterrorism services, launches an air strike in Deir Ezzor province, eastern Syria.
The strike kills ISIS senior leader, Moataz al-Jabouri (a.k.a. Hajji Tayseer), who Iraq’s intelligence agency alleges was also known as the “governor of Iraq and head of ISIS’s foreign operations.” Al-Jabouri reportedly oversaw ISIS’s state-building efforts and was responsible for planning and coordinating foreign operations. Source: Mina Aldroubi and Joyce Karam, “ISIS ‘governor of Iraq’ killed in Syria, says Baghdad,” National, May 26, 2020, <https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/isis-governor-of-iraq-killed-in-syria-says-baghdad-1.1025093>.
- **May 24, 2020:** U.S. federal agents arrest Mohammad al-Azhari in Tampa, Florida, for carrying weapons he allegedly sought to use in a future attack.
Al-Azhari faces federal charges for allegedly plotting a mass shooting and trying to give “material support” or resources to ISIS. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Al-Azhari was an ISIS supporter and has “expressed admiration for Pulse Nightclub shooter Omar Mateen,” and is suspected of wanting to carry out a similar mass casualty shooting. If convicted, Al-Azhari faces 20 years in federal prison. Sources: “DOJ: Man plotted attack in Tampa Bay area on behalf of ISIS,” ABC Action News, May 27, 2020, <https://www.abcactionnews.com/news/region-hillsborough/doj-man-accused-of-plotting-attack-in-tampa-bay-area-on-behalf-of-isis->; “United States of America v. Muhammed Momtaz Al-Azhari,” U.S. Department of Justice, May 26, 2020, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-mdfl/press-release/file/1278936/download>.
- **May 23, 2020:** Egyptian security forces raid two hideouts belonging to “terrorist elements” in the Sinai, killing at least 21 militants.
Two officers are wounded. According to Egyptian security forces, the militants were planning attacks during the Islamic holiday of Eid al-Fitr. Security forces reportedly find suicide belts and automatic weapons in the hideouts. Sources: “Egypt says 21 fighters killed during raids in Sinai,” Al Jazeera, May 23, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/05/egypt-21-fighters-killed-raids-sinai-200523194035699.html>; “Recent clashes in Egypt, Syria and Iraq shows fight against ISIS is not over,” Arab Weekly, May 23, 2020, <https://theArabweekly.com/recent-clashes-egypt-syria-and-iraq-shows-fight-against-isis-not-over>.
- **May 21, 2020:** Iraq’s National Intelligence Service transfers Abdul Nasser Qardash, a senior ISIS leader, from Syrian to Iraqi custody.
It is reported that Qardash was allegedly captured by U.S. or Kurdish forces in Syria last year. Qardash was allegedly one of the potential successors to former ISIS leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Qardash served as the head of one of ISIS’s commissions. Sources: “Iraq claims capture of senior Daesh leader,” Arab News, May 21, 2020, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1677661/middle-east>; “Iraq confirms arrest of top ranking Daesh member Nasser Al-Qardash,” Middle East Monitor, May 21, 2020, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20200521-iraq-confirms-arrest-of-top-ranking-daesh-member-nasser-al-qardash/>.
- **March 8, 2020:** A Kashmiri couple, Jahanjeb Sami and Hina Bashir Beig, is detained in Delhi, India for alleged links to ISIS-Khorasan province.
They were allegedly planning to carry out a suicide attack in Delhi and radicalizing Muslim youth to conduct terrorist strikes in protest of the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act. Source: Shashi Sharma, “Couple linked to ISIS were planning suicide attack in Delhi, detained,” International Business Times, March 8, 2020, <https://www.ibtimes.co.in/couple-linked-isis-detained-instigating-anti-caa-protests-were-planning-suicide-attack-says-814741>.
- **March 5, 2020:** A federal court sentences Robert Lorenzo Hester to 19 years in prison for attempting to provide material support to ISIS.
He communicated with undercover agents he believed to be members of the jihadist camp. Hester was previously in the Army which gave him knowledge of how to access military bases. Source: Emma Colton, “Missouri man sentenced to 19 years for plotting ISIS attack in US,” *Washington Examiner*, March 5, 2020, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/missouri-man-sentenced-to-19-years-for-plotting-isis-attack-in-us>.
- **February 2, 2020 - February 3, 2020:** On February 2, a man with a fake bomb strapped to his body indiscriminately stabs and injures three people in Streatham, London.
Police shoot the attacker dead at the scene. The assailant, Sudesh Amman, had just been released from prison a week prior, having served half of a three year and four month sentence. Amman was convicted in December of 2018 for 13 separate offenses including publishing graphic terrorist videos online and stockpiling instructions on bomb making and knife attacks. Amman was released under strict conditions, including a curfew and continued surveillance by police officers as part of a “proactive counterterrorism surveillance operation.” On February 3, ISIS released a statement through Telegram claiming the attacker was a fighter for the jihadist group. Sources: Lizzie Dearden, “Streatham terror attack: Isis claims responsibility for stabbing by supporter Sudesh Amman,” Independent, February 3, 2020, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/streatham-terror-attack-isis-london-sudesh-amman-latest-a9314481.html>; William Booth and Karla Adam, “London stabbing suspect was recently released from prison, police say,” *Washington Post*, February 2, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/london-police-shoot-man-dead-in-terrorist-related-stabbing-attack/2020/02/02/c64e56fa-45db-11ea-ab15-b5df3261b710_story.html.
- ISIS releases an audio message featuring spokesman Abu Hamza al-Qurashi calling on followers around the world to launch a “new phase” focused on “fighting the Jews and reclaiming what they have stolen from the Muslims...”
He calls on ISIS fighters in Syria and Egypt’s Sinai to turn Jewish settlements into a “testing ground” for their weapons. Source: Agence France Presse and Times of Israel, “Islamic State announces ‘new phase’ of attacks: Mainly targeting Israel,” Times of Israel, January 27, 2020, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/islamic-state-announces-new-phase-of-attacks-mainly-targeting-israel/>.
- **December 12, 2019:** A Dallas man, Said Azzam Mohamad Rahim, is sentenced to 30 years in prison for trying to recruit fighters for ISIS through social media, encouraging others to carry out terrorist attacks, and lying to federal agents.
Rahim was arrested in March 2017, and used a messaging app called Zello to recruit ISIS members. Source: Mihir Zaveri, “Dallas Man Gets 30 Years for Recruiting for ISIS Through App,” *New York Times*, December 12, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/12/us/dallas-terrorism-isis-sentence.html>.
- **November 30, 2019:** ISIS militants attack a town in Garmiyan, Iraq.
The attack kills three and injures eight others. Source: “ISIS attack in Kurdistan Region kills 3 and wounds 8, including children,” Kurdistan 24, November 30, 2019, <https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/0b728b37-ba8f-4cc8-b017-565db3c3fb35>.
- **November 27, 2019:** A Brooklyn man, Zachary Clark, is arrested and charged with attempting to provide material support to ISIS and distributing bomb-making instructions.
A Brooklyn man, Zachary Clark, is arrested and charged with attempting to provide material support to ISIS and distributing bomb-making instructions. Source: “Brooklyn Man Accused of Attempting to Provide Material Support to ISIS, Encouraging Attacks in NYC,” NBC New York, November 27, 2019, <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/brooklyn-man-accused-of-attempting-to-provide-material-support-to-isis/2224967/>.
- **November 27, 2019:** Federal authorities arrest Salman Rashid of North Miami Beach and charge him with soliciting another person to commit a crime of violence.

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Rashid reached out to ISIS members to carry out attacks that would target two deans at two Florida colleges where he had been suspended or expelled. If convicted, Rashid faces up to 20 years in prison. Source: Kim Bellware, "A man plotted an ISIS attack in revenge for getting kicked out of college in Florida, authorities say," *Washington Post*, November 27, 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2019/11/26/man-plotted-an-isis-attack-revenge-getting-kicked-out-college-authorities-say/>.

- **On October 26, U.S. forces raid a compound in the village of Barisha in Syria's Idlib province near the Turkish border and engage in a firefight with ISIS forces protecting Baghdadi.**
U.S. forces chase Baghdadi into a tunnel where he detonates a suicide vest, killing himself and two of his children. Five other ISIS members are also killed during the raid. U.S. President Donald Trump confirms Baghdadi's death on October 27, telling the U.S. public that officials identified Baghdadi through a DNA test of the remains. U.S. forces also capture intelligence and data from ISIS during the raid, according to Trump. ISIS does not immediately confirm Baghdadi's death, nor is there a clear succession path. On October 31, ISIS's Amaq News Agency eulogizes Baghdadi and announces Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Quraishi, a.k.a. Amir Muhammad Sa'id Abdal-Rahman al-Mawla, as the new "caliph" and "emir of the believers." Sources: Steve Holland and Phil Stewart, "Trump hails death of 'depraved' Islamic State leader Baghdadi in U.S. raid," Reuters, October 27, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-baghdadi/trump-hails-death-of-depraved-islamic-state-leader-baghdadi-in-u-s-raid-idUSKBN1X602N>; Raja Abdulrahim and Nazih Osseiran, "Islamic State Names New Leader to Succeed Baghdadi," *Wall Street Journal*, October 31, 2019, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/islamic-state-names-new-leader-to-succeed-baghdadi-11572537863>; Rick Gladstone, "Isis Names New Leader as It Confirms Al-Bagdadi's death," *New York Times*, October 31, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/31/world/middleeast/isis-al-baghdadi-dead.html>.
- **October 21, 2019:** Jordanian authorities arrest five members of ISIS who attempted to carry out an attack against guards stationed outside the home of a former Jordanian prime minister.
The suspects are accused of conspiring to carry out terrorist attacks, including shooting at security patrols and kidnapping a Jordanian Intelligence officer. Source: Khaled Abu Toameh, "Jordan nabs ISIS cell plotting terror attacks – report," *Jerusalem Post*, October 21, 2019, <https://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Jordan-nabs-ISIS-cell-plotting-terror-attacks-report-605285>.
- **September 26, 2019:** Malaysian police arrest at least 16 people linked to ISIS who were allegedly plotting several attacks throughout the country.
According to reports, the suspects attempted to target political figures and non-Muslim groups as well as recruit Indonesians and Malaysians through social media. Source: "Malaysia arrests 16 for suspected ISIL links, plotting attacks," *Al Jazeera*, September 26, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/09/malaysia-arrests-16-suspected-isis-links-plotting-attacks-190926061120273.html>.
- **September 24, 2019:** Missouri resident, Roberto Lorenzo Hester, pleads guilty to attempting to provide material support to ISIS.
He was arrested in February 2017 when he revealed to undercover FBI agents posing as ISIS operatives that he was willing to help with an attack to target "buses, trains and a train station in Kansas City" on Presidents' Day. Hester will receive no less than 15 years in prison. Source: Melissa Leon, "Missouri man pleads guilty to role in plotting ISIS attack," *Fox News*, September 24, 2019, <https://www.foxnews.com/us/missouri-man-guilty-isis-attack-plot>.
- **September 10, 2019:** The U.S.-led coalition conducts airstrikes against an ISIS "infested" island in Iraq. Qanus Island served as a safe haven for the terror group, dually operating as a "major transit hub for [ISIS] members moving from Syria and the Jazeera desert into Mosul, Makhmour, and the Kirkuk region" of Iraq, according to Operation Inherent Resolve.
Source: Elizabeth McLaughlin, "US-led coalition hits ISIS 'infested' island in Iraq with 80,000 pounds of munitions," *ABC News*, September 10, 2019, <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/us-led-coalition-hits-isis-infested-island-iraq/story?id=65510568>.
- **September 3, 2019:** Hungarian prosecutors charge F. Hassan, a 27-year-old Syrian man, with terrorism and crimes against humanity committed as a member of ISIS in 2015.
Hassan is charged with beheading and shooting people at least 25 people who refused to join the jihadist movement in 2015 in Syria's Homs region. Source: "Hungary charges Syrian accused of beheading, killing for IS," Reuters, September 3, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-hungary-isis-charges/hungary-charges-syrian-accused-of-beheading-killing-for-is-idUSKCN1V00T5>.
- **August 29, 2019:** U.S. authorities arrest a 19-year-old Pakistani-born Queens, New York resident.
The individual reportedly texted undercover agents that he planned to conduct a terror attack in the name of ISIS in Queens. Authorities allege he was inspired by ISIS and planned to conduct a stabbing or bombing attack in his home borough. Source: Shimon Prokupez, "Authorities arrest a Queens resident for allegedly plotting an ISIS-inspired attack," *CNN*, August 29, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/29/us/alleged-isis-inspired-plot-arrest/index.html>.
- **August 19, 2019:** Five months after American-backed forces ousted ISIS from Syria, the terrorist group is gathering new strength and has been conducting guerrilla attacks across Iraq and Syria.
American and Iraqi military and intelligence officers report that ISIS has been retooling its financial networks and targeting new recruits at an allied-run tent camp. Source: Eric Schmitt, Alissa J. Rubin and Thomas Gibbons-Neff, "ISIS Is Regaining Strength in Iraq and Syria," *New York Times*, August 19, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/19/us/politics/isis-iraq-syria.html>.
- **August 1, 2019:** ISIS releases a video of its members publicly beheading a Taliban member.
According to the Middle East Media Research Institute, "ISIS considers Taliban members to be apostates who can thus be lawfully killed." Source: Rowan Scarborough, "ISIS shares shocking video of beheading as children cheer," *The Washington Times*, August 1, 2019, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2019/aug/1/isis-shares-shocking-video-beheading-children-cheer/>.
- **July 30, 2019:** ISIS calls upon its supporters on the Telegram messaging app to carry out terrorist attacks in the major Western cities of San Francisco, New York, and London.
Source: Hunter Lovell, "ISIS urges followers to carry out attacks in major Western cities," *Washington Examiner*, July 30, 2019, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/isis-urges-followers-to-carry-out-attacks-in-major-western-cities>.
- **July 23, 2019:** A Dutch court convicts a Netherlands-born man of being a member in a terrorist organization and sentences him to seven and a half years in prison.
Oussama Achraf Akhlafa fought alongside ISIS militants in Mosul and Raqqa. Source: "Dutch court convicts Islamic State militant of war crimes," Reuters, July 23, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-netherlands-syria-warcrimes/dutch-court-convicts-islamic-state-militant-of-war-crimes-idUSKCN1UI1FU>.

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- **July 21, 2019:** Hundreds of ISIS militants who escaped the March 2019 defeat of their self-declared caliphate in Syria are reported to be slipping across the border into Iraq.
 These fighters are mostly Iraqis returning home to join militant cells in rugged rural areas. Their intimate knowledge of the terrain provides them the ability to carry out sniper attacks and rudimentary roadside bombings against community leaders and security forces a few times a week. Source: Louisa Loveluck and Mustafa Salim, "Hundreds of Islamic State militants are slipping back into Iraq. Their fight isn't over." *Washington Post*, July 21, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/hundreds-of-islamic-state-militants-are-slipping-back-into-iraq-their-fight-isnt-over/2019/07/21/fbe4262-a259-11e9-a767-d7ab84aef3e9_story.html.
- **July 19, 2019:** A U.S. citizen originally from Kazakhstan and living in New York, is charged with providing and attempting to provide material support, including training, services and personnel, to ISIS according to a statement from the U.S. Department of Justice.
 From 2013 to 2018, Asainov lived in Syria where he rose through the ranks of ISIS and became in charge of training other members in the use of weapons. He faces up to 20 years in prison. Source: Elisha Fieldstadt, "U.S. citizen accused of becoming ISIS sniper and training fighters in Syria," *NBC News*, July 19, 2019, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/u-s-citizen-accused-becoming-isis-sniper-training-fighters-syria-n1031846>.
- **July 17, 2019:** ISIS releases a propaganda video calling for more attacks in Tunisia.
 It is believed that the video was filmed within the country. Source: "ISIS video calls for attacks in Tunisia," *Al Arabiya*, July 17, 2019, <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/north-africa/2019/07/17/ISIS-video-calls-for-attacks-in-Tunisia.html>.
- **July 10, 2019:** ISIS releases a video of a group of fighters in Turkey pledging allegiance to al-Baghdadi and declaring a new province in Turkey, Wilayat Turkey.
 The speaker, identified as Abu Qatada at-Turki, threatens both Turkey and the United States. The militants appear in front of the ISIS flag with RPGs, machine guns, grenades, and assault rifles. Source: Rikar Hussein, Ezel Sahinkaya, Sirwan Kajjo, and Nafisa Hoodbhoy, "IS Decentralizing Into 'Provinces' in Bid to Return," *Voice of America*, July 21, 2019, <https://www.voanews.com/extremism-watch/decentralizing-provinces-bid-return>.
- **June 3, 2019:** Saudi and Yemeni forces, aided by U.S. forces, capture Abu Osama Al-Muhajir, the accused leader of ISIS's branch in Yemen. Commandos also capture the branch's financial leader, weapons, money, and computers. Source: Jared Malsin, "Saudis Say Yemeni Islamic State Leader Captured," *Wall Street Journal*, last updated June 25, 2019, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/saudis-say-yemeni-islamic-state-leader-captured-11561482261>.
- After clashes between militants and Indian police in Indian-administered Kashmir, ISIS announces through its Amaq News Agency on May 10 the creation of a new province in India called Wilayah al-Hind.
 A militant with alleged ties to ISIS is killed during the fighting. Indian police in Kashmir dismiss the claim of a new ISIS province based in Kashmir as propaganda. On May 14, ISIS announces the creation of a Pakistan province, which claims credit for killing a Pakistani police officer earlier in the week. Pakistan's government denies that ISIS has created a base in the country. Sources: Fayaz Bukhari and Alasdair Pal, "Islamic State claims 'province' in India for first time after clash in Kashmir," *Reuters*, May 11, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-kashmir-islamic-state/islamic-state-claims-province-in-india-for-first-time-after-clash-in-kashmir-idUSKCN1SH08J>; "ISIL claims 'province' in India, officials call it 'propaganda,'" *Al Jazeera*, May 12, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/05/isil-claims-province-india-officials-call-propaganda-190512092230131.html>; Ayaz Gul, "Islamic State Announces 'Pakistan Province,'" *Voice of America*, May 15, 2019, <https://www.voanews.com/south-central-asia/islamic-state-announces-pakistan-province>.
- On April 18, ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq News Agency for a shooting attack in Kamango, Democratic Republic of Congo, that killed three.
 ISIS credits the attack to its affiliate, Wilayat Central Africa. It is the group's first attack claimed in the Congo. Later in the month, ISIS releases a video featuring Baghdadi, who calls on ISIS's supporters to seek revenge for the loss of the group's caliphate. He also praises the April 21 bombings in Sri Lanka that killed more than 250 people, calling the attack revenge for ISIS's military defeat in Syria. Baghdadi is seen in the video handling documents, including one called Wilayat Central Africa. The video is Baghdadi's first appearance in an ISIS propaganda video since declaring the caliphate in June 2014. Sources: "Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi: IS leader appears in first video in five years," *BBC News*, April 30, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-48098528>; Jon Gambrell and Krishan Francis, "Islamic State leader: Sri Lanka attack was revenge for Syria," *Associated Press*, April 29, 2019, <https://www.apnews.com/54b095fc0e894790845f8b96292e0ab6>; Robert Postings, "Islamic State recognizes new Central Africa Province, deepening ties with DR Congo militants," *Defense Post*, April 30, 2019, <https://thedefensepost.com/2019/04/30/islamic-state-new-central-africa-province/>; "Islamic State claims its first Congo attack," *Reuters*, April 18, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-congo-security/islamic-state-claims-its-first-congo-attack-idUSKCN1RU2KD>.
- The U.S.-backed SDF launch an assault on ISIS's last territorial hold in Baghuz, Syria, on March 10.
 ISIS releases a propaganda video claiming tomorrow we will be in paradise." At least 20 suicide bombers attack SDF positions during the fighting. On March 12, hundreds of ISIS fighters and their families reportedly surrender to rebel forces. The SDF declare that the battle to retake Baghuz is as "good as over." The SDF claim to have killed 112 ISIS fighters by March 13. Sources: Ellen Francis, "Islamic State counter-attacks out of final Syria enclave fall short -U.S.-backed SDF," *Reuters*, March 13, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-islamic-state/islamic-state-counter-attacks-out-of-final-syria-enclave-fall-short-u-s-backed-sdf-idUSKBN1QU0Y1>; "Islamic State launches counter attacks at Syria enclave," *Reuters*, March 13, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-islamic-state-counter-attacks-syria-enclave-idUSKBN1QU1Z5>; Rodi Said, "Hundreds surrender as Islamic State nears defeat in last enclave," *Reuters*, March 12, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-islamic-state/hundreds-surrender-as-islamic-state-nears-defeat-in-last-enclave-idUSKBN1QT0VB>; Martin Chulov, "Isis releases video of fighters in Baghuz as Kurdish forces advance," *Guardian* (London), March 12, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/12/isis-releases-video-fighters-baghuz-syria-kurdish-forces-advance>; Ellen Francis, "Islamic State loses ground in final Syria enclave, hundreds surrender," *Reuters*, March 14, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-islamic-state/u-s-backed-syria-forces-advancing-into-islamic-state-enclave-idUSKCN1QV0WB?il=0>; Jeff Seldin, "Final Battle Against IS Caliphate as 'Good as Over,'" *Voice of America*, March 12, 2019, <https://www.voanews.com/a/syria-sdf-islamic-state-baghuz/4825600.html>.
- - : On December 19, U.S. President Donald Trump tweets that ISIS has been defeated in Syria and the United States will soon remove its forces from the country.
 German, French, and British officials respond that ISIS has been pushed back in Syria but not been defeated. On January 16, 2019, an explosion in the U.S.-patrolled town of Manbij kills at least 16, including four U.S. citizens. ISIS claims responsibility. Afterward, U.S. Vice President Mike Pence repeats that ISIS "has been defeated." Sources: "Germany, France, UK: 'Islamic State' not defeated in Syria," *Deutsche Welle*, December 20, 2018, <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-france-uk-islamic-state-not-defeated-in-syria/a-46815250>; Bassem Mroue, "2 US service members, 2 US civilians killed in Syria blast," *Associated Press*, January 16, 2019, <https://www.apnews.com/0a8f9c71d59c4e8e8df33d0470654bfc>.
- - : On May 1, the U.S.-led coalition begins Operation Roundup to eliminate ISIS's remaining presence in Iraq and Syria.
 In June, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) launch a ground offensive against ISIS targets in coordination with coalition and Iraqi airstrikes. By December 2018, ISIS retains only a small foothold in the Syrian town of Baghuz along the Syrian-Iraqi border. Sources: Falih Hassan and Rod Nordland, "Battered ISIS Keeps Grip on Last Piece

of Territory for Over a Year,” *New York Times*, December 9, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/09/world/middleeast/isis-territory-syria-iraq.html>; “November 6: Operation Roundup targets ISIS remnants,” U.S. Central Command, November 6, 2018, <http://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/1683075/november-6-operation-roundup-targets-isis-remnants/>; “Coalition forces, partners initiate second phase of Operation Roundup,” U.S. Central Command, June 3, 2018, <https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/1538892/coalition-forces-partners-initiate-second-phase-of-operation-roundup/>.

- **- :** On March 12, ISIS fighters attack the rebel-held al-Qadam neighborhood of southern Damascus. ISIS reportedly takes control of 25 percent of Qadam.
On March 13, the Syrian government evacuates approximately 300 rebel fighters from Damascus to the Idlib province. The rebels turn their remaining territory over to the Syrian government, which takes control of approximately 70 percent of Qadam. ISIS attacks rebels during the evacuation. On March 14, ISIS forces attack Syrian army positions and gain ground in southern Damascus after several days of fighting. At least 62 Syrian army soldiers are killed. The Syrian army sends thousands of reinforcements to southern Damascus in April to force ISIS from Qadam and surrounding areas, including the nearby Yarmouk Palestinian refugee camp, which ISIS had occupied since 2015. On May 18, the Syrian government reportedly reaches a truce with the militants. On May 19, the government begins evacuating ISIS fighters in buses under a reported deal for the government to retake full control of southern Damascus, though Syria denies any deal exists. Sources: Leith Aboufadel, “Breaking: ISIS captures several areas in southern Damascus after launching new offensive,” *Al Masdar News*, March 13, 2018, <https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/breaking-isis-captures-several-areas-in-southern-damascus-after-launching-new-offensive/>; Leith Aboufadel, “Breaking: Syrian Army takes control of 70 percent of southern Damascus district despite ISIS attack,” *Al Masdar News*, March 13, 2018, <https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/breaking-syrian-army-takes-control-of-70-percent-of-southern-damascus-district-despite-isis-attack/>; “Syrian army evacuates militants from small rebel pocket near capital,” *Reuters*, March 13, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-qadam/syrian-army-evacuates-militants-from-small-rebel-pocket-near-capital-idUSKCN1GP1ST>; Angus McDowall, “Islamic State takes Damascus area after rebels pull out - monitor,” *Reuters*, March 20, 2018, <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-damascus/islamic-state-takes-damascus-area-after-rebels-pull-out-monitor-idUKKBN1GW0Q8>; Agence France-Presse, “62 regime fighters dead in ISIS attack on Syria capital,” *Al Arabiya*, March 21, 2018, <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2018/03/21/62-regime-fighters-dead-in-ISIS-attack-on-Syria-capital.html>; Leith Aboufadel, “Syrian Army sends more troops to southern Damascus, thousands of soldiers surround area,” *Al Masdar News*, April 15, 2018, <https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/syrian-army-sends-more-troops-to-southern-damascus-thousands-of-soldiers-surround-area/>.
- **January 4, 2018:** ISIS’s Sinai affiliate releases a video declaring war on the Palestinian terror group Hamas while showing the execution of a Hamas member.
Source: Loveday Morris, “Islamic State declares war on rival Hamas with video execution,” *Washington Post*, January 4, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/01/04/islamic-state-throws-down-gauntlet-to-rival-hamas-with-video-execution/?utm_term=.c8702d61470e.
- **December 20, 2017:** ISIS issues a 17-point plan for supporters to carry out lone-wolf attacks on Christmas.
The guide includes calling for derailing trains, burning churches, and a detailed bomb-making plan. Source: “ISIS issues 17-point plan to help lone wolves carry out attacks at Christmas days after poster showed a fanatic about to behead Santa in London,” *Daily Mail*, December 20, 2017, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5198085/ISIS-issues-chilling-17-point-plan-help-lone-wolves.html>.
- **December 14, 2017:** ISIS releases a new propaganda poster aimed at the United States and New York Police Commissioner James O’Neill.
The poster threatens “more Ops in your land, until the final hour and we will burn you with the flames of war.” Source: Katherine Lam, “Pro-ISIS poster threatens more New York City attacks, beheading of NYPD Commissioner James O’Neill,” *Fox News*, December 14, 2017, <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/12/14/pro-isis-poster-threatens-more-new-york-city-attacks-beheading-nypd-commissioner-james-oneill.html>.
- **December 12, 2017:** ISIS forces launch a new offensive against Syrian, Iranian, and Hezbollah forces in Deir Ezzor, Syria. ISIS media claims to capture up to eight villages and kill as many as 41 pro-regime fighters.
Source: “After Putin’s visit to Syria, the fighting escalates east of Deir Ezzor and ISIS increases its attacks against the regime forces west of the Euphrates,” SOHR, December 12, 2017, <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=80481>.
- **November 25, 2017:** Militants carrying the ISIS flag carry out a bomb and gun attack on the al Rawdah mosque in Bir al-Abed in Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula, killing at least 305 people and wounding at least 128 others in the deadliest attack in the country’s history.
Although Egyptian authorities suspect ISIS’s Wilayat Sinai is responsible, the group does not claim responsibility. Sources: Hamdi Alkshali et al., “Egypt mosque attack death toll climbs to above 300,” *CNN*, November 25, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/11/25/africa/egypt-sinai-mosque-massacre/index.html>; Charlene Gubash et al., “Egypt mosque attack: Death toll rises, officials say militants brandished ISIS flag,” *NBC News*, November 25, 2017, <https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/egypt-reels-death-toll-rises-mosque-attack-which-militants-brandished-n823871>; Omar Fahmy and Patrick Markey, “Gunmen in Egypt mosque attack carried Islamic State flag, prosecutor says,” *Reuters*, November 24, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-security/gunmen-in-egypt-mosque-attack-carried-islamic-state-flag-prosecutor-says-idUSKBN1DO1AN>.
- **November 21, 2017:** Iranian President Hassan Rouhani announces that ISIS has been completely driven out of Syria.
The same day, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi declares a military victory over ISIS in Iraq following the recapture of Rawa, the last ISIS-held town in the country, the previous week. Despite these announcements, ISIS launches a new offensive on the same day targeting the rebel group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham in Hama, Syria. Sources: Alex Lockie, “ISIS has been militarily defeated in Iraq and Syria,” *Business Insider*, November 21, 2017, <http://www.businessinsider.com/isis-military-defeat-iraq-syria-2017-11>; *Weekly Conflict Summary November 16-22, 2017*, The Carter Center, November 22, 2017, https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/conflict_resolution/syria-conflict/weekly-conflict-summary-2017.11.22.pdf.
- **November 10, 2017:** ISIS is driven out of its last stronghold in Iraq, the town of Rawa.
Source: Alex Lockie, “ISIS has been militarily defeated in Iraq and Syria,” *Business Insider*, November 21, 2017, <http://www.businessinsider.com/isis-military-defeat-iraq-syria-2017-11>.
- **November 3, 2017:** ISIS is driven from Deir Ezzor, its last major stronghold in Syria, by Syrian troops and allied forces.
Source: Hamdi Alkshali et al., “ISIS ousted from last major city in Syria, state media reports,” *CNN*, November 3, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/11/03/middleeast/syria-isis-deir-ezzor/index.html>.
- **October 17, 2017:** American-backed forces in Syria announce that they have successfully liberated Raqqa from ISIS control.
Source: Anne Barnard and Hwaida Saad, “Raqqa, ISIS ‘Capital,’ Is Captured, U.S.-Backed Forces Say,” *New York Times*, October 17, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/17/world/middleeast/isis-syria-raqqa.html>.

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- **October 4, 2017:** Gunmen and a suicide attacker kill at least four people and injure almost 40 others in an attack on a court complex in Misrata, Libya.
 ISIS claims responsibility. Source: Ahmed Elumami, "Islamic State claims deadly attack on court in Libya's Misrata," Reuters, October 4, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security/islamic-state-claims-deadly-attack-on-court-in-libyas-misrata-idUSKCN1C91CU>.
- **October 2, 2017:** ISIS claims responsibility for the October 1, 2017, mass shooting in Las Vegas that killed at least 58 people, claiming that attacker Stephen Paddock was a "soldier of the Islamic State."
 Officials find this claim dubious, with the FBI stating that no links between Paddock and ISIS were found. Source: Tom Batchelor, "Las Vegas shooting: FBI says massacre has no connection to terrorism after Isis claims responsibility," *Independent* (London), October 2, 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/las-vegas-shooting-isis-terror-claims-fbi-no-connection-links-latest-news-a7979276.html>.
- **August 17, 2017 - August 18, 2017:** On August 17, a van crashes into a crowd of people on the Las Ramblas pedestrian walkway in Barcelona. The following morning, five attackers attempt to ram people in the resort city of Cambrils south of Barcelona, then begin to stab passersby before they are killed by police. Altogether, 16 people are killed and at least 130 others are wounded in both attacks. ISIS claims responsibility for both attacks. Source: "Barcelona attack: German woman dies in hospital," BBC News, August 27, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-41066735>; Jon Sharman, "Spain attacks: Isis claims responsibility for Cambrils car rampage after Barcelona atrocity," *Independent* (London), August 19, 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/spain-attacks-isis-claims-responsibility-cambrils-barcelona-terror-car-rampage-latest-a7901731.html>; Giles Tremlett et al., "Spain terror cell planned Barcelona bombing rampage," *Guardian* (London), August 18, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/aug/18/accidental-blast-thwarts-huge-bomb-attack-by-spain-terror-cell>; Andrés González et al., "Barcelona van attacker may still be alive, on the run: police," Reuters, August 17, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-barcelona/barcelona-van-attacker-may-still-be-alive-on-the-run-police-idUSKCN1AX1W6>.
- **August 12, 2017:** A suicide bomber on a motorcycle carries out an attack on a Pakistani army truck in Quetta, Pakistan, killing 15 people and injuring at least 40 others.
 ISIS claims responsibility. Source: Salman Masood, "ISIS Claims Suicide Bombing That Killed at Least 15 in Pakistan," *New York Times*, August 13, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/13/world/asia/pakistan-suicide-bomber-motorbike.html>.
- **July 10, 2017:** The Iraqi government declares victory against ISIS in Mosul after an almost-nine-month battle to recapture the city.
 Hundreds of Iraqi civilians are believed to have died in the fighting, while thousands more are wounded, according to authorities. Sources: "5 Things to Know About Mosul," Associated Press, July 10, 2017, <https://apnews.com/235d1fc9a02e4201a9532b0a11c924d7/5-Things-to-know-about-Iraqs-Mosul>; Isabel Coles and Stephen Kalin, "Iraqi PM declares victory over Islamic State in Mosul," Reuters, July 10, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul-idUSKBN19V105?il=0>.
- **June 21, 2017:** ISIS blows up Mosul's historic Great Mosque of al-Nuri, where Baghdadi had declared his caliphate in 2014.
 ISIS blames the mosque's destruction on U.S. warplanes, which U.S. officials vehemently deny. Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi calls ISIS's destruction of the over-800-year-old mosque "an official announcement of their defeat." Source: Hamdi Alkshali, Barbara Starr, and Phil Gast, "US, Iraq say ISIS blew up famous Mosul mosque," CNN, June 22, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/06/21/world/mosul-iraq-mosque-destroyed/index.html>.
- **June 6, 2017:** U.S.-backed Syrian and Kurdish forces begin an offensive to recapture the Syrian city of Raqqa, ISIS's de facto capital.
 Source: Anne Barnard, "U.S.-Backed Forces Begin Assault on Raqqa, ISIS Stronghold in Syria," *New York Times*, June 6, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/06/world/middleeast/us-backed-forces-begin-assault-on-raqqa.html>.
- **May 26, 2017:** Gunmen attack two buses and a truck carrying Coptic Christians to the monastery of St. Samuel the Confessor south of Cairo, killing 29 people.
 It is ISIS's first attack against a monastery. Source: Bijan Hosseini, Angela Dewan, and Jason Hanna, "Egypt shooting: ISIS claims massacre of 29," CNN, May 27, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/05/27/middleeast/egypt-shooting-coptic-christians-isis-claim/>.
- **April 9, 2017:** A bomb explodes at St. George's Church in Tanta, Egypt, while a suicide bomber targets St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Alexandria.
 The bombings kill a combined 45 people. Source: Maggie Michael, "Attacks test Egypt's president who orders state of emergency," Associated Press, April 10, 2017, <https://apnews.com/4b96a168a56441e2b66c41b797ef849e/egypts-christians-bury-dead-after-church-bombings>.
- **March 8, 2017:** ISIS operatives launch a suicide bomb and gun attack at a hospital in Kabul, killing 30 people.
 Source: Mirwais Harooni, "Over 30 killed as gunmen dressed as medics attack Afghan military hospital," Reuters, March 8, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-blast-idUSKBN16F0GP>.
- **February 15, 2017:** Iraq launches an offensive to retake western Mosul from ISIS.
 Source: Rukmini Callimachi and Fahih Hassan, "Iraq Starts Offensive to Retake Western Mosul From ISIS," *New York Times*, February 19, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/19/world/middleeast/iraq-starts-offensive-to-retake-western-mosul-from-isis.html>.
- **February 16, 2017:** ISIS suicide bombers attack an 800-year old Sufi Muslim shrine in Sehwan, Pakistan, killing at least 88 people—including 24 children—and wounding at least 200 others.
 That same day, a car bomb planted by ISIS kills at least 48 people and wounds 60 more at an outside market in the southwestern al-Bayaa neighborhood of Baghdad. Sources: Lizzie Dearden, "Pakistan kills 100 terrorists in crackdown after Isis shrine bombing," *Independent* (London), February 17, 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/pakistan-isis-shrine-bombing-attack-terrorist-kills-latest-sehwan-sufi-shrine-death-toll-taliban-a7585901.html>; Beth McKernan, "Baghdad bombing: At least 48 killed in 'Isis attack' on Iraqi market," *Independent* (London), February 16, 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/baghdad-bombing-car-isis-attack-market-iraq-death-toll-latest-a7584046.html>.
- **January 1, 2017:** A 34-year-old Uzbek national opens fire at a nightclub in Istanbul, Turkey, killing 39 people and injuring 70 others.
 ISIS claims responsibility. Turkish officials believe that the perpetrator had contact with ISIS militants inside Syria. Sources: "Istanbul new year Reina nightclub attack 'leaves 39 dead,'" BBC News, January 1, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38481521>; Rengin Arslan, "Abdulkadir Masharipov: Who is Istanbul gun attack suspect?," BBC News, January 17, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38648350>.

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- **December 19, 2016:** A 40-year-old Tunisian ISIS sympathizer drives a truck through a Christmas market in Berlin, Germany, killing 12 people and injuring 48 more.
 ISIS claims responsibility. Source: Samuel Osborne, "Berlin attack: Isis claims responsibility for Christmas market massacre that killed 12," *Intendent* (London), <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/berlin-isis-claim-responsibility-christmas-market-latest-updates-a7487746.html>.
- **November 6, 2016:** Syrian rebel groups begin an offensive to retake Raqqa from ISIS.
 Sources: Rodi Said, "U.S.-backed Syrian alliance declares attack on Islamic State in Raqqa," Reuters, November 6, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/11/07/middleeast/raqqa-syria-operation-explainer/>.
- **October 24, 2016:** ISIS claims responsibility for a suicide bombing at a cadet training center in Quetta, Pakistan.
 The attack leaves 60 people dead and more than 100 others injured. Source: Milo Comerford, "THE QUETTA ATTACK: IS ISIS EXTENDING INTO PAKISTAN?" *Newsweek*, October 25, 2016, <http://www.newsweek.com/quetta-attack-isis-extending-pakistan-513417>.
- **October 17, 2016:** Iraqi soldiers and allied forces begin the battle to retake Mosul from ISIS.
 Source: Nick Paton Walsh, Max Blau, Emanuella Grinberg and Tim Hume, "Battle for Mosul begins with gunfire and car bombs," CNN, October 17, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/10/17/middleeast/mosul-isis-operation-begins-iraq/index.html>.
- **August 12, 2016:** The U.S. military confirms the recent death of ISIS's leader in Wilayat Khorasan, Hafiz Saeed Khan.
 Source: Jibrán Ahmad and Yeganeh Torbati, "U.S. drone kills Islamic State leader for Afghanistan, Pakistan: officials," Reuters, August 13, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-islamicstate-idUSKCN10N21L>.
- **August 4, 2016:** Egypt's air force reportedly kills the leader of Wilayat Sinai, Abu Dua al-Ansari.
 Source: "Leader of ISIS in Egypt's Sinai killed by air force, sources confirm," Fox News, August 4, 2016, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2016/08/04/leader-isis-in-egypts-sinai-killed-by-air-force-sources-confirm.html>.
- **August 1, 2016:** The U.S. military begins a new airstrike campaign against ISIS in Libya.
 Source: Helene Cooper, "U.S. Conducts Airstrikes Against ISIS in Libya," *New York Times*, August 1, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/02/us/politics/us-conducts-airstrikes-against-isis-in-libya.html>.
- **May 19, 2016:** The State Department designates ISIS's Libya branch as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO).
 The State Department simultaneously designates ISIS's Yemen and Saudi Arabia branches—as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs) pursuant to Executive Order 13224. Source: "Terrorist Designations of ISIL-Yemen, ISIL-Saudi Arabia, and ISIL-Libya," U.S. Department of State, May 19, 2016, <http://m.state.gov/md257388.htm>.
- **July 27, 2016:** A bombing carried out by ISIS militants kills 44 in the Syrian Kurdish-controlled city of Qamishli.
 Source: "Syria: Deadly IS blast rocks Kurdish city of Qamishli," BBC News, July 27, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36902604>.
- **July 26, 2016:** ISIS operatives slit the throat of a priest in a church in Normandy, France.
 Source: Kim Willsher, "France in shock again after Isis murder of priest in Normandy," *Guardian* (London), July 26, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/26/france-shock-second-isis-attack-12-days>.
- **July 18, 2016 - July 24, 2016:** ISIS claims responsibility for two attacks in Germany.
 In the first attack, on July 18, a 17-year-old Afghan refugee armed with a knife and ax injures four people—all of them from Hong Kong—on a train traveling from Treuchlingen to Würzburg. In the second attack, on July 24, a 27-year-old Syrian refugee carried out a suicide bombing, injuring 12 people, outside of a music festival in Ansbach. Sources: "Germany axe attack: Assault on train in Wuerzburg injures HK family," BBC News, July 19, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36827725>; Niraj Chokshi, "Syrian Refugee Blows Himself Up at German Music Festival, Wounding 12," *New York Times*, July 24, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/25/world/europe/ansbach-germany-explosion-music-festival.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=second-column-region®ion=top-news&WT.nav=top-news>.
- **July 14, 2016:** A Tunisian-French citizen named Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel drives a truck through a crowd celebrating Bastille Day in Nice, France.
 The attack leaves 84 people dead and more than 300 wounded. ISIS claims responsibility. Source: Alissa J. Rubin and Aurelien Breeden, "ISIS Claims Truck Attacker in France Was Its 'Soldier,'" *New York Times*, July 16, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/17/world/europe/isis-nice-france-attack.html>.
- **July 3, 2016:** ISIS militants detonate a minivan packed with explosive in central Baghdad, killing at least 292 and wounding 200 others.
 Sources: Fahih Hassan, Tim Arango and Omar al-Jawoshi, "Bombing Kill More Than 140 in Baghdad," *New York Times*, July 3, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/04/world/middleeast/baghdad-bombings.html>; Tim Hume, "Death toll from devastating ISIS truck bomb in Baghdad rises to nearly 300," CNN, July 7, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/07/07/middleeast/iraq-baghdad-bomb-toll-rises/index.html>.
- **July 1, 2016:** ISIS operatives kill 20 people in a café in Dhaka, Bangladesh, after taking them hostage.
 Andrew Marszal and Chris Graham, "20 hostages killed in 'Isil' attack on Dhaka restaurant popular with foreigners," *Telegraph* (London), July 2, 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/07/01/gunmen-attack-restaurant-in-diplomatic-quarter-of-bangladeshi-ca/>.
- **June 28, 2016:** Three suicide bombers attack Turkey's Ataturk international airport, killing 45 people and wounding more than 230.
 Turkish authorities allege ISIS leadership was involved in planning the attack. On the same day, ISIS militants carry out the group's first successful attack in Malaysia, launching a grenade at a nightclub in Kuala Lumpur. The attack wounds eight. Sources: Associated Press, "Istanbul Airport Attack Death Toll Rises to 45, Dozens Still Hospitalized," NBC News, July 2, 2016, <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/istanbul-ataturk-airport-attack/istanbul-airport-attack-death-toll-rises-45-dozens-still-hospitalized-n602946>; Faith Karimi, Steve Almasy and Gul Tuysuz, "ISIS leadership involved in Istanbul attack planning, Turkish source says," CNN, June 30, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/06/30/europe/turkey-istanbul-ataturk-airport-attack/>; Marc Lourdes, "Islamic State launches first successful attack in Malaysia," CNN, July 4, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/07/04/homepage2/islamic-state-attack-malaysia/>.
- **June 26, 2016:** Iraqi forces retake Fallujah.

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Source: Tamer el-Ghobashy and Ghassan Adnan, "Iraqi Forces Take Full Control of Fallujah From Islamic State," *Wall Street Journal*, June 26, 2016, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/iraqi-city-of-fallujah-fully-liberated-from-islamic-state-iraqicommander-says-1466934423>.

