

## Main events of the week<sup>1</sup>

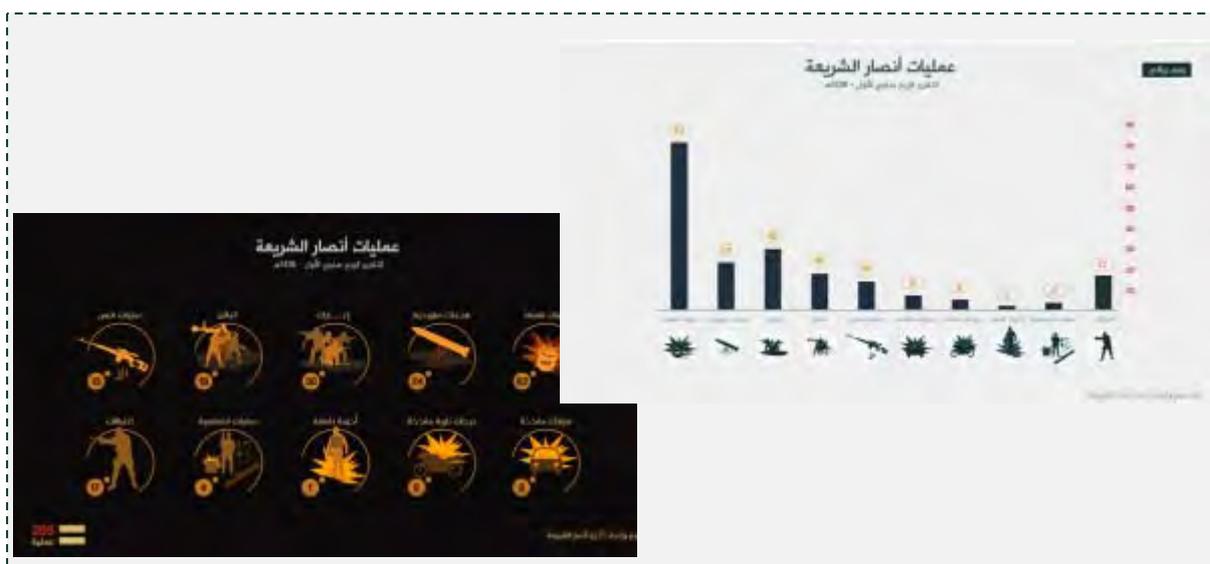
- On the morning of January 27, 2015, a shooting attack took place at the Corinthia Hotel in Tripoli, Libya, where diplomats, foreign and local government officials and tourists stay. The attack killed at least nine people. **ISIS's branch in Libya ("the province of Tripoli") claimed responsibility for the attack.** This is the first showcase terrorist attack of its kind **affiliated with ISIS in Libya and may be an indication of ISIS's growing terrorist capabilities in Libya.**
- One of the Japanese hostages, whose photo was circulated by ISIS last week, has been executed. ISIS, which is holding another Japanese hostage, has threatened to execute the other Japanese hostage and the Jordanian pilot if a female **terrorist held in Jordan is not released within 24 hours.** The terrorist in question is a female suicide bomber who participated in a series of simultaneous terrorist attacks at hotels in Amman, Jordan (2005). Those attacks were masterminded by Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi (the founder of the Al-Qaeda branch in Iraq, from which ISIS emerged).
- Kurdish sources reported that the **YPG militias have managed to liberate the whole city of Kobani (Ayn al-Arab).** ISIS has not commented to date. If this is true, then it is the first **practical blow to ISIS** of its kind since the coalition airstrikes began, as well as a blow to **the organization's morale.**
- Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and ISIS continue (separately) to use the media to call on **Muslims living in Western countries**, especially the coalition countries, to carry out "lone wolf" terrorist attacks **on an individual basis.** This is presented as a possible alternative for Muslims unable to travel to Syria and Iraq to join jihad.

<sup>1</sup> The weekly publication Spotlight on Global Jihad monitors developments among ISIS and global jihad organizations in Syria and Iraq and in the Middle East as a whole. The publication also monitors terrorist activities around the world, directed, supported or inspired by the global jihad organizations in the Middle East.

## The shooting attacks in Paris - additional information

### AQAP's additional claim of responsibility for the attack at the editorial offices of the weekly Charlie Hebdo

■ Another expression of AQAP's responsibility for the murder at the weekly Charlie Hebdo is a new announcement uploaded to a Twitter account affiliated with AQAP (entitled **Ansar al-Sharia**). The announcement shows **two graphs detailing AQAP's terrorist activities** in the first quarter of the Hijri year 1436 (i.e., as of October 25, 2014). According to the text that accompanies these graphs, during these three months AQAP claimed responsibility for 205 attacks, mostly against the Houthi rebels in Yemen. **The attacks carried out by AQAP include the shooting attack at the editorial offices of the weekly Charlie Hebdo on January 7, 2015** (AQAP's website, January 25, 2015).



Graph showing AQAP's terrorist operations: from sniper fire to car bombs (AQAP's website, January 25, 2015)

### Another expression of ISIS's support of the Jewish supermarket bombing in Paris

■ On January 24, 2015, a Twitter account affiliated with ISIS posted a photo showing a man using a smartphone bearing the flag of the Islamic State to take pictures of the Jewish supermarket Hyper Cacher in Paris (the supermarket where **Amedy Coulibaly** carried out a terrorist attack on January 9, 2015, which claimed the lives of four people). The writer describes Coulibaly as a hero and wishes the Christians ("worshippers of the cross") a death of "rage and fear" (Twitter account affiliated with ISIS, January 24, 2015).



Smartphone cover bearing the flag of the Islamic State against the background of the Jewish supermarket Hyper Cacher in Paris (Twitter account affiliated with ISIS, January 24, 2015)

## The international campaign against ISIS

### Attacks by the US and the coalition and their outcomes

■ US and coalition airstrikes in Syria and Iraq continued during the week. This week US and coalition aircraft carried out dozens of airstrikes in Syria and Iraq using fighter planes, bombers and unmanned aircraft. Following are the locations of the airstrikes (CENTCOM website):

- **In Syria**, airstrikes centered mainly in the area of Kobani (Ayn al-Arab). Airstrikes were also carried out in the area of Al-Raqqah, Al-Hasakah and Deir al-Zor. The airstrikes damaged tactical units, battle positions, posts and vehicles belonging to ISIS. An ISIS weapons cache in Al-Raqqah was destroyed. A mobile oil drilling facility was destroyed in Al-Hasakah.

- **In Iraq**, airstrikes were carried out in a large number of places, including Kirkuk, Mosul, Sinjar, Tal Afar, Ramadi, Al-Qaim, Erbil and Fallujah. The airstrikes damaged, among other things, weapons, including heavy weapons, vehicles and armored vehicles, canals, bridges, artillery systems, combat positions, infrastructures and military equipment. An ISIS weapons manufacturing facility was destroyed in Al-Qaim.

■ According to **Lloyd Austin**, commander of the Central Command of the US Army, attacks on ISIS have yielded significant results to date. He said that the ground forces fighting against ISIS have managed to take over an area of 300 square miles in Iraq

and kill 6,000 of its operatives, including over half of its leaders (The Wall Street Journal, January 22, 2015).

■ **A senior US State Department official** said that the coalition forces' campaign against ISIS is still in its initial stages. However, attacks by the coalition forces have killed **thousands of ISIS operatives, destroyed about 200 oil wells, and significantly damaged ISIS's resources**. The same official said that so far, 17 countries have passed new laws and begun to take steps against those leaving to fight in the ranks of jihadi organizations. In addition, teams of experts in the fields of policy, law, and intelligence have been formed, in order to deal with the problem (US State Department website, January 21, 2015).

■ **A conference of the foreign ministers of the 22 countries in the coalition was held London, to discuss ways of cooperating in the war against ISIS**. Speaking before the conference participants, British Foreign Secretary **Philip Hammond** estimated that the operation against ISIS would take a year or two. According to Hammond, Britain's involvement is designed to protect itself and therefore it provides significant assistance to the coalition in the form of air strikes, training and equipment. He also said that some of the coalition countries must contribute more to stop the spread of ISIS to Europe **and that everything must be done to prevent operatives from reaching Syria and Iraq** (Sky News, January 22, 2015). As for the **Iraqi Army**, the British Foreign Secretary said that the coalition is building the Iraqi security forces from a starting point of chaos, poor leadership and training, with a view to making them a significant defensive force against ISIS. He admitted, however, **that it would take many months until these forces are fit to take part in major operations** (BBC News, January 22, 2015).

## Main developments in Syria



Map of Syria (GOOGLE EARTH)

### ISIS's effort to expand its presence and intensify its influence in central Syria

■ According to a report written by **Chris Kozak** of the **ISW** Research Institute, **ISIS has expanded its presence in central Syria**, an area where its presence has been relatively limited up to now. According to the study, ISIS now controls a sort of corridor that begins at the border between Syria and Jordan on the outskirts of Damascus, and reaches Homs and Hama, which are key areas for the Syrian regime and rebel forces. The report also noted that in recent months, ISIS has stepped up the fighting in these areas and is now threatening the Syrian regime as well as the opposition forces that want to keep ISIS away from the front in Damascus. According to the study, ISIS's strategy in the area of Damascus and southern Syria is **to expand and deepen** its control by **persuading local residents and organizations to join it** (ISW Research Institute, January 21, 2015).

## Reports of the fall of the city of Kobani (Ayn al-Arab) in the hands of the Kurdish militias

■ On January 26, 2015, the Kurdish Peshmerga forces announced that they had completely liberated Kobani from the control of ISIS. Hoshiyar Abdullah, a member of the security and defense committee of the Kurdish government in Iraq, said that ISIS had lost more than 800 operatives in the battles in Kobani (Akhbar al-Iraq, January 27, 2015). YPG forces spokesman **Ayham Merhi** said that the fighting is now concentrated in villages in the area of the city of Kobani (Al-Akhbar, January 27, 2015).

■ **Masoud Barzani**, President of Iraq's Kurdistan Region, praised the great achievement and thanked the coalition forces and Turkey for their joint efforts to combat the organization. He noted that news of the liberation of Kobani has brought joy to the hearts of all Kurds and all freedom fighters (Shafaaq News, January 27, 2015). **So far ISIS has not commented on these announcements.**

The reports of the fall of the city of Kobani (Ayn al-Arab) in the hands of the Kurdish militias **require verification**. If this is true, then it will be the first **practical blow** of its kind **to ISIS** since the US began the international campaign against ISIS, as well as a blow to **the organization's morale**.

## Deir al-Zor

■ During the week, clashes continued between ISIS and Syrian security forces in a number of areas in Deir al-Zor (Local Coordination Committees in Syria, January 23, 2015). Syrian security forces reported that in the area of the military airfield, they were able to take over a number of posts, from which ISIS operatives withdrew (Al-Durar al-Shamia, January 26, 2015).

## The province of Idlib

■ Syrian TV reported that the Syrian Army units carried out a "series of successful operations" in the Idlib province, which caused the deaths of dozens of operatives of terrorist organizations, **most of whom have foreign citizenship**. The Al-Nusra Front was mentioned as one of the rebel organizations that suffered losses in these operations (Syrian TV, January 22, 2015).