- **June 13, 2016:** Larossi Abballa stabs to death two married French police officers, and pledges allegiance to ISIS directly after the attack. ISIS officially claims responsibility.
Source: Alissa J. Rubin, "ISIS Claims Responsibility for Killing of French Police Officer," *New York Times*, June 13, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/14/world/europe/france-stabbing-police-officer-magnanville.html>.
- **June 12, 2016:** In the deadliest mass shooting on American soil, U.S. citizen Omar Mateen murders 49 and wounds 53 at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida.
While carrying out the attack, Mateen calls 911 and pledges allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Later on June 12, ISIS claims responsibility for the shooting, writing on its Amaq news agency Telegram channel that "an Islamic State fighter" had "targeted a nightclub for homosexuals...." On June 13, ISIS releases another claim of responsibility on its official Al Bayan radio station, referring to Mateen as "one of the soldiers of the caliphate in America." Sources: "Orlando gay nightclub shooting: 50 killed, suspect is Omar Mateen," BBC News, June 12, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-36512308>; Kevin Sullivan, Ellen Nakashima, Matt Zapotosky and Mark Berman, "Orlando shooter posted messages on Facebook pledging allegiance to the leader of ISIS and vowing more attacks," *Washington Post*, June 15, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/investigation-into-orlando-shooting-continues-no-impending-charges-expected/2016/06/15/c3eccf5e-3333-11e6-8758-d58e76e11b12_story.html; Jared Malsin, "What We Know About ISIS's Role in the Orlando Shooting," *Time*, June 12, 2016, <http://time.com/4365507/orlando-shooting-isis-claims-responsibility-terror/>; "IS Calls Orlando Nightclub Shooter 'One of the Soldiers of the Caliphate in America,'" SITE Intelligence, June 13, 2016, <https://news.siteintelgroup.com/Jihadist-News/is-calls-orlando-nightclub-shooter-one-of-the-soldiers-of-the-caliphate-in-america.html>; Rukmini Callimachi, "ISIS Claims Responsibility for Orlando Attack in Radio Statement," *New York Times*, June 13, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/live/orlando-nightclub-shooting-live-updates/isis-radio-station/>.
- **June 8, 2016:** Two Palestinian terrorists, allegedly inspired by ISIS, kill four Israeli civilians and wound 15 at a food mall in Tel Aviv.
Sources: Yaniv Kubovich, Ido Efrati and Barak Ravid, "Four Killed, Six Wounded in Shooting Attack at Tel Aviv Shopping Center," *Haaretz* (Tel Aviv), June 8, 2016, <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.723941>; William Booth, "Israel says Tel Aviv attackers were 'inspired' by ISIS — and planned to dip knives in rat poison," *Washington Post*, July 4, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/07/04/israel-says-tel-aviv-attackers-were-inspired-by-isis-and-dipped-their-knives-in-rat-poison/>.
- **June 7, 2016:** ISIS claims responsibility for its first car bombing in the largely Shiite city of Karbala, Iraq.
The attack leaves 10 people dead and 25 wounded.
- **June 5, 2016:** ISIS's Amaq News Agency claims the killing of a Christian in Northwestern Bangladesh and a Buddhist monk in the country's southeast.
Source: "Amaq Reports IS Fighters Killing Christian in Bonpara in Northwestern Bangladesh, Buddhist in Southeast," SITE Intelligence, June 5, 2016, <https://news.siteintelgroup.com/Jihadist-News/amaq-reports-is-fighters-killing-christian-in-bonpara-in-northwestern-bangladesh-buddhist-in-southeast.html>.
- **May 20, 2016 - May 31, 2016:** Iraqi forces—backed by Iranian militias in Iraq—push to retake Fallujah.
Source: Tim Arango, "Iran-led Push to Retake Fallujah From ISIS Worries U.S.," *New York Times*, May 28, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/29/world/middleeast/iran-led-push-to-retake-falluja-from-isis-worries-us.html>.
- **May 3, 2016:** A U.S. Navy SEAL identified as Charlie Keating IV is killed in a firefight with ISIS militants in northern Iraq.
Source: "US Navy SEAL killed by ISIS in Iraq firefight identified," Fox News, May 3, 2016, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2016/05/03/us-service-member-killed-in-northern-iraq.html>.
- **April 7, 2016:** ISIS militants kidnap over 300 cement workers from a cement plant near Damascus, Syria.
Source: Greg Botelho and Mohammed Tawfeeq, "ISIS captures hundreds of Syrian cement factory workers, report says," CNN, April 7, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/04/07/middleeast/syria-war/>.
- ISIS executes at least 250 women for refusing to enter into temporary marriages with ISIS militants.
Source: Vishakha Sonawane, "ISIS Executes At Least 250 Women For Refusing 'Temporary Marriage' In Iraq's Mosul," *International Business Times*, April 24, 2016, <http://www.ibtimes.com/isis-executes-least-250-women-refusing-temporary-marriage-iraqs-mosul-2357113>.
- **March 25, 2016:** The Pentagon announces the death of top ISIS finance minister Abd al-Rahman Mustafa al-Qaduli as a result of a targeted airstrike earlier that week.
Source: Michael S. Schmidt and Mark Mazzetti, "A Top ISIS Leader Is Killed in an Airstrike, the Pentagon Says," *New York Times*, March 25, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/26/world/middleeast/abd-al-rahman-mustafa-al-qaduli-isis-reported-killed-in-syria.html>.
- Smugglers are increasingly requested to ship ISIS fighters from Libya to Europe, an unnamed smuggler tells CNN.
Source: Nick Paton Walsh, "ISIS on Europe's doorstep," CNN, May 26, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/05/26/middleeast/libya-isis-europe-doorstep/>.
- **February 10, 2016 - February 15, 2016:** U.S. airstrikes target ISIS training camps in Libya.
Source: "Pentagon: U.S. warplanes hit ISIS training camp in Libya," CBS News, last updated February 19, 2016, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/us-warplanes-hit-isis-targets-in-libya-official-says/>.
- **January 10, 2016:** U.S. airstrikes target ISIS banks in Mosul, destroying tens of millions of dollars of cash.
Source: Jim Miklaszewski and Corky Siemaszko, "Millions in ISIS Cash Destroyed in U.S. Airstrike," NBC News, January 11, 2016, <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/millions-isis-cash-destroyed-u-s-airstrike-n494261>.
- **January 5, 2016:** ISIS releases a video in which a British-accented man, believed to be [Abu Rumaysah](#), threatens the United Kingdom.
Source: Dana Ford, "Reports identify British-sounding militant in new ISIS video," CNN, January 5, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/01/05/middleeast/isis-propaganda-video-british-militant/>.
- **January 1, 2016 - January 10, 2016:** ISIS launches counterattacks on Iraqi soldiers in Ramadi.

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Source: Pat St. Claire, "ISIS suicide bombers attack Iraqi forces at base near Ramadi," CNN, January 3, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/01/02/middleeast/iraq-ramadi-isis-suicide-attack-on-army-base/>.

- **December 26, 2015:** Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi releases an audio message in which he claims that ISIS is thriving. He mocks the U.S. for refusing to put boots on the ground. Source: Elizabeth Chuck, "ISIS Leader Says Group Is Getting Stronger in Purported New Message," NBC News, December 26, 2015, <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/isis-leader-says-group-getting-stronger-purported-new-message-n486201>.
- **December 20, 2015 - December 27, 2015:** Iraqi forces retake Ramadi.
 On December 20, the Iraqi military asks residents of Ramadi to leave the ISIS-controlled Iraqi city. It is a suspected indication that Iraqi forces will soon try to retake the city. The next day, the Iraqi army chief of staff Lt. General Othman al-Ghanemi tells state TV: "There is an ongoing operation to control a sector in preparation of the onslaught on the [Ramadi] city center within the coming hours, God willing." Within four days, Iraqi troops have consolidated their positions on Ramadi before their "final push" against ISIS. On the 27th, The Iraqi army announces its capture of Ramadi from ISIS. Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi declares that the Iraqi army will defeat ISIS in 2016. Sources: "Iraq military asks residents of ISIS-controlled Ramadi to leave city," Reuters, December 20, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-ramadi-idUSKBN0U30K120151220>; "Iraqi army to start attack on ISIS-held Ramadi city in coming hours: Commander," Reuters, December 21, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-ramadi-idUSKBN0U4ISA20151221>; "Iraqi forces consolidate position in Ramadi ahead of final push against Islamic State," Reuters, December 25, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-ramadi-idUSKBN0U80R320151226>; "Iraqi army declares first major victory over Islamic State in Ramadi," Reuters, December 27, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/mideast-crisis-iraq-ramadi-idUSKBN0UA0DH20151228>; Stephen Kalin and Maher Chmaytelli, "Iraq PM vows to defeat ISIS in 2016 after army's first major victory," Reuters, December 28, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-ramadi-idUSKBN0UB0TW20151228>.
- **December 4, 2015:** German Parliament votes to join conduct airstrikes against ISIS.
 Source: Alastair Jamieson, "Germany Votes to Join U.S.-Led Fight Against ISIS in Syria," NBC News, December 4, 2015, <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/germany-votes-join-u-s-led-fight-against-isis-syria-n474161>.
- **December 3, 2015:** Britain Parliament votes to conduct airstrikes against ISIS in Syria.
 Source: Associated Press, "Britain joins fight against ISIS, launches airstrikes in Syria," Fox News, December 3, 2015, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2015/12/03/uk-lawmakers-vote-to-launch-airstrikes-against-isis-in-syria/>.
- **December 3, 2015:** ISIS releases a video purporting to depict the beheading of a Russian spy.
 The executioner addresses Russians, saying, "You will not find peace in your homes. We will kill your sons ... for each son you killed here. And we will destroy your homes for each home you destroyed here." Source: Greg Botelho, "ISIS video claims beheading of Russian spy, threatens Russian people," CNN, December 3, 2015, http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/02/middleeast/isis-russian-beheading-claim/index.html?eref=rss_latest.
- **December 2, 2015:** Two shooters kill 14 at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, California.
 The perpetrators, a husband and wife named Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik, are shot dead. The shooters were reportedly ISIS sympathizers. Malik pledged allegiance to ISIS via Facebook while carrying out the attack. Farook's later father told an Italian newspaper: "[Farook] said he shared the ideology of (ISIS leader Abu Bakr) al-Baghdadi to create an Islamic state...." The shooting represents the deadliest terror attack on U.S. soil since 9/11. Sources: "San Bernardino shooter pledged allegiance to ISIS on Facebook during shooting," Fox 59, December 4, 2015, <http://fox59.com/2015/12/04/san-bernardino-shooter-pledged-allegiance-to-isis-in-facebook-post-as-shooting-was-happening/>; Faith Karimi, Catherine E. Schoichet, and Dana Ford, "San Bernardino shooters were radicalized 'for quite some time,' FBI says," CNN, December 7, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/07/us/san-bernardino-shooting/>; "San Bernardino shooting updates," *Los Angeles Times*, December 9, 2015, <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-san-bernardino-shooting-live-updates-htmlstory.html>.
- **November 18, 2015:** ISIS releases a propaganda video threatening New York City in the wake of the Paris attacks.
 A voice in the video says, "...What's coming next will be far worse and more bitter." Source: Shawn Cohen, Isabel Vincent and Tina Moore, "ISIS threatens NYC in new propaganda video," *New York Post*, November 18, 2015, <http://nypost.com/2015/11/18/isis-threatens-nyc-in-new-propaganda-video/>.
- **November 13, 2015:** Eight assailants carry out multiple simultaneous attacks in Paris, killing 130 and seriously injuring more than 350.
 French President Francois Hollande labels the attacks an "act of war" and orders a national state of emergency. ISIS claims responsibility. Source: "Paris attacks: What happened on the night," BBC News, accessed December 9, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34818994>.
- **November 12, 2015:** ISIS claims responsibility for a suicide bombing in Beirut that kills at least 43 and wounds more than 200.
 The group says it targeted Shiite Muslims in a Hezbollah-controlled area. Source: Anne Barnard and Hwaida Saad, "ISIS Claims Responsibility for Blasts That Killed Dozens in Beirut," *New York Times*, November 12, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/13/world/middleeast/lebanon-explosions-southern-beirut-hezbollah.html?_r=0.
- **November 9, 2015:** The Egyptian government announces it has killed the "most dangerous leader" of ISIS's Sinai province, Ashraf Ali Ali Hassanein al-Gharabali.
 Source: "Egypt says top terrorist in ISIS-linked group killed in shootout," CNN, November 9, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/11/09/middleeast/egypt-kills-terrorist-isis-sinai/>.
- **October 31, 2015:** A Russian airliner crashes in Egypt's Sinai province, killing all 224 people on board.
 ISIS's Sinai province claims responsibility, and U.S. intelligence suggests the crash was caused by a bomb planted on the airplane by ISIS. Sources: Barbara Starr and Catherine E. Schoichet, "Russian plane crash: U.S. intel suggests ISIS bomb brought down jet," CNN, November 4, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/11/04/africa/russian-plane-crash-egypt-sinai/>; "Russian plane crash: investigation into cause begins - as it happened," *Guardian* (London), last modified November 2, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2015/oct/31/russian-passenger-plane-crashes-in-egypts-sinai-live>.
- **October 21, 2015:** Canada's Prime Minister-elect Justin Trudeau says he will follow through on his policy to halt Canadian airstrikes against ISIS.
 Trudeau insists Canada will stay active in the U.S.-led coalition in a humanitarian capacity. Source: Jethro Mullen, "Trudeau to Obama: Canada to pull out of bombing campaign against ISIS," October 21, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/10/21/middleeast/syria-iraq-isis-fight/>.
- **October 7, 2015:** The Iraqi military launches on operation to reclaim Ramadi.
 Source: M. Alex Johnson and Courtney Kube, "Iraqi Military Launches Operation to Retake Ramadi From ISIS," NBC News, October 7, 2015, <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/iraqi-military-launches-operation-retake-ramadi-isis-n439746>.

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- **October 6, 2015:** U.S. counterterrorism officials investigate how ISIS managed to obtain a slew of Toyota vehicles.
The Counter Extremism Project (CEP) reached out to Toyota to investigate the phenomenon after recognizing a number of Toyota trucks in ISIS's control. Sources: Matthew Mosak and Brian Ross, "US Officials Ask How ISIS Got So Many Toyota Trucks," ABC News, October 6, 2015, <http://abcnews.go.com/International/us-officials-isis-toyota-trucks/story?id=34266539>.
- **October 3, 2015:** In a propaganda move, ISIS unveils two theme parks in its territory: one in Raqqa, Syria, and the other in Fallujah, Iraq.
Source: Tom Wyke, "Welcome to the ISIS fanatics' fairground: Brutal jihadi group unveil two new theme parks to celebrate Eid in Iraq and Syria," *Daily Mail* (London), October 4, 2015, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3258899/Welcome-ISIS-fanatics-fairground-Brutal-jihadi-group-unveil-two-new-theme-parks-celebrate-Eid-Iraq-Syria.html>.
- **September 16, 2015 - September 17, 2015:** ISIS releases five videos amid the refugee crisis in Europe, urging Syrian and other refugees to leave Europe and travel to the self-proclaimed Islamic State.
Sources: Aaron Y. Zelin, "New video message from The Islamic State: 'A Message To the Refugees of the Abode of Infidelity – Wil'ayat 'a?ramawt,'" Jihadology.net, September 16, 2015; Aaron Y. Zelin, "New video message from The Islamic State: 'Muslim Asylum Seekers to the Abode of the Disbelievers – Wil'ayat 'im?'," Jihadology.net, September 17, 2015, <http://jihadology.net/2015/09/17/new-video-message-from-the-islamic-state-muslim-asylum-seekers-to-the-abode-of-the-disbelievers-wilayat-%E1%B8%A5im%E1%B9%A3/>; Aaron Y. Zelin, "New video message from The Islamic State: 'To [Those That] Abandoned the [Refugee] Camps – Wil'ayat al-Khayr,'" Jihadology.net, September 16, 2015, <http://jihadology.net/2015/09/16/new-video-message-from-the-islamic-state-to-those-that-abandoned-the-refugee-camps-wilayat-al-khayr/>; Aaron Y. Zelin, "New video message from The Islamic State: 'Warning To the Refugees From the Deceptions of the Crusaders – Wil'ayat al-Jan'ab,'" Jihadology.net, September 16, 2015, <http://jihadology.net/2015/09/16/new-video-message-from-the-islamic-state-warning-to-the-refugees-from-the-deceptions-of-the-crusaders-wilayat-al-janub/>.
- **September 9, 2015:** Al-Qaeda releases a message from its Emir Ayman al-Zawahiri in which he derides ISIS caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, claiming that he is not qualified to lead Muslims.
Analysts believe the message to have been recorded in March or April 2015. Source: Thomas Joscelyn, "Zawahiri argues Islamic State's caliphate is illegitimate in newly released message," *Long War Journal*, September 9, 2015, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/09/zawahiri-says-islamic-states-caliphate-is-illegitimate-in-newly-released-message.php>.
- **August 24, 2015:** A U.S. strike kills **Junaid Hussain**, a British citizen and hacker for ISIS.
Until his death, Hussain had maintained a presence on Twitter. Source: Barbara Starr, "Prominent ISIS recruiter killed in airstrike," CNN, August 28, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/08/26/politics/isis-recruiter-targeted-in-airstrike/>.
- **August 14, 2015:** U.S. officials confirm suspicions that ISIS used a mustard agent on its enemies in Syria.
Source: Barbara Starr, Jim Sciutto and Elise Labott, "U.S. confirms ISIS used mustard agent," CNN, August 14, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/08/14/politics/isis-mustard-agent/index.html>.
- **August 14, 2015:** U.S. officials tell the family of U.S. hostage Kayla Mueller—whose death was confirmed in February—that she was repeatedly raped by ISIS emir Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.
Source: Julia Zorthian, "ISIS Leader Sexually Abused American Hostage Kayla Mueller, U.S. Officials Claim," *Time*, August 14, 2015, <http://time.com/3998992/isis-kayla-mueller-baghdadi-rape/>.
- **July 27, 2015:** The *Daily Express* reports that British ISIS executioner Mohammed Emwazi, a.k.a. Jihadi John, has fled ISIS.
Source: Jake Burman, "Petrified Jihadi John 'ABANDONS ISIS - fearing the terror group no longer has use for him,'" *Daily Express* (London), July 27, 2015, <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/593683/Jihadi-John-Mohammed-Emwazi-Abandon-ISIS-SAS-Iraq-Syria-Islamic-State>.
- **July 17, 2015:** Kurdish officials, field investigators, and a Western technician report that ISIS militants have used rudimentary chemical weaponry against Kurdish territory in Iraq and Syria in recent weeks.
Source: C. J. Chivers, "ISIS Has Fired Chemical Mortar Shells, Evidence Indicates," *New York Times*, July 17, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/18/world/middleeast/islamic-state-isis-chemical-weapons-iraq-syria.html?_r=0.
- **July 17, 2015:** ISIS's Sinai Province claims responsibility for an attack on an Egyptian vessel.
Source: Doug Bolton, "Isis claims responsibility for rocket attack against Egyptian navy ship in Mediterranean Sea," *Independent* (London), July 17, 2015, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-claims-responsibility-for-a-rocket-attack-against-an-egyptian-navy-ship-in-the-mediterranean-sea-10394112.html>.
- **July 2, 2015:** ISIS militants decimate cultural artefacts in the Syrian city of Palmyra, designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
The next day, ISIS releases a video of a row of young men being beheaded in Palmyra's empty amphitheater. On August 18, ISIS militants publicly execute Palmyra's archeologist. Sources: Salma Abdelaziz, "ISIS publicly smashes Syrian artifacts," CNN, July 3, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/07/02/world/isis-syrian-artifacts/>; Kimberly Hutcherson, "ISIS video shows execution of 25 men in ruins of Syria amphitheater," CNN, July 4, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/07/04/middleeast/isis-execution-palmyra-syria/>; Ben Hubbard, "Syrian Expert Who Shielded Palmyra Antiquities Meets a Grisly Death at ISIS' Hands," *New York Times*, August 19, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/20/world/middleeast/isis-palmyra-syria-antiquities-scholar-beheaded.html?_r=1.
- **June 26, 2015:** ISIS takes credit for an attack on tourists at the Imperial Marhaba Hotel and the Sofil Hostel in Sousse, Tunisia.
The attack kills 38 individuals, most of whom are British tourists. Sources: Harleen Gambhir, "ISIS-Linked Regional Activity: June 2015," Institute for the Study of War, June 27, 2015, <http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-linked-regional-activity-june-2015>; Fiona Keating, "Tunisia hotel attack: Isis claim responsibility for the attack on Riu Imperial Marhaba Hotel," *International Business Times*, June 27, 2015, <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/tunisia-hotel-attack-isis-claim-responsibility-attack-riu-imperial-marhaba-hotel-1508243>.
- **June 22, 2015:** ISIS launches a Caucasus-based wilayat.
Source: Harleen Gambhir, "ISIS-Linked Regional Activity: June 2015," Institute for the Study of War, June 27, 2015, <http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-linked-regional-activity-june-2015>.
- **June 17, 2015 - June 29, 2015:** ISIS's Yemeni wilayat detonates VBIEDs at Shiite religious sites and Houthi political and military assets.
Source: Harleen Gambhir, "ISIS-Linked Regional Activity: June 2015," Institute for the Study of War, June 27, 2015, <http://www.understandingwar.org/background/isis-linked-regional-activity-june-2015>.

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- **May 25, 2015:** ISIS wrests control of the ancient Roman city of Palmyra, in central Syria, from the Syrian army.
According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, ISIS executed more than 200 Syrians, civilian and military, during the offensive. Source: Ben Brumfield and Raja Razek, "ISIS executes 262, as it takes ancient Syrian city of Palmyra, group says," CNN, May 25, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/25/middleeast/isis-killings-palmyra-syria/>.
- **May 17, 2015:** ISIS raises its banner over Ramadi, Iraq, which it conquered after a protracted struggle with the Iraq army and Shiite militias.
Source: Armin Rosen, "The Iraqi campaign to retake Ramadi from ISIS is a looming disaster," Business Insider, May 31, 2015, <http://www.businessinsider.com/the-campaign-to-retake-ramadi-from-isis-is-an-impending-disaster-2015-5#ixzz3eTyAYOBU>.
- **April 24, 2015:** Media reports surface that ISIS members are luring gay men out on dates in Syria and then publicly executing them.
Source: Deborah Hastings, "ISIS terrorists pose as gay men, lure victims on dates, then kill them: social media," *New York Daily News*, April 24, 2015, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/isis-terrorists-lure-gay-men-deaths-article-1.219755>.
- **April 8, 2015:** Canada launches its first airstrikes against ISIS in Syria, hitting a base near Raqqa.
Source: Jethro Mullen, "Canadian warplanes carry out first airstrike against ISIS in Syria," CNN, April 9, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/04/09/middleeast/canada-isis-syria-first-airstrike/>.
- **April 3, 2015 - April 10, 2015:** ISIS reportedly sends an email to the personal account of Reserve Bank of India Governor Raghuram Rajan threatening his life.
According to media, the email came from a Gmail account and the author said ISIS paid him to kill Rajan but he would spare Rajan for more money. Source: Sneha Shankar, "ISIS Threatens To 'Eliminate' India's Central Bank Governor Raghuram Rajan: Report," *International Business Times*, April 16, 2015, <http://www.ibtimes.com/isis-threatens-eliminate-indias-central-bank-governor-raghuram-rajana-report-1884373>.
- **April 2, 2015:** Twitter deletes 10,000 ISIS-related accounts.
Source: Rick Gladstone, "Twitter Says It Suspended 10,000 ISIS-Linked Accounts in One Day," *New York Times*, April 9, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/10/world/middleeast/twitter-says-it-suspended-10000-isis-linked-accounts-in-one-day.html>.
- **March 7, 2015:** Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau pledges allegiance to ISIS in an audio recording.
Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi purportedly accepts Boko Haram's pledge of allegiance five days later on March 12. Sources: "Boko Haram Leader Abubakar Shekau Pledges Allegiance to ISIS in New Audio," NBC News, March 7, 2015, <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/isis-starts-dismantle-ancient-iraqi-archaeological-site-hatran319231>; Hamdi Alkshali and Steve Almasy, "ISIS leader purportedly accepts Boko Haram's pledge of allegiance," CNN, March 12, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/03/12/middleeast/isis-boko-haram/>.
- **March 5, 2015 - March 6, 2015:** ISIS attacks the ancient Assyrian city of Nimrud in northern Iraq, razing the city and bulldozing archaeological ruins.
Sources: Michael Martinez and Mohammed Tawfeeq, "ISIS bulldozes ruins of ancient Assyrian city of Nimrud, Iraqi ministry says," CNN, March 6, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/03/05/world/iraq-isis-destroys-ancient-city-nimrud/>; Anne Barnard, "ISIS Attacks Nimrud, a Major Archaeological Site in Iraq," *New York Times*, March 5, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/06/world/middleeast/isis-attacks-iraqi-archaeological-site-at-nimrud.html?_r=0.
- **February 26, 2015:** The identity of "jihadi john,"—the British man featured in ISIS's beheading videos—is revealed as Londoner Mohammed Emwazi, a British citizen of Kuwaiti descent.
Source: Bill Chapell, "ISIS Extremist Who Beheaded Prisoners Is Identified As Man From London," NPR, February 26, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/02/26/389186094/isis-man-who-beheaded-prisoners-identified-as-london-man-by-bbc>.
- **February 26, 2015:** In the culmination of a multi-day offensive on Assyrian Christian villages in northeastern Syria, ISIS militants kidnap further hostages, bringing the total number of Assyrian Christian hostages to 262.
Source: Laura Smith-Spark, "Activist: ISIS now holds 262 Christians hostages in Syria," CNN, February 26, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/02/26/middleeast/isis-syria-iraq/>.
- **February 25, 2015:** U.S. federal agents arrest Arbor Habibov, an Uzbek-born, New York resident, in Jacksonville, Florida, on charges of conspiracy to provide material support to ISIS.
Habibov worked with another Uzbek national, Dilkhayot Kasimov, who assisted him in funding the trips of two foreign fighters to Syria. Sources: "Who is terror suspect Arbor Habibov?" First Coast News, February 25, 2015, <http://www.firstcoastnews.com/story/news/2015/02/25/who-is-abror-habibov/24009399/>; "Funder of ISIS Foreign Fighter Sentenced to 15 Years in Prison," U.S. Department of Justice, June 3, 2022, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/funder-isis-foreign-fighter-sentenced-15-years-prison>; "Fourth Brooklyn man charged in plot to join ISIL," Al Jazeera, April 6, 2015, <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/4/6/Fourth-Brooklyn-man-charged-plot-join-ISIL.html>.
- **February 23, 2015:** ISIS's media department releases a new video depicting caged Kurdish prisoners being paraded down ISIS-controlled streets.
Source: Yousuf Basil and Holly Yan, "New ISIS video shows Kurdish Peshmerga soldiers in cages in Iraq," CNN, February 23, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/02/22/middleeast/isis-crisis/>.
- **February 23, 2015:** ISIS militants burn the Mosul public library, which reportedly housed over 8,000 rare books and manuscripts.
Source: Riyadh Mohammed, "ISIS Burns 8000 Rare Books and Manuscripts in Mosul," *Fiscal Times*, February 23, 2015, <http://www.thefiscaltimes.com/2015/02/23/ISIS-Burns-8000-Rare-Books-and-Manuscripts-Mosul>.
- **February 15, 2015 - February 16, 2015:** ISIS uploads a video showing the gruesome killing of 21 Egyptian Coptic Christian laborers in Libya.
The men were kidnapped from the city of Sirt, led to a beach, and made to kneel before they were beheaded by multiple ISIS members. The group identifies its newly conquered land in Libya as the "Tripoli" Province of ISIS, leading analysts to believe that Libya is emerging as a 'second front' for the organization. Egypt retaliates with airstrikes against ISIS in Libya the following day. The Egyptian military targets training camps and armaments in Darna in eastern Libya, a jihadist hub. Sources: Jared Malson, "Beheading of Coptic Christians in Libya Shows ISIS Branching Out," *Time*, February 15, 2015, <http://time.com/3710610/libya-coptic-christians-isis-egypt/>; David

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D. Kirkpatrick, "Egypt Conducts Airstrikes on Islamic State Targets in Libya," *New York Times*, February 16, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/17/world/middleeast/isis-egypt-libya-airstrikes.html>.

- **February 10, 2015:** The U.S. government confirms the death of Kayla Mueller, a 26-year-old humanitarian aid worker and the last American hostage held by ISIS.

ISIS claims that she was killed when a Jordanian fighter plane bombed a building where she was being held. The claim cannot be confirmed and no proof was offered. Mueller had been captured in August 2013 at a Doctors Without Borders hospital. ISIS had threatened to kill her if several million euros were not paid in ransom by her family.

Sources: Adam Goldman, "Kayla Mueller, American Hostage of the Islamic State, is Confirmed Dead," *Washington Post*, February 10, 2015, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-believes-kayla-mueller-hostage-of-islamic-state-is-dead/2015/02/10/76eef7f0-b12e-11e4-886b-c22184f27c35_story.html. Adam Goldman, "Islamic State Claims American Hostage Killed in Bombing in Syria," *Washington Post*, February 6, 2015, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/islamic-state-claims-american-hostage-killed-bombing-syria/2015/02/06/0b37def6-70cd-11e4-893f-86bd390a3340_story.html.

- **February 3, 2015:** ISIS posts a video and still images of Jordanian pilot Moath al-Kasasbeh being burned alive in a cage. Al-Kasasbeh was a member of an important Jordanian tribe and the first prisoner from the coalition bombing ISIS. Jordanian officials say that he was actually killed on January 3. In response to the group's most cruel execution to date, Jordan executes Sajida al-Riswahi, convicted of attempting a suicide bombing and the prisoner ISIS had earlier asked for in a prisoner swap for Japanese hostage Haruka Yukawa. Jordan also executes Ziad al-Karbouli, a top lieutenant of al-Qaeda in Iraq, convicted of helping to plan 2005 bombings in Amman that killed more than 57 people. Both were already sentenced to death for terrorism. Source: Rod Nordland and Ranya Kadri, "Jordanian Pilot's Death, Shown in ISIS Video, Spurs Jordan to Execute Prisoners," *New York Times*, February 3, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/04/world/middleeast/isis-said-to-burn-captive-jordanian-pilot-to-death-in-new-video.html?_r=0.
- **January 27, 2015:** ISIS claims responsibility for an attack at the five-star Corinthia hotel in Tripoli, Libya.

Nine people are killed, including five foreign nationals. It is the first attack on western interests in Libya. ISIS's profile in Libya increases along with Islamic State Tripoli (IS Tripoli) in western Libya and ISIS-affiliated branches, Barqa in the east and Fezzan in the south. Many analysts attribute ISIS's rise in Libya to the anarchic state of the country. This is partly due to the ongoing battle between the internationally recognized government in the eastern city of Tobruk and Libya's National Salvation government, which is allied with the Islamist-backed Fajr Libya in Tripoli in the west.

Source: Jack Moore, "ISIS Attack on Tripoli Hotel Opens New Front Against West," *Newsweek*, January 27, 2015, <http://www.newsweek.com/isis-attack-tripoli-hotel-opens-new-front-against-west-302567>.

- **January 20, 2015 - January 31, 2015:** ISIS releases a video of two Japanese hostages, Kenji Goto and Haruka Yukawa. The extremists demand \$200 million dollars in ransom, which is the same amount Tokyo pledged in non-military aid to ISIS victims, including refugees and displaced people in Iraq and Syria. Four days later, ISIS posts a video of Japanese hostage Kenji Goto holding a picture of what is purported to be Haruka Yukawa's dead body. A man is heard on the video pleading for his life in exchange for a suspected female militant imprisoned in Jordan, Sajida al-Rishawi. On January 31, Kenji Goto is reported executed. His killer states on video: "[Prime Minister] Abe, because of your reckless decision to take part in an unwinnable war, this knife will not only slaughter Kenji, but will also carry on and cause carnage wherever your people are round. So let the nightmare for Japan begin." Sources: Patrick J. Mconnell and Bathsheva Sobelman, "Islamic State threatens to kill Japanese hostages, demands \$200 million," *Los Angeles Times*, January 20, 2015, <http://www.latimes.com/world/middleeast/la-fg-islamic-state-japan-hostages-video-20150119-story.html>; Eline Gordts and Charlotte Alfred, "Alleged ISIS Video Claims Japanese Hostage Haruka Yukawa Was Executed, Issues New Demand," *Huffington Post*, January 24, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/24/isis-executed-haruka-yukawa_n_6511536.html; Steve Almsay, "ISIS: Japanese hostage beheaded," *CNN*, February 3, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/01/31/middleeast/isis-japan-jordan-hostages/>.
- **December 24, 2014 - February 5, 2015:** ISIS militants capture a Jordanian pilot flying over ISIS-controlled territory in northern Syria by shooting down his jet with an anti-aircraft missile. The Jordanian pilot is identified as Moaz Youssef al-Kasasbeh. ISIS militants post photographs of the captured pilot surrounded by masked gunmen on Twitter. On February 3, ISIS posts a video and still images of al-Kasasbeh being burned alive in a cage. Two days later on February 5, Jordan launches Operation Martyr Moaz against ISIS in Syria and Iraq in response to Moath al-Kasasbeh's murder. Sources: Ben Hubbard, "ISIS Captures Jordanian Fighter Pilot in Syria," *New York Times*, December 24, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/25/world/middleeast/isis-syria.html>; Rod Nordland and Ranya Kadri, "Jordanian Pilot's Death, Shown in ISIS Video, Spurs Jordan to Execute Prisoners," *New York Times*, February 3, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/04/world/middleeast/isis-said-to-burn-captive-jordanian-pilot-to-death-in-new-video.html?_r=0; "IS captures Jordanian pilot after warplane crashes in Syria," *BBC News*, December 24, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-30596474>; John Hall, Tom Wyke and Stephanie Linning, "It's payback time: Jordan releases slick video of strikes against ISIS - in Operation Martyr Moaz named after murdered pilot," *Daily Mail* (London), February 5, 2015, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2941123/Jordan-s-air-force-fly-home-town-pilot-murdered-ISIS-returning-sortie-Syria-nation-s-king-visits-mourning-family.html>.
- **December 17, 2014:** A mass grave containing over 230 bodies is discovered in eastern Syria.

The dead are believed to have belonged to al-Sheitaat, a Sunni tribe against ISIS. The deaths bring the number of al-Sheitaats killed by ISIS over 900.

Source: Jack Moore, "Isis massacre: 230 al-Sheitaat tribesmen found in mass grave in eastern Syria," *The International Business Times*, December 17, 2014, <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/isis-massacre-230-al-sheitaat-tribesmen-found-mass-grave-eastern-syria-1480000>.

- **November 21, 2014:** ISIS releases another video with hostage John Cantlie.

Cantlie speaks to the camera, describing a failed rescue attempt by the U.S. He encourages the United States and Britain to negotiate with ISIS fighters regarding the release of Western hostages.

Source: Ben Hubbard, "ISIS Taunts United States and Britain in New Video," *New York Times*, November 21, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/22/world/middleeast/isis-taunts-united-states-and-britain-in-new-video.html>.

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- **November 16, 2014:** ISIS releases a video showing that they have beheaded American hostage Peter Kassig.

Kassig's death appears at the end of a 16-minute video titled "Although the disbelievers dislike it," in which ISIS members behead a group of Syrian soldiers. The scenes in which the soldiers are beheaded are edited in a way to increase the viewer's horror: slow-motion shots of the beheadings and sound effects of panicked breathing and slitting throats. In the video, Jihadi John speaks over Peter Kassig's beheaded corpse: "This is Peter Edward Kassig, a U.S. citizen of your country. Peter, who fought against the Muslims in Iraq while serving as a soldier under the American Army, doesn't have much to say. His previous cellmates have already spoken on his behalf... You claim to have withdrawn from Iraq four years ago. We said to you then that you are liars." Jihadi John continues: "your forces will return greater in number than they were before. We also remind you of the haunting words of our Sheikh Abu Musab al-Zarqawi who told you: 'The spark has been lit here in Iraq and its heat will continue to intensify by Allah's permission until it burns the crusader army.'"

Sources: "Gruesome Islamic State video Announces Death of Peter Kassig," *The Clarion Project*, November 16, 2014, <http://www.clarionproject.org/news/gruesome-islamic-state-video-announces-death-peter-kassig>. Rukmini Callimachi, "Obama Calls Islamic State's Killing of Peter Kassig 'Pure Evil'," *New York Times*, November 16, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/17/world/middleeast/peter-kassig-isis-video-execution.html>.

- **November 13, 2014:** Rumors of al-Baghdadi's death are put to rest following a speech in which the leader calls for "volcanoes of jihad."

It is unclear if the video was made before or after the airstrike carried out on November 8, in which many high-level ISIS militants were killed. In the video, Baghdadi mocks the U.S. for sending its soldiers "to their death and destruction." Baghdadi also shares the "good news" of the expansion of the caliphate. According to Baghdadi, jihadist groups from Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, Libya and Algeria have pledged allegiance to ISIS.

Sources: Erin Cunningham, "Islamic State leader al-Baghdadi calls on followers to unleash 'volcanoes of jihad,'" *The Washington Post*, November 13, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/defiant-message-from-islamic-state-leader-but-silence-over-airstrike-injury-reports/2014/11/13/a19f4d9e-6b54-11e4-9fb4-a622dae742a2_story.html. Leila Fadel, "With Cash and Cachet, The Islamic State Expands Its Empire," *NPR All Things Considered*, November 18, 2014, <http://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=364942091>.

- **November 10, 2014:** Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, a Sinai-based jihadist group with a history of violent attacks against Egyptian military and police forces- pledges allegiance to ISIS.

In return, Ansar Beit al-Maqdis receives increased funding, recruits and weaponry.

Sources: Khalil al-Anani, "ISIS Enters Egypt," *Foreign Affairs*, December 4, 2014, http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/142423/khalil-al-anani/isis-enters-egypt?cid=nlc-foreign-affairs-this-week-121114-isis-enters-egypt-5-121114&sp_mid=47611240&sp_rid=YWdvbGRzbWIAeXUuZWR1S0. David D. Kirkpatrick, "Militant Group in Egypt Vows Loyalty to ISIS," *New York Times*, November 10, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/11/world/middleeast/egyptian-militant-group-pledges-loyalty-to-isis.html>.

- **October 31, 2014:** ISIS fighter claims the group controls 90% of the city of Kobani
That same day, the United Nations releases a press statement condemning ISIS and expressing "deep outrage" at the group's actions. Sources: "ISIS Bomb Threat to Kurdish Forces Bound For Syria's Kobani," *NBC News*, October 31, 2014, <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/isis-bomb-threat-kurdish-forces-bound-syrias-kobani-n238406>. "U.N. Expresses 'Deep Outrage' at ISIS," *CBS News*, October 31, 2014, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/u-n-expresses-deep-outrage-at-isis/>.
- **October 24, 2014:** Iraqi forces regain control of the area of Jurf al-Sakhar, south of Baghdad. Meanwhile, Kurdish peshmerga forces liberate the northern Iraqi town of Zumar, west of the Mosul Dam.
Coalition forces conduct 22 airstrikes against ISIS from October 22-October 23. Source: Laura Smith-Spark and Kareem Khadder, "Iraqi Forces, Peshmerga Claim Gains Against ISIS; Battle for Kobani Continues," *CNN News*, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/10/25/world/meast/isis-threat/>.
- **October 14, 2014:** An ISIS bomber kills 24 and wounds 40 at a crowded checkpoint into a majority Shiite neighborhood in Baghdad.
Among the dead was Ahmed al-Khafaji, a Shi'ite member of Parliament as well as the Shi'ite military group, the Badr Organization. Source: Kirk Semple and Omar al-Jawshy, "ISIS Bomber Hits Baghdad, Killing 24," *New York Times*, October 14, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/15/world/middleeast/-isis-bomber-hits-baghdad-killing-24-.html>.
- **October 12, 2014:** ISIS releases its third propaganda video with British hostage John Cantlie.
Cantlie warns that "anyone hoping for a nice neat surgical operation without getting their hands dirty is in for a horrible surprise once it gets under way." He speaks about the beheading videos, and how ISIS profits from them. He says, "If these executions force public outcry or a policy change, that is a huge victory. And if they only goad our governments into dropping more bombs and spending millions more dollars, making our countries weaker in the process, that is a victory, too." Cantlie continues to explain the group's actions and reasoning. The video ends on a grim note, when Cantlie says, "Unless something changes very quickly and very radically, I await my turn." Source: Shiv Malik, "British hostage John Cantlie appears in fourth ISIS propaganda video," *Guardian* (London), October 12, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/12/british-hostage-john-cantlie-fourth-isis-video>.
- **October 10, 2014:** At least a third of the Syrian Kurdish town of Kobani is reported to be under the control of ISIS, despite continued airstrikes on the group.
Turkey continues to call for a no-fly buffer zone on the Syrian border, which would prevent Syrian government aircraft from flying overhead. Turkey's reasoning includes humanitarian motives such as protecting refugees, as well as Turkey's border. The more private argument is made that the buffer zone would be used to train moderate rebels in fighting Assad's government, something that the United States may not want to get involved in. Source: Tim Arango and Ceylan Yeginsu, "Turkey seeks buffer zone on the border with Syria," *New York Times*, October 9, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/10/world/middleeast/turkish-support-of-coalition-fighting-isis-centers-on-border-buffer-zone-.html>.
- **October 8, 2014:** ISIS militants shoot down an Iraqi military helicopter with a shoulder-fired missile, killing two onboard, for the second time in less than a week.

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The helicopter was believed to be a Bell 407 aircraft, generally used for surveillance. Source: Kirk Semple and Omar al-Jawshy, "ISIS Militants Shoot Down Iraqi Helicopter, Killing 2," *New York Times*, October 8, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/09/world/middleeast/isis-iraq-violence.html?partner=rss&emc=rss>.

- **October 3, 2014:** Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott tells the public that Australia will join the U.S.-led coalition in launching airstrikes in Iraq, but not Syria.
He also offers special operations personnel to advise Iraqi troops on the ground. Australia had already sent several military aircraft and hundreds of personnel to friendly countries neighboring Iraq and Syria in anticipation of the growing campaign against ISIS. Source: Michelle Innis, "Australia Says It Will Join Airstrikes Against Islamic State in Iraq," *New York Times*, October 3, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/04/world/asia/australia-says-it-will-join-airstrikes-against-islamic-state-in-iraq.html?_r=0.
- **October 3, 2014:** ISIS releases a video depicting the beheading of English taxi-driver Alan Henning.
The video takes place in the same area that James Foley, Steven Sotloff, and David Haines were beheaded. In the video, Henning, wearing the usual orange jumpsuit, says: "Hi, I am Alan Henning. Because of our Parliament's decision to attack the Islamic State, I — as a member of the British public — will now pay the price for that decision." Right before the decapitation, "Jihadi John", the executioner, says: "Obama, you have started your air bombardment in Sham [an area referring to greater Syria] which keeps on striking our people. It is only right that we continue to strike the necks of your people." According to some analysts, ISIS seems to have waited to behead Henning until after the start of Britain's airstrikes on the group. The video ends with Jihadi John threatening the execution of American hostage Peter Kassig if the airstrikes on ISIS do not cease. Source: Rukmini Callimachi and Kimiko de Freytas-Tamura, "ISIS releases video of execution of British aid worker," *New York Times*, October 3, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/04/world/middleeast/islamic-state-releases-video-of-execution-of-alan-henning-british-aid-worker.html>; "ISIL release beheading video of aid worker," *Al Jazeera*, October 3, 2014, <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/10/3/video-islamic-stategroupbeheadsbritishhostage.html>.
- **October 2, 2014:** The UN publishes a report stating that upwards of 5,500 people have been killed by ISIS in Iraq alone since June, 2014. This includes hundreds of Yazidis who were "slaughtered en masse." Source: Nick Cumming-Bruce, "5,500 Iraqis Killed Since Islamic State Began Its Military Drive, U.N. Says," *New York Times*, October 2, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/03/world/middleeast/un-reports-at-least-26000-civilian-casualties-in-iraq-conflict-this-year.html?_r=0.
- **October 2, 2014:** The Turkish parliament votes 298-98 in favor of military operations against ISIS.
This vote includes the potential use of Turkish bases by US-led coalition troops. However, it remains unclear if this vote will lead to deliverable military action. Defense Minister Ismet Yilmaz says to not expect "immediate steps." Source: Ceylan Yeginsu, "Turkey Votes to Allow Operations Against ISIS," *New York Times*, October 2, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/03/world/europe/turkey-votes-to-allow-operations-against-isis.html?_r=0; "Turkish parliament approves military operations in Syria, Iraq," *Al Jazeera*, October 2, 2014, <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/10/2/turkey-parliamentisil.html>.
- **September 26, 2014:** ISIS militants persist in their conquest of the Syrian Kurdish town of Kobani, amid airstrikes.
Mass numbers of Kurdish Syrian refugees continue to pile into Turkey. Growing anger from Turkish and Syrian Kurds towards the Turkish government's apparent lack of action concerning ISIS result in clashes between Turkish Kurds and Turkish military.
- **September 25, 2014:** Joint airstrikes led by the United States, Saudi Arabia and the UAE attack ISIS's 12 oil refineries in Syria.
Airstrikes also continue in Iraq on ISIS militants, armed vehicles, Humvees, checkpoints, guard towers and a command post. Additionally, James B. Comey, the director of the FBI, announces that the militant in the beheading videos has been identified. Comey would not release the name of the British citizen while agents search for him. Sources: Helene Cooper and Anne Barnard, "Warplanes blast militants' refineries in Syria, targeting a source of cash," *New York Times*, September 25, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/26/world/middleeast/isis-revenue-sources-remain-crucial-target-us-says.html>; David E. Sanger, "Militant in beheading videos has been identified, F.B.I. chief says," *New York Times*, September 25, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/26/world/middleeast/militant-in-beheading-videos-has-been-identified-fbi-chief-says.html>
- **September 23, 2014:** An 18-year old terror suspect in Australia is fatally shot by police after he attempts to stab two counter-terrorism officials.
The suspect had displayed an ISIS flag and was shouting insults about Prime Minister Tony Abbott before his death. Source: Reuters, "Man shot in attack on counterterrorism officials in Australia," *New York Times*, September 23, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/24/world/asia/man-shot-in-attack-on-counterterrorism-officers-in-australia.html>.
- **September 22, 2014:** ISIS releases John Cantlie's second propaganda video, in which Cantlie questions Obama's strategy of funding Syrian rebels, and picks apart several claims that are made about the group.
He says, "The Free Syrian Army are proven to be an undisciplined, corrupt, and largely ineffective fighting force... Giving the FSA 500 million [dollars] now is a completely pointless exercise." He continues by saying, "Never mind the fact that the FSA sells the weapons the West gives them to arms dealers and smugglers, and much of it then ends up with the Islamic State." Source: "Second video of British hostage John Cantlie released," BBC, September 23, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-29323283>.
- **September 21, 2014:** The U.S.-led coalition against ISIS begins airstrikes in Syria, hitting the towns of Raqqa, Dayr az Zawr, Al Hasakah, and Abu Kamal.
The targets include ISIS fighters, headquarters, command and control facilities, training compounds, supply trucks, armed vehicles and finance centers, according to a release from the U.S. Central Command. The coalition did inform Syria of the airstrikes before they took place, but did not ask for permission. By 10 pm ET on September 22, 2014, it is reported that at least 20 ISIS fighters have been wounded or killed. Source: "Pentagon: US and partner nations launch airstrikes in Syria against ISIL," *Al Jazeera*, September 22, 2014, <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/9/22/us-launches-airstrikesinsyriagainstisil.html>.
- **September 20, 2014:** Turkey's 49 citizens, who had been held hostage for more than three months by ISIS, are freed.
The hostages include diplomats and their families, as well as soldiers. They had been taken hostage in June at the Turkish consulate in Mosul, Iraq. Although Turkey did not initially give details surrounding the negotiations that led to the release, Turkish media claimed there was an exchange of ISIS prisoners held by a moderate Syrian rebel group with ties to Turkey. Sources: "ISIL released Turks held hostage in Iraq," *Al Jazeera English*, last modified September 21, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/09/turkish-hostages-seized-iraq-freed-201492035248486996.html>; Mustafa Akyol, "Will Turkey Fight ISIS?" *New York Times*, September 23, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/24/opinion/mustafa-akyol-will-turkey-fight-isis.html>
- **September 18, 2014:** In a near-total vote, the U.S. Congress gives tremendous approval to President Obama's plan to aid moderate Syrian rebels
The bill, in the following days, is signed into law. Source: Johathan Weisman and Jeremy Peters, "Congress gives final approval to aid rebels in fight with ISIS," *New York Times*, September 18, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/19/world/middleeast/senate-approves-isis-bill-avoiding-bigger-war-debate.html>.