## The province of Homs

■ According to reports by the Syrian regime, Syrian Army units fought against several ISIS strongholds in the province of Homs, killing and wounding many ISIS operatives (Syrian TV, January 22, 2015). On January 21, 2015, Syrian TV reported on a **car bomb attack** which had been carried out in the neighborhood of Akrama **in the city of Homs**. The attack killed six people and wounded 70, mostly women and children. In addition, the attack caused serious damage to property and infrastructures (electrical, telephone and water facilities). It is not known who was behind the attack, which was characteristic of jihadi organizations' modus operandi.



The scene of the car bomb attack in the city of Homs (Syrian TV, January 21, 2015)

### The province of Dara (Southern Syria)

■ Syrian websites reported that **the Al-Nusra Front** and other rebel organizations have taken over the 82nd **Brigade of the Syrian Army, which is deployed around the town of Al-Sheikh Maskin, in the province of Dara (north of the city of Dara)**. It was reported that rebel organizations had seized large quantities of the 82nd Brigade's weapons, including "advanced rockets" (SNN Facebook page, January 26, 2015). According to news website **Akhbar al-Aan**, the 82nd Brigade is an **air defense brigade** comprising six missile battalions and nine artillery batteries. Its forces possessed large quantities of small arms.

■ The takeover of the 82nd Brigade will enable the rebel organizations to establish their position near the Syrian-Jordanian border and attack the route leading from Damascus to Dara, the Syrian regime's supply channel to the city of Dara, thus isolating the forces of the regime in the city (Akhbar al-Aan, January 27, 2015). In addition, substantial quantities of weapons have apparently fallen into the hands of

the Al-Nusra Front and other rebel organizations, although the amount and types of weapons seized is not yet clear.

## Main developments in Iraq



Map of Iraq (GOOGLE EARTH)

### The Mosul area

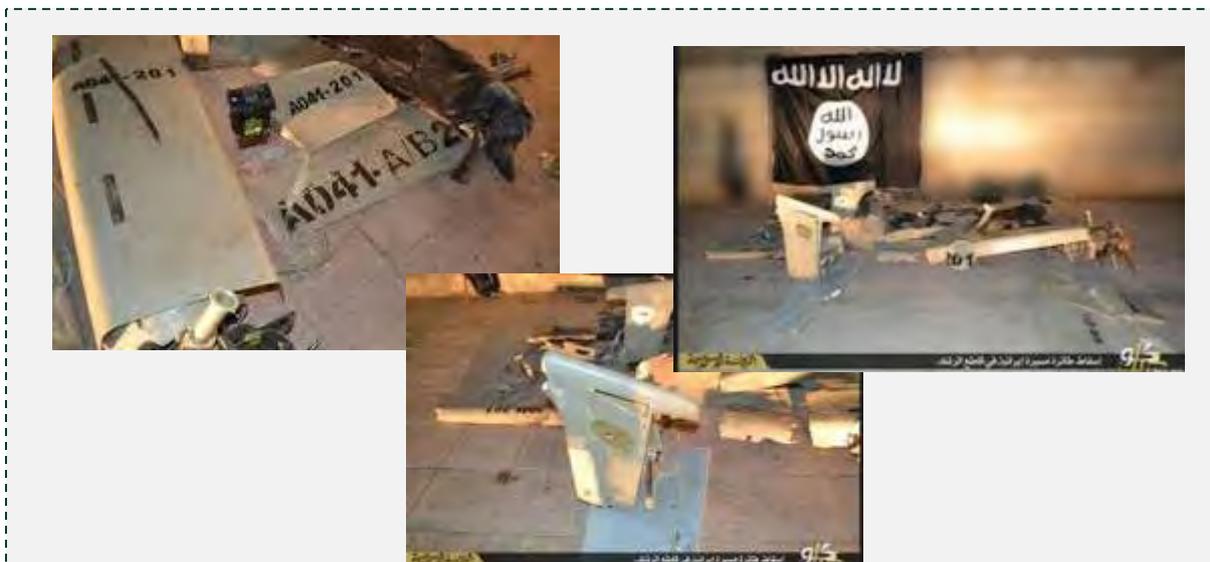
- It was reported that the Kurdish Peshmerga forces have captured four villages in northern Mosul from ISIS (Al-Sumaria News, January 21, 2015). Peshmerga forces said they were able to cut off ISIS's supply line from Syria to the city of Mosul (Peshmerga Twitter account, January 24, 2015).
- On January 22, 2015, a Twitter account affiliated with ISIS posted photos of a **tanker bomb**, which was driven by a suicide bomber and detonated near Peshmerga forces in the Mosul region. The photos show that the front, sides and wheels of the tanker were reinforced with metal sheets, presumably to ensure that it reached its target (Omar Khattab Twitter account, January 22, 2015)



Tanker bomb explosion (Omar Khattab Twitter account, January 22, 2015)

## The Kirkuk area

- An official statement from the ISIS information office in the Kirkuk province said that ISIS operatives managed to shoot down an Iranian unmanned aircraft (ISIS forum, January 21, 2015).



Remains of the Iranian unmanned aircraft (Al-Minbar al-I'jami al-Jihadi, January 22, 2015)

## The province of Nineveh

- On January 21, 2015, a Twitter account affiliated with ISIS posted photos of training by a military unit called **Fursan al-Harb Battalion** in the province of Nineveh, Iraq (Twitter account affiliated with ISIS, January 21, 2015; Minbar, January 20, 2015). The ITIC is unfamiliar with the nature of this military unit.