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- **September 18, 2014:** ISIS releases a video featuring John Cantlie, a British journalist being held hostage by ISIS. Vastly different from previous beheading videos, this video depicts Cantlie arguing against Western military involvement against ISIS. Sources: "John Cantlie Lend Me Your Ears - "?????? ???? "?? ?????," YouTube video, 3:21, posted by "Times of Lebanon," September 18, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vcew3qmidRI>; Shiraz Maher and Peter Neumann, "Analysis: What was the aim of IS' John Cantlie video," BBC News, September 23, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-29331757>
 - **September 17, 2014:** ISIS releases a video warning against the possibility of U.S. troops on the ground in Iraq and Syria, an action that Obama had repeatedly promised to not undertake. The video depicts Obama's speech from September 10th, and then the words "Flames of War" appear on the screen, followed by "Fighting has just begun." The video ends with the text "Coming soon." Source: Michael S. Schmidt, "Islamic State issues video challenge to Obama," *New York Times*, September 17, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/17/world/middleeast/isis-issues-video-riposte-to-obama.html>.
 - **September 14, 2014:** A group calling themselves the "Soldiers of the Caliphate in Algeria" splits from AQIM and pledges allegiance to ISIS and its caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Source: "Algeria's al-Qaeda defectors join IS group," *Al Jazeera*, September 14, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/09/algeria-al-qaeda-defectors-join-group-201491412191159416.html>.
 - **September 13, 2014 - January 27, 2015:** ISIS militants wage a vigorous battle for the northern Syrian city of Kobani. By October 9, at least a third of Kobani is reported to be under the control of ISIS despite continued U.S. airstrikes on the group. On October 20, the U.S. drops weaponry and other lethal aid to Kurdish fighters struggling to keep hold of Kobani. On October 24, Turkey pledges to allow a maximum of 150 peshmerga militants to travel through Turkey to defend the Syrian town of Kobani. By the end of October, ISIS claims the group controls 90% of the city of Kobani. Sources: "SYRIA KOBANE IS OFFENSIVE (13 SEPT 2014 – 26 JAN 2015)," Agathocle de Syracuse, January 27, 2015, <http://www.agathocledesyracuse.com/archives/52>; Tim Arango and Ceylan Yeginsu, "Turkey seeks buffer zone on the border with Syria," *New York Times*, October 9, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/10/world/middleeast/turkish-support-of-coalition-fighting-isis-centers-on-border-buffer-zone.html>; "US Sends Lethal Aid to Kurdish Forces Fighting ISIS in Kobani," Reuters, October 20, 2014, <http://rt.com/news/197360-isis-kobani-usa-weapons/>; Laura Smith-Spark and Kareem Khadder, "Iraqi Forces, Peshmerga Claim Gains Against ISIS; Battle for Kobani Continues," CNN News, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/10/25/world/middleeast/isis-threat/>; "ISIS Bomb Threat to Kurdish Forces Bound For Syria's Kobani," NBC News, October 31, 2014, <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/isis-bomb-threat-kurdish-forces-bound-syrias-kobani-n238406>.
 - **September 13, 2014:** ISIS releases another video, "A Message to the Allies of America," in which British aid worker David Cawthorne Haines is executed. Some analysts see it as a warning to the British Government for supporting the U.S.-led coalition against ISIS. The video is filmed in the same setting as the previous videos that ISIS has created: a nondescript area of what seems to be arid land beneath a blue sky. As in the other beheading videos disseminated by ISIS, "Jihadi John", stands by a kneeling Haines. The still anonymous British terrorist says to the camera that "this British man has to pay the price for your promise, Cameron, to arm the peshmerga against the Islamic State. Ironically, he has spent a decade of his life serving under the same Royal Air Force that is responsible for delivering those arms." At the end of the video, "Jihadi John" names the next victim as British citizen Alan Henning. Source: Rukmini Callimachi and Kimko de Freytas-Tamura, "ISIS Video Shows Execution of David Cawthorne Haines, British Aid Worker," *New York Times*, September 13, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/14/world/middleeast/islamic-state-says-it-has-executed-david-cawthorne-haines-british-aid-worker.html>.
 - **September 11, 2014:** Secretary of State John Kerry seeks broad support from Arab states against ISIS. He starts his tour in Jidda, Saudi Arabia, whose government agrees to provide bases in Syria for the training of moderate rebels. Other regional countries already in the coalition at this point include the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. Source: Michael R. Gordon, "Kerry Seeks Arab Consensus in Campaign Against ISIS," *New York Times*, September 11, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/12/world/middleeast/john-kerry-saudi-arabia-isis-strategy.html>.
 - **September 10, 2014:** "We will degrade, and ultimately destroy ISIL." Using the acronym ISIL, President Obama makes a speech on primetime television in which he lays out his coalition-based plan to defeat ISIS. The President's plan includes: 1) expanding the airstrike campaign in Iraq against Islamic State militants, 2) training and equipping the Iraqi army, Kurdish troops and moderate Syrian rebels, 3) expanding the U.S.-led coalition to include necessary regional actors such as Saudi Arabia, as well as relevant EU actors, and 4) the refusal to work with either the Syrian or Iranian governments. President Obama also reiterates his unwillingness to commit U.S. ground troops in either Iraq or Syria. Sources: Zack Beauchamp, "Obama's 6-point plan for defeating ISIS," *Vox*, September 10, 2014, <http://www.vox.com/2014/9/10/6132815/obama-isis-syria-iraq-war-strategy>; "A Timeline of ISIS Terror," World Watch Monitor, August 15, 2014, https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2014/08/article_3288644.html; "Transcript of Obama's Remarks on the Fight Against ISIS," *New York Times*, September 10, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/11/world/middleeast/obamas-remarks-on-the-fight-against-isis.html?_r=0
 - **September 8, 2014:** United States Secretary of State Chuck Hagel meets with Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan to discuss Turkish participation in the growing U.S.-led coalition against ISIS. Hagel describes Turkey as "absolutely indispensable" in the fight against ISIS, but Erdogan expresses concern for the 49 Turkish citizens being held hostage by ISIS. Source: Helene Cooper, "Turkey is courted by US to help fight ISIS," *New York Times*, September 8, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/09/world/europe/turkey-is-courted-by-us-to-help-fight-isis.html>.
 - **September 6, 2014:** The U.S. launches a new series of airstrikes on ISIS to prevent the group from taking the Haditha Dam and having the ability to release its floodwaters toward Baghdad. Source: Helene Cooper, "U.S. Launches New Airstrikes on ISIS to Protect Dam in Iraq," *New York Times*, September 7, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/08/world/middleeast/iraq.html>.
 - **September 5, 2014:** The Canadian government announces it will send 50 to 100 military advisers to Iraq to join U.S. military personnel in advising Kurdish forces in northern Iraq on how to fight ISIS militants. Then-Prime Minister Stephen Harper says the deployment was made in response to U.S. President Barack Obama's request and would last 30 days, subject to reassessment thereafter. Source: "Remarks by President Obama at NATO Summit Press Conference," The White House, September 5, 2014, http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/C/CN_CANADA_IRAQ_MILITARY?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT.
 - **September 5, 2014:** The U.S. government assembles what U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel calls a "core coalition" of ten countries to fight ISIS: the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, and Turkey. Source: Helene Cooper, "Obama Enlists 9 Allies to Help in the Battle Against ISIS," *New York Times*, September 5, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/06/world/middleeast/us-and-allies-form-coalition-against-isis.html?partner=rss&emc=rss>.
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- **September 3, 2014:** Israel designates ISIS as an “unauthorized organization,” enabling the Israeli government to crack down on ISIS operations and fundraising if discovered in Israel or the West Bank.
Source: Gili Cohen, “Israel prepares for possibility of local Islamic State cells,” *Haaretz*, September 3, 2014, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/.premium-1.613958>.
- **September 3, 2014:** ISIS releases another video, entitled “A Second Message to America,” showing a masked ISIS militant beheading kidnapped American journalist Steven Sotloff, as previously threatened.
Before being killed, Sotloff is made to say that he is “paying the price” for U.S. military intervention in Iraq. After the beheading, the ISIS militant, speaking with a British accent, said to U.S. President Barack Obama, “Just as your missiles continue to strike our people, our knife will continue to strike the necks of your people.” The militant also “warn[s] those governments who’ve entered this evil alliance of America against the Islamic State to back off and leave our people alone.” He threatens another captive, David Cawthorne Haines, a British aid worker kidnapped last year on the Turkish-Syrian border. The *Washington Post* reported that the U.S. government believes “as many as a dozen Americans may be fighting alongside [ISIS] and that the group holds at least two other American hostages, both aid workers.” Sources: Chelsea J. Carter and Ashley Fantz, “ISIS video shows beheading of American journalist Steven Sotloff,” CNN, September 3, 2014, http://edition.cnn.com/2014/09/02/world/meast/isis-american-journalist-sotloff/index.html?iid=article_sidebar; Greg Miller, “U.S. confirms authenticity of second journalist beheading video,” *Washington Post*, September 3, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/islamic-state-claims-to-have-beheaded-american-journalist-steven-sotloff/2014/09/02/a5e8ffa-32c3-11e4-9e92-0899b306bbea_story.html.
- “The Islamic State is coming” is spray-painted on the walls of two churches in northern Lebanon, deepening worries among Lebanese citizens that the country will be ISIS’s next target.
Groups of Lebanese Christians begin rearming and establishing self-defense units to protect against an attack by ISIS or other Islamist militant groups in Syria. Sources: Donna Abu-Nasr, “Islamic State Is Coming, Graffiti Warns Lebanese, as the Band Plays On,” September 4, 2014, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-09-03/lebanon-band-plays-on-as-fears-mount-islamic-state-lies-in-wait.html>; Bassem Mroue and Zeina Karam, “Some Christians arm as Mideast perils mount,” Associated Press, September 5, 2014, <http://news.yahoo.com/christians-arm-mideast-perils-mount-053505095.html>.
- **August 28, 2014:** U.S. President Barack Obama states that the U.S. does not yet have a strategy to deal with ISIS, spurring criticism.
Sources: Karen DeYoung, “Obama: U.S. doesn’t ‘have a strategy yet’ to comprehensively respond to Islamic State,” *Washington Post*, August 28, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/obama-us-doesnt-have-a-strategy-yet-to-comprehensively-respond-to-islamic-state/2014/08/28/25513d94-2ed5-11e4-994d-202962a9150c_story.html; “Transcript: President Obama’s Aug. 28 remarks on Ukraine, Syria and the economy,” *Washington Post*, August 28, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/transcript-president-obamas-aug-28-remarks-on-ukraine-and-syria/2014/08/28/416f1336-2eec-11e4-bb9b-997ae96fad33_story.html; “Remarks by President Obama and President Ilves of Estonia in Joint Press Conference,” The White House, September 3, 2014, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/03/remarks-president-obama-and-president-ilves-estonia-joint-press-confer-0>
- **August 20, 2014:** ISIS releases a video, entitled “A Message to America,” showing a masked ISIS militant beheading kidnapped American journalist James Foley and, speaking with a British accent, threatening to kill another such journalist, Steven Sotloff, if U.S. President Barack Obama does not stop U.S. military operations in Iraq.
Obama responds by condemning ISIS as a “cancer” engaging in “hateful terrorism,” saying that “[t]hey terrorize their neighbors and offer them nothing but an endless slavery to their empty vision, and the collapse of any definition of civilized behavior.” Obama pledges that the U.S. “will continue to do what we must do to protect our people. We will be vigilant and we will be relentless. When people harm Americans, anywhere, we do what’s necessary to see that justice is done. And we act against ISIL, standing alongside others.” Sources: Chelsea J. Carter, “Video shows ISIS beheading U.S. journalist James Foley,” CNN, August 20, 2014, http://edition.cnn.com/2014/08/19/world/meast/isis-james-foley/index.html?hpt=hp_t1; “Statement by the President,” The White House, August 20, 2014, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/08/20/statement-president>.
- **August 18, 2014:** Aided by the continuing U.S. airstrike campaign, Iraqi and Kurdish forces take back control of the Mosul Dam from ISIS.
Source: “Key events on Sunni militants surge in Iraq,” Associated Press, August 18, 2014, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/key-events-sunni-militants-surge-iraq>.
- **August 12, 2014:** The United States sent 130 military advisers to Erbil, the capital of the Kurdistan Region in northern Iraq, to assess how else the U.S. could aid the Yazidis besieged on Mount Sinjar.
The 130 advisers join 40 U.S. military personnel already in Erbil staffing a Joint Operations Center together with Kurdish forces. U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel stresses that the new advisers do not constitute “a combat boots on the ground operation. As the president has made very clear, we are not going back into Iraq in any of the same combat missions dimensions that we once were in in Iraq.” Source: Luis Martinez and Elise Widerlite, “U.S. Sends 130-Member Military Assessment Team to Erbil,” ABC News, August 12, 2014, <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2014/08/u-s-sends-130-member-military-assessment-team-to-erbil>.
- **August 11, 2014:** The U.S. government announces that it has begun taking the unprecedented step of providing weapons directly to Kurdish peshmerga forces fighting ISIS, instead of solely to the Iraqi government.
The arms transfers are going through a CIA back channel. The peshmerga has been losing ground to ISIS fighters, partly due to ammunition shortages and inferior weaponry. The Iraqi federal government has largely failed to transfer arms bought from the U.S. to the peshmerga in recent years. The new direct transfers of U.S. arms to the Kurds consist mainly of light arms and ammunition. The State Department plays down the significance of the policy shift, but Lt. Gen. William Mayville, director of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, acknowledges the importance of the new U.S. move and says that the U.S. wanted to do more. However, Mayville said, “There are no plans to expand the current air campaign” to include targeting ISIS leaders or logistical centers. Mayville reiterates the Obama administration’s policy that the purpose of the U.S. airstrikes is to prevent ISIS from advancing towards Erbil or on Mount Sinjar. Sources: Craig Whitlock and Greg Jaffe, “U.S. sending weapons directly to Kurdish forces, officials say,” *Washington Post*, August 11, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-sending-weapons-directly-to-kurdish-forces-officials-say/2014/08/11/7055b98c-2165-11e4-8593-da634b334390_story.html; Julie Pace and Nedra Pickler, “Obama welcomes new Iraqi leaders as ‘step forward,’” Associated Press, August 11, 2014, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/apnewsbreak-us-sending-arms-kurds-iraq>.
- **August 11, 2014:** Iraqi President Fouad Massoum acts to replace polarizing Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, nominating Haider al-Abadi, deputy speaker of Iraq’s parliament and a member of Maliki’s Dawa Party, as the new prime minister.
The United States backs Massoum’s decision, with President Barack Obama calling the leadership change “a promising step forward,” speaking to Abadi by telephone, and emphasizing that “[t]he only lasting solution is for Iraqis to come together and form an inclusive government.” However, Maliki refuses to step aside, going on national television to call the move “a coup against the constitution and the political process.” Maliki supporters protest in the streets. Sources: Patrick J. McDonnell, “Iraq’s Maliki defiant as new prime minister nominated to succeed him,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 11, 2014, <http://www.latimes.com/world/middleeast/la-fg-iraq-leqadership-20140811-story.html>; Julie Pace and Nedra Pickler, “Obama welcomes new Iraqi leaders as ‘step forward,’” Associated Press, August 11, 2014, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/apnewsbreak-us-sending-arms-kurds-iraq>.
- **August 7, 2014:** ISIS fighters take control of Qaraqosh, the largest Christian municipality in Iraq.

Tens of thousands of its residents flee. Source: "The jihadist offensive in Iraq: a timeline," Agence France-Presse, August 15, 2014, <http://www.afp.com/en/node/2730918>.

- **August 5, 2014:** Fighters from the Indonesian militant group Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid pledge allegiance to ISIS, and raise the ISIS flag on the grounds of a mosque in Pekayon Jaya, South Bekasi district. The fighters also announce the creation of a jihadist group, "Khilafah Ibrahim," in support of ISIS' activities. Source: "Bekasi Group Swear Allegiance to ISIS," The Jakarta Post, August 5, 2014, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/08/06/bekasi-group-swear-allegiance-isis.html>.
- **August 3, 2014 - August 13, 2014:** ISIS seizes several Kurdish towns in Iraq including Sinjar and Zumar. ISIS begins murdering Yazidis, ethnic Kurds whom ISIS despises as "devil worshipers" and heretics subject to death for practicing an ancient, pre-Abrahamic religion. As many as 200,000 local residents flee. Upon entering Sinjar, ISIS explodes a Shiite shrine and demands that Sinjar residents convert to Islam or be killed. Many of the Yazidis (estimates range from 10,000 to 50,000) take refuge on Mount Sinjar. There, they lack sufficient food, water, and medicine. They are besieged by ISIS and threatened with death if they attempt to come down from the mountains. On August 7, Syrian Kurdish fighters successfully establish an escape route for the Yazidis, and U.S. President Barack Obama approves U.S. airstrikes in Iraq. The same day, ISIS takes the strategically vital Mosul dam, driving out peshmerga forces from several towns. Hundreds of thousands of Yazidis flee the area. U.S. airstrikes begin on August 8, representing the first American military operation in Iraq since the Obama administration withdrew U.S. troops from Iraq in 2011. On August 10, tens of thousands of Yazidis escape to Iraq's Kurdistan Region from Mount Sinjar. On August 13, the U.S. announces that ISIS's besiegement of the Yazidis on Mount Sinjar has been broken by a combination of U.S. air strikes and humanitarian airdrops, as well as Kurdish peshmerga forces. It is not until December 19, 2014, that Kurdish peshmerga forces claim victory, ending the terror group's siege of Mount Sinjar. However, ISIS militants move back in to retake the mountain. In November 2015, the U.S. forces and the Kurds begin an effort to reclaim Mount Sinjar from ISIS. Sources: Loveday Morris, "Islamic State seizes town of Sinjar, pushing out Kurds and sending Yazidis fleeing," *Washington Post*, August 3, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/islamic-state-seize-town-of-sinjar-pushing-out-kurds-and-sending-yazidis-fleeing/2014/08/03/52ab53f1-48de-4ae1-9e1d-e241a15f580e_story.html; Mohammed A Salih and Wladimir van Wilgenburg, "Surrounded by Islamic State fighters, members of the Yazidi religious minority fear an onslaught of violence," *Al Jazeera*, last modified August 5, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/08/iraqi-yazidis-if-move-they-will-kill-us-20148513656188206.html>; Associated Press, "Syrian Kurdish fighters rescue stranded Yazidis," *Yahoo News*, August 12, 2014, <http://news.yahoo.com/syrian-kurdish-fighters-rescue-stranded-yazidis-172250184.html>; "Key events on Sunni militants surge in Iraq," Associated Press, August 18, 2014, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/key-events-sunni-militants-surge-iraq>; Liz Sly, "Exodus from the mountain: Yazidis flood into Iraq following U.S. airstrikes," *Washington Post*, August 10, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/exodus-from-the-mountain-yazidis-flood-into-iraq-following-us-airstrikes/2014/08/10/f8349f2a-04da-4d60-98ef-85fe66c82002_story.html; Richard Spencer, "Isil carried out massacres and mass sexual enslavement of Yazidis, UN confirms," *Telegraph* (London), October 14, 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/islamic-state/11160906/Isil-carried-out-massacres-and-mass-sexual-enslavement-of-Yazidis-UN-confirms.html>; "Iraqi Kurds say siege of Mount Sinjar broken," *Al Jazeera*, December 19, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/12/kurds-retake-ground-from-isis-iraq-20141218171223624837.html>; Michael R. Gordon, "Kurds, Backed by U.S. Air Power, Try to Regain Sinjar From ISIS," *New York Times*, November 11, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/12/world/middleeast/isis-iraq-syria.html?_r=1.
- **August 2, 2014 - August 3, 2014:** ISIS defeats Kurdish peshmerga fighters and takes over several Kurdish towns, Sinjar and Zumar near Iraq's border with Syria, as well as two small oil fields. During its conquest, ISIS kills up to 500 Yazidis, ethnic Kurds whom ISIS despises as "devil worshipers" and heretics subject to death for practicing an ancient, pre-Abrahamic religion. Upon entering Sinjar, ISIS notes the occasion by exploding a Shi'ite shrine and demanding that Sinjar residents convert to Islam or be killed. ¹⁷⁵ As many as 200,000 local residents flee, including other Yazidis. Many of the Yazidis (estimates range from 10,000 to 50,000) take refuge on Mount Sinjar. There, the Yazidis lack sufficient food, water, and medicine. They are besieged by ISIS and threatened with death if they attempt to come down from the mountains. The UN warns of a pending "humanitarian tragedy." As one besieged Yazidi notes, "We cannot get out of here; we cannot move. It's all [ISIS] fighters around us. If we move down they will kill us." Sources: Loveday Morris, "Islamic State seizes town of Sinjar, pushing out Kurds and sending Yazidis fleeing," *Washington Post*, August 3, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/islamic-state-seize-town-of-sinjar-pushing-out-kurds-and-sending-yazidis-fleeing/2014/08/03/52ab53f1-48de-4ae1-9e1d-e241a15f580e_story.html; Diaa Hadid and Bassem Mroue, "Syrian Kurdish fighters rescue stranded Yazidis," Associated Press, August 12, 2014, <http://news.yahoo.com/syrian-kurdish-fighters-rescue-stranded-yazidis-172250184.html>; "UN warns of 'humanitarian tragedy' as militants seize town in northern Iraq," UN News Centre, August 3, 2014, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48397#.VAmZFGRdVXA>; Mohammed A Salih and Wladimir van Wilgenburg, "Surrounded by Islamic State fighters, members of the Yazidi religious minority fear an onslaught of violence," *Al Jazeera*, last modified August 5, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/08/iraqi-yazidis-if-move-they-will-kill-us-20148513656188206.html>.
- **August 1, 2014 - August 5, 2014:** Around this time, ISIS militants crucify, behead and shoot over 700 members of the Shaitat tribe in eastern Syria, in what is one of ISIS's bloodiest advances. Source: Liz Sly, "Syria tribal revolt against Islamic State ignored, fueling resentment," *Washington Post*, October 20, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/syria-tribal-revolt-against-islamic-state-ignored-fueling-resentment/2014/10/20/25401beb-8de8-49f2-8e64-c1cfbee45232_story.html.
- **July 25, 2014:** ISIS blows up the shrine at the reputed burial site of the Biblical prophet Jonah in Mosul. ISIS has destroyed numerous shrines and mosques that it considers in conflict with early Islamic principles. Source: "Iraq jihadists blow up 'Jonah's tomb' in Mosul: official," Agence France-Presse, July 24, 2014, <http://news.yahoo.com/iraq-jihadists-blow-jonahs-tomb-mosul-official-220531959.html>.
- **July 23, 2014:** The Filipino jihadist group Aby Sayyaf pledges allegiance to ISIS through a video posted online. Source: Maria A. Ressa, "Senior Abu Sayyaf leader swears oath to ISIS," *Rapper*, August 4, 2014, <http://www.rappler.com/nation/65199-abu-sayyaf-leader-oath-isis>.
- **July 18, 2014:** Virtually the entire remaining Christian community in ISIS-controlled Mosul flees after receiving an ultimatum that Christians convert to Islam, pay the special *jizya* task for non-Muslims, leave, or be killed. ISIS members are observed marking Christian-owned houses with the Arabic letter *nun*, short for the Arabic word for "Christian." Sources: "The jihadist offensive in Iraq: a timeline," Agence France-Presse, August 15, 2014, <http://www.afp.com/en/node/2730918>; "Iraqi Christians flee after Isis issue Mosul ultimatum," *BBC News*, July 18, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28381455>; Fazel Hawramy, "They are savages," say Christians forced to flee Mosul by Isis," *Guardian*, July 24, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/24/iraqi-christians-mosul-isis-convert-islam-or-be-executed>; Alissa J. Rubin, "ISIS Forces Last Iraqi Christians to Flee Mosul," *New York Times*, July 18, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/19/world/middleeast/isis-forces-last-iraqi-christians-to-flee-mosul.html>.
- **July 5, 2014:** A man claiming to be ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi makes his first public appearance, speaking at a mosque in Mosul and calling for Muslims to wage jihad and accept the authority of ISIS's self-proclaimed caliphate. Sources: "Key Events on Sunni Militants Surge in Iraq," Associated Press, August 18, 2014, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/key-events-sunni-militants-surge-iraq>; Aaron Y. Zelin, "al-Furq'an Media presents a new video message from the Islamic State's Ab' Bakr al-'ussayn? al-Quraysh? al-Baghdad?d?: 'Khu'bah and Jum'ah Prayer in the Grand Mosque of M??ul (Mosul)," *Jihadology*, last modified July 27, 2014, <http://jihadology.net/2014/07/05/al-furqan-media-presents-a-new-video-message-from-the-islamic-states-abu-bakr-al-%E1%B8%A5ussayni-al-qurayshi-al-baghdadi-khu%E1%B9%ADbah-and-jumah-prayer-in-the-grand-mosque-of-mu>.

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- **July 4, 2014:** Spokesman Seifeddine Raise of the Tunisian terror group Ansar al-Sharia declares loyalty to ISIS caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, essentially pledging allegiance to ISIS.
Source: Jamel Arfaoui, "Ansar al-Sharia Tunisia spokesman backs ISIS," Magharebia, July 8, 2014, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/key-events-sunni-militants-surge-iraq>.
- **July 1, 2014:** The UN states that more than 2,400 Iraqis were killed in June, the most fatalities in one month in Iraq since April 2005.
Source: "Key Events on Sunni Militants Surge in Iraq," Associated Press, August 18, 2014, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/key-events-sunni-militants-surge-iraq>.
- **June 29, 2014:** ISIS declares an "Islamic caliphate" from Diyala province in Iraq to Aleppo in northern Syria, and renames itself simply the "Islamic State."
ISIS proclaims the group's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, as caliph, and urges Muslims to pledge their allegiance to him. Sources: "The jihadist offensive in Iraq: a timeline," Agence France-Presse, August 15, 2014, <http://www.afp.com/en/node/2730918>; "Sunni rebels declare new 'Islamic caliphate,'" Al Jazeera, last modified June 30, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/06/isis-declares-new-islamic-caliphate-201462917326669749.html>.
- **June 23, 2014:** Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani urges Iraqis to join Iraq's security forces in order to combat ISIS.
Source: "Key events on Sunni militants surge in Iraq," Associated Press, August 18, 2014, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/key-events-sunni-militants-surge-iraq>.
- **June 20, 2014:** Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the leading Iraqi Shiite cleric, urges the speedy expulsion of the insurgents and says that the next Iraqi government must steer clear of "past mistakes."
This is perceived as a reference to Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's purported bias against Iraq's Sunni minority. Maliki's bias is widely considered to have exacerbated Sunnis' alienation from and grievances against the Iraqi government, creating an opening that ISIS has exploited. Source: "The jihadist offensive in Iraq: a timeline," Agence France-Presse, August 15, 2014, <http://www.afp.com/en/node/2730918>.
- **June 17, 2014:** ISIS tries but fails to seize Iraq's largest oil refinery outside the northern Iraqi town of Baiji.
Further such attempts in the ensuing weeks also do not succeed. Source: Qassim Abdul-Zahra, "Iraq says it has repelled insurgent attack on oil refinery," Associated Press, June 18, 2014, <http://www.pressherald.com/2014/06/18/militants-lay-siege-to-iraqs-largest-oil-refinery>.
- **June 11, 2014:** ISIS insurgents take over Tikrit, home town of Saddam Hussein and his clan.
Source: "The jihadist offensive in Iraq: a timeline," Agence France-Presse, August 15, 2014, <http://www.afp.com/en/node/2730918>.
- **June 10, 2014:** ISIS insurgents take over Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, as Iraqi soldiers flee on foot and leave behind their weapons, vehicles, and uniforms.
After seizing Mosul and securing its hold over Nineveh Province, the militants move south toward Baghdad, taking over parts of Salahuddin Province along the way. Five days after its offensive, ISIS claims that it had executed 1,700 Iraqi soldiers, many of whom are Shiites. Those claims could not be immediately verified, though the Iraqi military admitted that at least 800 soldiers had been taken prisoner. ISIS also robs local banks and seizes U.S. military equipment left for the Iraqi army. Sources: Suadad Al-Salhu and Tim Arango, "Sunni Militants Drive Iraqi Army Out of Mosul," *New York Times*, June 10, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/11/world/middleeast/militants-in-mosul.html>; Rod Nordland and Alissa J. Rubin, "Militants Claim Mass Execution of Iraqi Forces," *New York Times*, June 15, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/16/world/middleeast/iraq.html?hp>; Jack Moore, "Mosul Seized: Jihadis Loot \$429m from City's Central Bank to Make Isis World's Richest Terror Force," *International Business Times*, June 11, 2014, <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/mosul-seized-jihadis-loot-429m-citys-central-bank-make-isis-worlds-richest-terror-force-1452190>.
- American citizen Moner Mohammad Abusalha, who goes by the nom de guerre Abu Huraira al-Amriki, reportedly carries out a suicide truck bombing on a mountaintop restaurant in Syria that had been a gathering spot for Syrian soldiers.
Also in May, French citizen Mehdi Nemmouche, who reportedly fought in Syria with ISIS, shoots and kills three people at a Jewish museum in Brussels. The attack is the first instance of a European Islamist fighter returning home from the conflict in Syria to commit acts of violence. Sources: Frances Robles and Emma G. Fitzsimmons, "Before Syrian Suicide Blast, a Quiet Life in the Suburbs," *New York Times*, May 31, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/01/us/Moner-Mohammad-Abusalha-Vero-Beach-Florida-Syria.html>; Scott Sayare, "Suspect Held in Jewish Museum Killings," *New York Times*, June 1, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/02/world/europe/suspect-arrested-in-jewish-museum-killings-in-belgium.html>.
- **February 23, 2014:** A suicide bomber from ISIS reportedly launches an attack against a rebel base that kills Abu Khalid al-Suri, who was chosen by Ayman al-Zawahiri to mediate disputes between the Nusra Front and ISIS.
Source: Ben Hubbard, "Jihadist Mediator Killed in Suicide Attack by Rival Extremists," *New York Times*, February 23, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/24/world/middleeast/jihadist-mediator-killed-in-suicide-attack-by-rival-extremists.html?module=ArrowsNav&contentCollection=Middle%20East&action=keypress®ion=FixedLeft&pgtype=article>.
- **February 22, 2014:** A Kurdish rebel group recaptures the northeastern town of Tell Brak from ISIS after a battle that killed at least 25 Islamist fighters.
Source: "Nearly 30 Die as Kurds Take a Syrian Town," Reuters, February 22, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/23/world/middleeast/syria.html>.
- **February 3, 2014:** Al-Qaeda's senior leadership issues a statement formally severing ties with ISIS, saying that the group is "not an affiliate with the [al-Qaeda] group and has no organizational relation with it."
Source: Thomas Joscelyn, "Al Qaeda's General Command Disowns the Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham," Long War Journal, February 3, 2014, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/02/al_qaedas_general_co.php.
- British Islamist fighter Abdul Waheed Majeed reportedly carries out a suicide truck bombing at the Aleppo Central Prison.
If true, Majeed's attack becomes the "first known case of a British suicide bomber in Syria." Source: Robert Mackey and Christine Hauser, "Deferential Remarks in Martyrdom Video Said to Show Briton's Last Words before Suicide Attack in Syria," *New York Times*, February 14, 2014, <http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/02/14/deferential-remarks-in-martyrdom-video-said-to-show-britons-last-words-before-suicide-attack-in-syria>.
- After days of intense fighting, ISIS militants take over major parts of Fallujah, destroy the police headquarters, and declare the city an Islamic state.
ISIS is accused of carrying out mass executions against civilians, prisoners, and other rebel fighters in Aleppo, Idlib, and Raqqa. According to reports, bodies were found handcuffed and blindfolded at a children's hospital used as a base by ISIS. In early January, after ISIS had asserted control over Aleppo for months, opposing Syrian rebel

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factions drive the group from its headquarters in the city. However, by mid-January, ISIS has reclaimed much of its territory. On January 23, Ayman al-Zawahiri releases an audio statement pleading with jihadist factions to stop fighting each other, and to set up an Islamic arbitration court. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reports that during two weeks of intense fighting between rebel groups and ISIS, approximately 1,400 people were killed. After taking control of Syria's oil and gas resources, reports surface in late January that the Nusra Front and ISIS are selling those resources back to the Assad regime. According to one intelligence source, "The regime is paying al-Nusra to protect oil and gas pipelines under al-Nusra's control in the north and east of the country..." Sources: Yasir Ghazi and Tim Arango, "Iraq Fighters, Qaeda Allies, Claim Falluja as New State," *New York Times*, January 3, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/04/world/middleeast/fighting-in-falluja-and-ramadi.html>; Nick Cumming-Bruce, "U.N. Says Executions in Syria by Rebels May Be War Crimes," *New York Times*, January 16, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/17/world/middleeast/syria.html>; Ben Hubbard, "Syrian Rebels Deal Qaeda-Linked Group a Reversal," *New York Times*, January 8, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/09/world/middleeast/syrian-rebels-said-to-oust-qaeda-linked-group-from-its-aleppo-headquarters.html>; Ben Hubbard, "Al Qaeda Calls for Rebel Unity in Syria," *New York Times*, January 23, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/24/world/middleeast/al-qaeda-calls-for-rebel-unity-in-syria.html?module=ArrowsNav&contentCollection=Middle%20East&action=keypress®ion=FixedLeft&pgtype=article>; Ruth Sherlock and Richard Spencer, "Syria's Assad Accused of Boosting Al-Qaeda with Secret Oil Deals," *Telegraph*, January 20, 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/10585391/Syrias-Assad-accused-of-boosting-al-Qaeda-with-secret-oil-deals.html>.

- **December 25, 2013:** After Prime Minister al-Maliki's visit to Washington, the U.S. reportedly begins "quietly rushing dozens of Hellfire missiles and low-tech surveillance drones to Iraq to help government forces combat an explosion of violence" by ISIS in western Iraq. Source: Michael R. Gordon and Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Sends Arms to Aid Iraq Fight with Extremists," *New York Times*, December 25, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/26/world/middleeast/us-sends-arms-to-aid-iraq-fight-with-extremists.html>.
- **December 19, 2013:** Nusra Front leader Abu Mohamed al-Golani conducts his first televised interview with Al Jazeera, telling the network that he believed victory was near. Jolani also says that his organization is "not seeking to rule the country... We want the Islamic Shariah to prevail." Source: Anne Barnard, "Jihadist Leader Envisions an Islamic State in Syria," *New York Times*, December 19, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/20/world/middleeast/jihadist-leader-envisions-an-islamic-state-in-syria.html?ref=middleeast>.
- **October 31, 2013:** Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki travels to Washington, D.C. to request increased military assistance from the U.S., including "Apache helicopter gunships, more American intelligence and other forms of counterterrorism support like reconnaissance drone that would be operated by Americans." Source: Michael R. Gordon and Eric Schmitt, "As Security Deteriorates at Home, Iraqi Leaders Arrives in U.S. Seeking Aid," *New York Times*, October 31, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/01/world/middleeast/iraqi-leader-on-fighting-terrorism.html?pagewanted=all>.
- **- :** ISIS and a rebel brigade called Northern Storm battle for control of Azaz, a Syrian town strategically located along the Turkish border. In late September, ISIS wrestles control of Azaz from Northern Storm. Source: Ben Hubbard, "Fighting between Rebels Intensifies over a Strategic Town in Syria," *New York Times*, October 3, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/04/world/middleeast/syria.html>.
- **September 12, 2013:** Ayman al-Zawahiri releases a message the day after the 12th anniversary of the September 11 attacks. He calls on his followers to carry out "a few disparate attacks" against the American homeland and to "bleed America economically." Part of his message refers to the war in Syria, where he tells Islamist fighters not to cooperate with secular rebel forces. Source: Alan Cowell, "Attack U.S., Qaeda Chief Tells Muslims in a Speech," *New York Times*, September 13, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/14/world/al-qaeda-leader-ayman-al-zawahiri-urges-muslims-to-attack-america.htm>.
- **August 28, 2013:** A series of more than a dozen explosions hit Shiite neighborhoods of Baghdad during the morning commute, killing at least 65 and wounding dozens more. The attacks follow a string of recent beheadings that are claimed by ISIS. Source: Yasir Ghazi and Tim Arango, "Deadly Blasts Stoke Fears of Sectarian Strife in Iraq," *New York Times*, August 28, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/29/world/middleeast/iraq-explosions.html>.
- **July 26, 2013:** Fighters from the Nusra Front and Ansar al-Khalafa al-Islamiya Brigade kill as many as 150 Syrian soldiers during a battle in Khan al-Assal, a suburb of Aleppo. 51 of the soldiers are summarily executed after surrendering, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. Source: Hania Mourtada and Rick Gladstone, "Soldiers' Mass Execution Reported by Syria Group," *New York Times*, July 26, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/27/world/middleeast/soldiers-mass-execution-reported-by-syria-group.html>.
- **July 23, 2013:** As part of its "Breaking the Walls" campaign, ISIS militants stage "carefully synchronized operations" to break members of the organization out of the Abu Ghraib and Taji prisons. Al-Qaeda claims that 500 inmates have been freed from the prisons, while Iraqi officials put the total at 800 – with 400 of them recaptured or killed. Source: Michael R. Gordon and Duraid Adnan, "Brazen Attacks at Prisons Raise Worries of Al Qaeda's Strength in Iraq," *New York Times*, July 23, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/24/world/middleeast/al-qaeda-asserts-responsibility-for-iraqi-prison-breaks.html>.
- **- :** ISIS escalates attacks against members of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) in an apparent attempt to take out the FSA's leadership. ISIS reportedly kills "prominent" FSA commander Kamal Hamami for planning operations without consulting it. The organization also beheads two FSA soldiers and leaves their heads next to a garbage can. Source: Anne Barnard and Hwaida Saad, "Syrian Rebel Infighting Undermines Anti-Assad Effort," *New York Times*, July 12, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/13/world/middleeast/syrian-rebel-infighting-undermines-anti-assad-effort.html?pagewanted=all>.
- **June 15, 2013:** AQI leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi releases a message rejecting Ayman al-Zawahiri's orders to dissolve his group's merger with the Nusra Front. Baghdadi says that ISIS "will remain, as long as we have a vein pumping or an eye blinking. It remains and we will not compromise nor give it up." Source: "Iraqi Al-Qaeda Chief Rejects Zawahiri Orders," Al Jazeera, June 15, 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/06/2013615172217827810.html>.
- **June 9, 2013:** Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri issues a letter nullifying the merger between the Nusra Front and ISI, notifying each side where they are to operate. "The seat of the Islamic State in Iraq is in Iraq. The seat of Jabhat al-Nusra for the people of al-Sham, is in Syria." Source: Basma Atassi, "Qaeda Chief Annuls Syrian-Iraqi Jihad Merger," Al Jazeera, June 9, 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/06/2013699425657882.html>.