Training by a military unit known as Fursan al-Harb Battalion (Minbar, January 20, 2015)

## The province of Diyala

- January 26, 2015, Iraqi officials announced that ISIS operatives had been driven out of the province of Diyala and that the Iraqi government had regained control of the entire province (the Al-Iraq al-Hurr radio station, January 26, 2015). The province of Diyala is located in the vicinity of the city of Baghdad and its population is mixed, Sunni and Shiite.

## The province of Al-Anbar

- On January 20, 2015, a forum affiliated with ISIS published photos of the detonation of two car bombs driven by suicide bombers at a headquarters and a deployment area of the Iraqi Army near Al-Sajaria (east of Ramadi). The explosion of the car bombs led to the death and injury of dozens of Iraqi soldiers (Al-Minbar al-l'ami al-Jihadi forum, January 20, 2015).



**The explosion of two car bombs near Al-Sajaria, east of Ramadi  
(Al-Minbar al-I'ami al-Jihadi forum, January 20, 2015)**

- On January 24, 2015, the Iraqi ministry of defense reported the liberation of a village located in the district of Haditha that had been captured by ISIS. The operation was carried out by the Iraqi Army with the assistance of **tribespeople**, the Iraqi Air Force, and international coalition aircraft. According to the Iraqis, many ISIS operatives were killed in the operation, some of them Arabs and some foreigners (Iraqi ministry of defense website, January 24, 2015).



**Iraqi soldiers folding up the ISIS flag and preparing to hoist the Iraqi flag  
(Iraqi ministry of defense website, January 24, 2015)**

## The province of Baghdad

- The Iraqi ministry of defense reported that forces from the headquarters of the 11th Infantry Division had uncovered an ISIS workshop for the manufacture of weapons

and ammunition in the area of Al-Madaen, in the province of Baghdad. The workshop also contained various types of explosives (Iraqi ministry of defense website, January 21, 2015).



The workshop area and some of the equipment found there  
(Iraqi ministry of defense website, January 21, 2015)

## Main developments in Lebanon

### Clashes between ISIS and the Lebanese Army

■ On January 24, 2015, a Twitter account affiliated with ISIS published a report about a battle that took place on January 23, 2015, in the area of **Ras Baalbek** between ISIS operatives and Lebanese Army forces (Ras Baalbek is located in the northern Bekaa Valley, north of the Sunni town of Aرسال). According to the reports, at least eight Lebanese Army soldiers were killed in the battle and 16 were wounded. Other Twitter accounts mentioned higher numbers of Lebanese Army fatalities (Twitter accounts affiliated with ISIS, January 24, 2015).

The Sunni Muslim town of Aرسال, northeast of Baalbek, is an **important center of power of the jihadi organizations in Lebanon**. The battles in the area of Ras Baalbek may indicate an expansion of the influence of the jihadi organizations (ISIS, the Al-Nusra Front) and are indicative of **how difficult it is for the Lebanese Army and Hezbollah to eradicate them**.

### Establishment of ISIS and Al-Nusra Front Sharia courts in Aرسال

■ On January 24, 2015, it was reported that an explosion occurred near the ISIS Sharia court and security office in Aرسال (the Lebanon-Syria border). This report may

indicate that **ISIS has set up its own Sharia courts in Lebanon**. Inquiries conducted by journalists among the residents of Aarsal revealed that the Al-Nusra Front has “**a Sharia authority**” and a complaints office in the town of Aarsal and that there is also **an ISIS Sharia court** on the outskirts of the town (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, January 26, 2015). The establishment of civilian infrastructures indicates the depth of the Jihadi organizations’ penetration of the local Sunni population.

## The conduct of the Islamic State

### ISIS has executed a Japanese hostage and is threatening to kill the other

- Last week, ISIS posted a video threatening to execute two Japanese hostages unless it receives the sum of USD 200 million. Seventy-two hours later (January 24, 2015), ISIS posted a video on YouTube showing one of the Japanese captives holding a picture showing **Haruna Yukawa**, one of the hostages, being executed.<sup>2</sup> In the background, the voice of the narrator is heard, saying that the other Japanese hostage will be released **only in return for an Al-Qaeda operative imprisoned in Jordan**. The operative in question is **Sajida Mubarak Atrous al-Rishawi**, a female suicide bomber who was one of the perpetrators of a series of terrorist bombings at hotels in Amman in 2005.

- On January 27, 2015, the Al-Minbar al-l’lami al-Jihadi forum, which is affiliated with ISIS, published a video demanding the release of the prisoner Sajida al-Rishawi within 24 hours. The video includes the threat that if the **governments of Japan and Jordan** do not meet the demands, ISIS will kill the other Japanese hostage and the Jordanian pilot held by ISIS. The reliability of the video is unclear. **Mohammad Shalabi (Abu Sayyaf)**, head of the Salafist-jihadi movement in Jordan, said that this tape should be taken seriously, although its reliability is questionable. He added that the 24 hours that were given are insufficient to conduct negotiations, but called on Jordan to release Sajida al-Rishawi, “since her release does not constitute a burden to Jordan” (Al-Jazeera, January 27, 2015). Jordanian sources noted that they were checking the reliability of the tape (Al-Bawaba, January 28, 2015).

- Al-Jazeera TV (January 27, 2015) published an **audiotape and slide**, obtained from a jihadi source, showing the Japanese captive holding a photo of the Jordanian pilot. In the audiotape, the Japanese captive says in English that he was told that this

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<sup>2</sup> Haruna Yukawa, 42, was captured in August 2014 after his arrival in Syria as an employee of a security company.

is his last message. He called on the government of Japan to exert pressure on the Jordanian government to release Sajida al-Rishawi within 24 hours.



Left: Slide showing the Japanese captive holding a photo of the Jordanian pilot (Al-Jazeera, January 27 2015) Right: The Japanese hostage holding a photo of the execution of his friend. The photo that he holds was blurred because it shows the severed head of the hostage who was executed (Al-Jazeera, January 25, 2015).

**On November 9, 2005**, there was a series of three simultaneous terrorist bombings at hotels in Jordan's capital, Amman. The attacks were carried out by suicide bombers wearing explosive belts and using a car bomb. **In total, 67 people were killed and around 200 were injured.** The Al-Qaeda branch in Iraq, headed by Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, from which ISIS emerged, claimed responsibility for the three suicide bombing attacks. The attacks were carried out by three male suicide bombers from Iraq, **and one female suicide bomber, who failed to blow herself up due to a technical malfunction.** The female suicide bomber, **Sajida Mubarak Atrous al-Rishawi**, was the wife of one of the terrorists who blew himself up and the sister of one of Zarqawi's deputies. She was tried and sentenced to death but her sentence was not carried out.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>For further information, see the ITIC's Information Bulletin from November 10, 2005: ["In a series of three nearly simultaneous terrorist explosions aimed against hotels in Amman, about 67 individuals were killed and more than 200 wounded \(November 9, 2005\). They were apparently orchestrated by Al-Qaeda and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who heads the organization's branch in Iraq and aspires to export terrorist attacks to other countries in the Middle East."](#)



**Sajida Mubarak Atrous al-Rishawi, the female suicide bomber (Jordanian TV, November 13, 2005)**

■ The Japanese Prime Minister confirmed that the photo showing the killing of one of the two Japanese hostages is probably authentic. The Prime Minister condemned the execution and demanded the release of the second hostage. He said his government is continuing to gather information and will do all it can to secure the release of the second hostage, in cooperation with other countries (NHK Tokyo, January 25, 2015).

## **ISIS is selling fuel oil to residents of southern Syria**

■ **In the province of Al-Suwayda**, in southern Syria, which is under the control of the Assad regime, there is a growing **phenomenon of the sale of primitively refined fuel oil**, which comes from the northeast of the country, **from oil fields controlled by ISIS**. According to reports, there are a number of sales centers for fuel in the province that do not belong to the regime. The locals call the fuel that is sold **“ISIS’s fuel oil”**. ISIS takes advantage of the shortage of fuel oil used for heating and sells it to the residents at a discount. Government officials are apparently turning a blind eye to the sale of fuel oil (Syrian Net, January 24, 2015).

While establishing its position in eastern Syria in 2013-2014, ISIS took control of oil fields, gas production facilities and other infrastructure facilities. ISIS now controls most of the oil fields in Syria. ISIS produces oil from the oil fields under its control, using the existing production infrastructure and by means of dozens of makeshift refineries (constituting a target for attacks by the coalition countries). Some of the oil distillates are used by ISIS in the areas under its control and some are exported to the domestic market in Syria, Iraq and the Kurdish Autonomous Region. There have been several reports in the Arab media about **implicit understandings that have been reached between ISIS and the Syrian regime**, regarding oil smuggling to areas controlled by the Syrian regime. From the perspective of the Syrian regime, this makes it possible to find ad hoc solutions to the fuel shortage in the areas under its control.

## Report on experts joining the Islamic Caliphate of ISIS

- The ISIS forum website has announced that 400 Chinese missile and technology experts and engineers recently joined ISIS (Al-Minbar al-I'jami al-Jihadi, January 21, 2015). **The figure is probably exaggerated**, but it could indicate a trend on the part of ISIS to recruit experts in various fields, including military fields, to help strengthen its forces and its civil administration of the Islamic Caliphate.



Report about 400 Chinese missile and technology experts and engineers joining ISIS (Al-Minbar al-I'jami al-Jihadi, January 21, 2015)

ISIS currently controls about one third of the territory of Iraq and about one third of the territory of Syria. This large space, which extends from the outskirts of Baghdad to the outskirts of Aleppo, is home to many millions of residents (around 5-6 million residents, according to various estimates). In the area under ISIS's control, which also includes major cities, **there is a salient discrepancy between the relatively small number of ISIS's military operatives and civilians and the extensive territory under its control.** In order to bridge this "weak point," ISIS is making major recruitment efforts in Syria and Iraq and in foreign countries as well, with the goal of adding high-caliber manpower to its military forces and its administrative systems.

## Palestinians and Israeli Arabs

### Training operatives from the Gaza Strip

- On January 22, 2015, a Twitter account affiliated with ISIS **posted photos of operatives allegedly from the Gaza Strip, training at ISIS training camps in Syria.** These operatives are training with the **Sheikh Abu Nur al-Maqdisi Company** (Twitter account affiliated with ISIS, January 22, 2015).



Operatives from the Gaza Strip training with the Sheikh Abu Nur al-Maqdisi Company (Twitter account affiliated with ISIS, January 22, 2015)

**Sheikh Abu Nur al-Maqdisi** was a Salafist-jihadi sheikh in the Gaza Strip who was killed in 2009 by Hamas following his announcement of the establishment of an Islamic emirate in Palestine. After his death, he became a role model for Salafist jihadis in the Gaza Strip. It was previously reported that there were nearly forty operatives in Syria, some of whom probably operate within a separate unit in ISIS named after Sheikh Abu Nur al-Maqdisi.

## Expression of support for ISIS in the Gaza Strip

- On January 25, 2015, a Twitter account affiliated with ISIS posted a photo of an ISIS flag being hung by an operative affiliated with the organization **opposite the French Cultural Center building in Gaza City**. The inscription next to the photo reads: “Today we are waving the flag and tomorrow we will destroy your building.” In the past, this cultural center was the target of several attacks by networks in the Gaza Strip affiliated with the global jihad (Twitter account affiliated with ISIS, January 25, 2015).