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- **April 9, 2013:** ISI leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announces that his organization has officially merged with the Nusra Front in Syria, forming the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS).
Source: Hania Mourtada and Rick Gladstone, "Iraq's Branch of Al Qaeda Merges with Syria Jihadists," *New York Times*, April 9, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/10/world/middleeast/Iraq-and-Syria-jihadists-combine.html>.
- **February 11, 2013:** Syrian rebels, including battalions from the Nusra Front, take control of the Tabqa Dam, Syria's largest hydroelectric dam, in Raqqa Province.
Source: Hwaida Saad and Rick Gladstone, "Syrian Insurgents Claim to Control Large Hydropower Dam," *New York Times*, February 11, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/12/world/middleeast/syrian-insurgents-claim-to-control-large-hydropower-dam.html>.
- **January 11, 2013:** The Nusra Front and Ahrar al-Sham lead an offensive on the Taftanaz air base in Idlib province, seizing large caches of weapons and ammunition—and also taking out the base that served as the launching point for "barrel bomb" attacks against civilians.
Source: Anne Barnard, "Syrian Rebels Say They Seized Helicopter Base in the North," *New York Times*, January 11, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/12/world/middleeast/syria-war-developments.html>.
- **December 11, 2012:** The U.S. Department of the Treasury designates Nusra Front leaders Maysar Ali Musa Abdallah al-Juburi and Anas Hasan Khattab for "acting on behalf of [al-Qaeda] in Iraq (AQI)."
Source: "Treasury Sanctions Al-Nusrah Front Leadership in Syria and Militias Supporting the Asad Regime," U.S. Department of the Treasury, December 11, 2012, <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/pages/tg1797.aspx>.
- **October 9, 2012:** The Nusra Front claims responsibility for multiple suicide attacks against an air force intelligence branch in Harasta, a suburb of Damascus.
The group claims that one suicide bomber detonated a vehicle packed with 9 tons of explosives, while another attacker drove an ambulance loaded with explosives to the scene 25 minutes later. Source: Anne Barnard and Christine Hauser, "Qaeda-Linked Group Claims Responsibility for Syrian Blasts," *New York Times*, October 9, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/10/world/middleeast/qaeda-linked-group-says-it-struck-compound-on-edge-of-damascus.html>.
- **September 8, 2012:** A suicide bomber from the Nusra Front attacks al-Haya hospital in Aleppo.
The group claims that it killed more than 200 military officers and soldiers, while the Syrian government reports that 27 soldiers died and 64 were wounded. Source: Bill Roggio, "Al Nusrah Front Claims 5 Suicide Attacks in Syria in Past Month," *Long War Journal*, September 25, 2012, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/09/al_nusrah_front_clai_4.php#.
- **July 19, 2012:** The Nusra Front claims responsibility for kidnapping and executing Syrian television presenter Mohamed al-Saeed.
The group warned supporters of the Syrian regime that "...the swords of the mujahideen will cut off their heads and purify the Levant from their obscenity." On the same date, the Nusra Front claims that it conducted a suicide bombing on a security post in Ma'arat al-Nu'man, killing 60 Syrian soldiers. Sources: "Mohammed Al-Saeed Dead: Militant Group Claims Kidnapping, Killing of Syrian TV Presenter," Reuters, August 5, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/05/mohammed-al-saeed-dead-militant-group-kidnapping-killing_n_1743392.html; Thomas Joscelyn, "Suicide Bombings Become Commonplace in Syria," *Long War Journal*, August 24, 2012, <http://www.defenddemocracy.org/media-hit/suicide-bombings-become-commonplace-in-syria>.
- **June 1, 2012:** The Nusra Front carries out multiple attacks on Syrian military targets.
This is in retaliation for the Syrian government's massacre in Houla. The attacks include a suicide attack on the al Nayrab Camp in Idlib, as well as ambush and IED attacks on military units responding to the attack at al Nayrab. Source: Bill Roggio, "Al Nusrah Front Claims Latest Suicide Attack in Syria," *Long War Journal*, June 13, 2012, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/06/al_nusrah_front_clai_2.php#.
- **April 24, 2012:** The Nusra Front claims responsibility for a suicide bombing attack on the Iranian Cultural Consulate in Damascus.
According to the group, one of its security battalions attached explosives to a Syrian army vehicle and detonated them when it arrived at the Consulate. Source: "Islamist group says behind Damascus bombing," Reuters, May 1, 2012, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-05-01/news/sns-rt-syria-bombclaim15e8g196r-20120501_1_al-nusra-front-syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-islamist-group.
- **February 10, 2012:** Several car bombs explode minutes apart from each other at a military security headquarters and police compound in Aleppo, Syria, killing 28 people and wounding more than 200.
The Nusra Front eventually claims responsibility for the attack. Sources: Neil MacFarquhar, "2 Security Complex Car Bombings Kill Dozens, Syria Says," *New York Times*, February 10, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/11/world/middleeast/blasts-in-aleppo-syria-homs-violence-said-to-continue.html?pagewanted=all>; "Unknown Islamist group claims suicide attacks in Syria," Agence France-Presse, February 29, 2012, <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/02/29/197781.html>.
- **January 24, 2012:** The Nusra Front, al-Qaeda's Syrian affiliate, officially announces its formation with a video statement, claiming it is "bringing the law of Allah back to His land."
The group carries out numerous attacks against diplomatic, military, and civilian targets inside Syria. Source: Noman Benotman and Roisin Blake, "Jabhat al-Nusra: A Strategic Briefing," Quilliam Foundation, January 8, 2013, <http://www.quilliamfoundation.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/publications/free/jabhat-al-nusra-a-strategic-briefing.pdf>; "Islamist group says behind Damascus bombing," Reuters, May 1, 2012, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-05-01/news/sns-rt-syria-bombclaim15e8g196r-20120501_1_al-nusra-front-syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-islamist-group; J. David Goodman and Hwaida Saad, "Suicide Attack Kills 9 Near Damascus as Cease-Fire Erodes," *New York Times*, April 27, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/28/world/middleeast/suicide-attack-kills-9-near-damascus-as-cease-fire-erodes.html>.
- U.S. forces complete their withdrawal from Iraq.
Source: Joseph Logan, "Last U.S. Troops Leave Iraq, Ending War," Reuters, December 18, 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/12/18/us-iraq-withdrawal-idUSTRE7BH03320111218>.
- **August 20, 2011:** ISI announces that it is launching a campaign, called "the battle of revenge for Sheik Osama bin Laden and other senior leaders," whereby it would carry out 100 attacks.
Source: Michael S. Schmidt, "Iraq Militants Say Violence Is to Avenge Bin Laden," *New York Times*, August 20, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/21/world/middleeast/21iraq.html>.
- **August 15, 2011:** ISI is suspected of carrying out a series of 42 "apparently coordinated" attacks using suicide bombs, car bombs, and gunmen.

At least 89 people are killed and 315 wounded. The attacks target Iraqi policemen and soldiers, as well as a market in Kut, and a mosque in Yusufiya. Source: Michael S. Schmidt, "Threat Resurges in Deadliest Day of Year for Iraq," *New York Times*, August 15, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/16/world/middleeast/16iraq.html>.

- **September 1, 2010:** The U.S. military officially marks the end of combat operations in Iraq and begins the "post-combat" phase (called Operation New Dawn).
Source: Michael R. Gordon and Elisabeth Bumiller, "In Baghdad, U.S. Officials Take Note of Milestone," *New York Times*, September 1, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/02/world/middleeast/02iraq.html>.
- **June 4, 2010:** The top U.S. commander in Iraq, General Ray Odierno, announces that Iraqi and American forces have killed or captured 34 of AQI's top 42 leaders.
Odierno tells reporters, "I think they're struggling now, and I think it's going to be difficult for them to continue to recruit." Source: Steven Lee Myers, "Coordinated Attacks in Iraqi Cities Kill More Than 100," *New York Times*, May 10, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/11/world/middleeast/11iraq.html>.
- **April 20, 2010:** Iraqi and American officials announce the deaths of Abu Omar al-Baghdadi and Abu Ayyub al-Masri, the top leaders of al-Qaeda in Iraq.
Shortly thereafter, AQI promotes Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who was detained for four years by American troops at Camp Bucca before being released in 2009, to lead the organization. Sources: Tim Arango, "Top Qaeda Leaders in Iraq Reported Killed in Raid," *New York Times*, April 20, 2010, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F0CE7DA1F3DF933A15757C0A9669D8B63>; "Profile: Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi," BBC News, June 11, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27801676>.
- **January 25, 2010:** Three bombs explode within 10 minutes of each other in Baghdad during rush hour.
Striking the Ishtar Sheraton, Babylon Hotel, and Hamra Hotel—all popular hotels for foreign businessmen and journalists. The blasts kill 36 and wound more than 70. Source: Anthony Shadid and John Leland, "Baghdad Blasts Shatter Sense of Security in Capital," *New York Times*, January 25, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/26/world/middleeast/26iraq.html>.
- **October 25, 2009:** ISI claims responsibility for two car bombings that strike the Iraqi Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works.
Killing more than 155 and injuring more than 500. Source: Rod Nordland, "Iraq Reaches Voting Deal as Toll Rises in Bombings," *New York Times*, October 26, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/27/world/middleeast/27iraq.html>.
- **April 23, 2009 - April 24, 2009:** Three separate suicide bombings in Baghdad and Muqadadiya kill at least 80 and injure 120.
The attack in Baghdad is perpetrated by a woman who detonates herself among a group of women and children waiting for emergency food aid. The next day, two suicide bombings near the revered Shi'ite shrine of Imam Musa al-Kadhim and his grandson kill at least 60. Sources: Timothy Williams, "80 Are Killed in 3 Suicide Bombings in Iraq," *New York Times*, April 23, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/24/world/middleeast/24iraq.htm>; Steven Lee Myers and Sam Dagher, "Storm of Violence in Iraq Strains Its Security Forces," *New York Times*, April 24, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/25/world/middleeast/25iraq.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.
- **February 9, 2009:** Four American soldiers are killed in Mosul when a suicide bomber detonated his vehicle near the soldier's Humvee.
The attack is the "deadliest single loss in nine months" for U.S. forces in Iraq. Source: Alissa J. Rubin, "Northern Iraq Suicide Blast Kills 4 American Soldiers," *New York Times*, February 9, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/10/world/middleeast/10iraq.html>.
- As U.S. forces withdraw from Iraq amidst relatively low levels of violence at the end of 2008, car bombings and suicide attacks make a comeback in 2009.
While the nature of the attacks fit the profile of AQI/ISI-style bombings, the group's culpability is unclear.
- U.S. forces pull out of Fallujah, handing over control to the Iraqi Army.
Source: Timothy Williams, "American Exit Increases Optimism in Falluja," *New York Times*, December 29, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/30/world/middleeast/30falluja.html?pagewanted=all>.
- **October 16, 2008:** The U.S. military announces that it has killed Abu Qaswarah, al-Qaeda in Iraq's second-in-command, during an operation in Mosul.
Source: Ernesto Londoño, "No. 2 Leader of Al-Qaeda in Iraq Killed," *Washington Post*, October 16, 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/15/AR2008101500682.html>.
- **September 1, 2008:** U.S. forces transfer responsibility for maintaining security in Anbar Province back to Iraqi forces.
As of 2006, Anbar has been the "most lethal place for Americans in Iraq," with more than 1,000 U.S. troops killed. Source: Dexter Filkins, "U.S. Hands Off Pacified Anbar, Once Heart of Iraq Insurgency," *New York Times*, September 1, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/02/world/middleeast/02anbar.html?pagewanted=all>.
- - : By early 2008, Coalition and Sunni Awakening forces have killed around 2,400 members of AQI/ISI, and captured 8,800.
Between March and April, U.S. and Iraqi forces have "killed or captured 53 senior members of AQI's network," including numerous provincial leaders, cell leaders, and facilitators who are "in charge of moving men, weapons, explosive, and money to allow al Qaeda to continue operations." In addition to General Petraeus, other high level U.S. officials state publicly that AQI has been severely degraded. In May, CIA Director Michael Hayden reports that al-Qaeda is on "the verge of a strategic defeat in Iraq," and in August, Marine Corps Commandant General James Conway says that AQI has been driven from large parts of Iraq, its leaders turning their attention to Afghanistan. Sources: M.J. Kirdar, "Al Qaeda in Iraq," *The Future of Al Qaeda and Associated Movements (AQAM)* | Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011, 5, http://csis.org/files/publication/110614_Kirdar_AlQaedaIraq_Web.pdf; Bill Roggio, "Targeting Al Qaeda in Iraq's Network, March-April 2008," *Long War Journal*, April 16, 2008, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2008/04/targeting_al_qaeda_i.php#; Kenneth Katzman, "Al Qaeda in Iraq: Assessment and Outside Links," Congressional Research Service, August 15, 2008, 15, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/RL32217.pdf>.
- Petraeus claims the number of high profile attacks in Iraq is down.
The top U.S. commander in Iraq, General David Petraeus, claims that the "number of high-profile attacks, that is car bombs, suicide car bombs and suicide vest attacks, is...down, roughly 60 percent" since March. A spokesman for Iraq's Interior Ministry claims that "75 percent of Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia's networks and safe havens [were] destroyed," noting that 18,000 people have been killed in 2007. Source: Stephen Farrell and Solomon Moore, "Iraq Attacks Fall 60 Percent, Petraeus Says," *New York Times*, December 30, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/30/world/middleeast/30iraq.html?pagewanted=print>.

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- **August 16, 2007:** Suicide bombers simultaneously detonate five fuel trucks.
This occurs in the Yazidi Kurdish villages of al-Qataniyah and al-Adnaniyah, killing more than 300 Iraqis, injuring several hundred, and destroying dozens of homes. It is reportedly the worst terrorist attack in Iraq since the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime. Source: Tim Butcher, "Iraq Bombs: 250 Die in Worst Terror Attack," *Telegraph*, August 16, 2007, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1560477/Iraq-bombs-250-die-in-worst-terror-attack.html>.
- **July 7, 2007:** Suicide bomber detonates a truck carrying 4.5 tons of explosives in the Shiite Turkmen village of Amerli, killing as many as 150 people.
Source: Stephen Farrell, "Around 150, Death Toll in Iraq Attack among War's Worst," *New York Times*, July 9, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/09/world/middleeast/09iraq.html>.
- **February 3, 2007:** A suicide bomber detonates a truck bomb in a heavily Shiite populated neighborhood of Iraq, killing 135 in what is then the "deadliest single bombing" since the beginning of the Iraq war in 2003.
Source: "CHRONOLOGY-The Deadliest Bomb Attacks in Iraq," *Reuters*, February 3, 2007, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2007/02/03/us-iraq-bombings-idUSL0340037820070203>.
- **ISI continues its deadly bombing campaign, targeting predominantly Shiite populations.**
In January 2007, the U.S. begins its "surge," deploying an additional 30,000 troops to Iraq, completing the deployment in June that year, and bringing the total number of troops in Iraq to 150,000. Source: Thom Shanker and Michael R. Gordon, "G.I.'s in Iraq Open Big Offensive against Al Qaeda," *New York Times*, June 17, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/17/world/middleeast/17iraq.html>.
- **November 23, 2006:** Car bombs and mortar attacks in Sadr City kill 215, setting off more sectarian violence.
Source: Greg Bruno, "Profile: Al-Qaeda in Iraq (a.k.a. Al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia)," *Washington Post*, November 19, 2007, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/19/AR2007111900721.html>.
- **October 15, 2006:** Due to a lack of support for the MSC, AQI formally rebrands for a second time, becoming the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). Its new leader is Abu Omar al-Baghdadi. Source: M.J. Kirdar, "Al Qaeda in Iraq," *The Future of Al Qaeda and Associated Movements (AQAM) | Center for Strategic and International Studies*, June 2011, 5, http://csis.org/files/publication/110614_Kirdar_AlQaedaIraq_Web.pdf.
- **A Sunni tribesman from Anbar Province begins coordinating attacks against AQI in what became known as the Sunni Awakening.**
The Awakening campaign is formally announced in September. Source: M.J. Kirdar, "Al Qaeda in Iraq," *The Future of Al Qaeda and Associated Movements (AQAM) | Center for Strategic and International Studies*, June 2011, 5, http://csis.org/files/publication/110614_Kirdar_AlQaedaIraq_Web.pdf.
- **June 7, 2006:** After weeks of tracking al-Zarqawi's spiritual adviser, Sheikh Abdul Rahman, U.S. forces pinpoint al-Zarqawi's location at a house near Baghdad.
U.S. planes drop two 500-pound bombs on the location, killing al-Zarqawi and Rahman. AQI soon replaces al-Zarqawi with Abu Hamzah al-Muhajir—otherwise known as Abu Ayyub al-Masri. Sources: Ellen Knickmeyer and Jonathan Finer, "Insurgent Leader Al-Zarqawi Killed in Iraq," *Washington Post*, June 8, 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/06/08/AR2006060800114.html>; Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, "Al-Qa'ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records," *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, January 2, 2008 [the website erroneously lists the publication date as January 2, 2007], 5, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/aqs-foreign-fighters-in-iraq.pdf>.
- **February 22, 2006:** AQI bombs the Shiite al-Askari Mosque in Samarra, Iraq, one of the four major Shiite shrines in Iraq and the burial place for two of the 12 revered Shiite Imams.
Reportedly, "a group of men dressed like Iraqi police commandos" walked into the shrine and set off the explosions. The mosque attack sets off a wave of intensified Shiite-Sunni attacks across Iraq. Sources: Bill Roggio, "Dome of the Golden Mosque Destroyed," *Long War Journal*, February 22, 2006, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2006/02/dome_of_the_golden_m_1.php; Robert F. Worth, "Blast Destroys Shrine in Iraq, Setting Off Sectarian Fury," *New York Times*, February 22, 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/22/international/middleeast/22cnd-iraq.html>.
- **AQI's extreme tactics under al-Zarqawi provoke a backlash among Iraqi nationalist insurgents.**
In an attempt to rebrand itself and minimize the damage from al-Zarqawi, AQI joins other affiliated groups under the coalition Mujahideen Shura Council (MSC) and name Abdullah Rashid al-Baghdadi as its leader. Source: Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, "Al-Qa'ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records," *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, January 2, 2008 [the website erroneously lists the publication date as January 2, 2007], 5, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/aqs-foreign-fighters-in-iraq.pdf>.
- **AQI increases the frequency of attacks throughout the year, targeting Coalition forces and Iraqi Shiites.**
In late 2005, during operations in Iraq, U.S. forces confiscate a letter from Ayman al-Zawahiri that describes the organization's long-term global strategy. The letter also criticizes al-Zarqawi for videotaping and distributing footage of beheadings, saying that such violence could alienate the Islamic world from al-Qaeda's cause. Source: Douglas Jehl and Thom Shanker, "Al Qaeda Tells Ally in Iraq to Strive for Global Goals," *New York Times*, October 7, 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/07/politics/07zarqawi.html>.
- **October 17, 2004:** Al-Zarqawi's group pledges allegiance to Bin Laden.
Uniting under the name Tanzim Qa'idat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn (the Organization of Jihad's Base in the Land of the Two Rivers), better known as al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) or, less commonly, al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia (AQM). Sources: Ty McCormick, "Al Qaeda Core: A Short History," *Foreign Policy*, March 17, 2014, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/03/17/al_qaeda_core_a_short_history; "Terrorist Organization Profile: al-Qaeda Organization in the Land of the Two Rivers," *National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism*, http://www.start.umd.edu/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=4416; "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant / al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI): ISIL – Early History," *GlobalSecurity.org*, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/aqi-2.htm>.
- **In May, al-Zarqawi "inaugurated his notorious wave of hostage beheadings," making American citizen Nicholas Berg his first victim.**
Later that month, a suicide bomber with suspected ties to al-Zarqawi detonates himself near the U.S.-led coalition headquarters in Baghdad, killing the acting president of the Iraqi Governing Council, Ezzedine Salim. Salim's death comes 45 days before the occupation forces are set to transfer limited political control back to the Iraqis. Sources: Mary Anne Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi," *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2006/07/the-short-violent-life-of-abu-musab-al-zarqawi/304983/?single_page=true; Ian Fisher, Christine Hauser, "The Struggle for Iraq: Political Violence; Suicide Bomber Kills President of Iraqi Council," *New York Times*, May 18, 2004, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/18/world/struggle-for-iraq-political-violence-suicide-bomber-kills-president-iraqi.html>.

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- Al-Zarqawi is allegedly responsible for the car bombing of the Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad on August 7, which kills at least 10 and wounds about 40.
Two weeks later, al-Zarqawi is reportedly behind the truck bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad, which kills 17—including the UN representative—and injures 100. On August 29, al-Zarqawi is behind the car bombing outside of the Imam Ali Mosque in Najaf, Iraq—one of the holiest sites for Shiite Muslims—that kills revered cleric Ayatollah Mohamad Bakr al-Hakim and 100 others. Sources: "Baghdad Blast Kills 10 at Jordanian Embassy," CNN.com, August 7, 2003, <http://us.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/08/07/sprj.irq.main>; "Truck Bomb Kills Chief U.N. Envoy to Iraq," CNN.com, August 20, 2003, <http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/08/19/sprj.irq.main>; Ben Wedeman, Ingrid Formanek, David Ensor, Shirzad Bozorgmehr, "Najaf Bombing Kills Shiite Leader, Followers Say," CNN.com, August 30, 2003, <http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/08/29/sprj.irq.najaf/index.html?iref=mpstoryview>.
- - : Al-Zarqawi leaves Afghanistan with several hundred of his newly trained fighters.
They first travel to Iran, and then move between Lebanon, Syria, and the autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq. In the lead up to the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, al-Zarqawi "mobilized his network of safe houses, weapons caches, and intelligence networks, preparing a trap for the coalition forces." Source: M.J. Kirdar, "Al Qaeda in Iraq," *The Future of Al Qaeda and Associated Movements (AQAM)* | Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011, 3, http://csis.org/files/publication/110614_Kirdar_AIQaedaIraq_Web.pdf.
- - : Al-Zarqawi secures \$5,000 in startup money from al-Qaeda, with help from the organization's security chief Seif al-Adel.
He sets up a training camp in Herat that recruits Jordanian, Palestinian, Lebanese and Syrian jihadists. When the U.S. military campaign begins in Afghanistan in October 2001, Zarqawi's camp allegedly has 2,000-3,000 trainees. Source: M.J. Kirdar, "Al Qaeda in Iraq," *Al Qaeda and Associated Movements (AQAM) Futures Project, Case Study Number 1* (2011): 2-3.
- Jordan's King Abdullah II issues a general amnesty upon assuming the throne and al-Zarqawi is released from prison.
Soon after, he leaves Jordan and returned to Afghanistan, where he meets Osama Bin Laden in December 1999. Source: Mary Anne Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi," *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2006/07/the-short-violent-life-of-abu-musab-al-zarqawi/304983/?single_page=true.
- - : Al-Zarqawi and al-Maqdisi are arrested by the Jordanian government for their activities related to Bayat al-Imam, and sentenced to prison (reports suggest that they received between 15 years to life).
While incarcerated together at al-Sawaqa prison, al-Maqdisi and al-Zarqawi continue expanding Bayat al-Imam among the inmates, while al-Maqdisi's religious treatises are smuggled out of the prison and disseminated across the Middle East and Europe. In 1998, several of al-Zarqawi's own writings appeared on the Internet and are noticed by Osama bin Laden. Sources: Nibras Kazimi, "A Virulent Ideology in Mutation: Zarqawi Upstages Maqdisi," *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology 2* (September, 2005): 63, http://www.hudson.org/content/researchattachments/attachment/1368/kazimi_vol2.pdf; M.J. Kirdar, "Al Qaeda in Iraq," *AQAM Futures Project, Case Study Number 1* (June 2011): 2-3, http://csis.org/files/publication/110614_Kirdar_AIQaedaIraq_Web.pdf; Mary Anne Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi," *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2006/07/the-short-violent-life-of-abu-musab-al-zarqawi/304983/?single_page=true.
- Al-Zarqawi and al-Maqdisi return to Jordan, and began plotting against the Hashemite monarchy.
There, al-Zarqawi establishes an organization called al-Tawhid wal-Jihad, later changing the name to Bayat al-Imam (Allegiance to the Imam). The first mission that al-Zarqawi directs—against a movie theater in Zarqa that was showing pornographic films—fails when the bomber "forgot about his bomb. It exploded and blew off his legs." Source: Mary Anne Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi," *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2006/07/the-short-violent-life-of-abu-musab-al-zarqawi/304983/?single_page=true.
- Ahmad Fadhil Nazzal al-Khalaylah (also known as Abu Musab al-Zarqawi) arrives in Peshawar, Pakistan to fight alongside the mujahideen against the Soviet Union.
During his three-year stay in Afghanistan and Pakistan, al-Zarqawi comes into contact with prominent jihadi ideologues, including radical Palestinian cleric Abu Mohamed al-Maqdisi. Source: Mary Anne Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi," *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2006, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2006/07/the-short-violent-life-of-abu-musab-al-zarqawi/304983/?single_page=true.

Violent history:

- **May 20, 2023:** An explosive-laden handcart detonates on a road to Kabul in Kandahar, the Taliban’s political headquarters in southern Afghanistan. The explosion kills at least one and injures three others. Multiple sources claim that the bombing had targeted Taliban security forces, and the death toll was significantly higher than what was officially reported. Authorities suspect ISIS-K carried out the attack as they routinely target members of the Taliban and the country’s minority Shiite community.⁴⁰⁸
- **May 20, 2024:** Indian anti-terror police arrest four Sri Lankan nationals in Ahmedabad, western India, after a tip-off. Further investigation reveals that the ISIS cell maintained contact with a key ISIS leader, a Pakistan-based man named . Police later uncover three loaded pistols and an ISIS flag belonging to the men at a nearby location.⁴⁰⁹
- **May 19, 2024:** Austrian police search an ISIS-affiliated schoolgirl’s home in Graz, Austria. The suspect, a national of Montenegro, had reportedly planned to carry out an attack on non-believers in Jakominiplatz, one of the largest squares in Graz. Police tracked the girl down after they were alerted of her suspicious social media activity. Upon investigation of her belongings, police discover ISIS propaganda, videos of combat and executions, weapons, and special clothing.⁴¹⁰
- **May 17, 2024:** Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) launches a raid on a Russian soldier’s home in Karachay-Cherkess Republic, one of Russia’s ethnic republics in the North Caucasus. FSB soldiers ultimately kill the soldier accused of links to ISIS and the preparation of an attack on law enforcement officers. FSB forces reportedly find an improvised explosive device and assault rifles at the scene of arrest.⁴¹¹
- **May 17, 2024:** ISIS militants open fire on civilians in Bamyan province, a major tourist area in central Afghanistan. The mass shooting kills six and wounds seven others. Of those killed, three are Spanish citizens. Included among the wounded are nationals from Norway, Australia, and Latvia. Seven suspects are arrested at the scene. Following the attack, ISIS releases a statement via its Amaq news agency claiming the shooting was “in response to the IS leaders’ directions to target citizens of the European Union wherever they are found.”⁴¹²
- **May 14, 2024:** Morocco’s special forces of the Rapid Intervention Brigade launch an operation targeting a four-member ISIS cell active in Tiznit and Sidi Slimane. The operation leads to the arrest of four members who are charged with financing and plotting terrorist projects with the aim of undermining public order. Investigators later seized paramilitary equipment, extremist manuscripts, and electronic media from the sites of arrest.⁴¹³
- **May 13, 2024:** ISIS militants ambush a military outpost between Diyala and Salahuddin provinces, eastern Iraq. The assailants kill five soldiers, including an Iraqi commanding officer, and wound five others.⁴¹⁴
- **May 8-14, 2024:** On May 8, Greater Manchester Police arrest three men on suspicion of planning to carry out an ISIS-style gun attack on Jewish targets in northwest England. One of the suspects, Walid Saadaoui, reportedly arranged for a safehouse to store weapons and ammunition. He also allegedly contacted a member of ISIS. The other suspect, Amar Hussein, allegedly conducted reconnaissance of port security in Dover where the weapons would be imported. The last suspect, Bilel Saadaoui, failed to provide information of a terrorist act with authorities. The men reportedly began planning an attack in December 2023 and were allegedly set to launch the attack by May 2024. The suspects appear at Westminster Magistrates’ Court on May 14 on charges of preparing a terrorist attack.⁴¹⁵
- **April 30, 2024:** A gunman storms a Shiite Mosque in Herat, Afghanistan, killing six and injuring one. The gunman flees the scene. ISIS-K claims responsibility for the attack on its Telegram channel.⁴¹⁶
- **April 25, 2024:** Greater London police arrest Hamza Alam on three counts of disseminating terrorist publications as well as one charge of encouraging terrorism and terrorist acts. Alam claims he was an “online librarian,” but he has previously shared videos of ISIS executions and other content that glorified ISIS.⁴¹⁷
- **April 24, 2024:** German prosecutors charge seven Islamic terror suspects with forming a terror group and plotting terror attacks in the country. The suspects were reportedly in the process of procuring money and weapons and scoped possible targets and locations for an attack in Germany and Western Europe. The suspects—from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan—arrived in Germany in 2022 and were arrested in July 2023 in western Germany upon suspicion of supporting ISIS and communicating with ISIS-K.⁴¹⁸
- **April 20, 2024:** A bomb attached to a car detonates in a Shiite neighborhood of Kabul, killing one and wounding three others. ISIS-K claims responsibility for the attack.⁴¹⁹
- **April 18, 2024:** The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) arrest an ISIS operative in the West Bank. The suspect was reportedly planning to carry out a future attack. Further information on the assailant is not reported.⁴²⁰
- **April 13, 2024:** ISIS-affiliated militants ambush villages surrounding Mulekera in eastern Congo. The assailants kill 11 people while also torching vehicles and stealing possessions.⁴²¹

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- **April 9, 2024:** The FBI arrests Alexander Mercurio, an 18-year-old from Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, on charges of providing material support to a foreign terrorist organization. According to investigators, Mercurio had intentions of attacking at least one church and had revealed to an undercover FBI source that he wanted to kill as many people as possible. He reportedly stated he wanted to “donate every last cent...to ISIS” and pledge allegiance to the terror group before carrying out the attack.⁴²²
 - **April 6, 2024:** Iranian police arrest three ISIS members, including a senior operative, in Karaj, west of Tehran. The suspects reportedly planned to carry out a suicide attack during Ramadan celebrations.⁴²³
 - **April 4, 2024:** Israel’s Shin Bet security agency foils a terror plot by the members of an ISIS-affiliated cell in Jerusalem. The suspects reportedly had plans to open fire and use explosives on a police station and a stadium in east Jerusalem. One of the suspects reportedly specialized in organizing attacks within Israel. Another suspect had also received training abroad and encouraged his accomplices to do the same. All reportedly pledged allegiance to ISIS prior to their arrest.⁴²⁴
 - **March 22, 2024:** At approximately 7:50 p.m., 10 minutes before the start of a concert by the band Picnic, at least four gunmen dressed in khakis open fire at the 6,200-seat Crocus City Hall in the Moscow suburb of Krasnogorsk. The gunmen spread throughout the building, shooting people on sight. The gunmen then set the concert hall on fire. By 8:30, the building is reportedly engulfed in flames. The attack kills at least 137 and wounds more than 180 others. It is reportedly the deadliest terror attack in Russia in more than two decades. Russian President Vladimir Putin initially blames Ukraine, but ISIS-K claims responsibility several hours after the attack through ISIS’s social media channels. ISIS issues a second statement of responsibility on March 23, calling the attack part of “the natural framework” of ISIS’s war against countries the terror group accuses of fighting Islam. Some analysts suggest the ISIS attack could be revenge for Russian airstrikes in Syria against ISIS hideouts. While some Russian media outlets doubt the veracity of the ISIS claim and suggest it is part of an attempt to create a fake trail, U.S officials confirm ISIS’s claim of responsibility. On March 23, Russian authorities arrest four suspects in the Bryansk region, allegedly heading toward Ukraine. The suspects appear in a Moscow court on March 24. Two of the suspects admit guilt. All four reportedly show signs of severe beatings, raising questions in global media about the authenticity of the confessions. Authorities charge the suspects, identified as Tajik nationals, with carrying out a terrorist act. They face life in prison. On March 25, the French government corroborates the authenticity of ISIS’s claim of responsibility.⁴²⁵
 - **March 19, 2024:** German police arrest two Afghan nationals in Gera, Germany, for allegedly planned an attack on Sweden’s parliament. The two reportedly received instructions on how to conduct the attack from an unidentified ISIS branch in the summer of 2023. The planned attack was allegedly in response to Quran burnings that occurred in early 2023 across Sweden and other Scandinavian countries.⁴²⁶
 - **March 16, 2024:** Spanish police arrest an alleged ISIS supporter in Barcelona. The suspect, an 18-year-old Spanish national of Moroccan heritage, is accused of disseminating “jihadist content on terrorist activities” as well as “material suitable for the manufacture of explosives” through instant messaging applications. The suspect managed to use “tools that let him operate anonymously” online. He is further accused of instructing four members of a jihadist cell in Tyresö, Sweden who were allegedly preparing an attack. SÄPO reportedly alerted the Information Service of the Civil Guard of the cell a year prior. The Spanish Civil Guard believes the suspect is also connected to terrorist financing activities as he used cryptocurrencies that will be further investigated. His terror connections also include a jihadist in Canada who was arrested in December 2023 as well as links to ISIS members in Asia and Europe.⁴²⁷
 - **March 8, 2024:** The Swedish Security Service (SÄPO) announces the arrest of four individuals associated with ISIS in Stockholm. The suspects reportedly were in the process of preparing terrorist crimes. “Swedish security service arrests 4 on suspicion of preparing 'terrorist offences',” Euronews, March 3, 2024, <https://www.euronews.com/2024/03/08/swedish-security-service-arrests-4-on-suspicion-of-preparing-terrorist-offences>.
 - **March 7, 2024:** Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) claims it “neutralized” an ISIS-K cell planning an attack on a Moscow synagogue. According to the FSB, members of the cell opened fire during the attempted arrest and were then “neutralized by return fire.”⁴²⁸
 - **March 4, 2024:** Israel’s Shin Bet security agency dismantles a terror cell of four West Bank Palestinians inspired by ISIS. The cell reportedly used online guides and instructions from other ISIS operatives to manufacture 100 explosive devices to be used against IDF forces in the West Bank. The four suspects are arrested and charged with security offenses.⁴²⁹
 - **March 2, 2024:** A Swiss teenager stabs and critically wounds an Orthodox Jewish man in Zurich, Switzerland. Police apprehend the suspect at the scene. Swiss police later reveal that the suspect had appeared in a video where he pledged solidarity with ISIS and called himself a “soldier” in its so-called caliphate.⁴³⁰
 - **February 16, 2024:** A Manhattan federal court charges Minnesota native Harafa Hussein Abdi with providing and conspiring to provide material support to a foreign terrorist group and receiving and conspiring to receive military-type training from ISIS. Abdi traveled to Somalia in 2015 to join ISIS with the intent of acquiring skills to carry out an attack against civilians in New York City. Abdi was arrested in 2017 in an undisclosed area in East Africa after escaping the group following disagreements with the leadership. He remained in detention abroad before being transported to the United States on February 15, 2024. If found guilty, Abdi faces 10 years imprisonment.⁴³¹
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- **February 14, 2024:** ISIS militants ambush Syrian soldiers in Syria’s Badia Desert, killing nine.⁴³²
 - **February 12, 2024:** Spain’s Audiencia Nacional criminal court sentences both Karim Abdesalem Mohamed and Mohamed El Gharbi to seven-and-a-half years’ imprisonment for “recruitment and terrorist indoctrination.” According to the court, the two suspects—both of whom were already serving eight- to 12-year sentences for belonging to terror cells—reportedly encouraged other inmates to follow the jihadist ideology of ISIS and continue terrorist activities once released.⁴³³
 - **February 9, 2024:** ISIS-Mozambique gunmen ambush a passenger bus in Cabo Delgado province, Mozambique. The militants kill the driver and leave a note threatening Christians to convert to Islam or be killed.⁴³⁴
 - **February 9, 2024:** A pro-ISIS Telegram channel posts a video after ISIS gunmen kill the driver of a passenger bus in Mozambique’s Cabo Delgado province. The post also shows a photo of a note left by ISIS-Mozambique at the scene stating, “We declare war on all Christians in the world... To Muslims we announce peace to all the world. Let’s work together to defend the religion of Allah together. If [Christians] refuse [to convert to Islam] then you will pay jizyah and if you refuse to pay jizyah you will be killed.”⁴³⁵
 - **January 30, 2024:** ISIS-K militants carry out two bombings in Balochistan, Pakistan. The explosions in Pishin and Qila Saifullah, which target election offices, kill at least 22 people and wound several others.⁴³⁶
 - **January 28, 2024:** ISIS militants carry out an attack at the Santa Maria Catholic Church in Istanbul, Turkey, killing one. Authorities later arrest two suspected assailants, one from Tajikistan and the other from Russia.⁴³⁷
 - **January 9, 2024:** ISIS militants ambush government soldiers in Homs province, Syria, killing at least 14.⁴³⁸
 - **January 9, 2024:** An explosive hidden on a minivan belonging to employees of Kabul’s main prison detonates, killing three and wounding four others. ISIS claims responsibility. One suspect is detained.⁴³⁹
 - **January 6, 2024:** ISIS-K militants ambush a minibus in Dasht-e-Barchi, western Kabul in Afghanistan. The attack kills at least five and wounds more than a dozen others. ISIS-K targets Afghanistan’s Hazara-Shiite community in the attack, a demographic ISIS labels as “disbelievers.”⁴⁴⁰
 - **January 3, 2024:** Two explosions kill at least 84 people in Kerman, Iran, near the tomb of deceased IRGC Quds Force leader Qasem Soleimani. The first bomb detonates outside the Garden of Martyrs cemetery near the Saheb al-Zaman Mosque. A second bomb detonates approximately 15 minutes later about a mile from the cemetery, targeting people fleeing the scene. The attack occurs during a ceremony marking the anniversary of Soleimani’s January 3, 2020, death in a U.S. airstrike in Iraq. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi’s political deputy, Mohammad Jamshidi, blames Israel and the United States. On January 4, ISIS claims responsibility on Telegram, calling the attacks a “dual martyrdom operation.” ISIS identifies the bombers as Omar al-Mowahid and Sayefulla al-Mujahid. Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei pledges a “harsh response.” According to communications intercepts collected by the United States, ISIS’s Afghanistan branch, ISIS-K, carried out the twin bombings.⁴⁴¹
 - **December 22, 2023:** Birmingham Crown Court in the United Kingdom sentences Mohamed Al Bared, a PhD student from Coventry, to life imprisonment on charges of engaging in conduct in preparation of terrorist acts. Al Bared used a 3D printer to construct a drone inspired by a Tomahawk missile and intended to make a “video-transmitting fixed-wing” drone that would travel to West Africa for terrorist purposes. Upon his arrest in January 2023, security officials discovered digital material supporting ISIS.⁴⁴²
 - **December 21, 2023:** A U.S. District court in Connecticut sentences Kevin Iman McCormick to 144 months of prison followed by a lifetime of supervised release on charges of attempting to provide material support to ISIS. In 2019, McCormick recorded a video where he pledged allegiance to ISIS and its late leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi. He then attempted to travel to Syria on two different occasions but was ultimately arrested by Department of Homeland security officials in October of that year. In January 2023, McCormick pleaded guilty to attempting to provide support to ISIS.⁴⁴³
 - **December 19, 2023:** Militants from the ISIS-linked Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) ambush a village in Kamwenge, western Uganda. The ambush kills at least 10.⁴⁴⁴
 - **December 13, 2023:** A U.S. federal court in Indiana sentences Moyad Dannon to 16 years and eight months imprisonment on charges of attempting to provide material support to ISIS. Dannon’s brother, Mahde, was previously sentenced to 20 years imprisonment in October 2021 after he was found guilty of the same charges. Beginning in 2018, the brothers purchased firearms parts online and manufactured “ghost guns.” The brothers were arrested in May 2019 when they attempted to sell ghost guns to an undercover FBI informant planning to ship weapons to ISIS members in the Middle East. Moyad reportedly also sought to travel to Syria where he would provide ammunitions and military assistance to the terror group.⁴⁴⁵
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- **December 3, 2023:** ISIS militants detonate a bomb at a gym inside Mindanao State University in Marawi City, southern Philippines. The explosion, which targeted a Catholic mass service, kills at least four and wounds more than 40 others.⁴⁴⁶
 - **December 2, 2023:** A man armed with a knife and hammer carries out an attack near the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France. The assailant, a self-proclaimed ISIS supporter and French national, kills one German tourist and injures two others. The suspect flees the scene, but police quickly pursue and apprehend the man. According to France's interior minister, the suspect, Armand Rajabpour-Miyandoab, suffers from serious psychiatric disorders. The suspect claimed he was upset over the conflict in Gaza and the deaths of Muslims all over the world. The suspect had a prior terrorism conviction and had reportedly communicated with jihadists affiliated with terror attacks in France.⁴⁴⁷
 - **November 8, 2023:** ISIS militants carry out multiple machine gun attacks in Raqqa, Homs, and Deir ez-Zor, Syria. The attacks kill at least 30 pro-government militia and injure an unspecified number of others.⁴⁴⁸
 - **November 7, 2023:** ISIS militants detonate an explosive targeting a Hazara stronghold in Dasht-e-Barch district, near Kabul. The explosion kills seven and wounds 20 of the historically marginalized Shiite community.⁴⁴⁹
 - **October 26, 2023:** ISIS militants detonate an explosive that targets a sports club in Dashti Barchi, Afghanistan. The explosion, which targeted the Hazara community in the area, killed four and wounded seven others.⁴⁵⁰
 - **October 17, 2023-November 2, 2023:** On October 17, militants belonging to the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), an ISIS-affiliated terror group based in Democratic Republic of the Congo, open fire on a foreign couple from South Africa and their tour guide in Queen Elizabeth National Park, Uganda. The attack kills all three. On November 2, Ugandan officials claim they detained ADF chief "Njovu," following a raid in which six ADF members were killed.⁴⁵¹
 - **October 16, 2023:** A Tunisian man, likely inspired by ISIS, opens fire on three Swedish soccer fans in Brussels, Belgium as they get out of a taxi. The attack kills two of the victims and critically injures the other. The assailant, Abdesalem Lassoued, is shot dead by police following the attack. Lassoued reportedly posted videos on social media where he spoke of targeting Swedish people on behalf of ISIS.⁴⁵²
 - **October 13, 2023:** An ISIS suicide bomber detonates an explosive at a Shiite mosque in Pul-i-Khumri, northern Afghanistan. The explosion kills at least 17 and injures dozens of others.⁴⁵³
 - **July 30, 2023:** A suspected suicide bomber detonates an explosive at a political rally in Bajur District, northwestern Pakistan on the border of Afghanistan. The explosion kills at least 55 and injures 135 others. The rally is held for religious political party Jamiat Ulema Islam, run by Maulana Fazlur Rehman. Although no group claims responsibility, it is expected that ISIS-K is responsible. Rehman is a pro-Taliban cleric, and ISIS-K regularly targets Taliban officials throughout Afghanistan.⁴⁵⁴
 - **June 25, 2023:** ISIS gunmen shoot and kill a man in Peshawar. The man belonged to Pakistan's minority Sikh community.⁴⁵⁵
 - **June 10, 2023:** ISIS militants ambush an army position in Kirkuk, Iraq. The attack, which involved light weapons, kills two soldiers and wounds three others.⁴⁵⁶
 - **June 8, 2023:** ISIS-K militants detonate an explosive at a mosque in Badakhshan, northern Afghanistan. The explosion kills 11 and wounds 30 others. The explosion occurred during a funeral for one of the Taliban's provincial governors.⁴⁵⁷
 - **May 4, 2023:** Suspected ISWAP militants ambush loggers in Bulayobe village, Nigeria. The assailants kill three of the loggers and abduct 11 others.⁴⁵⁸
 - **May 1, 2023:** Suspected Boko Haram militants reportedly abduct 15 loggers in Gamboru, Borno State. While four bodies are recovered the next day, the other 11 remain missing. Loggers, farmers, and herders are regularly targeted by Boko Haram as the terror group claims the civilians are spying for the military or other counterinsurgent forces.⁴⁵⁹
 - **April 1, 2023:** An assailant slashes a man's throat and injures another on a transit bus in Surrey, British Columbia. Abdul Aziz Kawam is arrested and faces four terrorism charges for attempted murder, aggravated assault, and two counts of assault related to the attack. According to court records filed by the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, Kawam reportedly carried out the assault for "the Islamic State."⁴⁶⁰
 - **March 27, 2023:** An assailant detonates a bomb near the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kabul, Afghanistan. The blast kills six and injures at least 12. Guards were able to identify and kill the assailant before he reached the ministry. ISIS-K is suspected of being responsible for the attack.⁴⁶¹
 - **March 11, 2023:** Suspected ISIS militants target truffle hunters in northern Syria. The assailants kill three and kidnap 26 others. The area is a known hideout for extremists.⁴⁶²
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- **March 11, 2023:** ISIS-K detonates a bomb at a cultural center in Balkh Province, northern Afghanistan. The explosion kills at least one and injures eight others.⁴⁶³
 - **March 10, 2023:** ISIS carries out an attack targeting Christians in eastern Congo. The assault included guns and knives and the destruction of property. More than 35 are killed and dozens are injured.⁴⁶⁴
 - **March 9, 2023:** An ISIS-K suicide bomber sneaks his way into the office of Mohammad Dawood Muzammil, the governor of Balkh Province, Afghanistan. The assailant detonates a bomb, killing the governor and another. Two other people are wounded in the explosion. Muzammil was a vocal critic of ISIS.⁴⁶⁵
 - **February 4-5, 2023:** Local ISIS fighters attack a group of Philippine Marines in the Philippines' province of Lanao del Sur, killing one and wounding three.⁴⁶⁶
 - **February 4, 2023:** Turkish intelligence breaks up a 15-member ISIS cell planning attacks on the Swedish and Dutch embassies in Istanbul, as well as synagogues and churches in Istanbul, though authorities say they found no evidence of concrete plans for an imminent attack. The alleged cell was reportedly planning the attacks in retaliation for far-right Quran burnings in Sweden and the Netherlands. Authorities link the cell to ISIS's Khorasan Province in Afghanistan.⁴⁶⁷
 - **February 1, 2023:** Authorities in Singapore announce the December 2022 arrest of 18-year-old Muhammad Irfan Danyal bin Mohamad Nor, who was planning violent attacks on behalf of ISIS. According to a police statement, the teenager posed "imminent security threat." The Ministry of Home Affairs says Irfan allegedly planned to stab and kill "disbelievers" in dark alleys, carry out a mass-casualty attack against a military base, and bomb a grave site he considered "un-Islamic."⁴⁶⁸
 - **January 25, 2023:** The Iraqi Ministry of the Interior announces security forces had disrupted a plan by three ISIS suicide bombers to target the Nineveh Court of Appeal.⁴⁶⁹
 - **January 17, 2023:** Suspected ISIS militants attack a security checkpoint in Iraq's Kirkuk province, killing two Kurdish police officers.⁴⁷⁰
 - **January 17, 2023:** An IED planted on the road to the Al-Thawra oil field in Al-Tabaqah desert wounds four soldiers. The military suspects ISIS of responsibility.⁴⁷¹
 - **January 16, 2023:** Unidentified militants attack a military post in Deir Ezzor, killing one. Officials suspect the militants may be linked to ISIS.⁴⁷²
 - **January 16, 2023:** An explosive detonates at a church in Kasindi, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The explosion kills 12 and injures at least 50 others. The Allied Democratic Forces, an ISIS-affiliated group, is suspected of planting the bomb.⁴⁷³
 - **January 15, 2023:** Suspected ISIS militants attack Syrian military positions in Al-Sokhna desert in Homs, killing one.⁴⁷⁴
 - **January 11, 2023:** A suicide bomber detonates an explosive at the main entrance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kabul, reportedly targeting the Taliban. The explosion kills 20 and injures an unidentified number of others. ISIS-K claims responsibility for the attack.⁴⁷⁵
 - **January 9, 2023:** Alleged ISIS militants attack the headquarters of local Iran-backed militias in Palmyra, killing one. ISIS militants also attack Syrian military positions in Al-Masrib Desert, killing an undisclosed number.⁴⁷⁶
 - **January 9, 2023:** Suspected ISIS gunmen open fire at a Syrian military outpost near Al-Jalaa town in the eastern part of Deir Ezzor. One of the attackers is killed while the others escape.⁴⁷⁷
 - **January 7, 2023:** ISIS militants ambush Syrian soldiers in the Juaydeen area in Al-Tabaqah desert in western Raqqa, killing one and wounding at least four.⁴⁷⁸
 - **January 5, 2023:** An alleged ISIS landmine wounds two NDF members near the Al-Rasafa area in the southwestern Raqqa desert of Syria.⁴⁷⁹
 - **January 1, 2023:** A bomb explodes near a checkpoint at Kabul's military airport, killing and wounding "several" people, according to Afghanistan's Taliban government. The Taliban-run Interior Ministry does not further clarify the casualties. ISIS-K claims responsibility on January 3 and identifies the attacker as Abdul Jabbar, who also participated in the December 12, 2022, attack on a Kabul hotel.⁴⁸⁰
 - **December 30, 2022:** Two gunmen attack a police checkpoint in the Egyptian Suez Canal city of Ismailia, killing at least three and wounding four others. Police kill one of the attackers, while the other escapes. ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq news agency. It is reportedly the first terrorist attack in mainland Egypt in almost three years.⁴⁸¹
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- **December 26, 2022:** ISIS militants attack security and military buildings in Raqqa, Syria, killing six SDF fighters and wounding an unspecified number of others. At least one attacker is killed and another is arrested.⁴⁸²
 - **December 26, 2022:** A car bomb near the regional police headquarters in Faizabad in Afghanistan's Badakhshan province kills at least three, including regional security chief Abdulhaq Abu Omar. ISIS claims responsibility. In a statement released through its Amaq news agency, ISIS claims it had closely followed Abu Omar prior to the attack. Abu Omar is reportedly the highest-ranking Taliban security official killed since the Taliban seized power in August 2021.⁴⁸³
 - **December 12, 2022:** Gunmen set off an explosion and attack the Longan Hotel in Kabul's Shahr-e-Naw neighborhood, killing at least three and wounding 18, including at least five Chinese nationals. Security forces kill three gunmen, while assailant Abdul Jabbar escapes after he runs out of ammunition. The hotel is reportedly popular with Chinese and foreign tourists. The attackers reportedly booked a room in the hotel and smuggled in explosives ahead of the attack. ISIS claims responsibility and claims it had killed or wounded 30 security force members and Chinese citizens. It is the first ISIS attack on Chinese interests in Afghanistan since the Taliban seized power in August 2021. After the attack, China calls on its citizens to leave Afghanistan.⁴⁸⁴
 - **December 2, 2022:** ISIS militants open fire on Pakistan's embassy in Kabul. The attack wounds a security guard. Pakistan's Foreign Office claims the attack had been aimed at the head of mission, Ubaid-ur-Rehman Nizamani.⁴⁸⁵
 - **November 30, 2022:** An explosive detonates at the Al Jihad Madrassa in Aybak, Samangan province. The explosion kills 10 and wounds a number of others. The madrassa was a religious school for boys set up by local Taliban officials. Although no group claims responsibility for the bombing, ISIS-K has carried out similar attacks in recent months.⁴⁸⁶
 - **November 23, 2022:** Two bombs detonate within a half hour of each other at two bus stops in Jerusalem, wounding at least 20 and killing two, including a Canadian-Israeli teenager. Two U.S. citizens are among the wounded. On November 29, Israeli authorities arrest 26-year-old Aslam Faruch on suspicion of orchestrating the attacks. Faruch reportedly shares ISIS's ideology. The arrest is made public on December 27.⁴⁸⁷
 - **October 26, 2022:** ISIS militants open fire at the Shahcheragh Shrine in Shiraz, southern Iran. The attack kills at least 15 and injures 40 others. ISIS releases a statement claiming one assailant "targeted groups of Sunni refusal infidels inside the shrine with his machine gun, causing the death of tens of them." Iranian security forces arrest two of the suspects, with a manhunt underway in search of the third.⁴⁸⁸
 - **October 24, 2022:** ISWAP terrorists ambush Boko Haram militants in Gajibo camp, Borno State, Nigeria. The attack kills six Boko Haram members. Gajibo, Boko Haram's main hideout, is a border community with Cameroon along the Dikwa-Gambouru road. Following the attack, ISWAP fighters took away Boko Haram's weapons and other war assets in Sambisa Forest and the Lake Chad region.⁴⁸⁹
 - **September 30, 2022:** A suspected ISIS-K suicide bomber detonates an explosive at a Kabul, Afghanistan, tutoring center. The assailant reportedly targeted the center as it was in a neighborhood with a significant population of Hazara. The explosion kills 53, of which most were ethnic Hazaras.⁴⁹⁰
 - **September 23, 2022:** An explosive detonates near a mosque in Wazir Akbar Khan, Kabul, Afghanistan. The explosion kills at least seven and injures 41. The former "green zone" of the city, the area was once the location of many foreign embassies and NATO prior to the Taliban's return to power. No group claims responsibility but ISIS-K is suspected.⁴⁹¹
 - **September 17, 2022:** ISWAP militants ambush a Boko Haram hideout in Borno State, Nigeria. The attack kills Abou Hamza and Abou Ibrahim, two Boko Haram commanders. Although Boko Haram attempted to wage reprisal attacks against ISWAP, local security forces claim Boko Haram forces were unable to counter ISWAP.⁴⁹²
 - **September 11, 2022:** ISIS militants ambush the village of Ruwaished, eastern Syria, where they kill six members of the Kurdish-led Syrian democratic forces. The militants carried out the attack in retaliation for an ongoing operation inside a camp currently holding thousands of family members of ISIS. Also on the 11, ISIS-linked gunmen carry out a shooting in Deir Ezzor province, killing one fighter from the SDF.⁴⁹³
 - **September 7, 2022:** ISIS militants ambush the districts of Erati and Memba, Nampula province, Mozambique. The attackers behead six people and shoot and kill an Italian nun. According to ISIS's statement claiming responsibility for the attack, the nun "went too far in spreading Christianity."⁴⁹⁴
 - **September 5, 2022:** Suspected ISIS militants kidnap a shepherd in Iraq's Narin village Diyala province.⁴⁹⁵
 - **August 28, 2022:** ISIS militants attack a group of shepherds in Kirkuk's Laylan district, killing one and injuring another. At least one ISIS member is also killed.⁴⁹⁶
 - **August 2, 2022:** Suspected ISIS militants attack and temporarily occupy an Iraqi army outpost in Kashakawl village in Khanaqin's Qaratapa subdistrict. An Iraqi army convoy carrying reinforcement strikes an IED, killing five soldiers. Authorities suspect ISIS.⁴⁹⁷
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- **July 24-25, 2022:** Overnight ISIS attacks in four Iraqi provinces kill at least nine. In Baghdad’s Tarmiyah, two civilians are killed while two members of the Saraya Salam militia are killed in Samarra. A member of the Iraqi federal police is shot dead in Kirkuk. An ISIS attack in Diyala kills four and wounds 11.⁴⁹⁸
 - **July 24, 2022:** Six ISIS gunmen ambush a family returning from a swim in Lake Hamrin in Diyala province, killing five and wounding three. ISIS claims responsibility after the attack.⁴⁹⁹
 - **July 14-20, 2022:** ISIS claims responsibility for three attacks that killed or wounded 13 people.⁵⁰⁰
 - **July 12, 2022:** Militants from Wilayat Al-Hind, ISIS’s offshoot in India, ambush Indian police in Srinagar, Jammu, and Kashmir. The ambush kills one policeman and injures two constables.⁵⁰¹
 - **July 5, 2022:** ISWAP militants raid the Kuje maximum prison in Abuja, Nigeria’s capital. According to media sources, the militants detonate “very high-grade explosives” killing a security officer and injuring three others. Shuaib Belgore, permanent secretary at the interior ministry, claims the attackers specifically sought to release co-conspirators, but the operation leads to the escape of hundreds of other inmates. While 879 inmates flee, more than half are returned to the prison while 443 inmates remain at large. According to Nigerian officials, 64 “Boko Haram” members escape. However, that figure could include fighters from ISWAP, Jamaat Ahlus Sunna li-Dawa wal Jihad, and the al-Qaeda-linked Ansaru.⁵⁰²
 - **July 4, 2022:** ISWAP militants ambush Suleja, a village in Niger State. The assailants kill a policeman.⁵⁰³
 - **June 20, 2022:** Militants attack a civilian bus on a highway between Raqqa and Homs in the Jabal al-Bishri region of Raqqa province, killing at least 11 soldiers and two civilians. Three soldiers are wounded. ISIS claims responsibility.⁵⁰⁴
 - **June 18, 2022:** Seven gunmen attack a Sikh temple in Kabul, killing at least two and wounding seven. The gunmen detonate a car bomb outside the temple before throwing grenades at security guards at the entrance and storming inside. There are no casualties reported from the car bomb. All seven gunmen are killed in an ensuing standoff with security forces. ISIS claims responsibility for the attack, calling it “an act of support for the Messenger of Allah.”⁵⁰⁵
 - **June 18, 2022:** Suspected ISWAP gunmen open fire on scrap metal collectors in Goni Kurmi village, Borno State. The gunmen kill 10.⁵⁰⁶
 - **June 17, 2022:** ISWAP militants ambush Monguno, a town in Borno State. The militants kill three soldiers and abduct three civilians.⁵⁰⁷
 - **June 5, 2022:** ISIS-linked militants ambush Nanduli village in northern Mozambique. The assailants decapitate one resident and set fire to dozens of homes.⁵⁰⁸
 - **June 2, 2022:** Militants attack a civilian bus in Deir Ez-Zor, eastern Syria. The attack kills three and wounds 21 others. Although no group claims responsibility for the attack, large parts of the Deir Ez-Zor area are controlled by ISIS.⁵⁰⁹
 - **May 25, 2022:** ISIS-K militants launch a series of explosions in Mazar-i-Sharif, northern Afghanistan. The explosions kill nine. The same day, ISIS-militants detonate a bomb inside a mosque in Kabul. The explosion kills as many as five and wounds as many as 22 others.⁵¹⁰
 - **April 29, 2022:** A suicide bomber detonates a bomb at the Khalifa Sahib Mosque in western Kabul, Afghanistan. The explosion kills at least 50 and injures hundreds of others. A day later, ISIS-K claims responsibility for the attack.⁵¹¹
 - **April 28, 2022:** Suspected ISIS gunmen ambush a Ramadan iftar gathering in Deir Ezzor province, northeast Syria. The attack kills seven and wounds four others. Among those killed was Nouri Hasmish, the former spokesperson of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces.⁵¹²
 - **April 21, 2022:** ISIS-K militants carry out a series of bombings that target Afghanistan’s minority Shiite Muslims. The deadliest of three bombings occurs at a Shiite mosque in northern Mazar-i-Sharif. The explosion kills 12 and injures as many as 40 others. In Kabul, a roadside bomb explodes near a boy’s school, injuring two. A third bomb detonates in Kunduz, and 11 mechanics working for the Taliban are injured. On April 22, ISIS-K releases a statement claiming the explosive device that devastated Mazar-i-Sharif’s Sai Doken mosque was hidden in a bag left inside among scores of worshippers. As they knelt in prayer, it exploded.⁵¹³
 - **April 19, 2022:** ISIS militants detonate an explosive at a market in Iware, a village in the central region of Nigeria. The attack causes 30 casualties, but it is unreported exactly how many of those casualties were deaths or injuries.⁵¹⁴
 - **March 27, 2022:** Two gunmen open fire on police in the Israeli city of Hadera, killing two passersby and wounding six. Police shoot and kill the attackers, who are identified as Arab-Israeli citizens from the Arab-majority Israeli city of Umm al-Fahm in the northern district of Haifa. ISIS claims responsibility for the “twin immersive commando attack by Islamic State Fighters.” After the attack, ISIS’s Amaq News Agency distributes a video of two masked gunmen pledging allegiance to the group. On March 29, Israeli security forces arrest two Israeli Arab citizens suspected of ties to ISIS.⁵¹⁵
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- **March 22, 2022:** An attacker stabs multiple people at a shopping center and gas station in Beersheba, Israel, killing four and wounding two others. At the start of the attack, the assailant runs over a bicyclist in Beersheba before driving to a gas station where he exits the car and stabs a woman. The attacker drives to a shopping center, exits the car, and stabs two other people. He returns to the car and drives into another vehicle. He exits the car and stabs another victim before he is shot and killed by an armed civilian. Police identify the attacker as Muhammad Alab Ahmed abu Alkiyan, an Israeli Bedouin from Hura who had previously spent time in prison for supporting ISIS. Police arrest two of Alkiyan's brothers who allegedly saw him leave their home with the knife. Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Hezbollah praise the attack, which aligned with the anniversary of the assassination of Hamas founder Ahmed Yassin. ISIS reportedly claims responsibility for the attack.⁵¹⁶
 - **March 4, 2022:** ISIS militants detonate a bomb targeting a Shiite mosque in Peshawar, northwestern Pakistan. According to the Peshawar police chief, there was at least one gunman on a motorcycle who killed two police guards before entering the mosque and detonating a suicide vest. The attack kills at least 57 and wounds more than 100 others.⁵¹⁷
 - **January 22, 2022:** An explosive attached to a minivan detonates in Herat, western Afghanistan. The explosion kills at least seven and wounds nine others. ISIS claims responsibility for the attack the next day.⁵¹⁸
 - **January 21, 2022:** ISIS militants ambush an army barracks in al-Azim district, north of Baghdad, Iraq. The militants kill 11 soldiers before escaping.⁵¹⁹
 - **January 20–26, 2022:** On January 20, more than 100 ISIS militants launch an attack on Gweiran Prison in Hasakah, northeastern Syria, in an attempt to free detained ISIS fighters. The prison, which is the largest of around a dozen facilities run by U.S.-backed Syrian Kurdish forces, held over 3,000 inmates, including ISIS commanders and other dangerous jihadists. The militants were armed with heavy machine guns and explosive-laden vehicles. The attack began with one explosion and was closely followed by two more, with one bomb hitting a nearby petroleum depot that resulted in a fire that continued into the next day. Kurdish forces attempted to repel the extremists and the inmates, with fighting lasted over two days. According to Farhad Shami, a spokesman for the Kurdish forces, the attack was ISIS's biggest since its territorial defeat in Syria in 2019. Additionally, Shami states the attack was led by foreign insurgents, many of whom spoke in Iraqi dialect. ISIS claims responsibility for the attack and later releases a video showing militants holding prison kitchen staff captive. According to the *New York Times*, jihadists were using more than 600 boys detained in the complex as "human shields." Fighting continues through the 24th—with the United States launching airstrikes to retake control of Hasakah—and 300 ISIS insurgents surrender that day. Media sources claim at least 27 Kurdish fighters and 180 inmates are killed in the days long attack. According to a spokesman for the SDF, between 400 and 500 inmates originally escaped, with the majority being recaptured. Despite the surrender of 300 ISIS fighters, as of January 25, ISIS still controlled one-quarter of the prison and threatened to kill hostages and child detainees if the coalition continues to assault the prison. On January 26, the U.S.-backed Syrian forces announced they retook full control of the prison. As many as 200 U.S. soldiers fought alongside the Kurdish-led forces.⁵²⁰
 - **January 9, 2022:** ISIS-K fighters launch an attack on a house in Kabul, Afghanistan. The Taliban claim to have repelled the militants, killing three and arresting two others during the gunfight.⁵²¹
 - **January 3, 2022:** According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, ISIS militants launch an attack near oil installations on the edge of Deir Ezzor province, eastern Syria. The militants kill ten soldiers in the attack. That same day, ISIS militants launch a rocket attack on a military transport bus traveling to Palmyra desert, southeast of Damascus, Syria. The attack kills between five and nine soldiers and injures 15 to 20 others.⁵²²
 - **December 27, 2021:** ISIS militants ambush a car carrying Adham Dabash al-Abes, the leader of the SDF, in Dhiban, Deir Ezzor, eastern Syria. The militants kill al-Abes and one of his escorts as well as injure another escort.⁵²³
 - **December 17, 2021:** U.S.-supported Moroccan security forces arrest an alleged ISIS supporter from the country's Sala Al-Jadida region and confiscate explosive materials.⁵²⁴
 - **December 7, 2021:** A motorcycle bomb in Basra, Iraq, kills at least four and wounds 20. ISIS claims responsibility.⁵²⁵
 - **December 6, 2021:** Alleged ISIS militants from Syria attack Kurdish Peshmerga forces in Iraq in Ninevah province's Makhmour district.⁵²⁶
 - **December 5, 2021:** ISIS militants attack the Qara Salem village in northern Iraq, killing four Peshmerga soldiers and a civilian and wounding four others. Separately, ISIS fighters attack and capture Luhaiban village. Iraqi and Peshmerga forces recapture the village the following day.⁵²⁷
 - **December 2, 2021:** ISIS militants attack multiple homes in Khidir Jija in Iraq's Makhmour region, killing 10 Peshmerga soldiers and three civilians.⁵²⁸
 - **November 27, 2021:** A Peshmerga convoy hits a roadside bomb in Iraq's Diyala province. ISIS snipers attack Peshmerga forces attending to the wounded, killing five.⁵²⁹