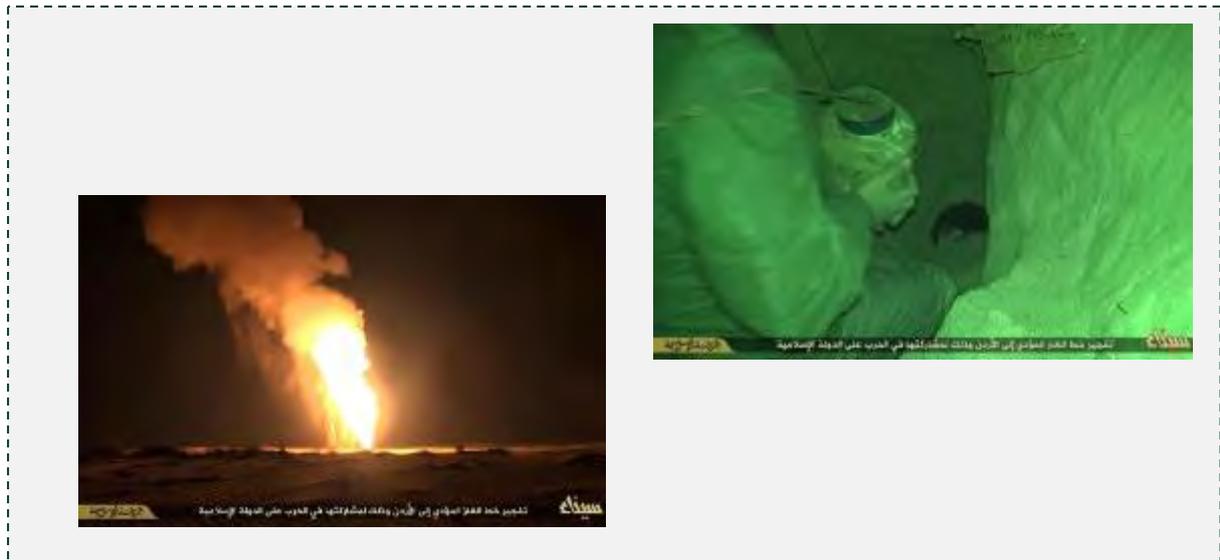


Raising the ISIS flag opposite the French Cultural Center in Gaza (Twitter account affiliated with ISIS, January 25, 2015).

## Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula

### Gas pipeline explosion

- On its official Twitter account, the ISIS Sinai province posted photos showing the explosion of a gas pipeline leading to Jordan. The organization said the attack was carried out against the pipeline because of Jordan’s participation in the war against ISIS (Twitter account of the Islamic State, January 19, 2015).



Planting and detonating an IED (Twitter account of the ISIS Sinai province, January 19, 2015)

This isn't the first time that terrorist organizations affiliated with the global jihad in the Sinai Peninsula have sabotaged the gas pipeline from Egypt to Jordan. The gas pipeline, which is around 1,200 km long, is used to export natural gas from Egypt to Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, via the northern Sinai Peninsula. The section of the pipeline that runs through the Sinai Peninsula **has been subjected to repeated attacks by jihadi terrorist organizations**. On November 15, 2014, the gas pipeline was sabotaged by operatives from Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, which has since joined ISIS. A statement released by the organization said that it would not allow the continuation of gas exports to Jordan unless Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi ordered it to do so.

### ISIS transfers funds to Bedouin tribes in Sinai

- On January 24, 2015, a website affiliated with ISIS posted photos **documenting the transfer of funds from ISIS to Bedouins in Sinai**. The website noted that the recipients are “needy Muslims whose homes were destroyed and burned by the Egyptian Army [which ISIS calls an apostate army]” (justpaste.it, January 24, 2015).



Left: One of the envelopes of money given to the Bedouins in Sinai. The envelopes read: “The Islamic State - Sinai province.” Right: Photo from the video in which ISIS operatives promise to continue to fight against the Egyptian Army and President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and are prepared to sacrifice their entire force in order to do so.

On November 10, 2014, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis pledged its allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, leader of ISIS. From the perspective of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, the reason for pledging allegiance was to ensure external support, taking advantage of the improved financial capabilities of ISIS. In the ITIC’s assessment, the transfer of funds to the Bedouins in Sinai (assuming the photos are authentic) may indicate the existing channels of communication used by ISIS to send aid to Ansar Bayt al-Maqdisi.

## Global jihad organizations in other countries

### AQAP encourages terrorist attacks against the West

- Between January 19 and January 20, 2015, AQAP issued a two-part video of an interview with **Nasser Al-Ansi**, one of the senior operatives in the organization. In the video, he answers questions on behalf of the organization. As in some of his previous statements, Al-Ansi reiterates **the need to attack the United States**. In addition, he says, the organization will not postpone the attack on the “crusader forces” that are “in the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea” and will do so when the organization has the opportunity. He also calls on Muslims living in Western countries that are fighting against Islam, especially **the US, Britain, France, Canada and other countries to carry out jihad as a personal obligation** (MEMRI, January 24, 2015).
- In a video posted on Twitter by AQAP’s propaganda wing, another senior figure in the organization by the name of **Harith al-Nadhari**, who is considered its ideologue, presents guidelines for suicide bombing attacks. Following are some of the recommendations (YouTube, January 23, 2015):

- Refrain from making use of explosives in areas where there may be a large crowd of Muslims, such as mosques, open-air markets, stadiums or similar places.
- Refrain from killing Muslims even if they are being used as (human) shields by the enemy. Muslims may only be killed in extreme situations.
- Make sure to issue *fatwas* (religious rulings) pertaining to suicide bombing attacks. Jihadi commanders must refrain from issuing *fatwas* or making decisions on matters that are not clear to them.



Sheikh Harith Al-Nadhari: Make sure not to hit Muslims in suicide bombing attacks (Source: YouTube, January 23, 2015)

## Terrorist attack at a hotel in Tripoli, carried out by a branch of ISIS in Libya<sup>4</sup>

- On the morning of January 27, 2015, five masked men broke into the **Corinthia** luxury hotel in Tripoli, which is frequented by diplomats and foreign officials, tourists and senior Libyan government officials. **At least nine people were killed**, including five security guards and four foreign nationals, one of them apparently an American. At least 12 people were injured.

<sup>4</sup> Initial summary of the events, as of the morning of January 28, 2015, based on reports from news agencies and the Al-Minbar al-lami al-Jihadi website, which is affiliated with ISIS.



**Left: Photo taken during the attack (Al-Minbar al-I'jami al-Jihadi, January 27, 2015) Right: The Corinthia Hotel (Al-Minbar al-I'jami al-Jihadi, January 27, 2015)**

■ The attack began in the early hours of the morning, when terrorists detonated a car bomb, apparently driven by a suicide bomber, at the entrance to the hotel. They then stormed into the hotel, shooting in all directions. It was reported that two terrorists blew themselves up in the hotel reception (according to another version, this explosion was not deliberate). Libyan security forces surrounded the hotel, evacuated some of the guests,<sup>5</sup> entered the hotel and killed the terrorists (it's unclear whether all of them were killed).



**Left: Photos of the terrorists: the one on the right is known as Abu Suleiman al-Sudani and the one on the left is known as Abu Ibrahim al-Tunisi (Al-Minbar al-I'jami al-Jihadi, January 27, 2015) Right: Photos of the terrorists before the attack, taken by the security cameras (Al-Minbar al-I'jami al-Jihadi, January 27, 2015)**

<sup>5</sup> The Reuters office in Tripoli reported (January 27, 2015) that the guests who were evacuated by Libyan security forces included the Prime Minister of Libya and an American delegation.

■ Through a jihadi forum affiliated with ISIS (Al-Minbar al-I'jami al-Jihadi), the organization announced that the “**province of Tripoli**” of the Islamic State carried out the attack.<sup>6</sup> According to the announcement, the attack was designed to avenge the death of the **Libyan Abu Anas**,<sup>7</sup> who was abducted from his home by an American force, tortured and executed (this is a false statement because the Libyan Abu Anas died of an illness and wasn't executed by the Americans).



The inscription below the caption “the province of Tripoli” (in red, on top) says that the raid [the jihadists’ name for the terrorist attack], named after the Libyan Abu Anas, is at a hotel frequented by “crusader” [i.e., Western] security companies and diplomatic delegations. According to the announcement, the attack was intended to avenge the death of the Libyan Abu Anas, who was abducted from his home by US forces, tortured and executed (Al-Minbar al-I'jami al-Jihadi forum, January 27, 2015)

## Announcement of the death of the head of Ansar al-Sharia in Libya

■ The family of **Mohammad al-Zahawi**, who heads the large jihadi organization **Ansar al-Sharia**, announced that he died as a result of an injury sustained in battle in September 2014. Rumors of his death have been circulating for several months but so far there has been no official confirmation. The name of the organization first made

<sup>6</sup> At this stage, the ITIC does not know the identity of the entity calling itself the “province of Tripoli” of the Islamic State. The ITIC does know of the existence of a branch of ISIS in the city of Derna, in eastern Libya. In early November 2014, a local jihadi organization in Derna called Majles Shura Shabab al-Islam pledged allegiance to Caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. It’s not clear whether this organization was involved in the attack.

<sup>7</sup> **The Libyan Abu Anas**, codename of **Nazih Abd al-Hamid al-Ruqai’i**, was a senior Al-Qaeda operative, a Libyan information technology engineer, who operated alongside Osama bin Laden (served as an expert in computers). He returned to Libya in 2011 and was captured by an American force in Tripoli on October 13, 2013. He was held in custody for his involvement in attacks against the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania (August 7, 1998). He died in prison of an illness on January 3, 2015, a few days before he was to stand trial before a court in New York. The ITIC believes that ISIS’s branch in Libya is trying to **capitalize on** the Libyan Abu Anas and the criticism of his capture and death among jihadists (despite the fact that the Libyan Abu Anas belonged to ISIS’s rival organization, Al-Qaeda).

headlines in September 2012, when its operatives took part in a terrorist attack carried out against the US Embassy in Benghazi, which killed four Americans, including the Ambassador (Reuters, January 23, 2015).



Right: Mohammad al-Zahawi (photo uploaded by Ansar al-Sharia, July 22, 2014)