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- **November 17, 2021:** A car bomb in Kabul’s Dasht-e Barchi neighborhood kills at least one and wounds six. A second explosion is reported later in Kabul’s Karte 3 area. ISIS claims responsibility for both explosions.⁵³⁰
 - **November 16, 2021:** Three suicide bombers explode in Kampala, Uganda, killing at least three and wounding 33. Police shoot and wound a fourth would-be suicide bomber in a northern suburb of Kampala. Police initially blame the attacks on the Allied Democratic Forces, but ISIS later claims responsibility through its Amaq News Agency.⁵³¹
 - **November 15, 2021:** A magnetic bomb attached to a vehicle explodes in the Kota-e Sangi district of Kabul, wounding at least two people. There are no immediate claims of responsibility, but the bombing is similar an ISIS-claimed bombing two days earlier.⁵³²
 - **November 13, 2021:** An explosive device planted in police barracks in the Bajaur district of Pakistan’s Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province kills two. ISIS claims responsibility.⁵³³
 - **November 13, 2021:** A magnetic bomb attached to a minibus in the Kabul suburb of Dasht-e Barchi kills at least one and wounds at least four. The neighborhood is largely populated by the Hazara minority. ISIS claims responsibility.⁵³⁴
 - **November 12, 2021:** A bomb explodes during Friday prayers at a Sunni mosque in Traili in Afghanistan’s Nangahar province, wounding at least 15. ISIS is suspected.⁵³⁵
 - **November 2, 2021:** Gunmen and at least one suicide bomber attack a Kabul military hospital, killing at least 25 and wounding more than a dozen. An explosives-filled car outside the hospital also explodes. The attack targets the 400-bed Sardar Daud Khan hospital, which treats both soldiers for the former government and Taliban fighters. Gunmen reportedly enter a ward filled with wounded Taliban fighters and shoot them in their beds. ISIS-K claims responsibility.⁵³⁶
 - **October 26, 2021:** ISIS gunmen attack the Shiite village of al-Rashad in Iraq’s Diyala province, killing at least 11 and wounding 15. The militants reportedly kidnapped two villagers and then attacked the village when their ransom demands were not met.⁵³⁷
 - **October 15, 2021:** A group of suicide bombers detonate explosives at the Imam Barga mosque in Kandahar during Friday prayers. The explosion, which targeted Kandahar’s largest Shiite mosque, kills 47 and wounds another 68. ISIS-K claims responsibility for the attack.⁵³⁸
 - **October 8, 2021:** An ISIS-K suicide bomber detonates an explosive at the Shiite Sayed Abad mosque in Kunduz, northern Afghanistan. At least 43 people are killed and more than 140 are injured. ISIS-K released a statement claiming the attacker belonged to the Uighur community—an ethnic minority group that has been regularly oppressed by the Chinese government. Chinese officials have previously raised concerns that Afghanistan could potentially become a safe haven for Uighur militants seeking to attack Chinese government interests due to the systemic oppression of the Uighurs in western China.⁵³⁹
 - **October 3, 2021:** Iraqi security forces open fire on a suicide bomber in an explosives-filled car in Ramadi, capital of Anbar province. The bomber detonates his explosives, killing himself and wounding five others. ISIS is suspected. Later in the day, ISIS militants attack the Diyala village, north of Baghdad, killing at least two soldiers and wounding two others. The Iraqi air force bombs an ISIS hideout in response.⁵⁴⁰
 - **October 3, 2021:** A bomb detonates outside of the Eidgah mosque in Kabul. The blast allegedly targeted a funeral service that was held for the mother of Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid. At least five people were killed in the attack. ISIS-K claimed responsibility for the blast, stating in a Telegram post that one of their fighters managed to evade security forces at the funeral and detonate his explosive belt.⁵⁴¹
 - **September 30, 2021:** ISIS militants shoot and kill 45-year-old Satnam Singh inside his herbal medicine clinic in Peshawar. The gunmen escape. An ISIS claim of responsibility accuses the Sikh civilian of being a polytheist.⁵⁴²
 - **September 28, 2021:** ISIS agents attempt to smuggle 500 kilograms of TNT into Iraq from Syria via car. Iraqi security forces stop the car at the border and seize the explosives.⁵⁴³
 - **September 22, 2021:** ISIS-K militants carry out at least two bombings and a gun attack in Jalalabad. The shooting attack kills three people, including two Taliban fighters. ISIS-K has purposely targeted the Taliban in recent attacks as they describe the self-imposed regime as “the apostate militia” as they follow a less rigid form of Sunni Islam.⁵⁴⁴
 - **September 18 – 19, 2021:** A series of explosive devices were set off around the city of Jalalabad, Afghanistan, over two days. According to on-the-ground sources, the explosions kill at least three people and injure about 20 others. Of a total of six explosions during the weekend, one attack targeted a Taliban vehicle that killed one child and injured two others, including a Taliban member. ISIS-K claims responsibility for the explosions, claiming that more than 35 Taliban members were killed or wounded.⁵⁴⁵
 - **September 17, 2021:** ISIS militants plant and detonate explosives on a major natural gas pipeline southeast of Damascus, Syria. There are no reports of deaths or injuries. The gas pipeline feeds the Tishreen and Deir Ali power plants which generate half of Syria’s power needs. The explosion affected several other smaller stations and caused blackouts in Damascus before power was restored half an hour later. Maintenance
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on the pipeline began on September 18, but has led to severe energy rationing until the pipeline is restored.⁵⁴⁶

- **September 11, 2021:** Suspected ISIS militants attack a unit of Iraqi federal police officers in Kirkuk province’s Daquq district, killing at least three and wounding several others. A roadside bomb targets Iraqi reinforcements.⁵⁴⁷
- **September 5, 2021:** Suspected ISIS militants attack police officers in Satiha village in the al-Rashad region of Kirkuk, killing three. Police reinforcements arrive but additional officers are ambushed by roadside explosives. At least 13 officers are killed and five are wounded in the attack. Another officer is reported missing.⁵⁴⁸
- **September 3, 2021:** A man enters an Auckland supermarket where he grabs a knife on display and goes on a stabbing spree. The assailant shouts “Allahu akbar” before stabbing and wounding six people. Within 60 seconds of the start of the attack, New Zealand police shoot and kill the assailant. The assailant, a Sri Lankan national who had been in New Zealand for 10 years, was known to authorities and had been monitored by police for about five years. The attacker was a known supporter of ISIS ideology.⁵⁴⁹
- **September 2, 2021:** An ISIS cell of 30 militants attacks the Shahali Kon village in the Sargaran sub-district of Kirkuk province, killing at least one Iraqi soldier and wounding six civilians. The militants kidnap one civilian before Iraqi forces repel the attackers.⁵⁵⁰
- **August 26, 2021:** A suicide attack is carried out at the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan, near Abbey Gate. According to media reports, as many as 170 people and 13 U.S. service members were killed, with an additional 200 wounded. The Taliban condemn the attack, later launching an investigation into the perpetrators. That evening, ISIS-K issues an official statement on Telegram claiming responsibility for the attack. On February 4, 2022, U.S. military officials brief reporters on the results of an investigation into the ISIS-K bombing at Abbey Gate. The investigation, led by Brigadier General Lance Curtis, interviews more than 130 people and spanned five countries over three and a half months. The investigation finds that none of the casualties were injured or killed by gunfire, contradicting previous claims that casualties were a result of both a suicide bomber and ISIS-K gunmen. According to media sources, the report also determines that a single suicide bomber—who possessed 20 pounds of explosives packed with ball bearings—carried out the attack alone.⁵⁵¹
- **August 21, 2021:** ISIS militants ambush members of the Noujaba Movement—a pro-Iranian militia—at their base in Tarmiya, near Baghdad. The ambush kills three.⁵⁵²
- **August 3, 2021:** ISIS militants attack Safra village in Kirkuk province’s Rashad district, killing Iraqi federal police officers. One militant is killed and another is wounded during the attack.⁵⁵³
- **July 30, 2021:** Gunmen attack a funeral in Iraq’s Salahuddin province, killing at least eight. Officials do not specify the number of casualties. A local security official accuses ISIS of responsibility.⁵⁵⁴
- **July 21, 2021:** Unidentified gunmen attack the headquarters of the 66th Army Brigade in the Mutaibija area in Salahuddin province, killing two Iraqi soldiers and wounding three others. Iraqi officials blame ISIS.⁵⁵⁵
- **July 19, 2021:** A suicide bomber detonates in the Al-Wuhailat market in Baghdad’s al-Sadr City, killing at least 35 and wounding more than 60. The attack occurs on the eve of the Islamic festival of Eid al-Adha. ISIS claims responsibility through its Nasheer news agency on Telegram.⁵⁵⁶
- **June 12, 2021:** Magnetic bombs attached to two minivans explode in Kabul, Afghanistan, killing at least seven and wounding six altogether. The two attacks take place two kilometers away from each other. The second bombing takes place in front of the Muhammad Ali Jinnah hospital, killing one and wounding four. ISIS claims responsibility for the attacks targeting “disbeliever Shiites.”⁵⁵⁷
- **June 8, 2021:** ISIS militants attack a British-American charity in Baghlan province in Afghanistan. The attack kills at least 10 and injures 16 others. The charity, HALO Trust, clears land mines in the country. The militants allegedly sought to target the Hazaras, a persecuted Shiite minority.⁵⁵⁸
- **June 6, 2020:** A suicide bomber detonates an explosive at a checkpoint in Sebha, Libya. The attack kills two and injures four others. ISIS claims responsibility for the attack.⁵⁵⁹
- **May 29, 2021:** A minivan of university lecturers strikes a roadside bomb and students in Afghanistan’s Kapisa province, killing at least four and wounding 11. ISIS claims responsibility, calling the victims “Shiite apostates.”⁵⁶⁰
- **May 14, 2021:** A bomb explodes in a mosque during Eid al-Fitre prayers in Shakardara district in Afghanistan’s Kabul province, killing 12 and wounding 15. The Taliban condemn the attack, which takes place during a three-day ceasefire. ISIS claims responsibility the following day over Telegram.⁵⁶¹
- **April 30, 2021 – May 1, 2021:** Suspected ISIS fighters attack Iraqi troops in Tarmiya overnight, killing four. Another five are killed after Iraqi reinforcements arrive, including a civilian.⁵⁶²

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- **April 25, 2021:** ISWAP fighters attack a Nigerian military convoy in Borno State, killing at least 31.⁵⁶³
 - **April 17, 2021:** Militants use explosives to attack two oil wells at the Bai Hassan oilfield near Kirkuk. There is no significant damage reported. ISIS claims responsibility.⁵⁶⁴
 - **April 17, 2021:** ISIS-affiliated militants in Egypt release a video of the murder of a Coptic Christian and two tribesmen. Two days later, Egypt's interior ministry claims Egyptian forces had killed at least three of the militants involved during a battle that day.⁵⁶⁵
 - **April 15, 2021:** A bomb placed under a vehicle in al-Sadr city in Baghdad kills four and wounds 17. ISIS claims responsibility.⁵⁶⁶
 - **April 13, 2021:** ISWAP fighters attack Damasak, Nigeria, killing eight and wounding 12. The attackers burn down a police station, a clinic, a U.N. building, and other structures. It is the fourth attack on the town in four days.⁵⁶⁷
 - **April 9, 2021:** An IED explodes at the home of the head of the local council in al-Harmousheya, Syria, causing damage but no casualties. ISIS claims responsibility.⁵⁶⁸
 - **April 8, 2021:** ISIS fighters fighter RPGs in the Syrian town of al-Shuhayl, causing material damage. ISIS fighters then ambush SDF patrols in the area and detonate an explosive device, killing four.⁵⁶⁹
 - **April 7, 2021:** ISIS fighters attack the town of Palma in Mozambique. The bodies of 12 suspected white foreigners are found tied up and beheaded.⁵⁷⁰
 - **April 6, 2021:** ISIS fighters on motorbikes attack a police station in al-Saan, Syria, killing at least one civilian. The militants take hostage eight soldiers and police officers, along with 11 civilians. Up to 46 others are captured but later released. The attack is reportedly ISIS's largest operation in at least three years.⁵⁷¹
 - **March 22, 2021:** Suspected ISGS militants attack three villages in Niger's Tahoua region, killing at least 137. The attackers also burn livestock and buildings.⁵⁷²
 - **March 15, 2021:** Suspected ISGS militants attack a bus in Banibangou, Niger, and then attack a nearby village, killing at least 66. The attackers also burn down granaries.⁵⁷³
 - **March 15, 2021:** Gunmen on motorbikes and pickup trucks attack a military post in Ansongo, Mali, killing 33 soldiers and wounding 14. At least 20 jihadists are also killed in the assault. The gunmen belong to Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS). ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq News Agency almost a week later. ISIS also claims it captured three vehicles, weapons, and ammunition during the attack.⁵⁷⁴
 - **March 12, 2021:** Militants wearing military uniforms raid multiple houses in al-Boudur in Iraq's Salahuddin province, killing eight people, including six members of a single family. ISIS claims responsibility the following day and alleges the targeted family had been part of a PMF spy ring. Iraqi authorities confirm ISIS's responsibility.⁵⁷⁵
 - **March 2, 2021:** In two coordinated attacks, gunmen shoot and kill three female journalists—21-year-old Mursal Wahidi, 21-year-old Sadia Sadat, and 20-year-old Shahnaz Raufi—walking home from work in Jalalabad, Afghanistan. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani blames the killings on the Taliban and an atmosphere of violence the group promotes. The Taliban deny responsibility. ISIS soon after claims responsibility.⁵⁷⁶
 - **March 1, 2021:** Gunmen in trucks and on motorcycles attack the town of Dikwa, Nigeria, burning down the police station, the primary health center, and attacking U.N. humanitarian offices. The militants leave the town the following day. The military does not report any casualties, but local media reports claim at least 15 soldiers are killed. Authorities identify the attackers as members of ISWAP.⁵⁷⁷
 - **February 26, 2021:** ISWAP gunmen attack the town of Dikwa, Nigeria, forcing residents to flee.⁵⁷⁸
 - **February 22, 2021:** ISIS militants attack a checkpoint of the IRGC-backed al-Qura Guards militia in al-Asharah city in Deir Ezzor, Syria, killing at least four. ISIS also attacks various Syrian military outposts in the Syrian desert, killing at least eight regime-backed militiamen. Russia carries out airstrikes over ISIS position in response. Separately, ISWAP militants attack a military base in Marte, Nigeria, killing at least eight soldiers.⁵⁷⁹
 - **February 19, 2021:** Suspected ISWAP militants on trucks fitted with machine guns attack an army base in Dikwa, Nigeria, forcing soldiers to withdraw until an aerial assault drives the militants back.⁵⁸⁰
 - **February 9, 2021:** Suspected ISIS fighters attack an SDF security checkpoint in the Abu Khashab desert, killing four.⁵⁸¹
 - **February 8, 2021:** ISIS militants ambush a military convoy of Syrian army soldiers and IRGC-Quds Force members in Deir Ezzor, killing at least 26. Eleven ISIS fighters are also killed.⁵⁸²
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- **February 4, 2021:** ISIS militants attack Iraqi army forces in the town of Jalawla in Diyala province, killing two Iraqi soldiers and wounding two others.⁵⁸³
 - **Late January 2021:** ISIS kidnaps two local female officials from their homes in al-Dashisha. The decapitated bodies of the two women are found hours later.⁵⁸⁴
 - **January 24, 2021:** Gunmen ambush a bus carrying government soldiers in Deir Ezzor, killing three and wounding 10. ISIS claims responsibility.⁵⁸⁵
 - **January 23, 2021:** Militants ambush a PMF battalion east of Tikrit in the Salahaddin province, killing 11 and wounding 10. Iraqi authorities suspect ISIS.⁵⁸⁶
 - **January 21, 2021:** A suicide bomber claims to be ill in a crowded marketplace in Baghdad and sets off his explosives when a crowd gathers around him. A second bomber reportedly claims to be an injured victim of the first blast and detonates his explosives when a crowd gathers around him. The two bombings kill at least 32 and wound 110 others. It is the first suicide bombing in Baghdad's commercial area in three years. ISIS claims responsibility. The Iraqi government launches Operation Revenge of the Martyrs in response. The top ISIS commander in Iraq, Abu Yasser al-Issawi, a.k.a. Jabbar Salman Ali Farhan al-Issawi, is killed on January 28 in Kirkuk. On February 2, the U.S.-led coalition uses Iraqi military intelligence to launch an airstrike in southern Iraq, killing two ISIS commanders— Abu Hassan al-Gharibawi and Ghanem Sabah Jawad—allegedly involved in the planning of the January 21 suicide attacks. Gharibawi was ISIS's leader in southern Iraq. On February 20, security forces reportedly kill the local commander of ISIS operations in the Tarmiya area.⁵⁸⁷
 - **January 18, 2021:** ISIS landmines detonate in Syria's Deir Ezzor province. The explosion kills 10 Russian soldiers.⁵⁸⁸
 - **January 15-16, 2021:** ISWAP gunmen attack and capture a military base in Marte, Nigeria. Casualties are reported but the army does not clarify how many soldiers are killed. ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq News Agency. ISIS claims it killed seven soldiers and captured another while seizing weapons, ammunition, and vehicles.⁵⁸⁹
 - **January 3, 2021:** Militants attack a coal mine in the Mach area of Bolan district in Pakistan's Balochistan province, abducting and then killing 11 of Pakistan's Shiite Hazara minority. ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq News Agency. Four others are wounded.⁵⁹⁰
 - **December 31, 2020:** Explosions target three buses carrying regime soldiers in Deir Ezzor, killing at least 28 and injuring at least 13 others. Some reports claim as many as 37 are killed. It is suspected that ISIS carried out the attack.⁵⁹¹
 - **December 30, 2020:** ISIS militants ambush three buses in southern Syria. According to the U.K.-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, ISIS militants planted explosives on the road between central Homs and Deir Ezzor provinces, and then opened fire at the buses. The attacks kill at least 37, all of which were soldiers returning home for the holidays.⁵⁹²
 - **December 13, 2020:** Militants detonate a bomb attached to an armored vehicle in Kabul, Afghanistan. The attack kills two and wounds two others. That same day an Afghan government prosecutor is shot dead in eastern Kabul. It is suspected that ISIS is behind both attacks.⁵⁹³
 - **December 10, 2020:** Malalai Maiwand, an Afghan journalist, is shot dead by ISIS gunmen in Jalalabad, Afghanistan. Her death is the latest in a number of attacks carried out by ISIS against media personalities. According to an Afghan official, the Taliban and ISIS have allegedly created a terror cell that specifically targets journalists in Kabul.⁵⁹⁴
 - **November 29, 2020:** Two Katyusha rockets strike the Siniya oil refinery in Salahuddin province in Iraq, causing a small fire but no casualties. ISIS claims responsibility.⁵⁹⁵
 - **November 24, 2020:** A woman wielding a knife attacks two shoppers in a Lugano, Switzerland store. The assailant, a Swiss-Italian woman, reportedly praises ISIS while attempting to decapitate the two victims. The victims do not suffer fatal injuries. Pedestrians manage to subdue the attacker until police are able to arrest the woman.⁵⁹⁶
 - **November 22, 2020:** A car strikes a roadside bomb in Salahuddin province in Iraq. Militants ambush and open fire on soldiers who arrive at the scene after the explosion. At least six soldiers and four civilians are killed in the attack. There are no immediate claims of responsibility, but Iraqi authorities suspect ISIS.⁵⁹⁷
 - **November 21, 2020:** A barrage of rockets strike the center of Kabul, killing at least eight and wounding more than 24 others. ISIS claims responsibility.⁵⁹⁸
 - **November 9, 2020:** Militants throw grenades at and open fire on Al-Radwaniyah lookout point west of Baghdad, killing 11 and wounding eight. The lookout is overseen by state-sponsored tribal forces. There are no immediate claims of responsibility, but Iraqi authorities suspect ISIS.⁵⁹⁹
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- **November 2, 2020:** ISIS-affiliated gunmen storm Kabul University in Kabul Afghanistan. The attack kills at least 22 and wounds another 22 others. The gunmen took hostages and exchanged fire with security forces for more than five hours. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack, claiming it had targeted a “graduation gathering for judges and investigators of the apostate Afghan government.”⁶⁰⁰
 - **November 2, 2020:** A gunman armed with an automatic rifle and a fake explosive vest opens fire in a busy nightlife district in Vienna, Austria. The assailant kills four and injures 22 others before he is shot dead by police. The attacker, Kujtim Fejzulai, was a 20-year-old Austrian-North Macedonian dual citizen who sympathized with ISIS. A day later, ISIS’s Amaq News Agency released a statement on Telegram claiming responsibility for the attack. The statement was accompanied by a photo of Fejzulai who is identified as “Abu Dagnah Al-Albany,” posing with weapons. According to media reports, Fejzulai was sentenced to 22 months in prison in April 2019 for attempting to join ISIS in Syria but was granted early release in December 2019. The Austrian Foreign Ministry labeled the assault a terror attack, which Chancellor Sebastian Kurz described as “clearly an Islamic terror attack.” The attack began the night before Austria was set to begin a new coronavirus lockdown, with bars and restaurants closing for a month at midnight.⁶⁰¹
 - **October 24, 2020:** A suicide bomber attacks an education center in Kabul. The explosion kills at least 24 and wounds over 57. ISIS claims responsibility for the attack in a statement on Telegram.⁶⁰²
 - **October 20, 2020:** ISIS fighters attack a jail in Beni, Democratic Republic of Congo. Following the ambush, in which jihadists broke the prison’s door with electrical equipment, at least 1,300 prisoners escape. The city’s mayor, Modeste Bakwanamaha, claims the attack was the work of the Allied Democratic Forces, a Ugandan rebel group that has been reportedly linked to the ISIS financial network. However, Amaq, ISIS’s official news outlet, confirms that ISIS carried out the attack.⁶⁰³
 - **October 16, 2020:** An assailant shouting “Allahu akbar”—“God is great” in Arabic—decapitated history teacher Samuel Paty in the Paris suburb of Conflans-Sainte-Honorine. Police shot and killed the suspect, who was armed with a kitchen knife and an air gun. Paty had recently received death threats after showing caricatures of the Islamic Prophet Mohammad in class as part of a lesson on freedom of speech. Police identified the suspect as 18-year-old Russia-born Chechen Abdoulakh Anzorov, who had received residency in France as a refugee, and whose sister had previously joined ISIS. Witnesses reported afterward that Anzorov had previously been seen at the school asking students about Paty. Police found messages planning the attack on Anzorov’s cell phone and that he had had uploaded a picture of Paty to Twitter prior to the attack. Police also discovered that prior to his own death, Anzorov posted video and images of the attack to Russian-speaking ISIS supporters, who disseminated the materials on Telegram. Those materials also included a video confession. Paris authorities arrested an additional 11 suspects in connection to the attack and launched investigations into several French groups suspected of promoting Islamism. Three days after Paty’s murder, French prosecutors found no direct link between radical French Islamist movements and Anzorov, but they pointed to a hateful atmosphere on social media and identified an indirect link between these groups and the crime.⁶⁰⁴
 - **September 26, 2020:** ISWAP militants ambush the convoy of Borno governor Babagana Umara Zulum near the town of Baga on the shores of Lake Chad. The convoy was escorting displaced Nigerians back to their homes in Baga, Borno State. The attack kills at least 30 and injures over 13 others.⁶⁰⁵
 - **September 9, 2020:** ISWAP militants carry out two attacks in the Lake Chad area of Nigeria’s Borno State. The ambushes kill more than 12, with 27 soldiers unaccounted for following the attacks.⁶⁰⁶
 - **September 6, 2020:** ISIS militants ram a vehicle into a National Guard patrol in the tourist district of Sousse, a coastal city in Tunisia. The attack kills one officer and wounds another. According to Tunisian officials, at least seven people have been arrested in connection to the attack, including two twin brothers who reportedly visited Facebook pages dealing with “explosive and armed attacks,” but somehow managed to evade Tunisian authorities.⁶⁰⁷
 - **August 20, 2020:** ISWAP militants overrun the town of Kukawa in northeastern Nigeria. The insurgents take hundreds of hostages, many of whom had recently returned to the village after spending two years in displacement camps.⁶⁰⁸
 - **August 9, 2020:** Jihadist militants on motorcycles ambush a tour group at the Koure Giraffe Reserve in Niger, killing six French aid workers as well as their Nigerian tour guide and driver. The French victims worked for the French NGO Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED). A month later, ISIS claims responsibility for the attack and credits ISWAP. According to French President Emmanuel Macron, however, ISGS leader Adnan al-Sahrawi personally ordered the attack.⁶⁰⁹
 - **August 3, 2020:** ISIS militants ambush a prison complex in Jalalabad, eastern Afghanistan. The assailants detonate a car bomb and wage a gun battle with guards for hours. Over 270 inmates, belonging both to the Taliban and ISIS, manage to escape. The attack kills at least 29 and wounds 42 others. The ambush occurred in the final hours of a three-day ceasefire between the Afghan government and the Taliban for Eid al-Adha.⁶¹⁰
 - **August 2020:** In August, ISIS militants carried out at least 35 attacks in Syria. The attacks killed at least 76 pro-Assad regime fighters in the Homs, Deir Ezzor, Raqqa, Hama and Aleppo governorates. The attacks focused primarily in the western urban belt stretching from Deir Ezzor city along the Euphrates to Ma’adan, and secondarily in the desert west of Mayadeen. Notably, on August 27, ISIS militants ambushed NDF
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fighters in western Deir Ezzor. Most of the men killed hailed from the local Busaraya tribe. The massacre triggered a massive mobilization of tribal members from the pro-regime Liwa al-Quds, Qaterji Forces, and NDF deploying to the region to conduct their own anti-ISIS operations in lieu of what one tribal fighter told this author was an abandonment by the Syrian army. The operation began on August 30 and as of September 2020, remains active.⁶¹¹