## The battle for hearts and minds conducted by ISIS

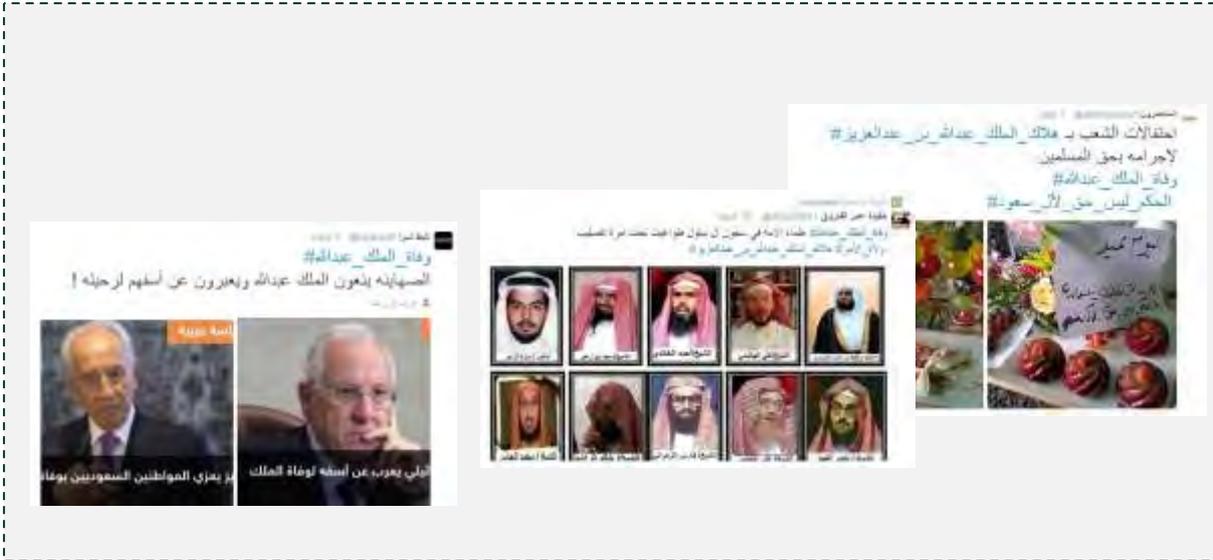
### Encouraging “lone wolf” activity against the West

■ After the terrorist attacks in Paris, ISIS operatives and operatives of other jihadi organizations began to use the jihadi media **to encourage activity by other “lone wolf” jihadists**. For example, a new Twitter account in English encourages Muslims living in the West to carry out more so-called “lone wolf” activity against civilians. Among other things, it says that “the Muslims should learn from the lions of Islam”, i.e., the Kouachi brothers and Amedy Coulibaly (vocativ.com, January 12, 2015).

### ISIS’s expressions of joy at the death of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia

■ On January 23, 2015, following the announcement of the death of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, expressions of joy began to appear on social networks affiliated with ISIS, with an emphasis on his having been a “collaborator” with the West. It was claimed that he persecuted jihadi clerics. There were also those who claimed that the House of Saud did not have the right to rule because it imprisoned Muslims and arrested and tortured their wives. It also noted that the President of the State of Israel, and the former President of the State of Israel, Shimon Peres, had expressed their

condolences on the death of King Abdullah (Twitter accounts affiliated with ISIS, January 23, 2015).



Left: Quotation from the condolences expressed by Israel’s President Reuven Rivlin and by Shimon Peres (Twitter account affiliated with ISIS, January 23, 2015) Center: Photos of *ulama* (religious scholars) allegedly held in the prisons of the “tyrants” in Saudi Arabia (Twitter account affiliated with ISIS, January 22, 2015) Right: Pastries with writing on them expressing joy over the death of the Saudi king: “Today is a holiday - the death of King Abdullah - the House of Saud shouldn’t rule” (Twitter account affiliated with ISIS, January 23, 2015)

## ISIS’s dissemination of news among local residents in the Damascus area



Photo presented by ISIS from the town of Al-Hajar al-Aswad (south of Damascus), documenting a public news broadcast produced by ISIS for the residents of the town (Al-Minbar, January 26, 2015)

## Counterterrorism and preventive activity

### Britain

■ British police detained **Imran Khawaja** on suspicion of faking his own death in Syria so he could return to Britain without being detained or monitored. During his interrogation, he admitted to **planning a terrorist attack, possession of weapons and training at a training camp**. Imran Khawaja travelled to Syria in January 2014 and **appeared in several ISIS propaganda videos**. A jihadi organization by the name of **Rayat al-Tawhid**, which pledged allegiance to ISIS, used social networks to announce the death of the man known as the British Dugham on the battlefield (a reference to Imran Khawaja). Following the announcement of his death, **Imran Khawaja returned from Syria to Britain via Turkey and Bulgaria** (AFP, January 20, 2015).

### Australia

■ Attorney-General for Australia **George Brandis** revealed that the number of Australians who have gone to fight in Syria and Iraq **has recently increased significantly** and is now estimated at **ninety people**. **The departure of young women and teenagers is a new trend and a source of concern for the authorities**. The increase in the number of people traveling to Syria is in spite of the law enacted in Australia a year ago. Under the law, traveling to Syria and Iraq without justification is illegal (The Guardian, January 24, 2015).

In a speech to Parliament on October 1, 2014, the Prime Minister of Australia announced that **at least 60 Australian soldiers** are fighting in the Middle East (Australian Government website, October 1, 2014). The announcement by the Attorney-General for Australia may indicate a **significant increase** (about one third) in the number of Australians traveling to fight in Syria and Iraq. In the ITIC's assessment, this may indicate an increase that began when additional Western foreign fighters joined the ranks of ISIS, with an emphasis on the countries of Western Europe.

### Pakistan

■ On January 21, 2015, security forces in Lahore arrested an operative by the name of the **Salafist Joseph**, AKA **Hafez al-Tayyeb**, a Syrian Pakistani in his forties. His

two assistants were arrested along with him. **The three were arrested on suspicion of recruiting young people in Pakistan with the intention of sending them to fight in the ranks of ISIS in Syria.** It was reported that the Salafist Joseph entered Pakistan in September 2014 **after returning from Turkey** (Al-Quds al-Arabi, January 22, 2015).

## Search for a boy from South Korea who may have joined ISIS

■ Turkish police are searching for **Kim, a South Korean boy** of 18 who disappeared on January 10, 2015, in the city of Kilis, on the border between Syria and Turkey. There is concern that he crossed the border into Syria. He used to post tweets on his Twitter account about joining ISIS (AFP, January 21, 2015).



Facebook page affiliated with the Korean boy, showing the ISIS flag and ISIS insignia