- **July 2020:** In July, ISIS militants carried out at least 23 attacks, killing at least 29 pro-regime fighters in the Homs, Deir Ezzor, Raqqa, Hama, and Aleppo governorates. July marked the third month in a row that ISIS carried out at least one high quality attack in all four provinces in which it is active. Among ISIS's seven high quality attacks this month were targeted killings of the Syrian Army 4th Division's commander of the Mayadeen Sector in Deir Ezzor and of a Border Guard colonel in southeast Raqqa. Reported attacks in Deir Ezzor continue to be few and far between, although a July 9 ambush of a Border Guard position left at least three regime soldiers dead. Instead, ISIS activity appeared heavily concentrated around the Sukhnah area of east Homs, where ISIS militants regularly attacked regime forces with mines, IEDs, and heavy machine guns. Additionally, on July 28, approximately 40 ISIS militants attempted to raid an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) warehouse on the southwest edge of the city, engaging in a five-hour battle with local security forces before ultimately retreating.⁶¹²
- **July 9, 2020:** ISWAP militants ambush a military convoy in Bulabulin village, northeast Nigeria. The attack kills 23 soldiers and wounds two others.⁶¹³
- **June 13, 2020:** Militants armed with rocket launchers and other heavy weaponry attack Monguno, Nigeria, killing at least 40 soldiers and 20 civilians and wounding hundreds more. The attackers burn down a U.N. humanitarian hub and set fire to a police station. Simultaneously, militants attack N Ganzai, Nigeria, killing at least 40. ISWAP claims responsibility.⁶¹⁴
- **June 2, 2020:** ISIS militants detonate a bomb inside a mosque in Kabul. The attack kills two and injures two others. The mosque is located in a high-security diplomatic area near several international organizations and embassies.⁶¹⁵
- **June 2020:** In June, ISIS militants carried out at least 14 attacks in Syria. The attacks killed at least 26 pro-regime fighters in the Homs, Deir Ezzor, Raqqa and Hama governorates. On June 18, ISIS militants targeted an Army checkpoint in central Raqqa. The attack kills six and wounds five others. On June 21, ISIS attacks a military base in Deir Ezzor. At least two soldiers are killed in the attack and several others were captured.⁶¹⁶
- **May 31, 2020:** ISIS members detonate a roadside bomb that strikes a minibus carrying employees of Khurshid TV, a television station ISIS calls "loyal to the Afghan apostate government." The Kabul attack kills two and injures seven others.⁶¹⁷
- **May 23, 2020:** ISIS militants detonate an explosive at the security gate of the Libyan National Army in Trajan, southern Libya. According to ISIS's media wing, the explosive led to the destruction of a military vehicles. Despite the explosion, no casualties are reported.⁶¹⁸
- **May 23, 2020:** ISIS fighters attack a police checkpoint on the outskirts of Zammar district in Nineveh province, northern Iraq, killing three officers. Observers suspect the attack is revenge for the arrest of ISIS commander Abdul Nasser Qardash earlier in the month.⁶¹⁹
- **May 18, 2020:** ISIS gunmen execute 11 people along a desert highway between Deir Ezzor and Damascus in Syria. All but one of the victims are pro-regime fighters.⁶²⁰
- **May 17, 2020:** Pakistani police kill four militants in a clash with ISIS fighters in Punjab province. According to police, the fighters were tasked with carrying out an attack on Shiites in Bahawalpur in order to incite sectarian divisions.⁶²¹
- **May 15, 2020:** ISIS militants in Iraq attack positions belonging to the Iraqi security forces and PMF in Kirkuk, Diyala, Salahuddin, and Baghdad provinces. At least eight are killed and at least nine are wounded. Suspected ISIS militants kidnap and behead a youth in Tarmiyah.⁶²²
- **May 12, 2020:** Three militants wearing police uniforms attack Dasht-e-Barchi Hospital in Kabul and besiege the maternity hospital for five hours until they are killed by security forces. At least 80 women and infants are evacuated from the hospital. At least 24 people, including two newborn babies, are killed. There are no immediate claims of responsibility, but U.S. officials blame ISIS. Separately, a suicide bomber kills at least 32 people and wounds more than 60 at the funeral of local pro-government militia commander and former warlord in Nangarhar province's Khewa district. Separately, a remotely detonated bomb in a market in Khost kills a child and wounds 10 people. ISIS claims responsibility for both attacks.⁶²³
- **May 11, 2020:** Four bombs wound four in Kabul, Afghanistan. ISIS claims responsibility. Separately, ISIS militants burn crop fields in Iraq's disputed Makhmour district. ISIS militants had previously threatened farmers in the area if they did not pay taxes to the terror group.⁶²⁴
- **May 1, 2020:** PMF fighters clash with militants in the village of Mekeeshfa, south of Tikrit. Six PMF fighters are killed in the fighting, while another three PMF fighters are killed by a roadside bomb as reinforcements arrive. Another PMF fighter is shot dead in the nearby Tal al-Dahah village. The military says the attacks were coordinated. ISIS is suspected of responsibility.⁶²⁵

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- **April 28, 2020:** Two militants drive to the gate of the Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism Directorate in Kirkuk. A militant wearing an explosive vest gets out of the car and throws a grenade at the building. He then detonates an explosive vest. At least three security personnel are wounded. The second militant drives away. There are no immediate claims of responsibility, but security forces suspect ISIS.⁶²⁶
 - **April 21, 2020:** A roadside IED blows up under an army vehicle in the vicinity of the Um Hanta village in Diyala province, killing two soldiers. A sniper kills a police officer near a public university campus in Baqubah. A roadside bomb on the road connecting Quneitra and al-Lazakah villages in Nineveh province kills at least two. ISIS is suspected in all three attacks.⁶²⁷
 - **April 10, 2020:** ISIS launches an attack in Homs, central Syria. ISIS manages to take control of some neighborhoods in Al-Sukhna. The attack kills at least 27 pro-government fighters.⁶²⁸
 - **April 6-7, 2020:** On April 6, gunmen launch an overnight attack on a federal police checkpoint in the village of Daquq. Three roadside IEDs explode as reinforcements arrive, wounding three. On April 7, militants attack Peshmerga forces in the town of Kujalo, killing two. Separately, a roadside bomb blows up an Iraqi federal police convoy in the Daquq district of the Kirkuk province, wounding two. ISIS is suspected in all three attacks.⁶²⁹
 - **March 25, 2020:** Gunmen throw grenades and shoot indiscriminately during an attack on a Sikh temple in Kabul, killing at least 25 and wounding at least eight. The gunmen take up to 200 hostages during a six-hour standoff with security forces, who eventually kill all three attackers. ISIS claims responsibility for the attack.⁶³⁰
 - **March 10, 2020:** ISIS militants launch an attack in Khanaqin, Diyala province, where the Iraqi Army soldiers and the Popular Mobilization Forces are stationed. The attack kills two members of the Iraqi Army and one Shia Hashd al-Shaabi militia member.⁶³¹
 - **March 9, 2020:** U.S. forces conduct an anti-ISIS mission in ISIS's stronghold in mountainous area of north central Iraq. Two American troops are killed during the operation, while four others are injured by enemy forces.⁶³²
 - **March 9, 2020:** ISIS launches a rocket attack during president-elect Ashraf Ghani's Inauguration ceremony. The assailants launched five missiles to target the presidential palace. It is unclear if there were any casualties, despite claims from ISIS's official news agency claiming an "injury was delivered."⁶³³
 - **March 8, 2020:** ISIS militants open fire on security forces belonging to Iraq's counter-terrorism forces and U.S.-led coalition forces in Makhmour, northern Iraq. The joint operation was a mission to eliminate a stronghold for the militant group in north-central Iraq. The attack kills two U.S. service members, U.S. Marine Corps Captain Moises A. Navas and Gunnery Sergeant Diego D. Pongo.⁶³⁴
 - **March 6, 2020:** Two gunmen open fire on a crowded event in Kabul. The attack kills 32 and injures at least 58 others. The event commemorated the life of an ethnic Hazara leader who was killed by Taliban militants in 1995. ISIS-K, ISIS's branch in Afghanistan, claimed responsibility for the attack. The Hazara are a minority Shiite Muslim group who are frequently targeted by both ISIS and the Taliban.⁶³⁵
 - **February 18, 2020:** ISIS militants attack a security checkpoint in Jawala, Iraqi Kurdistan. The attack kills one Iraqi soldier and injures at least three others.⁶³⁶
 - **February 13, 2020:** ISIS militants attack a village in Khanaqin. The targets were a Kurdish religious minority known as the Kakais. The attack kills two and injures 10 others.⁶³⁷
 - **February 2, 2020:** Masked gunman blow up a gas pipeline in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. There are no casualties reported. The following day, ISIS's Sinai Province claims responsibility, asserting that the pipeline connected to Israel's offshore gas field. ISIS also claims the pipeline it targeted was in the Sinai village of Al Teloul. Egyptian authorities dispute the claim, saying the pipeline was a domestic one and connected to a power station in el-Arish.⁶³⁸
 - **January 15, 2020:** ISIS members ambush a border checkpoint at the Al-Waleed port in Iraq. The attack wounds four.⁶³⁹
 - **January 10, 2020:** ISIS fighters plant a bomb that detonates inside a mosque in Quetta, Pakistan. The attack kills at least 15 and wounds at least another 18. The mosque was frequented by senior Taliban figures. ISIS and the Taliban have long battled each other for control of territory in Afghanistan.⁶⁴⁰
 - **January 5, 2020:** ISIS fighters ambush security forces in Tal Diab Village in Kirkuk province. The attack kills two soldiers and injures three others.⁶⁴¹
 - **December 24, 2019:** ISWAP militants ambush a military base in Hallele, Burkina Faso. The attack kills seven.⁶⁴²
 - **December 10, 2020:** Hundreds of ISWAP militants attack a military camp in Inates, Niger. The attack kills at least 71 soldiers and injured 12 others. The attack is the country's deadliest Islamist attack since 2015.⁶⁴³
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- **November 11, 2019:** ISIS militants ambush Iraqi military forces in Khanaqin, Iraq. The attack kills four and wounds seven others. The military forces were assessing damage following Iraqi airstrikes on ISIS hideouts near Hamrin Lake.⁶⁴⁴
 - **November 6, 2019:** ISIS militants attack a security checkpoint on the Tajikistan-Uzbekistan border. The attack kills at least 17. The militants crossed into Tajikistan from northern Afghanistan where the border is porous.⁶⁴⁵
 - **November 3, 2019:** Armed militants ambush an army post in northern Mali. The attack kills at least 54. Although ISIS claims responsibility for the attack, following the death of ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in October of 2019, ISIS has claimed multiple attacks without providing evidence.⁶⁴⁶
 - **September 20, 2019:** Dozens of ISWAP fighters on motorbikes and in pickup trucks ambush a military base in Koutougou, northern Burkina Faso. The attack kills 24 soldiers, the country's worst insurgent attack.⁶⁴⁷
 - **September 8, 2019:** A woman suspected of being a suicide bomber is killed in an explosion near a military detachment in the southern Philippines. No casualties or injuries are reported. If confirmed, the incident would be the fourth suicide bombing in the southern Philippines in 14 months.⁶⁴⁸
 - **September 7, 2019:** An ISIS militant detonates a bomb in a public market in the southern Philippines. The attack wounds at least seven Filipino Christians.⁶⁴⁹
 - **August 31, 2019:** Two cows harnessed to explosive vests wander into the outskirts of Al Islah, Iraq. The bombs detonate, killing the cows and damaging nearby houses, but not harming any people. ISIS claims responsibility for the attack as the militant group resorts to unconventional attack methods when lacking manpower.⁶⁵⁰
 - **August 30, 2019:** An ISIS militant on a motorcycle targets a patrol from Yemen's Security Belt group in Yemen. The attack kills six southern separatist fighters.⁶⁵¹
 - **August 17, 2019:** A suicide bomber infiltrates a wedding in Kabul and detonates his bomb-laden vest. The attack kills 63 and injures 182. ISIS's Khorasan Province claims responsibility for the bombing. The attack was meant to target the Shiite community, but the fatalities included members of both Sunni and Shiite sects.⁶⁵²
 - **August 1, 2019:** ISIS detonates a car bomb in a military camp for the Security Belt forces—the elite military wing of the Southern Transitional Council—in Aden, Yemen. The attack kills 13 policemen.⁶⁵³
 - **July 31, 2019:** Militants attacks a military post in Baga, Borno. The attack kills at least 15 soldiers. Later, the militants storm army barracks in the town of Benisheik where they kill another 25 soldiers. ISIS claims responsibility for the attacks via its Amaq News Agency.⁶⁵⁴
 - **July 25, 2019:** A magnetic bomb attached to a bus in Kabul, Afghanistan, explodes. The bus is carrying employees of the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum. A suicide bomber on a motorbike then blows up nearby after emergency services arrive. The attack kills at least eight and wounds 27 others. ISIS claims responsibility. A third bombing less than two miles away wounds at least 17. The Taliban claim responsibility for the third bombing.⁶⁵⁵
 - **July 23, 2019:** An Indonesian couple carry out a suicide attack in a Cathedral in Jolo, the Philippines. At least 23 people are killed and more than 100 are wounded. ISIS claims responsibility for the attack.⁶⁵⁶
 - **July 18, 2019:** A suicide bomber detonates a bomb in a car park in Sheikh Zuweid, on Egypt's border near the Gaza Strip. One civilian and one member of the Egyptian security forces are killed. ISIS claims responsibility for the attack.⁶⁵⁷
 - **July 18, 2019:** Militants from ISIS's West Africa Province attack an aid convoy in Nigeria's Borno State, killing one and taking hostage six aid workers from the NGO Action Against Hunger. A week later, ISIS releases a video of the one of the hostages begging Action Against Hunger and the Nigerian government to help them.⁶⁵⁸
 - **July 17, 2019:** Four headless bodies are found in an empty street in the North Sinai town of Bir al-Abd. ISIS claimed responsibility for the beheadings, claiming the four were spies for the Egyptian military.⁶⁵⁹
 - **July 17, 2019:** Fighters from ISIS's West Africa Province ambush a military patrol vehicle on near Jakana in Nigeria's Borno State, killing all six soldiers on board. The militants then attack a military base in Jakana but are repelled by Nigerian forces, according to the military.⁶⁶⁰
 - **July 11, 2019:** A car bomb detonates outside of a Christian church in Qamishli, Syria. At least 11 people are injured in the attack. ISIS claims responsibility for the attack despite having lost its last stronghold of Baghuz in March.⁶⁶¹
 - **July 5, 2019:** A bomb explodes at the Mohammadiya mosque in Afghanistan's Ghazni province, killing at least two and wounding 20 others. ISIS claims responsibility and claims the bombing wounded 40 at the Shiite mosque.⁶⁶²
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- **July 1, 2019:** Militants blow up two cars at a military camp in Niger. Gunmen on motorcycles then open fire at the base, killing at least 18 soldiers. Four other soldiers are reported missing. ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq News Agency.⁶⁶³
 - **June 28, 2019:** An explosion at a military base on the Philippine island of Jolo kills at least five and wounds nine. ISIS claims through its Amaq News Agency that multiple suicide bombers had infiltrated the base and killed or wounded 100 soldiers.⁶⁶⁴
 - **June 27, 2019:** Two suicide bombers attack police positions in Tunis, killing two and wounding seven others. ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq News Agency. The attack's alleged mastermind, Aymen Smiri blows himself up in Tunis on July 2 after being surrounded by police. There are no other casualties from that explosion.⁶⁶⁵
 - **June 25, 2019:** ISIS militants attack four Egyptian police positions in el-Arish in Egypt's Sinai, killing eight and wounding two. One of the attackers detonates an explosives belt during clashes with Egyptian forces after the attack. Three other militants are killed during the clashes. ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq News Agency while claiming it carried out multiple simultaneous raids.⁶⁶⁶
 - **June 5, 2019:** ISIS militants attack a military checkpoint in Egypt's northern Sinai Peninsula, killing at least eight policemen. Egyptian forces kill at least five of the militants after the attack.⁶⁶⁷
 - **June 4, 2019:** ISIS issues a statement claiming its Central Africa Province repelled an "attack" by the army in Mozambique. ISIS also claims its fighters captured weapons, ammunition, and rockets. It is ISIS's first claim to be operating within Mozambique. Police deny that ISIS was responsible for the fighting.⁶⁶⁸
 - **June 2 – 3, 2019:** On June 2, four bombings in Kabul kill at least two and wound 27. On June 3, a bomb explodes near a bus in Kabul, Afghanistan, killing at least four and wounding 10. ISIS claims responsibility for both days of bombings. Also on June 3, militants attack a security patrol in Tripoli, Lebanon, killing four. ISIS claims responsibility in July through its *Al-Nabaa* newspaper but does not provide evidence.⁶⁶⁹
 - **May 19 – 20, 2019:** Militants armed with knives spark a riot at a prison in Vakhdat, Tajikistan, leaving three guards and five prisoners dead. The militants also burn down the prison hospital and take several prisoners hostage in an attempt to escape. Prison authorities kill 24 of the militants while quelling the riot. Tajik authorities blame ISIS for instigating the riot.⁶⁷⁰
 - **May 14, 2019:** Militants ambush a military convoy in Niger near the Malian border, killing 28 soldiers. ISIS claims responsibility two days later.⁶⁷¹
 - **May 9, 2019:** A suicide bomber blows up in a market in Baghdad, Iraq, killing at least eight and wounding 15. ISIS claims responsibility.⁶⁷²
 - **May 4, 2019:** ISIS militants attack a military training camp in Sabha, Libya, belonging to forces loyal to General Khalifa Haftar, killing at least nine. ISIS claims it killed or wounded at least 16.⁶⁷³
 - **April 21, 2019:** Coordinated suicide bombings at three hotels and three Catholic churches across Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday kill at least 250 people and wound approximately 500 others. On April 23, ISIS releases a claim of responsibility through its Amaq News Agency, though the group does not provide evidence of its claim. Sri Lankan officials suspect two local Islamist groups of responsibility: National Thowheeth Jama'ath and Jamiyyathul Millathu Ibrahim. Mohamed Atif Subhi Abu Sitta Ruwan Wijewardene, Separately on April 21, militants kill three soldiers and wound another in the Butembo area of the Democratic Republic of Congo. ISIS claims responsibility four days later.⁶⁷⁴
 - **April 20, 2019:** A suicide bomber blows himself up at the entrance of the telecommunications ministry in Kabul, Afghanistan. Four gunmen then attack the ministry, killing 10 people during a three-hour gun battle with Afghan forces. The attackers are killed during the course of the battle. ISIS claims responsibility the following day.⁶⁷⁵
 - **April 18, 2019:** ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq News Agency for a shooting attack in Kamango, Democratic Republic of Congo, that killed three. ISIS credits the attack to its new affiliate, Wilayat Central Africa. It is the group's first attack claimed in the Congo.⁶⁷⁶
 - **April 12, 2019:** A suicide bomber explodes in a vegetable market in Quetta, Pakistan, killing at least 20 and wounding at least 48. At least nine of the dead are part of the minority Shiite Hazara community, which has been targeted in the past. Lashkar-e-Jhangvi initially claims responsibility. ISIS releases a conflicting claim of responsibility and a photo of the alleged bomber.⁶⁷⁷
 - **March 2019:** The U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) launch an assault on ISIS's last territorial hold in Baghuz, Syria, on March 10. ISIS releases a propaganda video claiming "tomorrow we will be in paradise." At least 20 suicide bombers attack SDF positions during the fighting. On March 12, hundreds of ISIS fighters and their families reportedly surrender to rebel forces. The SDF declare that the battle to retake Baghuz is as "good as over." The SDF claim to have killed 112 ISIS fighters by March 13.⁶⁷⁸
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- **January 16, 2019:** An explosion in the U.S.-patrolled town of Manbij kills at least 16, including four U.S. citizens. ISIS claims responsibility.⁶⁷⁹
 - **April 2, 2018:** Approximately 400 ISIS fighters attack Iranian-backed militias in the Syrian town of Boukamal, killing 11 pro-government fighters. Five ISIS militants are also killed.⁶⁸⁰
 - **March 2018 – May 2018:** On March 12, ISIS fighters attack the rebel-held al-Qadam neighborhood of southern Damascus. ISIS reportedly takes control of 25 percent of Qadam. On March 13, the Syrian government evacuates approximately 300 rebel fighters from Damascus to the Idlib province. The rebels turn their remaining territory over to the Syrian government, which takes control of approximately 70 percent of Qadam. ISIS attacks rebels during the evacuation. On March 14, ISIS forces attack Syrian army positions and gain ground in southern Damascus after several days of fighting. At least 62 Syrian army soldiers are killed. The Syrian army sends thousands of reinforcements to southern Damascus in April to force ISIS from Qadam and surrounding areas, including the nearby Yarmouk Palestinian refugee camp, which ISIS had occupied since 2015. On May 18, the Syrian government reportedly reaches a truce with the militants. On May 19, the government begins evacuating ISIS fighters in buses under a reported deal for the government to retake full control of southern Damascus, though the government denies any deal exists.⁶⁸¹
 - **January 5, 2018:** ISIS renews its offensive against Syrian rebel group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (formerly Jabhat al-Nusra), capturing at least two villages in south-eastern Idlib, Syria.⁶⁸²
 - **January 4, 2018:** A suicide bombing at a market in Kabul, Afghanistan, kills at least 20 and wounds at least 24. ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq News Agency but doesn't provide direct evidence linking it to the attack.⁶⁸³
 - **December 28, 2017:** ISIS claims responsibility after a suicide bomber kills at least 41 at a Shiite cultural center in Kabul, Afghanistan.⁶⁸⁴
 - **December 27, 2017:** A small bomb in a supermarket locker wounds 13 in St. Petersburg, Russia. ISIS claims responsibility but provides no evidence that it is behind the attack. Police arrest Dmitry Lukyanenko, who reportedly belongs to a nationalist group and has received "psychiatric treatment" in the past.⁶⁸⁵
 - **December 11, 2017:** Akayed Ullah, a Bangladeshi native, detonates a pipe bomb in the subway tunnel under the Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York City. The bomb does not detonate properly and no one is seriously injured except for Ullah. Ullah had previously declared allegiance to ISIS, according to New York officials.⁶⁸⁶
 - **November 25, 2017:** Militants carrying the ISIS flag carry out a bomb and gun attack on the al Rawdah mosque in Bir al-Abed in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, killing at least 305 people and wounding at least 128 others in the deadliest attack in the country's history.⁶⁸⁷
 - **October 31, 2017:** Sayfullo Habibullaevic Saipov, an Uzbek national living in the United States, drives a truck down a bike path in New York City in a vehicular attack that kills eight people and injures at least twelve others. He is shot and taken into custody. Saipov tells authorities that he was inspired to carry out the attack by ISIS propaganda videos.⁶⁸⁸
 - **October 4, 2017:** Gunmen and a suicide attacker kill at least four people and injure almost 40 others in an attack on a court complex in Misrata, Libya. ISIS claims responsibility.⁶⁸⁹
 - **August 17-18, 2017:** On August 17, a van crashes into a crowd of people on the Las Ramblas pedestrian walkway in Barcelona. The following morning, five attackers attempt to ram people in the resort city of Cambrils south of Barcelona, then begin to stab passersby before they are killed by police. Altogether, 16 people are killed and at least 130 others are wounded in both attacks. ISIS claims responsibility for both attacks.⁶⁹⁰
 - **August 12, 2017:** A suicide bomber on a motorcycle carries out an attack on a Pakistani army truck in Quetta, Pakistan, killing 15 people and injuring at least 40 others. ISIS claims responsibility.⁶⁹¹
 - **May 26, 2017:** Gunmen attack two buses and a truck carrying Coptic Christians to the monastery of St. Samuel the Confessor south of Cairo, killing 29 people. It is ISIS's first attack against a monastery.⁶⁹²
 - **May 22, 2017:** Salman Abedi detonates a homemade bomb at an Ariana Grande concert at Manchester Arena in Manchester, England, killing himself and 22 other people and wounding more than 800. It is the deadliest terror attack in Britain since the July 2005 London bombings. ISIS claimed responsibility for the Manchester attack on May 23, 2017, calling Abedi a "soldier of the caliphate." On May 23, police in Libya arrest Abedi's younger brother, Salman, who is later extradited to the United Kingdom. In March 2020, Salman Abedi is found "jointly responsible" for the Manchester attack and convicted on 22 counts of murder, attempted murder, and conspiracy to cause an explosion likely to endanger life.⁶⁹³
 - **May 17, 2017:** A suicide attack on state-run the Radio Television Afghanistan (RTA) broadcasting station in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, kills at least five people and wounds 24 others. Three other assailants are killed in a gun battle with security forces. ISIS claims responsibility.⁶⁹⁴
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- **April 9, 2017:** A bomb explodes at St. George’s Church in Tanta, Egypt, while a suicide bomber targets St. Mark’s Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Alexandria. The bombings kill a combined 45 people.⁶⁹⁵
 - **March 8, 2017:** ISIS operatives a suicide bomb and gun attack at a hospital in Kabul, killing 30 people.⁶⁹⁶
 - **February 16, 2017:** ISIS suicide bombers attack an 800-year old Sufi Muslim shrine in Sehwan, Pakistan, killing at least 88 people—including 24 children—and wounding at least 200 others. That same day, a car bomb planted by ISIS kills at least 48 people and wounds 60 more at an outside market in the southwestern al-Bayaa neighborhood of Baghdad.⁶⁹⁷
 - **January 3, 2017:** ISIS suicide bombers kill at least 39 people at a market in Baghdad.⁶⁹⁸
 - **January 1, 2017:** A 34-year-old Uzbek named Abdulkadir Masharipov opens fire at a nightclub in Istanbul, Turkey, killing 39 people and injuring 70 others. ISIS claims Turkish officials believe that Masharipov had contact with ISIS militants inside Syria.⁶⁹⁹
 - **December 19, 2016:** A 40-year-old Tunisian ISIS sympathizer drives a truck through a Christmas market in Berlin, Germany, killing 12 people and injuring 48. ISIS claims responsibility.⁷⁰⁰
 - **December 18, 2016:** ISIS gunmen carry out an attack at Karak Castle, a popular tourist destination in Karak, Jordan, leaving 10 people dead.⁷⁰¹
 - **December 11, 2016:** ISIS suicide bombers attack a Coptic cathedral in Cairo, killing 25 people. ISIS claims responsibility two days later.⁷⁰²
 - **November 28, 2016:** U.S. resident and ISIS sympathizer Abdul Razak Ali Artan carries out a knife- and car-attack at Ohio State University where he is a student, wounding 11 people before he is shot dead. ISIS later claims responsibility.⁷⁰³
 - **October 24, 2016:** ISIS claims responsibility for a suicide bombing at a cadet training center in Quetta, Pakistan, killing 60 people and injuring more than 100 others.⁷⁰⁴
 - **October 21, 2016:** ISIS militants reportedly execute 284 men and boys who they had used as human shields on the outskirts of Mosul.⁷⁰⁵
 - **October 4, 2016:** A bomb explodes in Afghanistan’s Nangarhar Province, killing a U.S. service member. ISIS claims responsibility.⁷⁰⁶
 - **October 3, 2016:** ISIS suicide bombers target a Kurdish wedding party in northeast Syria, killing at least 36 people.⁷⁰⁷
 - **September 24, 2016:** Three suspected ISIS insurgents carry out coordinated suicide bombings at a security checkpoint in northern Baghdad, killing 11 security personnel.⁷⁰⁸
 - **September 17, 2016:** U.S. resident [Dahir Adan](#) allegedly goes on a stabbing spree in a mall St. Cloud, Minnesota, injuring 10 people. ISIS claims responsibility.⁷⁰⁹
 - **September 12, 2016:** An Australian man loyal to ISIS stabs a 59-year-old man and attempts to attack a police officer in Sydney, Australia.⁷¹⁰
 - **August 29, 2016:** ISIS operatives carry out a suicide car bomb attack in Aden, Yemen, killing at least 60 people.⁷¹¹
 - **August 21, 2016:** A suicide bomber kills 51 people at a wedding in Gaziantep, Turkey. The Turkish government blames ISIS.⁷¹²
 - **August 8, 2016:** A suicide bomber in Quetta, Pakistan, kills approximately 70 people and wounds more than 100. ISIS claims responsibility.⁷¹³
 - **August 7, 2016:** An Algerian man acting on behalf of ISIS wounds two policewomen in a machete attack in Charleroi, Belgium. ISIS claims responsibility.⁷¹⁴
 - **July 31, 2016:** ISIS operatives raid the Bai Hassan oil field near Kirkuk, Iraq, and take four employees hostage. The militants are killed by security personnel.⁷¹⁵
 - **July 27, 2016:** A bombing carried out by ISIS militants kills 44 in the Syrian Kurdish-controlled city of Qamishli.⁷¹⁶
 - **July 26, 2016:** ISIS operatives slit the throat of a priest in a church in Normandy, France.⁷¹⁷
 - **July 18, 2016 – July 24, 2016:** ISIS claims responsibility for two attacks in Germany. In the first, on July 18, a 17-year-old Afghan refugee armed with a knife and ax injures four people—all of them from Hong Kong—on a train traveling from Treuchlingen to Würzburg.⁷¹⁸ In the second, on July 24, a 27-year-old Syrian refugee carried out a suicide bombing, injuring 12 people, outside of a music festival in Ansbach.
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- **July 14, 2016:** A Tunisian-French citizen named Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel drives a truck through a crowd celebrating Bastille Day in Nice, France. The attack kills 84 people and wounds over 300. ISIS claims responsibility two days later.⁷²⁰
- **July 3, 2016:** ISIS militants detonate a minivan packed with explosive in central Baghdad, killing at least 292 and wounding 200 others.⁷²¹
- **July 1, 2016:** ISIS operatives kill 20 people in a café in Dhaka, Bangladesh, after taking them hostage.⁷²²
- **June 28, 2016:** Three suicide bombers attack Turkey’s Ataturk international airport, killing 45 and wounding more than 230. Turkish authorities allege ISIS leadership was involved in planning the attack.⁷²³ On the same day, ISIS militants carry out the group’s first successful attack in Malaysia, launching a grenade at a nightclub in Kuala Lumpur. The attack wounds eight.⁷²⁴
- **June 13, 2016:** [Larossi Abballa](#) stabs to death two married French police officers, and pledges allegiance to ISIS directly after the attack.⁷²⁵ ISIS officially claims responsibility.⁷²⁶
- **June 12, 2016:** In the deadliest mass shooting on American soil, U.S. citizen Omar Mateen murders 49 and wounds 53 at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida. While carrying out the attack, Mateen calls 911 and pledges allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.⁷²⁷ Later on June 12, ISIS claims responsibility for the shooting, writing on its Amaq news agency Telegram channel that “an Islamic State fighter” had “targeted a nightclub for homosexuals...”⁷²⁸ On June 13, ISIS releases another claim of responsibility on its official Al Bayan radio station, referring to Mateen as “one of the soldiers of the caliphate in America.”⁷²⁹
- **June 8, 2016:** Two Palestinian terrorists, allegedly inspired by ISIS, kill four Israeli civilians and wound 15 at a food mall in Tel Aviv.⁷³⁰
- **June 7, 2016:** ISIS claims responsibility for its first car bombing in the largely Shiite city of Karbala, Iraq. The attack kills 10 and wounds 25.⁷³¹
- **June 5, 2016:** ISIS’s Amaq News Agency claims the killing of a Christian in Northwestern Bangladesh and a Buddhist monk in the country’s southeast.⁷³²
- **April 7, 2016:** ISIS militants kidnap over 300 cement workers from a cement plant near Damascus, Syria.⁷³³
- **April 2016:** ISIS executes at least 250 women for refusing to enter into temporary marriages with ISIS militants.⁷³⁴
- **March 22, 2016:** ISIS operatives carry out three bombings in Brussels, Belgium, in the worst attack in that country’s history. At 8 a.m., two bombs explode at the airport in Zaventem. At 9 a.m., one bomb detonates at the Maalbeek metro station. The attacks kill 32 and wound 270.⁷³⁵
- **Early January 2016:** ISIS launches counterattacks on Iraqi soldiers in Ramadi.⁷³⁶
- **January 5, 2016:** ISIS releases a video in which a British-accented man, believed to be [Abu Rumaysah](#), threatens the United Kingdom.⁷³⁷
- **December 3, 2015:** ISIS releases a video purporting to depict the beheading of a Russian spy. The executioner addresses Russians, saying, “You will not find peace in your homes. We will kill your sons ... for each son you killed here. And we will destroy your homes for each home you destroyed here.”⁷³⁸
- **December 2, 2015:** Two shooters kill 14 at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, California. The perpetrators, a husband and wife named Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik, are shot dead. The shooters were reportedly ISIS sympathizers. Malik pledged allegiance to ISIS via Facebook while carrying out the attack. Farook’s later father told an Italian newspaper: “[Farook] said he shared the ideology of (ISIS leader Abu Bakr) al-Baghdadi to create an Islamic state....” The shooting represents the deadliest terror attack on U.S. soil since 9/11.⁷³⁹
- **November 18, 2015:** ISIS releases a propaganda video threatening New York City in the wake of the Paris attacks. A voice in the video says, “...What’s coming next will be far worse and more bitter.”⁷⁴⁰
- **November 13, 2015:** Eight assailants carry out multiple simultaneous attacks in Paris, killing 130 and seriously injuring more than 350. French President Francois Hollande labels the attacks an “act of war” and orders a national state of emergency. ISIS claims responsibility.⁷⁴¹
- **September 15, 2015:** Two car bomb attacks kill more than 20 and injure more than 100 others in Syria’s northeastern Kurdish city of Hasakah. The local Kurdish forces blame the attack on ISIS.⁷⁴²
- **September 16, 2015 – September 17, 2015:** ISIS releases five videos amid the refugee crisis in Europe, urging the Syrian and other refugees to leave Europe and travel to the self-proclaimed Islamic State.⁷⁴³

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- **September 15, 2015:** Danish teenager Lisa Borch receives nine years in prison for stabbing her mother to death after becoming radicalized by watching ISIS beheading videos online.⁷⁴⁴
 - **September 15, 2015:** Two car bomb attacks kill more than 20 and injure more than 100 others in Syria's northeastern Kurdish city of Hasakah. The local Kurdish forces blame the attack on ISIS.⁷⁴⁵
 - **September 1, 2015:** ISIS releases a video depicting the burning alive of four Iraqi men accused of working with Shiite militias.⁷⁴⁶
 - **September 1, 2015:** The U.N. confirms that ISIS militants have destroyed the ancient Temple of Baal in Palmyra, Syria.⁷⁴⁷
 - **August 30, 2015:** ISIS fighters severely damage the Temple of Baal, another major religious shrine in Palmyra.⁷⁴⁸ By August 31, the United Nations confirms that the Temple of Baal has been destroyed.⁷⁴⁹
 - **August 25, 2015:** ISIS releases a video showing its members destroying the Baalshamin temple in Palmyra, Syria.⁷⁵⁰ Satellite imagery confirms the destruction.⁷⁵¹
 - **August 21, 2015:** ISIS fighters use chemical weapons during a battle near Aleppo, Syria, according to an August 23 finding by the *Wall Street Journal*.⁷⁵²
 - **August 18, 2015:** ISIS militants publically execute the archeologist of Syria's ancient city Palmyra.⁷⁵³
 - **August 14, 2015:** U.S. officials confirm suspicions that ISIS used a mustard agent on its enemies in Syria.⁷⁵⁴
 - **August 9, 2015:** ISIS reportedly plots to assassinate the Queen of England.⁷⁵⁵
 - **August 7, 2015:** ISIS captures and holds dozens of Christians in Syria's Homs province.⁷⁵⁶
 - **July 17, 2015:** Kurdish officials, field investigators, and a Western technician report that ISIS militants have used rudimentary chemical weaponry against Kurdish territory in Iraq and Syria in recent weeks.⁷⁵⁷
 - **July 17, 2015:** ISIS's Sinai Province claims responsibility for an attack on an Egyptian vessel.⁷⁵⁸
 - **July 16, 2015:** The *International Business Times* reports that ISIS has crucified 12 people for allegedly failing to fast during the holy month of Ramadan.⁷⁵⁹
 - **July 3, 2015:** ISIS releases a video of a row of young men being beheaded in the empty amphitheater in Syria's Palmyra.⁷⁶⁰
 - **July 2, 2015:** ISIS militants decimate cultural artefacts in the Syrian city of Palmyra, designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.⁷⁶¹
 - **June 30, 2015:** Yemen-based ISIS militants claim responsibility for a car bomb in Sanaa that kills 28.⁷⁶² In northern Syria, ISIS insurgents launch a renewed attack on the Kurdish town of Tal Abyad after being repelled two weeks prior.⁷⁶³
 - **June 26, 2015:** ISIS takes credit for an attack on tourists at the Imperial Marhaba Hotel and the Sofil Hostel in Sousse, Tunisia.⁷⁶⁴
 - **June 26, 2015:** ISIS's Saudi wilaya attacks a Shiite mosque in Kuwait City.⁷⁶⁵
 - **June 17- 29, 2015:** ISIS's Yemeni wilaya detonates VBIEDs at Shiite religious sites and Houthi political and military assets.⁷⁶⁶
 - **June 12, 2015:** ISIS's wilaya in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region conducts public beheadings, killing five.⁷⁶⁷
 - **June 09-10, 2015:** ISIS's Egyptian wilaya targets the Multinational Force and Observers airbase in North Sinai using rocket fire.⁷⁶⁸
 - **Mid-April 2015:** ISIS releases a propaganda video threatening a "9/11-style attack" on the United States. ISIS supporters spread the message on Twitter using the hashtag "We Will Burn America."⁷⁶⁹
 - **April 10, 2015:** ISIS launches an assault, including suicide and car bombers, on Ramadi, Iraq. The group seizes northern parts of the city by the end of the day. At least 10 Iraqi soldiers are killed and General Qassim al-Muhammadi, Iraq's military head in Anbar province, is wounded.⁷⁷⁰
 - **April 6, 2015:** ISIS kills 52 men, mostly Iraqi police officers, at the al-Qaim border crossing with Syria. ISIS captured the victims when it overran the border area the year before.⁷⁷¹
 - **Early April 2015:** ISIS reportedly sends an email to the personal account of Reserve Bank of India Governor Raghuram Rajan threatening his life. According to media, the email came from a Gmail account and the author said he ISIS paid him to kill Rajan but he would spare Rajan for
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more money.⁷⁷²

- **March 21, 2015:** ISIS releases an online call to lone-wolf attacks against U.S. service members. The group reportedly releases the names of 100 targets in particular.⁷⁷³
- **March 11, 2015:** A new ISIS video shows a child executing what the group claims is an Israeli spy.⁷⁷⁴
- **March 7, 2015:** ISIS razes the ancient city of Hatra in northern Iraq, destroying archaeological ruins.⁷⁷⁵
- **March 5-6, 2015:** ISIS attacks the ancient Assyrian city of Nimrud in northern Iraq, razing the city and bulldozing archaeological ruins.⁷⁷⁶
- **March 1, 2015:** ISIS supporters threaten to kill Twitter employees as the company deletes some violent ISIS videos on the site and suspends a number of accounts.⁷⁷⁷
- **February 26, 2015:** In the culmination of a multi-day offensive on Assyrian Christian villages in northeastern Syria, ISIS militants kidnap further hostages, bringing the total number of Assyrian Christian hostages to 262.⁷⁷⁸
- **February 23, 2015:** ISIS's media department releases a new video depicting caged Kurdish prisoners being paraded down ISIS-controlled streets.⁷⁷⁹
- **February 23, 2015:** ISIS militants burn the Mosul public library, which reportedly housed over 8,000 rare books and manuscripts.⁷⁸⁰
- **February 18, 2015:** A top Iraqi diplomat alleges that ISIS is harvesting and selling the organs of those it murders. Iraqi Ambassador to the United Nations Mohamed Alhakim declares: "We have bodies. Come and examine them. It is clear they are missing certain parts."⁷⁸¹
- **February 17, 2015:** ISIS militants burn to death 45 Iraqis, many of them suspected to be security forces.⁷⁸²
- **February 15, 2015:** ISIS uploads a video showing the gruesome killing of 21 Egyptian Coptic Christian laborers in Libya. The men were kidnapped from the city of Sirt, led to a beach, and made to kneel before they were beheaded by multiple ISIS members. The group identifies its newly conquered land in Libya as the "Tripoli" Province of ISIS, leading analysts to believe that Libya is emerging as a 'second front' for the organization.⁷⁸³
- **February 13, 2015:** ISIS launches a suicide attack on the al-Asad airbase in Iraq's Anbar province, where U.S. and coalition troops are training Iraqi forces. A Pentagon spokesman states that an estimated 20-25 extremists, disguised as Iraqi soldiers, are involved in the attack. Most are killed by their suicide vests or by Iraqi government forces. No Iraqi or U.S. troops are killed, nor were U.S. soldiers involved in the gunfight. This comes after ISIS took control of a nearby town, their first territorial gain in months.⁷⁸⁴
- **February 12, 2015:** ISIS makes advances on the western Iraqi province of Anbar where their first attack is a suicide bombing at a police station. This is only miles away from the Ayn al-Asad airbase, where 320 coalition personnel are training Iraqi troops and tribal fighters.⁷⁸⁵
- **February 11, 2015:** U.S. President Barack Obama requests that Congress pass a bipartisan authorization for the use of military force (AUMF) against ISIS. The administration's draft AUMF only authorizes flexible ground operations with coalition support for three years.⁷⁸⁶ According to some congressional sources, the anti-ISIS AUMF will extend beyond Iraq and Syria.⁷⁸⁷
- **February 10, 2015:** The U.S. government confirms the death of Kayla Mueller, a 26-year-old humanitarian aid worker and the last American hostage held by ISIS.⁷⁸⁸ ISIS claims that she was killed when a Jordanian fighter plane bombed a building where she was being held. The claim cannot be confirmed and no proof was offered. Mueller had been captured in August 2013 at a Doctors Without Borders hospital. ISIS had threatened to kill her if several million euros were not paid in ransom by her family.⁷⁸⁹
- **February 3, 2015:** ISIS posts a video and still images of Jordanian pilot Moath al-Kasasbeh being burned alive in a cage. Al-Kasasbeh was a member of an important Jordanian tribe and the first prisoner from the coalition bombing ISIS. Jordanian officials say that he was actually killed on January 3. In response to the group's most cruel execution to date, Jordan executes Sajida al-Riswahi, convicted of attempting a suicide bombing and the prisoner ISIS had earlier asked for in a prisoner swap for Japanese hostage Haruka Yukawa. Jordan also executes Ziad al-Karbouli, a top lieutenant of al-Qaeda in Iraq, convicted of helping to plan 2005 bombings in Amman that killed more than 57 people. Both were already sentenced to death for terrorism.⁷⁹⁰
- **January 31, 2015:** The second Japanese hostage, journalist Kenji Goto, is reported executed. A video is released online showing his decapitated body. The video begins with the man known as "Jihadi Joe" brandishing his knife, stating, "[Prime Minister] Abe, because of your reckless decision to take part in an unwinnable war, this knife will not only slaughter Kenji, but will also carry on and cause carnage wherever your people are round. So let the nightmare for Japan begin."⁷⁹¹
- **January 30, 2015:** ISIS attacks oil-rich Kirkuk in northern Iraq after months of fighting the Peshmerga, fighters protecting the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The attack is possibly a diversion against Kurdish efforts to take Mosul, ISIS's stronghold. Among those killed by ISIS are

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Brigadier General Shirko Fateh, the highest-ranking operational commander of the Peshmerga brigade.⁷⁹²

- **January 27, 2015:** ISIS claims responsibility for an attack at the five-star Corinthia hotel in Tripoli, Libya. Nine people are killed, including five foreign nationals. It is the first attack on western interests in Libya. ISIS's profile in Libya increases along with Islamic State Tripoli (IS Tripoli) in western Libya and ISIS-affiliated branches, Barqa in the east and Fezzan in the south. Many analysts attribute ISIS's rise in Libya to the anarchic state of the country. This is partly due to the ongoing battle between the internationally recognized government in the eastern city of Tobruk and Libya's National Salvation government, which is allied with the Islamist-backed Fajr Libya in Tripoli in the west.⁷⁹³
- **December 24, 2014:** ISIS militants capture a Jordanian pilot flying over ISIS-controlled territory in northern Syria by shooting down his jet with an anti-aircraft missile. The Jordanian pilot is identified as Moaz Youssef al-Kasabeh. ISIS militants post photographs of the captured pilot surrounded by masked gunmen on Twitter. They also upload photos of the jet's debris, as well as Kasabeh's military identification card.⁷⁹⁴ This represents the first US-led coalition aircraft to be lost on ISIS-controlled territory.⁷⁹⁵
- **December 18, 2014:** Tunisian militants aligned with ISIS appear in a video, threatening attacks before Tunisia's upcoming presidential runoff. The armed militants urge Tunisians to expand the Islamic State across North Africa, and claim that Tunisians "will not live secured as long as Tunisia is not governed by Islam." The militants also claim responsibility for the 2013 assassinations of left-wing politicians Chokri Belaid and Mohamed Brahmī.⁷⁹⁶
- **December 17, 2014:** ISIS fighter Abu Anas Al-Libi murders over 150 women and girls- some of whom are pregnant- for refusing to partake in sexual acts and marriage with ISIS fighters. The women and girls' bodies are buried in mass graves west of Baghdad.⁷⁹⁷
- **December 17, 2014:** A mass grave containing over 230 bodies is discovered in eastern Syria. The dead are believed to have belonged to al-Sheitaat, a Sunni tribe against ISIS. The deaths bring the number of al-Sheitaats killed by ISIS over 900.⁷⁹⁸
- **December 15, 2014:** ISIS militants capture two key army bases in the northwestern province of Idlib, Syria. The two bases, Wadi Deif and Hamidiyeh, are significant losses for the Syrian army, who had them under its control for more than two years. The battle results in dozens of casualties on each side.⁷⁹⁹
- **December 15, 2014:** Up to 40 people are taken hostage by an Islamist gunman at a Lindt Chocolate café in Sydney, Australia. The hostages are forced to hold a black flag with Arabic inscription to the window, raising fears that ISIS is responsible for the attack. Dozens of police surround and eventually storm the premises.⁸⁰⁰ After a shootout between police and the gunman, three people (including the gunman) are killed, with four injured. The gunman, Man Haron Manis, is described as a 50 year-old Iranian who had received political asylum in Australia in 1996.⁸⁰¹
- **December 15, 2014:** ISIS authorities release a penal code titled "Clarification [regarding] the *Hudud* [Koranic punishments]." The document details the appropriate punishment- according to sharia- for various illegal acts, including homosexuality: "death for the person committing the act, as well as for the one receiving it," and banditry: "cutting of the right hand and the left leg." ISIS claims to have distributed the penal code as a reminder to the people living in the "caliphate," and warns that it will be vigilantly enforced.⁸⁰²
- **December 13, 2014:** ISIS militants shoot down an Iraqi helicopter, killing two pilots onboard. It is suspected that the militants used a shoulder-fired rocket launcher. ISIS shot down two other Iraqi military helicopters in October 2014.⁸⁰³
- **December 2, 2014:** ISIS supporters in Saudi Arabia release a video purportedly showing the shooting of a Danish national in Saudi Arabia. The video includes clips of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, as well as ISIS spokesman Abu Mohammed al-Adnani calling on Saudis to "kill and spit upon" Westerners fighting ISIS.⁸⁰⁴
- **November 16, 2014:** ISIS releases a video showing that they have beheaded American hostage Peter Kassig.⁸⁰⁵ Kassig's death appears at the end of a 16-minute video titled "Although the disbelievers dislike it," in which ISIS members behead a group of Syrian soldiers.⁸⁰⁶ The scenes in which the soldiers are beheaded are edited in a way to increase the viewer's horror: slow-motion shots of the beheadings and sound effects of panicked breathing and slitting throats. In the video, Jihadi John speaks over Peter Kassig's beheaded corpse: "This is Peter Edward Kassig, a U.S. citizen of your country. Peter, who fought against the Muslims in Iraq while serving as a soldier under the American Army, doesn't have much to say. His previous cellmates have already spoken on his behalf... You claim to have withdrawn from Iraq four years ago. We said to you then that you are liars."⁸⁰⁷ Jihadi John continues: "your forces will return greater in number than they were before. We also remind you of the haunting words of our Sheikh Abu Musab al-Zarqawi who told you: 'The spark has been lit here in Iraq and its heat will continue to intensify by Allah's permission until it burns the crusader army.'"⁸⁰⁸
- **November 13, 2014:** Rumors of al-Baghdadi's death are put to rest following a speech in which the leader calls for "volcanoes of jihad." It is unclear if the video was made before or after the airstrike carried out on November 8, in which many high-level ISIS militants were killed. In the video, Baghdadi mocks the U.S. for sending its soldiers "to their death and destruction."⁸⁰⁹ Baghdadi also shares the "good news" of the expansion of the caliphate. According to Baghdadi, jihadist groups from Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, Libya and Algeria have pledged allegiance to ISIS.⁸¹⁰

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- **November 3, 2014:** Human Rights Watch releases a report on ISIS’s practice of kidnapping and torturing child hostages from the city of Kobani.⁸¹¹
 - **November 2, 2014:** ISIS continues summarily killing members of the Sunni Al Bu Nimr tribe. 50 members are found dead in a water well. ISIS summarily executes 50 additional members of the tribe and kidnaps 65 members of the tribe. According to the Iraqi government, ISIS has thus far killed 322 members of the Al Bu Nimr tribe.⁸¹² Canada launches its first airstrike against ISIS.⁸¹³
 - **November 1, 2014:** Turkey allows precisely 150 Iraqi Kurdish forces to arrive in the Syrian city of Kobani.⁸¹⁴ ISIS summarily executes 50 members of the Sunni Al Bu Nimr tribe.⁸¹⁵
 - **October 31, 2014:** ISIS fighter claims the group controls 90% of the city of Kobani.⁸¹⁶ That same day, the United Nations releases a press statement condemning ISIS and expressing “deep outrage” at the group’s actions.⁸¹⁷
 - **October 30, 2014:** Human Rights Watch releases a report on the group, saying that summary executions of ISIS prisoners “amount to war crimes and most likely crimes against humanity.”⁸¹⁸
 - **October 26, 2014:** Casualties over the fight for Kobani reveal at least 302 Kurdish fighters and 21 civilians have been killed in 40 days of fighting over the town, two of the civilians killed by beheadings.⁸¹⁹ Evidence surfaces that ISIS may be using advanced surface-to-air missile systems to shoot down coalition missiles.⁸²⁰
 - **October 21, 2014:** ISIS releases a video in which seventeen-year-old Australian Abdullah Elmir, *nom de guerre* Abu Khaled, speaks to the camera with dozens of young jihadists by his side. He says: “I say this about your coalition: you threaten us with your countries, bring every nation that you wish to us, bring every nation that you want to come and fight us... we will not put down our weapons until we reach your lands, until we take the head of every tyrant and until the black flag is flying high in every single land, until we put the black flag on top of Buckingham Palace, until we put the black flag on top of the White House.”⁸²¹ In Canada, a gunman whose photo is tweeted by an ISIS-linked account kills a reservist before storming into Ottawa’s parliament.⁸²²
 - **October 20, 2014:** 40 people are killed in Iraq by ISIS in a quadruple car bombing and a suicide bombing inside a mosque. Local officials remarked that the attacks were specifically aimed against Shiites, as they took place near holy Shiite shrines and a Shiite mosque.⁸²³
 - **October 19, 2014:** A Syrian rebel commander is reportedly shot and wounded in a kidnapping attempt by ISIS militants within Turkish borders. In the southern Turkish city of Urfa, ISIS has safe houses and is believed to “operate without impunity.” It was in Urfa that ISIS militants kidnapped Abu Issa, but ultimately failed to bring him into Turkey. There is increasing international condemnation on Turkey concerning Turkey’s apparent relaxed stance on ISIS militants in the South of the country, including ISIS’s smuggling operations from Turkey into Syria.⁸²⁴
 - **October 14, 2014:** An ISIS bomber kills 24 and wounds 40 at a crowded checkpoint into a majority Shiite neighborhood in Baghdad. Among the dead was Ahmed al-Khafaji, Shiite member of Parliament and member of the Badr Organization, a Shiite group that controls a Shiite insurgency fighting ISIS.⁸²⁵
 - **October 8, 2014:** ISIS militants shoot down an Iraqi military helicopter with a shoulder-fired missile- killing two onboard- for the second time in less than a week. The helicopter was believed to be a Bell 407 aircraft, generally used for surveillance.⁸²⁶
 - **October 5, 2014:** The fighting in the Syrian Kurdish town of Kobani intensifies, with ISIS sending rockets into the town and neither side claiming victory. Kurdish pesh merga forces state that Western-led airstrikes are not enough to stop ISIS militants from taking Kobani.⁸²⁷
 - **October 5, 2014:** A document found by Iraqi special forces, believed to be written by Abdullah Ahmed al-Meshedani, a member of ISIS’s six-man war cabinet, states that ISIS plans to steal Tehran’s ‘nuclear secrets’ and wage war on Iran’s Shiite government. Meshedani writes that ISIS will depend on Russia to “give up Iran and its nuclear.... secrets” by offering Russia access to Iraqi gas fields controlled by the group. First, Meshedani writes, Moscow must give up its support for Bashar al-Assad’s regime in Syria, and join in the Gulf States’ coalition against Iran. The document also lists 70 plans of ethnic cleansing to target Shiite Iraqi authorities- as well as Shiite Iran- in the interest of building the ‘new caliphate’. The manifesto also calls for the assassination of Iranian diplomats, teachers and businessmen, along with Iraqi military chiefs, Iranian-backed militias fighting for the Iraqi government, and Shiite officials.⁸²⁸
 - **October 3, 2014:** ISIS releases a video depicting the beheading of English taxi-driver Alan Henning. The video takes place in the same area that James Foley, Steven Sotloff, and David Haines were beheaded. In the video, Henning, wearing the usual orange jumpsuit, says: “Hi, I am Alan Henning. Because of our Parliament’s decision to attack the Islamic State, I — as a member of the British public — will now pay the price for that decision.” Right before the decapitation, ‘Jihadi John’, the executioner, says: “Obama, you have started your air bombardment in Sham [an area referring to Syria and Lebanon] which keeps on striking our people. It is only right that we continue to strike the necks of your people.” According to some analysts, ISIS seemed to have waited to behead Henning until after the start of Britain’s airstrikes on the group. The video ends with Jihadi John threatening the execution of American hostage Peter Kassig if the airstrikes on ISIS do not cease.⁸²⁹
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- **October 2, 2014:** The UN publishes a report stating that upwards of 5,500 people have been killed by ISIS in Iraq alone since June, 2014. This includes hundreds of the Yazidi minority who were “slaughtered en masse.”⁸³⁰
 - **September 29, 2014:** Shelling from ISIS during its attack on Kobani falls into Turkey, prompting the Turkish military to send tanks to its border with Syria.⁸³¹
 - **September 26, 2014:** ISIS militants persist in their conquest of the Syrian Kurdish town of Kobani, amidst airstrikes. Mass numbers of Kurdish Syrian refugees continue to pile into Turkey.
 - **September 26, 2014:** Iraq’s Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi tells US officials that ISIS had planned to attack subways in Paris and the United States. Western officials were skeptical of the news, and al-Abadi was unable to provide concrete evidence for his claim.⁸³²
 - **September 24, 2014:** On this same day, ISIS militants blow up the “Green Church” in Tikrit, Iraq, an ancient and holy site for Christians.⁸³³
 - **September 23, 2014:** An 18-year old terror suspect in Australia is fatally shot by police after he attempts to stab two counter-terrorism officials. The suspect had displayed an ISIS flag and was shouting insults about Prime Minister Tony Abbott before his death.⁸³⁴
 - **September 23, 2014:** Fighting between incoming ISIS militants and Kurdish forces intensifies in the Kurdish town of Kobani in northern Syria along the Turkish border. By September 24, at least 140,000 Syrian Kurdish refugees had crossed the border into Turkey.⁸³⁵
 - **September 23, 2014:** The Algerian group linked to ISIS, Jund al-Khalifah, decapitates French mountaineer Hervé Gourdel, who they had held hostage for three days. The group say that they chose to behead Gourdel after the French government ignored the group’s call to end airstrikes on ISIS.⁸³⁶
 - **September 18, 2014:** Australian police foil a “beheading plot” by Australian militants connected to ISIS.⁸³⁷
 - **September 13, 2014:** ISIS releases another video in which British aid worker David Cawthorne Haines is executed. Some analysts see it as a warning to the British Government for supporting the US-led coalition against ISIS. The video is filmed in the same setting as the previous videos that ISIS has created: a nondescript area of what seems to be arid land beneath a blue sky. As in the other beheading videos disseminated by ISIS, “Jihadi John”, stands by a kneeling Haines. The still anonymous British terrorist says to the camera that “this British man has to pay the price for your promise, Cameron, to arm the pesh merga against the Islamic State. Ironically, he has spent a decade of his life serving under the same Royal Air Force that is responsible for delivering those arms.” At the end of the video, “Jihadi John” names the next victim as British citizen Alan Henning.⁸³⁸
 - **September 6, 2014:** Images on Twitter depict ISIS executing a second Lebanese soldier kidnapped when the group and the Nusra Front overran the Lebanese town of Arsal by the Syrian border last month. The soldier was identified as Abbas Medlij, a Shiite Muslim.⁸³⁹ ISIS and the Nusra Front reportedly continue to hold 17 Lebanese soldiers captive.
 - **September 3, 2014:** ISIS released another video, entitled “A Second Message to America,” showing a masked ISIS militant beheading kidnapped American journalist Steven Sotloff, as previously threatened. Before being killed, Sotloff said that he was “paying the price” for U.S. military intervention in Iraq. After the beheading, the ISIS militant, speaking with a British accent, said to U.S. President Barack Obama, “Just as your missiles continue to strike our people, our knife will continue to strike the necks of your people.” The militant also “warn[ed] those governments who’ve entered this evil alliance of America against the Islamic State to back off and leave our people alone.”⁸⁴⁰ He also threatened another captive, David Cawthorne Haines, a British aid worker kidnapped last year on the Turkish-Syrian border.⁸⁴¹ The *Washington Post* reported that the U.S. government believes “as many as a dozen Americans may be fighting alongside [ISIS] and that the group holds at least two other American hostages, both aid workers.”⁸⁴²
 - **September 2, 2014:** Amnesty International reports that ISIS “has carried out ethnic cleansing on a historic scale in northern Iraq... systematically target[ing] non-Arab and non-Sunni Muslim communities, killing or abducting hundreds, possibly thousands, and forcing more than 830,000 others to flee the areas it has captured” since June 10, 2014.⁸⁴³
 - **August 30, 2014:** ISIS posted a video of their fighters beheading one of the Lebanese soldiers they kidnapped when they and the Nusra Front captured and briefly held the Lebanese border town of Arsal in early August. The soldier, Ali al-Sayyed, was a Sunni Muslim. ISIS also posted another video of nine other captive soldiers pleading for their lives and calling on their families to hold street protests to seek the release of Islamist prisoners by the Lebanese government. ISIS has sought the release of Imad Ahmad Jomaa, an ISIS commander (formerly in the Nusra Front) who was arrested in Arsal in early August, as well as several other imprisoned Islamists.⁸⁴⁴
 - **August 20, 2014:** ISIS released a video, entitled “A Message to America,” showing a masked ISIS militant beheading kidnapped American journalist James Foley and, speaking with a British accent, threatening to kill another such journalist, Steven Sotloff, if U.S. President Barack Obama did not stop U.S. military operations in Iraq.⁸⁴⁵
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- **August 11, 2014:** ISIS militants defeated Kurdish peshmerga forces in the municipality of Jalawla.⁸⁴⁶
 - **August 7, 2014:** ISIS took the strategically vital Mosul dam, driving out peshmerga forces from several towns. Hundreds of thousands of Yazidis flee the area.⁸⁴⁷
 - **August 7, 2014:** ISIS fighters took control of Qaraqosh, the largest Christian municipality in Iraq. Tens of thousands of its residents fled.⁸⁴⁸
 - **August 2-7, 2014:** Fighters from ISIS and the Nusra Front overrun the Lebanese town of Arsal by the Syrian border, killing several Lebanese soldiers, following repeated tensions with the Lebanese military.⁸⁴⁹ The fighters withdraw from Arsal on August 7 after Sunni clerics negotiate a truce, but they take a reported 19 captive Lebanese soldiers with them.⁸⁵⁰
 - **August 2-3, 2014:** ISIS defeated Kurdish peshmerga fighters and takes over several towns previously held by the Kurds, including the towns of Sinjar and Zumar near Iraq's border with Syria, as well as two small oil fields. During its conquest, ISIS kills up to 500 Yazidis, ethnic Kurds whom ISIS despises as "devil worshipers"⁸⁵¹ and heretics subject to death⁸⁵² for practicing an ancient, pre-Abrahamic religion. Upon entering Sinjar, ISIS noted the occasion by exploding a Shiite shrine and demanding that Sinjar residents convert to Islam or be killed.⁸⁵³ As many as 200,000 local residents fled, including other Yazidis.⁸⁵⁴ Many of the Yazidis (estimates range from 10,000 to 50,000) took refuge on Mount Sinjar. There, the Yazidis lacked sufficient food, water, and medicine, and were besieged by ISIS and threatened with death if they came down from the mountains. The UN warned of a "humanitarian tragedy."⁸⁵⁵ As one besieged Yazidi noted, "We cannot get out of here; we cannot move. It's all [ISIS] fighters around us. If we move down they will kill us."⁸⁵⁶
 - **August 1-5, 2014:** ISIS militants crucify, behead and shoot over 700 members of the Shaitat tribe in eastern Syria, in what is one of ISIS's bloodiest advances.⁸⁵⁷
 - **July 1, 2014:** The UN stated that more than 2,400 Iraqis were killed in June, the most fatalities in one month in Iraq since April 2005.⁸⁵⁸
 - **June 11-14, 2014:** On June 11, ISIS insurgents take over Tikrit, hometown of Saddam Hussein and his clan. On June 12, ISIS forces attack Camp Speicher, a former U.S. Army base in Tikrit, killing between 1,095 and 1,700 Shiite Iraqi cadets and captives over three days. ISIS separates captives based on Islamic sect. ISIS gives Sunnis the opportunity to repent for serving the Iraqi government, while Shiites are executed. According to witnesses, approximately 3,000 trained Iraqi soldiers changed into civilian clothing and abandoned the camp when ISIS attacked rather than defend it. The exact number of casualties remains unverified. ISIS claims it killed 1,700 Shiite soldiers, which would make the massacre the worst sectarian massacres in recent Iraqi history. Human Rights Watch says satellite imagery and ISIS photos confirmed at least between 560 and 770 men were killed, but the final toll could be greater. Photos show ISIS lining up and shooting Iraqi cadets. Some bodies are thrown into the Tigris River, while others are deposited in mass graves. On July 9, 2015, Iraq's Supreme Judicial Council in Baghdad sentences 24 suspected ISIS members to death for participation in the massacre. The suspects deny taking part in the massacre and claim Iraqi authorities had tortured them into confessing. In August 2016, Iraqi authorities hang 36 men convicted of participating in the massacre. In August 2017, an Iraqi court sentences another 27 men to death for participating in the massacre.⁸⁵⁹
 - **June 10, 2014:** ISIS insurgents took over Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, as Iraqi soldiers fled on foot and left behind their weapons, vehicles and uniforms. After seizing Mosul and securing its hold over Nineveh Province, the militants moved south toward Baghdad, taking over parts of Salahuddin Province along the way.⁸⁶⁰ Five days after its offensive, ISIS claimed that it had executed 1,700 Iraqi soldiers, many of whom were Shiites. Those claims could not be immediately verified, though the Iraqi military admitted that at least 800 soldiers had been taken prisoner.⁸⁶¹ ISIS also robs local banks and seizes U.S. military equipment left for the Iraqi army.⁸⁶²
 - **May 2014:** American citizen Moner Mohammad Abusalha, who went by the *nom de guerre* Abu Huraira al-Amriki, reportedly carried out a suicide truck bombing on a mountaintop restaurant in Syria that was a gathering spot for Syrian soldiers.⁸⁶³ On May 15, a car bombing carried out by ISIS near the Turkish border killed at least 43 people. The bombing was reportedly intended to target the Tawhid Brigade—part of the rebel coalition called the Islamic Front—which controlled the border crossing.⁸⁶⁴ Also in May, French citizen Mehdi Nemmouche, who reportedly fought in Syria with ISIS, shot and killed 3 people at a Jewish museum in Brussels. The attack was the first instance of a European Islamist fighter returning home from the war to commit acts of violence.⁸⁶⁵
 - **February 23, 2014:** A suicide bomber from ISIS reportedly launched an attack against a rebel base, killing Abu Khalid al-Suri, who was chosen by Ayman al-Zawahiri to mediate disputes between Jabhat al-Nusra and ISIS.⁸⁶⁶
 - **February 2014:** British jihadist Abdul Waheed Majeed reportedly carried out a suicide truck bombing at the Aleppo Central Prison. If true, Majeed's attack was the "first known case of a British suicide bomber in Syria."⁸⁶⁷
 - **January 2014:** After days of intense fighting, ISIS militants took over major parts of Fallujah, destroyed the police headquarters, and declared the city an Islamic state.⁸⁶⁸ ISIS was accused of carrying out mass executions against civilians, prisoners, and other rebel fighters in Aleppo, Idlib, and Raqq. According to reports, bodies were found handcuffed and blindfolded at a children's hospital used as a base by ISIS.⁸⁶⁹
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- **December 21, 2013:** 18 Iraqi soldiers, including a high-ranking commander, were killed during a raid on a training camp where ISIS was teaching recruits how to make roadside explosives.⁸⁷⁰
 - **September 12, 2013:** Ayman al-Zawahiri released a message the day after the 12th anniversary of the September 11 attacks, called on his followers to carry out “a few disparate attacks” against the American homeland and to “bleed America economically.” Part of his message referred to the war in Syria, where he told jihadists not to cooperate with secular rebel forces.⁸⁷¹
 - **August 28, 2013:** A series of more than a dozen explosions hit Shiite neighborhoods of Baghdad during the morning commute, killing at least 65 and wounding dozens more. The attacks followed a string of recent beheadings that were claimed by AQI.⁸⁷²
 - **July 26, 2013:** Fighters from the Nusra Front and Ansar al-Khalafa al-Islamiya Brigade reportedly killed as many as 150 Syrian soldiers during a battle in Khan al-Assal, a suburb of Aleppo. 51 of the soldiers were summarily executed after surrendering, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.⁸⁷³
 - **July 23, 2013:** As part of its “Breaking the Walls” campaign, AQI militants staged “carefully synchronized operations” to break members of the organization out of the Abu Ghraib and Taji prisons. Al-Qaeda claimed that 500 inmates had been freed from the prisons, while Iraqi officials put the total at 800—with 400 of them recaptured or killed.⁸⁷⁴
 - **June-July 2013:** ISIS escalated attacks against members of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) in an apparent attempt to take out the FSA’s leadership. ISIS reportedly killed “prominent” FSA commander Kamal Hamami for planning operations without consulting it. The organization also beheaded two FSA soldiers and left their heads next to a garbage can.⁸⁷⁵
 - **June 17, 2013:** A suicide bomber detonated a truck, allegedly laden with 6 tons of explosives, near a Syrian military base in Aleppo, killing up to 60 soldiers.⁸⁷⁶
 - **April 8, 2013:** A car bomb exploded near the Syrian Central Bank in Damascus, killing at least 15 and wounding 53.⁸⁷⁷
 - **March 11, 2013:** ISI claimed responsibility for ambushing and gunning down more than 40 Syrian soldiers in Anbar Province who had temporarily travelled to Iraq for safety.⁸⁷⁸
 - **January 11, 2013:** The Nusra Front and Ahrar al-Sham led an offensive on the Taftanaz air base in Idlib province, seizing large caches of weapons and ammunition – and also taking out the base that served as the launching point for “barrel bomb” attacks against civilians.⁸⁷⁹
 - **October 9, 2012:** The Nusra Front claimed responsibility for multiple suicide attacks against an air force intelligence branch in Harasta, a suburb of Damascus. The group claimed that one suicide bomber detonated a vehicle packed with 9 tons of explosives, while another attacker drove an ambulance loaded with explosives to the scene 25 minutes later.⁸⁸⁰
 - **September 8, 2012:** A suicide bomber from the Nusra Front reportedly attacked al-Haya hospital in Aleppo. The group claimed that it killed more than 200 military officers and soldiers, while the Syrian government reported that 27 soldiers died and 64 were wounded.⁸⁸¹
 - **July 19, 2012:** The Nusra Front claimed responsibility for kidnapping and executing Syria television presenter Mohamed al-Saeed. The group warned supporters of the Syrian regime that “...the swords of the mujahideen will cut off their heads and purify the Levant from their obscenity.”⁸⁸² On the same date, the Nusra Front claimed that it conducted a suicide bombing on a security post in Ma’arat al-Nu’man, killing 60 Syrian soldiers.⁸⁸³
 - **June 26, 2012:** The Nusra Front claimed responsibility for an attack on the private Syrian television station *Alikhbaria*, killing 7 people and reportedly destroying the station.⁸⁸⁴
 - **June 1, 2012:** In retaliation for the Syrian government’s massacre in Houla, the Nusra Front reportedly carried out multiple attacks on Syrian military targets, including a suicide attack on the al Nayrab Camp in Idlib, as well as ambush and IED attacks on military units responding to the attack at al Nayrab.⁸⁸⁵
 - **May 19, 2012:** A suicide bomber reportedly detonated a car bomb near a Syrian military post in Deir Ezzor, killing 9 people and wounding nearly 100.⁸⁸⁶
 - **May 12, 2012:** Syrian security forces reportedly killed a suicide bomber who was attempting to drive a minibus packed with explosives into a densely populated neighborhood in Aleppo.⁸⁸⁷
 - **May 10, 2012:** Two suicide bombers carried out car bombings that targeted “a notorious military intelligence compound” and another security building in Damascus, reportedly killing 55 and wounding 400.⁸⁸⁸
 - **April 30, 2012:** Two suicide bombers reportedly detonated vehicles laden with explosives near a Syrian military compound and the Carlton Hotel in Idlib, killing at least 9 and wounding dozens.⁸⁸⁹
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- **April 24, 2012:** Jabhat al-Nusra claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing attack on the Iranian Cultural Consulate in Damascus. According to the group, one of its security battalions attached explosives to a Syrian army vehicle and detonated them when it arrived at the consulate.⁸⁹⁰
 - **April 17, 2012:** A suicide bomber detonated himself near a mosque in the Midan neighborhood of Damascus, killing at least 9 and wounding dozens.⁸⁹¹
 - **March 17, 2012:** Two powerful car bombs exploded near Syrian intelligence and security buildings in Damascus, killing more than 25 people and injuring nearly 100.⁸⁹²
 - **February 10, 2012:** Several car bombs exploded minutes apart from each other at a military security headquarters and police compound in Aleppo, killing 28 people and wounding more than 200.⁸⁹³ The Nusra Front eventually claimed responsibility for the attack.⁸⁹⁴
 - **January 14, 2012:** Militants detonated a bomb near a tent in Basra where Shiite pilgrims celebrating the holiday of Arbaeen were eating breakfast. The explosion killed at least 53 and wounded more than 130.⁸⁹⁵
 - **January 6, 2012:** The Syrian government reported that a suicide bomber detonated himself in the Midan neighborhood in Damascus, killing 26 and wounding dozens. Again, the opposition accused the Syrian government of perpetrating the attacks to bolster its narrative that al-Qaeda was gaining influence among the opposition.⁸⁹⁶ The Nusra Front eventually claimed responsibility for the attack.⁸⁹⁷
 - **December 23, 2011:** Two car bombs exploded near the State Security Directorate in Damascus, killing at least 44. Syria's state news agency claimed that two suicide bombers affiliated with al-Qaeda were responsible for the attack, though members of the Syrian opposition accused the Assad regime of planning the attacks in order to crackdown harder on its opponents.⁸⁹⁸
 - **August 20, 2011:** AQI announced that it was launching a campaign whereby it would carry out 100 attacks, calling it "the battle of revenge for Sheik Osama bin Laden and other senior leaders."⁸⁹⁹
 - **August 15, 2011:** The Islamic State of Iraq was suspected of carrying out a series of 42 "apparently coordinated" attacks using suicide bombs, car bombs, and gunmen. At least 89 people were killed and 315 wounded. The attacks targeted Iraqi policemen and soldiers, as well as a market in Kut, and a mosque in Yusufiya.⁹⁰⁰
 - **May 5, 2011:** A suicide bomber detonated himself at a police training center in the majority Shiite city of Hilla, killing 25 and wounding at least 75.⁹⁰¹
 - **November 2, 2010:** Militants set off a wave of car bombs and roadside improvised explosive devices (IEDs) that targeted Sunni and Shiite area across Baghdad, killing at least 63 and wounding about 285.⁹⁰²
 - **October 31, 2010:** Gunmen strapped with suicide vests attacked a Catholic church in Baghdad, taking more than 100 people hostage. During the ensuing siege, at least 30 hostages were killed and 41 wounded.⁹⁰³
 - **May 10, 2010:** A series of shooting and bombing attacks in Baghdad, Fallujah, Samarra, Tarmiya, and Suwayra, killed more than 100 people and wounded hundreds.⁹⁰⁴
 - **April 23, 2010:** A series of bombings struck near the headquarters belonging to Shiite cleric Moktada al-Sadr in Sadr City, Baghdad, killing at least 59 and wounding dozens.⁹⁰⁵
 - **January 25, 2010:** Three bombs exploded within 10 minutes of each other in Baghdad during rush hour, striking the Ishtar Sheraton, Babylon Hotel, and Hamra Hotel – all popular hotels for foreign businessmen and journalists. The blasts killed 36 and wounded more than 70.⁹⁰⁶
 - **2009:** As U.S. forces withdrew from Iraq amidst relatively low levels of violence at the end of 2008, car bombings and suicide attacks made a comeback in 2009. While the nature of the attacks fit the profile of AQI/ISI-style bombings, the group's culpability was unclear. The attacks included:
 - **October 25, 2009:** ISIS claimed responsibility for two car bombings that struck the Iraqi Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works, killing more than 155 and injuring more than 500.⁹⁰⁷
 - **July 17, 2009:** 3 American soldiers were killed when militants attacked an army base in Basra with mortar rounds.⁹⁰⁸
 - **April 23-24, 2009:** Three separate suicide bombings in Baghdad and Muqdadiya killed at least 80 and injured 120. The attack in Baghdad was perpetrated by a woman who detonated herself among a group of women and children waiting for emergency food aid.⁹⁰⁹ The next day, two suicide bombings near the revered Shiite shrine of Imam Musa al-Kadhim and his grandson killed at least 60.⁹¹⁰
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- **April 10, 2009:** A suicide truck bomber struck the main military base in Mosul, killing 5 American soldiers and two Iraqis. It was “the deadliest attack against American soldiers [in Iraq] in 13 months...”⁹¹¹
 - **April 6, 2009:** Six car bombs detonated in Shiite neighborhoods in Baghdad, killing at least 33 and wounding dozens.⁹¹²
 - **February 9, 2009:** Four American soldiers were killed in Mosul when a suicide bomber detonated his vehicle near the soldiers’ Humvee. The attack was the “deadliest single loss in nine months” for U.S. forces in Iraq.⁹¹³
 - **January 2, 2009:** A suicide bomber detonated himself during a meeting of nearly 1,000 tribal leaders in Yusufiya, killing at least 24 and wounding about 40.⁹¹⁴
 - **2007:** ISI continued its deadly bombing campaign, targeting predominantly Shiite populations. In January 2007, the U.S. began deploying an additional 30,000 troops to Iraq, completing the deployment in June that year and bringing the total number of troops in Iraq to 150,000.⁹¹⁵
 - **August 16, 2007:** Suicide bombers simultaneously detonated five fuel trucks in the Yazidi Kurdish villages of al-Qataniyah and al-Adnaniyah, killing more than 300 Iraqis, injuring several hundred, and destroying dozens of homes. It was reportedly the worst terrorist attack in Iraq during the post-Saddam Hussein era.⁹¹⁶
 - **July 7, 2007:** A suicide bomber detonated a truck carrying 4.5 tons of explosives in the Shiite Turkmen village of Amerli, killing as many as 150 people.⁹¹⁷
 - **June 19, 2007:** A truck bomb exploded outside the Shiite Khulani mosque in Baghdad, killing more than 80 people.⁹¹⁸
 - **April 18, 2007:** Five separate bombs, including 4 car bombs, targeted Shiite areas in Baghdad, killing more than 170. One of the bombs struck at a central bus station for Shiites travelling to Sadr City.⁹¹⁹
 - **March 6, 2007:** Two suicide bombers detonated themselves among Shiite pilgrims in Hillah, killing 93.⁹²⁰
 - **February 3, 2007:** A suicide bomber detonated a truck bomb in a heavily Shiite populated neighborhood of Iraq, killing 135 in what was then the “deadliest single bombing” since the beginning of the Iraq war in 2003.⁹²¹
 - **January 22, 2007:** A suicide bomber and car bomb targeted a Shiite market in central Baghdad, killing 88.⁹²²
 - **November 23, 2006:** Car bombs and mortar attacks in Sadr City killed 215, setting of more sectarian violence.⁹²³
 - **February 22, 2006:** Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) bombed the Shiite Al Askari Mosque in Samarra, Iraq, one of the four major Shiite shrines in Iraq and the burial place for two of the 12 revered Shiite Imams. Reportedly, “a group of men dressed like Iraqi police commandos” walked into the shrine and set off the explosions.⁹²⁴ The mosque attack set off a wave of intensified Shiite-Sunni attacks across Iraq.⁹²⁵
 - **2005:** Al-Qaeda in Iraq increased the frequency of attacks throughout the year, targeting Coalition forces and Iraqi Shiites. In late 2005, during operations in Iraq, U.S. forces confiscated a letter from Ayman al-Zawahiri that described the organization’s long-term global strategy. The letter also criticized al-Zarqawi for videotaping and distributing footage of beheadings, saying that such violence could alienate the Islamic world from al-Qaeda’s cause.⁹²⁶ Major attacks conducted by AQI that year included:
 - **November 9:** Coordinated suicide bombings at three hotels in Amman, Jordan killed 58 and injured more than 90.⁹²⁷
 - **September 29:** Three suicide bombers detonated car bombs at a market and busy streets in the town of Balad, killing at least 102.⁹²⁸
 - **September 14:** A suicide bomber attacked a group of laborers in a predominantly Shiite neighborhood in Baghdad, killing 112.⁹²⁹
 - **July 29:** A suicide bombing on Iraqi army recruits in Rabia killed 52 and injured 57.⁹³⁰
 - **July 16:** A suicide bomber attacked a fuel truck in Musayyib, killing at least 98 and wounding at least 80.⁹³¹
 - **July 2:** Egypt’s envoy to Iraq, Ihab al-Sherif, was kidnapped and later executed⁹³²
 - **April 29:** Numerous suicide bombings across Iraq killed as many as 50 people⁹³³
 - **February 28:** A suicide bombing in Hilla reportedly targeted Shiite police and National Guard recruits, killing 125 and wounding hundreds.⁹³⁴
 - **May 2004:** In May, Zarqawi “inaugurated his notorious wave of hostage beheadings,” making American citizen Nicholas Berg his first victim.⁹³⁵ Later that month, a suicide bomber with suspected ties to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi detonated himself near the U.S.-led coalition
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headquarters in Baghdad, killing the acting president of the Iraqi Governing Council, Ezzedine Salim. Salim's death came 45 days before the occupation forces were set to transfer limited political control back to the Iraqis.⁹³⁶

- **August 2003:** Zarqawi was allegedly responsible for the car bombing of the Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad on August 7, which killed at least 10 and wounded about 40.⁹³⁷ Two weeks later, Zarqawi was reportedly behind the truck bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad, which killed 17—including the UN representative – and injured 100.⁹³⁸ Finally, on August 29, Zarqawi was behind the car bombing outside of the Imam Ali Mosque in Najaf, Iraq—one of the holiest sites for Shiite Muslims—that killed revered cleric Ayatollah Mohamad Bakr al-Hakim and 100 others.⁹³⁹
- **1993:** Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and Abu Mohamed al-Maqdisi returned to Jordan, and began plotting against the Hashemite monarchy. There, Zarqawi established an organization named Bayat al-Imam (Allegiance to the Imam). The first mission that Zarqawi directed—against a movie theater in Zarqa that was showing pornographic films—failed when the bomber “forgot about his bomb. It exploded and blew off his legs.”⁹⁴⁰

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Designations:

Designations by the U.S. Government:

- ○ **October 15, 2004** : The State Department designates Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant Specially Designated Global Terrorists and Blocks all property in U.S. or under possession of control of U.S. persons; bans any property-related transactions by U.S. persons or within U.S., including giving or receiving contributions to the entity.⁹⁴¹
- **December 17, 2004**: The State Department designates Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant a Foreign Terrorist Organization and freezes of assets in U.S. financial institutions, bans admission of members to U.S., and bans providing “material support or resources” to entity.⁹⁴²
- **October 4, 2011**: The State Department designates Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri, AKA Abu Du’a [AKA Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi] a Specially Designated Global Terrorist and blocks all property in U.S. or under possession of control of U.S. persons and bans any property-related transactions by U.S. persons or within U.S., including giving or receiving contributions to the entity.⁹⁴³
- **December 11, 2012**: The State Department designates the Nusra Front Specially Designated Global Terrorists and Blocks all property in U.S. or under possession of control of U.S. persons; bans any property-related transactions by U.S. persons or within U.S., including giving or receiving contributions to the entity.⁹⁴⁴
- **May 14, 2014**: The State Department designates The Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), ad-Dawla al-Islamiyya fi al-‘Iraq wa-sh-Sham, Daesh, Dawla al Islamiya, and Al-Furqan Establishment for Media Production (as aliases for the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) Specially Designated Global Terrorists.⁹⁴⁵
- **May 14, 2014**: The Department of the Treasury designates Abd Al-Rahman Muhammad Zafir Al-Dubaysi Al-Juhni (Al-Juhni) and 'Abd Al-Rahman Mustafa Al-Qaduli (Al-Qaduli) Specially Designated Global Terrorists.⁹⁴⁶
- **August 6, 2014**: The Department of the Treasury designates ‘Abd al-Rahman Khalaf ‘Ubayd Juday’ al-‘Anizi a Specially Designated Global Terrorist.⁹⁴⁷
- **August 18, 2014**: The State Department designates Abu Mohammed al-Adnani a Specially Designated Global Terrorist.⁹⁴⁸
- **January 14, 2016**: The State Department designates ISIL-Khorasan (ISIL-K)—ISIS’s affiliate in the Afghanistan/Pakistan region—as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) under Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act.⁹⁴⁹
- **May 19, 2016**: The State Department designates ISIS’s Libya branch as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). The State Department simultaneously designates ISIS’s Libya branch—alongside ISIS’s Yemen and Saudi Arabia branches—as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs) pursuant to Executive Order 13224.⁹⁵⁰
- **May 16, 2018**: The State Department designates ISIS in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). The State Department simultaneously designates ISGS’s leader, Adnan Abu Walid al-Sahwari as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) pursuant to Executive Order 13224.⁹⁵¹
- **September 10, 2019**: The Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) amends Executive Order 13224, resulting in secondary sanctions for all Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs). The sanctions also designate Marwan Mahdi Salah Al-Rawi, the Saksouk Company for Exchange and Money Transfer (Saksouk), Al Haram Foreign Exchange Co. Ltd., Al-Khalidi Exchange, Al-Hebo Jewelry Company, Muhamad Ali al-Hebo, Mohamad Ameen, Almaida Marani Salvin, to be targeted as ISIS financial facilitators. OFAC also designates Muhammad Ali Sayid Ahmad for his participation in training related to terrorism that was provided by ISIS.⁹⁵²
- **March 10, 2021**: The State Department designates the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria – Democratic Republic of the Congo (ISIS-DRC) and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria – Mozambique (ISIS-Mozambique) as Foreign Terrorist Organizations. The State Department also designates ISIS-DRC and ISIS-Mozambique as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs) under Executive Order 13224. The State Department further designates the respective leaders of ISIS-DRC and ISIS-Mozambique, Seka Musa Baluku and Abu Yasir Hassan, as SDGTs.⁹⁵³
- **June 8, 2023**: The U.S. Department of State designates Abdallah Makki Muslih al-Rufay’i and Abu Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn ‘Ali al-Mainuki as Specially Designated Global Terrorists. Rufay’i is the emir of the Bilad al-Rafidayn Office, ISIS’s Iraq division. Al-Mainuki is a Sahel-based senior leader of ISIS’s al-Furqan Office, ISIS’s regional division in Nigeria and the Sahel.⁹⁵⁴
- **July 21, 2023**: The U.S. Department of the Treasury designates 38 members and entities belonging to ISIS in the Maldives as specially designated nationals. Among the members designated are financial facilitators, operatives, and senior leaders who have been in direct communication with ISIS-K and have also provided financial support to Maldivian ISIS fighters in Syria.⁹⁵⁵
- **November 22, 2021**: The

Designations by Foreign Governments and Organizations:

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- Australia—listed ISIS as a terrorist organization on March 2, 2005.⁹⁵⁶
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Canada—listed ISIS as a terrorist organization on August 20, 2012.⁹⁵⁷

Canada—listed Islamic State in Sinai Province as a terrorist organization on April 7, 2015.⁹⁵⁸

Canada—listed Islamic State – Khorasan Province as a terrorist organization on March 23, 2018.⁹⁵⁹

Canada—listed Islamic State – Bangladesh as a terrorist organization on February 3, 2021.⁹⁶⁰

Canada—listed Islamic State East Asia as a terrorist organization on February 3, 2021.⁹⁶¹

Canada—listed Islamic State in the Greater Sahara as a terrorist organization on February 3, 2021.⁹⁶²

Canada—listed Islamic State in Libya as a terrorist organization on February 3, 2021.⁹⁶³

Canada—listed Islamic State West Africa Province as a terrorist organization on February 3, 2021.⁹⁶⁴

Canada—listed Islamic State – Democratic Republic of the Congo as a terrorist organization on June 25, 2021.⁹⁶⁵

• Indonesia—listed ISIS as a terrorist organization on August 2, 2014.⁹⁶⁶

• Saudi Arabia—listed ISIS as a terrorist organization on March 7, 2014.⁹⁶⁷

• Israel—Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri al-Samarrai, Djamel Moustafa, Ismail Abdallah, and Mubarak Mushakhas Sanad Mubarak al-Bathali declared Individual under Article 2 of the Prohibition of Financing Terrorism on January 18, 2004.⁹⁶⁸

Israel—Hamid Abdallah Ahmad al-Ali and Aschraf al-Dagma declared Individual under Article 2 of the Prohibition of Financing Terrorism on October 18, 2004.⁹⁶⁹

• Israel—listed ISIS as an unauthorized organization on September 3, 2014.⁹⁷⁰

United Kingdom—listed Al-Qaida in Iraq as an Asset Freeze Target on October 18, 2004.⁹⁷¹

United Kingdom—listed Muthanna Harith al-Dari as an Asset Freeze Target on April 7, 2010.⁹⁷²

United Kingdom—listed Ali al-Badri al-Samarrai as an Asset Freeze Target on October 17, 2011.⁹⁷³

United Kingdom—listed Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant as an Proscribed Terrorist Organization on June, 2014.⁹⁷⁴

• United Kingdom—listed Abou Mohamed al Adnani and Hamid al-‘Ali as Asset Freeze Targets on August 15, 2014.⁹⁷⁵

United Nations—Al-Qaida in Iraq Listed under category “Entities and other groups and undertakings associated with Al Qaida” on October 18, 2004.⁹⁷⁶

United Nations—Muthanna Harith al-Dari listed as individual associated with Al-Qaida on March 25, 2010.⁹⁷⁷

United Nations—Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri al-Samarrai (Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi) listed as an individual associated with Al-Qaida on October 5, 2011.⁹⁷⁸

United Nations—Abou Mohamed al Adnani and Abou Mohamed al Adnani listed as individuals associated with Al-Qaida on August 15, 2014.⁹⁷⁹

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United Nations—Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant - Khorasan (ISIL - K) added to the ISIL (Da’esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List on May 14, 2019.⁹⁸⁰

United Nations— Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) added to the ISIL (Da’esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List on February 23, 2020.⁹⁸¹

United Nations—Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) added to the ISIL (Da’esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List on February 23, 2020.⁹⁸²

United Nations— Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant - Libya added to the ISIL (Da’esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List on February 23, 2020.⁹⁸³

United Nations—Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant - Yemen added to the ISIL (Da’esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List on March 4, 2020.⁹⁸⁴

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Associations:

Ties to Extremist Entities:

- [Al-Qaeda](#)

ISIS was originally an al-Qaeda affiliate in Iraq formerly known as al-Qaeda in Iraq. Under al-Qaeda's auspices from October 2004⁹⁸⁵ until February 2014, ISIS was responsible for a score of terrorist bombings that resulted in the death of thousands. In February 2014, the two groups split over a leadership dispute when ISIS's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, refused to obey al-Qaeda's leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri. Al-Zawahiri cut ties with ISIS due to the group's repeated attempts to subsume al-Qaeda's Syrian affiliate, the Nusra Front, under its command.⁹⁸⁷ Despite losing its formal alliance with al-Qaeda, ISIS has the same ideology and goals and uses the same brutal tactics as its former parent organization.⁹⁸⁸

- [Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb \(AQIM\)](#)

AQIM has a controversial relationship with ISIS in light of the rift between ISIS and al-Qaeda. AQIM leaders have expressed support for the group despite the break and AQIM's official allegiance to al-Zawahiri. On July 1, 2014, AQIM posted an official message of congratulations to ISIS in light of the group's military gains.⁹⁸⁹ In the statement, however, AQIM tempered its congratulations with calls for reconciliation between ISIS and al-Qaeda as well as its affiliate in Syria, the Nusra Front. The statement also explicitly defers to al-Zawahiri, calling him "Our Sheikh and Emir."⁹⁹⁰ Two weeks later, AQIM posted a statement officially rejecting ISIS's declaration of a caliphate. In the statement, AQIM refused to swear allegiance to ISIS leader and self-proclaimed caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.⁹⁹¹ Some analysts have pointed to these two contradictory statements as evidence of internal rifts emerging within AQIM's leadership over ISIS's controversial declaration of caliphate.⁹⁹² In September 2014, AQIM and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) released a joint statement calling on ISIS to reconcile with al-Qaeda.⁹⁹³ Also in September, AQIM members are reported to have splintered from the group to pledge allegiance to ISIS under a new name, "the Caliphate Soldiers in Algeria."⁹⁹⁴ However, in May 2015, Algerian forces ambushed Caliphate soldiers, killing 25 men, including the group's leader.⁹⁹⁵

In Nigeria, AQIM has a strong collaborative relationship with Boko Haram, ISIS's purported wilaya (governorate) in West Africa as of March 2015.⁹⁹⁶ AQIM has reportedly assisted Boko Haram by providing training, resource-sharing and allegedly direct payments to execute crimes on AQIM's behalf such as kidnap-ransom incidents in Nigeria. Some analysts believe that through Boko Haram, ISIS will build further ties with AQIM.⁹⁹⁷

- [Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula \(AQAP\)](#)

In August 2014, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula announced its support for the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria via Twitter,⁹⁹⁸ and made operative recommendations to ISIS in a statement published on its website.⁹⁹⁹ In November 2014, AQAP chief cleric Harith al-Nadhari accused ISIS of "planting... disunity" among Islamic factions fighting in Syria.¹⁰⁰⁰ In an official AQAP statement, al-Nadhari criticized ISIS of "extending the caliphate to a number of countries in which [it has] no power." Al-Nadhari's criticism came one week after a November 13th declaration by ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, in which Baghdadi claimed the 'caliphate' to have spread to Libya, Yemen, Algeria, Egypt and Qatar.¹⁰⁰¹

- [Ansar al-Sharia in Libya \(ASL\)](#)

After al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) rejected ISIS in favor of a continued allegiance to al-Qaeda, ISIS looked to ASL as a possible partner in North Africa. Throughout 2014, the two groups seemed to have had some cooperation. For example, the June 2015 Tunisia gunman, Seifeddine Rezgui, was reported to have trained in both ASL and ISIS camps in Libya, indicating some crossover between the two groups.¹⁰⁰² Additionally, it was reported that ISIS and ASL worked together in February 2015 to round up 35 Egyptian Coptic Christians living in Libya.¹⁰⁰³ These links led some analysts to speculate in spring 2015 that a pledge of allegiance from ASL to ISIS was imminent.¹⁰⁰⁴

In July 2014, jihadist militants associated with ISIS began posting statements on social media sites and jihadist forums hoping to push ASL to pledge allegiance to ISIS.¹⁰⁰⁵ That summer, the leader of ASL's Derna's branch, Abu Sufyan Bin Qumu, became the first of ASL's leadership to break from ASL and pledge allegiance to ISIS.¹⁰⁰⁶ Similarly, in March 2015, ASL's senior sharia official Abu Abdullah al-Libi pledged allegiance to ISIS and subsequently split from ASL, taking a group of fighters with him.¹⁰⁰⁷

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ISIS's growing popularity in Libya began to pose a major threat to ASL, and the mounting defections, along with ISIS seizure of the previously ASL-held cities of Sirte and Derna, gradually increased tensions between the two groups.¹⁰⁰⁸ Derna, previously one of ASL's strongholds, was seized by ISIS affiliated militants in October 2014, pushing the Derna Mujhadeen Shura Council (MSC), a coalition of Islamists groups of which ASL is a part, to the outskirts of the city.¹⁰⁰⁹

In June 2015, ISIS, looking to cement their control of Derna and eliminate competing Islamist groups in the area, assassinated a senior member of MSC leadership. ASL and the MSC fought back, killing dozens of ISIS militants¹⁰¹⁰ ¹⁰¹¹ and pushing the group "30 or 50 kilometers to the east" of Derna.¹⁰¹² Fighting between the two groups has not spread to elsewhere in Libya.

- **[Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia \(AST\)](#)**

AST has an ambiguous relationship with ISIS. While much of AST's leadership has declared support for the group, AST has not formally pledged allegiance to ISIS. AST is nonetheless heavily involved in exporting militants from Tunisia to fight in Syria, many with ISIS. In February 2014, it was estimated that more than 5,000 Tunisians had traveled to Syria to fight against Bashar al-Assad's government,¹⁰¹³ an estimated 80% or more of whom join ISIS.¹⁰¹⁴ A year later, the *International Business Times* reported that Seifallah Ben Hassine, the leader of AST, was running a "joint AST-ISIS operation in Tunisia" and had become "one of the main jihadi recruiters in the country."¹⁰¹⁵ While it's unknown how many militants AST has trafficked to ISIS, Tunisians have featured heavily in ISIS propaganda, and both AST and ISIS have regularly eulogized Tunisian fighters and suicide bombers killed in Syria.¹⁰¹⁶

In 2014, a group of AST's senior leadership pledged allegiance to ISIS. First, in February 2014, AST deputy leader Kamel Zarrouk traveled to Syria and joined ISIS. AllAfrica reported that, "Zarrouk is known in his [Tunisian] neighborhood as someone who encouraged young people to go for jihad in Syria, which he considers to be the springboard for establishing an Islamic state from the Gulf to the ocean."¹⁰¹⁷ In July 2014, while speaking at a mosque in Kairouan, Tunisia, AST spokesman Seifeddine Rais swore loyalty to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.¹⁰¹⁸ The same month, Al-Monitor reported that a number of AST leaders had gone to Syria and pledged allegiance to al-Baghdadi.¹⁰¹⁹ However, none of these pledges represented an official pledge of allegiance from AST to ISIS.

In the past, AST has more overtly endorsed its relationship with ISIS both through AST's social media postings and official communications. On April 9, 2013, AST posted a photo of ISIS militants on its website with a banner that read, "O lions of god in all the earth Call out Allah Akbar, for victory and conquest is ours. Rejoice, for the glorious caliphate is near. Our [sharia] will reign over every corner [or inch of land]."¹⁰²⁰

- **[Lashkar-e-Taiba \(LeT\)](#)**

Indian media reported in July 2019 that ISIS in Afghanistan is reportedly working closely with LeT and the Pakistani army to attack Indian and U.S. interests in Afghanistan.¹⁰²¹

- **[Boko Haram](#)**

In March 2015, Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau pledged allegiance to ISIS in an audio message.¹⁰²² In an audio message released the week after, ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi purportedly accepted his pledge.¹⁰²³

- **[The Nusra Front](#)**

The Nusra Front was allegedly formed as an extension of al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI, now ISIS), and received a monthly salary from AQI leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The relationship between the groups deteriorated in April 2013, when al-Baghdadi unilaterally announced a merger between the two groups. The two have since engaged in violent clashes, vying for control over rebel-held territory. Nonetheless, they have continued to cooperate on certain military campaigns against the Assad regime.¹⁰²⁴

- **[Taliban](#)**

In mid-2016, the Taliban and ISIS militants in eastern Afghanistan reached a deal in which both groups agreed to prioritize fighting the government rather than each other.¹⁰²⁵ The agreement came after years of strain between the two organizations due to differing strategies and affiliations.¹⁰²⁶

Following al-Qaeda's example, the Taliban have advised ISIS to "avoid extremism" that risks splintering the violent Islamist movement across the broader Middle East.¹⁰²⁷ Though Taliban Emir Mullah Omar is believed to have died in April 2013,¹⁰²⁸ Taliban leadership issued a fatwa under his name in April 2015, in which they reaffirmed the Taliban's priority of establishing a unified Islamist movement to expel the "far enemy" (Western powers). The fatwa referred to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as a "fake caliph," asserting, "Baghdadi just wanted to

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dominate what has so far been achieved by the real jihadists of Islam after three decades of jihad. A pledge of allegiance to him is ‘haram.’”¹⁰²⁹

ISIS has also expanded its operations in Afghanistan. In early 2015, the group announced the creation of an ISIS satellite there known as Wilayat Khorasan, and hinted at its ambitions to challenge the Taliban in the region (comprising Pakistan and Afghanistan).¹⁰³⁰ As of January 2015, hundreds of Taliban members had joined Wilayat Khorasan. In April 2015, ISIS claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing in Jalalabad that marked its first serious attack in Afghanistan.¹⁰³¹

As a result of ISIS’s encroachment on its traditional territory, the Taliban have become more direct in their opposition to the terrorist group. In June 2015, the Taliban’s late deputy leader [Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour](#) sent a missive to al-Baghdadi, warning ISIS’s caliph that “jihad against the Americans and their allies [in Afghanistan] must be conducted under one flag and one leadership.”¹⁰³² One year later, in mid-2016, the Taliban and local ISIS militants in eastern Afghanistan reached an ad hoc ceasefire, agreeing to focus on fighting U.S.-backed Afghan soldiers.¹⁰³³

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Media Coverage:

Arab Media Coverage

The Connection between Iraq and Al-Qaeda

In October 2002, the Saudi paper *Al-Riyadh* reported al-Qaeda's statements in response to the Bush administration's allegations that al-Qaeda and Iraq were connected. According to the paper, the organization claimed that Saddam Hussein was "on al-Qaeda's assassination list," and its spokesman, who called himself Abdulrahman al-Rashed, said that Saddam was just like Bush in terms of "barbarism, brutality, and [religious] disbelief," adding that Bush made allegations against Saddam "to control the oil of Iraq."¹⁰³⁴

Generally, the Arab media's coverage of alleged links between Saddam Hussein's regime and al-Qaeda was fairly neutral leading up to the Iraq war. Al Jazeera dedicated the bulk of its reporting to U.S. President George W. Bush's State of the Union address in late January 2003 on Iraq's suspected weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The only mention the network made of al-Qaeda was a brief portion of the speech where Bush claimed that there was intelligence and secret communications showing that Saddam "aids and protects terrorists, including members of al-Qaeda."¹⁰³⁵

Leading pan-Arab newspaper *Al-Hayat* also dedicated scant coverage to the al-Qaeda connection. On top of the same lines from Bush's speech that Al Jazeera reported, the paper included comments from the British Foreign Office saying that al-Qaeda agents had taken refuge in Iraq. "We believe that there have been al-Qaeda operatives in parts of Iraq controlled by Baghdad. It is hard to imagine that they are there without the knowledge and acquiescence of the Iraqi Government." *Al-Hayat* noted that it was the first time London had discussed connections between al-Qaeda and the Hussein regime. According to the paper, Prime Minister Blair had only spoken of the existence of "relationships" between the two, but that he "was not sure of the true extent of these relationships."¹⁰³⁶

Zarqawi Pledges Allegiance to Al-Qaeda

When Abu Musab al-Zarqawi pledged his allegiance to Osama bin Laden, Al Arabiya noted that the announcement reinforced analysts' reports that Zarqawi's organization was indeed subordinate to al-Qaeda's central leadership. The network said that Zarqawi's pledge represented a trump card for U.S. President George W. Bush's election campaign claims that he was fighting a war in Iraq against al-Qaeda. An analyst interviewed for the article noted that pledging allegiance to bin Laden would enhance Zarqawi's legitimacy among jihadi groups in Iraq.¹⁰³⁷

Middle East Online reflected several points of view in its coverage. The outlet quoted Yasser Sirri, director of the Islamic Observatory in London, who said that the pledge proved the "invalidity of American allegations about the relationship between al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein [who are allegedly connected through] al-Zarqawi."¹⁰³⁸

However, Abdel Bari Atwan, who was then editor of *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, said that the pledge removed all doubt about "al-Zarqawi's connection with Bin Laden... Al-Zarqawi is a graduate from Bin Laden's school, trained in Afghanistan. He went to Iraq and founded a wing of the organization... Al-Qaeda is a horizontal organization and not vertical. Bin Laden is the spiritual father."¹⁰³⁹

Al-Zarqawi's Death

While Al Jazeera television reported details of the airstrike that killed al-Zarqawi in Diyala Province and remarks from Iraqi and U.S. leaders, the network also carried an acknowledgement of his death from the Mujahideen Shura Council. The report included a statement from the spokesman of the Islamic Army in Iraq, who said that his group and Zarqawi's were "brothers in religion and unity of purpose." Curiously, the network dedicated part of its reporting to his family's reaction in Jordan, noting that they set up a tent at their home where they could grieve his martyrdom. According to the network, Jordanian authorities also briefly detained Al Jazeera's Amman bureau chief and technical crew while they were interviewing Zarqawi's brother-in-law live in Zarqa.¹⁰⁴⁰

Al Arabiya devoted even more space to the reactions from Zarqawi's family in Jordan. After first reporting on Mujahideen Shura Council's statements, the network transitioned to the scene in Zarqa where Zarqawi's elder brother was accepting condolences. The women at the family home were sobbing, wearing all black. Several of the men told them not to cry because "al-Zarqawi is a martyr, and [you] should not cry over the martyrs." According to the network's sources, the women described those who killed Zarqawi as "traitors and criminals."¹⁰⁴¹

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Coverage from London-based Arabic newspaper Asharq al-Awsat, in both English and Arabic, omitted the reaction from Zarqawi's grieving family. Instead, the paper reported statements from top U.S. and Iraqi officials and details of the raid. The paper wrote that "Suicide car bombers sent by Zarqawi have targeted Shiite mosques in the past as part of a campaign to plunge Iraq into sectarian civil war." The paper also noted a "boost of confidence among American and Iraqi officials" following his death.¹⁰⁴²

Al-Qaeda in Iraq's Decline

In May 2008, Al Arabiyareported that Iraqi military operations in Ninevah province, home to Mosul and one of the most dangerous cities in Iraq, had achieved their objectives of "dismantling al-Qaeda" and "weakening armed groups" by arresting senior leaders affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). According to Iraq's Interior Ministry spokesman, the army had arrested 1480 men during its operations, half of them from ISI, Ansar al Sunna, the Mujahideen Army, and the Naqshbandi Brigades. According to the spokesman, "large numbers of those wanted surrendered to our forces and were released after making pledges through clan elders."¹⁰⁴³

In February 2008, an article in Egypt's *Al-Ahram* highlighted the pros and cons of leveraging the Awakening Councils to weaken ISI. The article noted that the councils had become an important cornerstone of the Iraqi security equation by reducing levels of violence in certain areas by as much as 60 percent, and achieving unexpected success in defeating ISI.

However, the article raised several concerns about the councils. One worry was that the councils would turn against the Shiites after American forces withdrew from the country, noting that council formations had begun taking the place of regular military formations. Another concern was that arming thousands of Sunnis would prompt the rise of Shiite militias in response, while failing to integrate the Sunnis into the government may push them back into insurgency. Finally, the article cautioned that the councils could maintain their own agendas separate from the central government in Baghdad, imposing their control over provinces and further dividing Iraqi society.¹⁰⁴⁴

Death of Abu Omar al-Baghdadi and Abu Ayyub al-Masri

Unlike several reports on Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's death, Arab media reports on the deaths of Abu Omar al-Baghdadi and Abu Ayyub al-Masri offered little more than details on the raid and statements of praise from Iraqi and U.S. leaders. According to a statement from then Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki carried by Asharq al-Awsat, Iraqi and U.S. forces also arrested a majority of ISI's senior leaders who "were planning a large criminal act during the last two days, planning to target a large number of churches." Maliki also claimed that "[ISI] has become weaker than ever after this strike..."¹⁰⁴⁵

Egypt's *Al-Masri Al-Youm* carried slightly more hyperbolic statements from Prime Minister Maliki, including his assertion that the intelligence operation was able to "achieve a quality blow that broke the back of al-Qaeda." Furthermore, Maliki described their deaths as a "rush of good news to all of the Iraqi people and the civilized world..."¹⁰⁴⁶

Al Jazeera noted that the timing of the announcement was important for Maliki's credibility, pointing out that his government had declared al-Baghdadi dead the previous year on official TV, only to have those claims denied by al-Qaeda. Mustafa al-Ani, a security advisor from the Gulf Research Centre, was quoted saying that he didn't believe "Maliki is going to risk losing his credibility a second time without verifying the identity." At the same time, the article pointed to the importance of the operation for Maliki as he tried to gain support for his State of Law coalition after parliamentary elections.¹⁰⁴⁷

AQI: Neutralized or Resurgent?

In June 2010, *Asharq al-Awsat* carried reporting from the *New York Times* that alleged AQI's communication with al-Qaeda Central in Pakistan had been cut off. The report ran General Ray Odierno's statement that due to losses inflicted on the network, "it would be difficult for them to continue to recruit new members." Iraqi Defense Minister Abdel Qader Jassim also noted in the story that security forces were in the final stages of clearing al-Qaeda members from Basra Province after numerous senior leaders were arrested.¹⁰⁴⁸

After Osama bin Laden was killed on May 2, 2011, Egypt's Masrawy quoted Iraq's Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari saying that bin Laden "got what he deserved" and that his death would be a blow to his followers. Zebari alleged at the time that Iraq was weakening al-Qaeda there. "Al-Qaeda lost the ability to carry out terrorist campaigns permanently. Terrorists can no longer work from...liberated regions...They no longer have control over any cities – they now need a month or two for preparing attacks."¹⁰⁴⁹

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However, by the following July, *Asharq al-Awsat* quoted Iraqi intelligence sources when stating that there had been a resurgence in al-Qaeda activities, particularly in western Iraq. The outlet pointed out that the organization's return to Iraq aligned with a recent statement from its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, calling on young Muslims to begin returning to parts of Iraq that the organization had left.

In October 2012, BBC Arabic highlighted an intelligence report from U.S. Inspector General Stuart Bowen that noted Iraq's security had deteriorated significantly over the past year amidst a revival of ISI. The report claimed that when American forces were leaving Iraq in late 2011, there were less than 800 al-Qaeda members in Iraq; as of late 2012, there were "at least 2,500" members who were living and training in five camps in Anbar Province and Salahuddin Province.¹⁰⁵⁰

Emerging in Syria or Regime Propaganda?

Two weeks after car bombs struck the State Security Directorate in Damascus on December 23, 2011, *Asharq Al-Awsat* ran a story titled "Syria: The Lie of Al-Qaeda," which featured Syrian opposition members pinning the blame for the attacks on Bashar al-Assad's regime. The article quoted Hani al-Sibai, director of the Al-Maqrizi Studies Center in London, saying that the explosions were strange "in a country governed by a totalitarian regime based on a security machine," and that the regime was using the al-Qaeda boogeyman to suspend its failure in dealing with demonstrators peaceful requests. The article also featured the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood's former Supreme Guide, Ali Sadr al-Deen al-Bayouni, who claimed that several days before the bombings, one of the regime's media outlets carried a fabricated intelligence report on al-Qaeda elements infiltrating Syria from Lebanon. According to al-Bayouni, there were also leaked reports inside Syria that the regime had transferred hundreds of civilian detainees to the security centers that were bombed, and then buried them before identifying the bodies.¹⁰⁵¹

Writing in *Al Arabiya* the day of the attacks, however, Faris Bin Hazam observed that the "presence of suicide bombers in the heart of Damascus is not a surprising step, and it is not possible for any sane person to rule it out. Didn't Damascus control the passage of suicide bombers to Iraq?" Hazam concluded by saying that it was only natural for the Syrian regime to reap what it sowed over the years, citing an "established fact that the regime, which supported and nurtured killing in Iraq, will one day live the same scene."¹⁰⁵²

Islamic State of Iraq Merges with Nusra Front

One month after ISI leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced his group's merger with the Nusra Front in Syria, *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* reported that Nusra's influence was waning against the more extreme ISI. The article alleged that Nusra had been gaining support with other Syrian opposition groups because of its discipline and battlefield successes. In contrast, Baghdadi was not popular among the opposition due to his focus on enforcing Islamic rule instead of overthrowing the Assad regime. The article quoted one source close to Nusra Front leader Abu Mohamad al-Jolani stating, "We reject his presence in Syria... He should take his fighters and return to Iraq. We do not accept his methods."¹⁰⁵³

When al-Qaeda Central leader Ayman al-Zawahiri annulled the merger between the groups, Al Jazeera blamed Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi for Nusra's hardships, noting al-Zawahiri's criticism that Baghdadi was wrong to announce the merger without consulting or notifying al-Qaeda's leadership. The network cited a Nusra militant who said that when the two groups merged, nearly 70 percent of its members—especially the non-Syrians—joined the new organization in Idlib. According to him, the defection rates were even higher in eastern regions of Syria.¹⁰⁵⁴

Safe Haven for Foreign Fighters

In late 2013, Arabic media outlets picked up a report from the BBC that foreign jihadists were crossing into Syria via safe houses in southern Turkey. *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* cited the report's claim that more than 150 people stayed in one particular safe haven over the course of 90 days, including about 15 to 20 Britons. According to one fighter from the Free Syrian Army (FSA) that *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* interviewed, the jihadists were not only fighting the Assad regime, other rebel groups as well. The FSA fighter said that they had "undertaken a revolution for freedom and equality, but the jihadists don't want that. They have come to destroy Syria."¹⁰⁵⁵

In May 2014, *Asharq Al-Awsat* reported Washington's increasing fears about the numbers of foreign fighters, including Americans, that were flooding into Syria. These jihadists were getting trained and potentially returning home as national security threats. At the time, intelligence estimates put the number of American citizens fighting in Syria at around 100, though sources indicate the number was likely higher. The report cited figures from *Le Monde*, which alleged that there were 300 French jihadists, 200 from Belgium, 100 from the Netherlands, 300-400 Britons, dozens of Germans, and 15,000 foreign fighters from 70 other countries.¹⁰⁵⁶

Rebel Infighting

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In January 2014, *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* documented fighting in Raqqa between ISIS and the Islamic Front, an umbrella group of seven rebel factions. The paper's report cited numbers from the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which claimed that almost 700 people were killed during nine days of fighting between ISIS and rebel groups. Like many other reports, *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* mentioned that other opposition fighters accused ISIS of kidnapping, detaining, and murdering opponents. The paper also reported that members of an unnamed fighting group attacked an ISIS commander's house, "kidnapped his mother and sister, and raped his mother..."¹⁰⁵⁷

In addition to fighting each other on the battlefield, Al Jazeera reported that rebel groups were trading insults on social media sites like WhatsApp and Twitter. According to the network, social media accounts that either supported or were affiliated with ISIS would accuse people linked to the Mujahideen Army, Islamic Front, and Syrian Rebel Front, of not supporting jihad in Syria. ISIS targets for such shaming were also compared the Awakening Councils in Iraq, who took money from Arab regimes to fight al-Qaeda.¹⁰⁵⁸ Meanwhile, supporters of the anti-ISIS factions accused ISIS of being an Iranian agent, and call them Kharijites—a slanderous reference to early Muslims who rejected the rule of the Prophet Muhammad's grandson Ali.

Nusra Front and ISIS supporters also clashed online, as ISIS supporters accused Nusra and its leader, Abu Mohamed al-Jolani, of betraying the mujahideen and standing on the sidelines while the other factions fought it. In opposition, the Nusra Front's followers focused on ISIS's executions of Nusra leaders and members.¹⁰⁵⁹

Al-Qaeda Central Cuts Off ISIS

After al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahri officially cut off ISIS from the organization, Al Arabiya's Institute for Studies published an article highlighting the damage the infighting among Syria's Islamist groups had done to the cause of jihad, similar to the Islamist infighting during Algeria's civil war in the 1990s. The author hypothesized that, after watching how infighting collapsed Islamist rule in Algeria, al-Qaeda Central decided to "pull the rug [out from underneath] ISIS early on." However, the author cautioned, ISIS maintains substantial influence inside Syria, and "90 percent of Arab and foreign fighters going to fight in Syria are joining under its banner," making it the largest fighting faction among all other rebel groups.¹⁰⁶⁰

Al Jazeera English reported the news with the headline, "Al-Qaeda Disowns ISIL (ISIS) Rebels in Syria."¹⁰⁶¹ The article highlighted that ISIS "consolidated its grip" on Raqqa, "imposing their strict version of Sharia law on residents." According to the report, ISIS ordered women to "wear the niqab in public," banned the sale of cigarettes and tobacco products, and also banned music and made "attendance of Friday prayers compulsory." Also noting ISIS's in-fighting with other rebels, the article stated, "[I]nternecine fighting...has undermined the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad and dismayed Western powers pushing for peace talks."¹⁰⁶²

Western Media

The Connection between Iraq and Al-Qaeda

In the lead up to the Iraq War, President George W. Bush used his State of the Union address to document a connection between Saddam Hussein's government and al-Qaeda, stating, "Evidence from intelligence sources, secret communications, and statements by people now in custody, reveal that Saddam Hussein aids and protects terrorists, including members of Al Qaeda." As the *New York Times* reported, one of those links between al-Qaeda and Iraq was the "presence in Baghdad" of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who "had received medical treatment in Iraq for wounds supposedly suffered in Afghanistan."¹⁰⁶³

Nearly one week after President Bush's address, the paper reported that an "intelligence breakthrough," gathered through interrogations and an intercepted phone call, "made it possible for Secretary of State Colin L. Powell to [present evidence that] a well developed cell of al-Qaeda operating out of Baghdad that was responsible for the assassination of the American diplomat Laurence Foley last October."¹⁰⁶⁴

The British press was far more skeptical. As Colin Powell was set to present his case to the United Nations, the BBC reported that a leaked British intelligence report concluded there were "no current links" between Iraq and al-Qaeda. The article noted frustration among British "intelligence sources" that their work was being politicized to support the war, stating that the intelligence report's conclusion "flatly contradicts one of the main charges" against Saddam Hussein.¹⁰⁶⁵

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The *Guardian* was even more skeptical in its coverage of the Iraq–al-Qaeda link. For an article titled, “False Trails That Lead to the Al-Qaeda ‘Links,’” the outlet interviewed a former CIA analyst who said that his “sources at the CIA...are saying the evidence [of a link between al-Qaeda and Saddam] is simply not there.” The *Guardian* claimed that his view “summarizes what many in the intelligence community on both side of the Atlantic believe,” concluding bluntly, “The evidence on al-Qaeda is very flimsy. Claims of a meeting between an Iraqi intelligence officer and Mohamed Atta, one of the 9/11 suicide bombers, are shaky at best. So too is knowledge of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, an alleged associate of Osama bin Laden’s, who is said to have been in Baghdad for medical treatment.”¹⁰⁶⁶

Zarqawi Pledges Allegiance to Al-Qaeda

When Zarqawi’s Tawhid and Jihad organization pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda in October 2004, the Associated Press noted that al-Qaeda and Zarqawi had been in contact for eight months, and pointed out that “[Zarqawi’s] relationship to bin Laden and the al-Qaeda leadership has long been the subject of considerable speculation.”¹⁰⁶⁷ CNN noted that the report Colin Powell presented to the UN in 2003, which asserted a link between Zarqawi, al-Qaeda, and the Iraqi regime, “had been called into question,” and that reports of Zarqawi having his leg amputated in Iraq “appeared to have been incorrect.”¹⁰⁶⁸

The Associated Press also pointed out that “terror mastermind Abu Musab al-Zarqawi” and al-Qaeda had been in contact for eight months, though it similarly noted the “considerable speculation” that had long surrounded his relationship with the organization.¹⁰⁶⁹

The BBC hedged its report by referencing the “speculation before now about whether Zarqawi and Bin Laden are allies or rivals,” and noted that, “Some reports claim the two men have little connection at all.” Furthermore, the same report cautioned that “bogus messages” had been posted on Islamic websites before, though it cited analysts who said that the pledge “may well be genuine.”¹⁰⁷⁰

Zarqawi’s Death

In its obituary for Zarqawi, the *Guardian* called him the “self-styled leader” of ISI that Britons would “forever associate” with the 2004 kidnapping and beheading of British citizen Ken Bigley. The obituary stated that Zarqawi “played a pivotal, if curious role, in the US decision to invade Iraq,” but also highlighted much of Zarqawi’s brutality in Iraq, and mentioned his plan for igniting civil war between Iraq’s Sunnis and Shiites.¹⁰⁷¹

The Associated Press focused very little of its immediate coverage on the legacy and background of Zarqawi. Instead, the network reported details of the airstrike that killed him, while noting that his death “was not likely to end the insurgency” because another “foreign-born militant was poised to take over the terror network’s operations.”¹⁰⁷²

For its part, the BBC called Zarqawi “Iraq’s most notorious insurgent,” but highlighted that “most information on him is restricted to what his enemies and supporters have attributed to him.” The obituary for Zarqawi also hinted that the BBC remained unsure of Zarqawi’s links to Saddam Hussein’s regime. “Intelligence reports indicated he was in Baghdad and—according to Mr. Powell—this was a sure sign that Saddam Hussein was courting al-Qaeda, which, in turn, justified an attack on Iraq.” In conclusion, the obituary surmised that, “like so much else about Zarqawi’s life, the true facts seem likely to remain shrouded in uncertainty.”¹⁰⁷³

Al-Qaeda in Iraq Declines

By mid 2008, the media narrative shifted to the success of the Sunni Awakening as former insurgents turned against al-Qaeda, resulting in the decline of al-Qaeda’s strength in Iraq.

The Associated Press quoted General David Petraeus, then-commander of U.S. forces in Iraq, as saying, “We do think that there is some assessment ongoing as to the continued viability of Al Qaeda’s fight in Iraq.”¹⁰⁷⁴

When Coalition forces killed AQI’s deputy leader Abu Qaswarah in October 2008, CNN reported that the Sunni Awakening Councils had “turned against al Qaeda in Iraq, helping to diminish its presence in several parts of the country.” The article concluded by quoting military officials who said that the deputy leader’s death “will significantly degrade [ISI] operations in Mosul and northern Iraq, leaving the network without a leader to oversee and coordinate its operations in the region.”¹⁰⁷⁵

Deaths of Abu Omar al-Baghdadi and Abu Ayyub al-Masri

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When Coalition forces killed top ISI leaders Abu Omar al-Baghdadi and Abu Ayyub al-Masri in April 2010, Fox News highlighted statements from Vice President Joe Biden and General Ray Odierno regarding the organization's status. According to Biden, the deaths of the two leaders marked a "potentially devastating" blow to the network, and the raid that killed them "demonstrates the improved security, strength and capacity of Iraqi security forces." Odierno echoed similar sentiments, commenting, "The death of these terrorists is potentially the most significant blow to Al Qaeda in Iraq since the beginning of the insurgency."¹⁰⁷⁶

The BBC noted the same comments from both men, but cautioned that "the death of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in 2006 did little to slow the insurgency...The militants' fortunes in Iraq are at a low ebb...and the deaths of its leaders are no doubt a factor in that, but there are many other elements involved too."¹⁰⁷⁷

The Associated Press wrote, "Though al-Qaida has shown it is still capable of staging its hallmark coordinated suicide attacks against high-profile targets in the heart of the capital, U.S. and Iraqi military operations have diminished its power since the height of the violence several years ago." Furthermore, the network described their deaths as "a significant boost for [Iraqi Prime Minister] al-Maliki, who has staked his reputation on being the man who can restore stability to Iraq after years of bloodshed."¹⁰⁷⁸

ISI: Neutralized or Resurgent?

In June 2010, the *New York Times* carried General Odierno's reports that ISI had "lost connection" to its central leadership, and would "face difficulties as it tried to promote new officers for its efforts to topple the Iraqi government and establish havens." That news prompted the paper to run with the headline, "Qaeda Leaders in Iraq Neutralized, U.S. Says."¹⁰⁷⁹

The *Guardian* offered a starkly different take. In an article just two months later, the outlet wrote that al-Qaeda was "attempting to make a comeback in Iraq" and "exploiting the imminent departure of US fighting troops" by recruiting former Sunni Awakening fighters who were disgruntled that they had not collected their paychecks for more than two months. One of the Awakening Council leaders was quoted saying, "Al-Qaida has made a big comeback here. This is my neighborhood and I know every single person living here. And I know where their allegiances lie now."

At the end of 2011, the *New York Times* offered a different assessment. The paper reported in November 2011 that, as U.S. combat troops prepared to leave the country, "senior American and Iraqi officials are expressing growing concern...[that ISI] is poised for a deadly resurgence." The paper attributed ISI's rebound to a change in tactics, allowing it to "exploit gaps left by the departing American troops..."¹⁰⁸⁰

By 2012, the Associated Press reported that ISI had established training camps for insurgents in western Iraq, drawing from a pool of men who either escaped or were released from Iraq's prisons to double in size between late 2011 and late 2012. One "Shiite" government employee that the paper interviewed said that ISI "is much stronger than what the Iraqi officials are imagining...The terrorist group is able to launch big attacks and free its members from Iraqi prisons, and this indicates that al-Qaeda is stronger than our security forces."¹⁰⁸¹

Emerging in Syria or Regime Propaganda?

One of the problems with reporting on the Syrian civil war, especially in its early stage, was a relative dearth of media outlets actually reporting from inside the country. Journalists based in neighboring countries were still piecing together reports from accounts they were hearing from Syrian citizens on the ground and from the Syrian regime itself.

When al-Qaeda-style attacks began occurring more frequently in Syria between late 2011 and early 2012, reports from Syrian citizens and the regime tended to contradict each other entirely. When two car bombs hit the State Security Directorate in Damascus on December 23, 2011, the *New York Times* wrote that it "appeared to be the most brazen and deadly attack" against the Assad regime since the uprising began, and Syria's deputy foreign minister Faisal Mekdad remarked, "We said it from the beginning, this is terrorism...They are killing the army and civilians." The paper also published reactions from opposition members who accused the regime of playing a role, but state that they "offered no proof for that claim."¹⁰⁸²

Reporting the same news, the *Guardian* gave substantially more space to the opposition's claims against the government, raising their accusations in the second paragraph of the article. The *Guardian* highlighted the fact that the bombs detonated "shortly after the arrival of Arab League observers" to Damascus, noting that it was the first large bombing in the capital since the uprising began. According to one opposition activist the paper interviewed, "The presence of the Arab League advance team of observers pushed the regime to give this story in order to scare the committee from moving around Syria." Adding further skepticism to the regime's position, the article noted Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Muallem's prediction that the Arab League observers would "come and see that [terrorist groups] are present."¹⁰⁸³

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When the next major bombing struck on January 6, the *New York Times* seemed torn between which narrative to believe. The paper flatly noted that “Evidence was scant for either the government’s or the opposition’s narrative, but the bombing seemed to underline each party’s version of events: a dictatorial government so cynical as to kill its own people or a religiously inspired opposition bent on sowing anarchy in an increasingly combustible country.”¹⁰⁸⁴

Haaretz was markedly less torn in its coverage. The Israeli newspaper opened by saying that the Syrian opposition “demanded an independent investigation” of the bombing, and then quoted “eyewitnesses” in the neighborhood who reported that “tens of ambulances were in the area approximately three hours prior” and “added that state-run news crews began their on-site coverage of the attack almost immediately after it occurred.” Meanwhile, the report gave almost no space to the government’s side of the story.¹⁰⁸⁵

However, as bombings continued to strike Damascus and Aleppo, the media quickly turned their attention to al-Qaeda’s affiliates in the region. When car bombs hit security buildings in Aleppo in February 2012, the *New York Times* conceded that, while the perpetrators were still unknown, “it seemed Syria was facing the kind of violence it had long been accused of supporting in neighboring Iraq and Lebanon.” The report went as far as to say that the attacks “suggest that now foreign fighters may indeed be jumping into the conflict...”¹⁰⁸⁶

The day after the bombings, McClatchy cited unnamed U.S. officials who pinned responsibility on al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). The report stated flatly that ISI “carried out two recent bombings” in Damascus, though noted it “likely was behind suicide bombings Friday that killed at least 28 people in the largest city, Aleppo...” According to one of the officials, the bombings in Aleppo were “[al-Qaeda leader] Zawahiri basically taking the shackles off.”¹⁰⁸⁷

ISI Merges with Nusra Front, Forming ISIS

When the Islamic State of Iraq merged with the Nusra Front to form the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) in April 2013, the *New York Times* reported that the union “appeared to strengthen the role of Islamic militants in the Syrian insurgency and further complicate Western assistance efforts.” But it also highlighted pushback from the secular Free Syrian Army (FSA) in response to ISIS’s leader telling Syrians to not “make democracy a price for those thousands among you who have been killed.” An FSA spokesman retorted that, “No one has the right to impose any form of state on Syrians. Syrians will go to the polls to choose their leaders and form their own state.”¹⁰⁸⁸

The *Financial Times* also reported that the merger would increase the power of “radical Islamist factions” and also “dismay western backers of the rebellion...”¹⁰⁸⁹ London’s *Daily Telegraph* noted that the U.S. designation of the Nusra Front in December 2012 showed “the ambiguous attitude of the West to the revolution in Syria.” The *Telegraph* also claimed that the major dilemma for Western policy was embodied by Eric Harroun, a U.S. army veteran who fought alongside the Nusra Front in Syria before a Virginia court charged him with firing a rocket-propelled grenade while fighting with a terrorist group.¹⁰⁹⁰

Safe Haven for Foreign Fighters

During summer 2013, media outlets reported that jihadist groups had secured safe havens in Syria and posed a major terrorist threat. The *New York Times* reported that the West had lost an opportunity to influence the outcome of the conflict in Syria as more than 6,000 fighters had entered the country as a result of its “fear of militants coming to dominate the opposition...”¹⁰⁹¹

In September, The Washington Post editorial board argued that, while U.S. members of Congress were rightfully worried that Western military action in Syria could strengthen extremists, “[T]he threat to both Syria and U.S. national interests from the jihadists” would worsen if they failed to act. As the board further noted, “...They are determined to create a safe haven for al-Qaeda in Syria...while imposing a Taliban-style fundamentalist regime.”

By October 2013, the *Washington Times* reported that “Syria has become al Qaeda’s largest safe haven, with more than 10,000 fighters” and “provides al Qaeda with a new base from which to attack Western targets.”¹⁰⁹²

Rebel Infighting

Media coverage of rebel in-fighting has centered on ISIS’s brutal attacks against the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and other local rebel brigades, which undermine rebel efforts against the Syrian regime. In July 2013, the *New York Times* reported that ISIS had shot and killed one of the FSA’s commanders and had beheaded several FSA foot soldiers. One FSA fighter told the paper that Syrians had “staged demonstrations to get freedom,

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not to have an emir ruling us.”¹⁰⁹³

When ISIS battled local rebel groups in Azzaz, a group of six rebel brigades reportedly “took a jab at the strict ideology of the ISIS jihadists,” telling them not “to shed the blood of Muslims and be hasty in calling them heretics and apostates.”¹⁰⁹⁴ After rebel brigades pushed ISIS out of its headquarters in Aleppo in January 2014, the *New York Times* highlighted opposition members “who have compared the group’s heavy-handed tactics to those of Mr. Assad’s government.” One activist said, “Now my neighborhood has been liberated twice. Once from the regime and the second time from ISIS.”¹⁰⁹⁵

Al-Qaeda Central Cuts Off ISIS

When al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahri issued a statement cutting ties with ISIS in February 2014, multiple outlets interpreted the move to mean that ISIS was too extreme for its former mother organization.

CNN’s Peter Bergen wrote, “When even al Qaeda publicly rejects you because you are too brutal, it’s likely a reasonable indicator that you are.”¹⁰⁹⁶ Bergen also noted that al-Qaeda’s leadership has long been concerned about alienating Muslim populations—which became apparent when Ayman al-Zawahri asked al-Qaeda in Iraq to stop killing Shiite civilians in 2005 and when Osama Bin Laden told al-Shabab “to stop attacking in the central market” of Mogadishu.”¹⁰⁹⁷

The *Huffington Post* explained that “[T]he blunt statement from al-Qaeda reinforced [ISIS’s] pariah status as a militant body so inflexible that it is shunned even by other hardline Islamists.”¹⁰⁹⁸ The article suggested that the move might isolate ISIS and boost the credibility of the Nusra Front, which “has gained a reputation as a pragmatic group” despite its “hardline Islamist doctrine.”¹⁰⁹⁹

The *Daily Telegraph* continued with the same conclusion that al-Qaeda disavowed the group because it was “too extreme even for the organization founded by Osama bin Laden.”¹¹⁰⁰ Like the *Huffington Post*, it also claimed that the Nusra Front “has grown in popularity in Syria” because it has a smaller contingent of foreigners in its ranks, and “has used a more pragmatic, less dictatorial approach to imposing hardline Islamic law on the country.”¹¹⁰¹

Taking over Mosul

Taking over Mosul

When ISIS fighters took control over Mosul on June 10, 2014, the *New York Times* reported that the Iraqi Army “apparently crumbled in the face of the militant assault, as soldiers dropped their weapons, shed their uniforms for civilian clothes and blended in with the fleeing masses. The story painted a picture of utter terror and submission, as one soldier told the paper, “They took control of everything, and they are everywhere.”

According to Al Jazeera, “Not since Osama bin Laden has a leader been held in such reverence among Sunni fighters, scored such stunning and shocking victories, and threatened so much of the established order.” The report almost seemed to praise al-Baghdadi’s rise from modest means to emir of ISIS, writing that, “Baghdadi has literally fought his way from ordinary beginnings in northern Iraq to lead what is perhaps the Middle East’s most feared irregular force.”¹¹⁰²

One week later, Al Arabiya general manager Abdulrahman al-Rashed pinned the debacle on Prime Minister al-Maliki. He wrote that, “Events once again proved that the problem lies with Nuri al-Maliki’s leadership. He is an ignorant and authoritarian prime minister who is in control of all jurisdictions... One of his current follies is that he’s attacking his rivals and provoking them to collectively act against him.”¹¹⁰³

Meanwhile, as the U.S. moved several navy ships to the Persian Gulf, NBC News noted “heightened concerns over deepening U.S. involvement in a conflict that most Americans thought was behind them.” The network also raised several questions, including “can the assault by the Sunni militants be stopped, will the U.S. military bolster its presence in Baghdad and how will the instability in Iraq affect the rest of the Middle East.”¹¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³⁴ “Al-Qaeda: Saddam ‘ala Qa’ima Al-Ightiyalat,” *Al-Riyadh*, October 11, 2002, http://www.alriyadh.com/Contents/11-10-2002/Mainpage/POLITICS_2637.php.

¹⁰³⁵ “Bush Yataham Al-Ra’is Al-Iraqi bi Izdira’ Al-Umam Al-Mutahida,” Al Jazeera, January 29, 2003, <http://aljazeera.net/news/pages/de0c2868-c172-46e0-ae10-96bb46f58c7d>.

¹⁰³⁶ Ragida Dargam, Jalal Al-Mashata, Basil Rifa’ia, Arafan Rasheed and Zaki Shahab, “Bush Yataham Baghdad bi Alaqa ma’ ‘Al-Qaeda’ wa Ya’idu Al-Amirkiyin bi Intidhar...” *Al Hayat*, January 30, 2003, http://daharchives.alhayat.com/issue_archive/Hayat%20INT/2003/1/30/???-???-???-???-??-????-???-????????-????-????-6-????-?-16-20-??-??-????-??-??.

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Rhetoric:

Abu ?udhayfah Al-Ansari, spokesman, March 29, 2024

Statement entitled “[By Allah], Allah Will Bring This Matter to Its Consummation”:

“So renew your intentions and draft your wills, and lie in wait for the Jews and Christians and attack them, and remember the greatness of your deeds and the magnanimity of your reward.”¹¹⁰⁵

Abu ?udhayfah Al-Ansari, spokesman, March 29, 2024

Statement entitled “[By Allah], Allah Will Bring This Matter to Its Consummation”:

“We ask Allah Almighty to enable you to reach the land of Palestine to fight the Jews face to face, in a religious war that does not spare nor leave anything. In this context, we renew and reiterate our incitement to the lone lions, to make efforts to target the Crusaders and Jews everywhere, especially in Crusader America and Europe, as well as in the heart of the Jewish quasi-state in al-Qaeda and the territories of the Palestinian interior.”¹¹⁰⁶

Abu ?udhayfah Al-Ansari, spokesman, March 29, 2024

Statement entitled “[By Allah], Allah Will Bring This Matter to Its Consummation”:

“We also do not need to produce legitimate justifications to target a state that fought Muslims in the past and the present, and we continue to kill and arrest its soldiers in the valleys of Sham and the Sahel and the coast.”¹¹⁰⁷

Abu Hudhayfah Al-Ansari, spokesman, January 4, 2024

Statement entitled, “And Kill Them Wherever You find Them”:

“Monotheism is the goal, and jihad is the path...the war with the Jews will not end in a one-state solution or two-state solution, as nationalists believe. It is a religious ideological war that will continue until we kill their antichrist under the banner of the Prophet of Allah... tighten the plans and diversify operations: Blow them up with explosives, burn them with incendiary bombs, shoot them with bullets, slaughter their necks with knives, and run them over with buses.”¹¹⁰⁸

Abu Hudhayfah Al-Ansari, spokesman, January 4, 2024

Statement entitled, “And Kill Them Wherever You find Them”:

“Lions of Islam: Chase your preys whether Jewish, Christian or their allies, on the streets and roads of America, Europe, and the world. Break into their homes, kill them and steal their peace of mind by any means you can lay hands on. Understand that you are the arm of the Islamic State hitting in the kuffar’s homelands, and are avenging the Muslims in Palestine, Iraq, Sham, and other Muslim countries... Intentionally seek easy targets before hard ones, civilian targets before military one, religious targets like synagogues and churches before others, for this will satisfy the soul and will demonstrate the characteristics of the battle, as our battle with them is a religious one and we kill them wherever we come upon them in response to Allah Almighty’s command.”¹¹⁰⁹

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¹¹⁰⁶ “[By Allah], Allah Will Bring This Matter To Its Consummation,” Al-Furqan Media Group, March 29, 2024.

¹¹⁰⁷ “[By Allah], Allah Will Bring This Matter To Its Consummation,” Al-Furqan Media Group, March 29, 2024.

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