



Spotlight on Global Jihad

(March 5-11, 2015)



Main events of the week¹

- An Iraqi military force numbering tens of thousands of soldiers continues its large-scale attack, with Iranian involvement, with the goal of capturing **the city of Tikrit**, north of Baghdad. The fighting is still ongoing. In the **city of Samarra**, south of Tikrit, the Iraqi Army and Shiite militias are facing an attack by ISIS. In the **Al-Anbar province**, ISIS completed the takeover of the **city of Al-Baghdadi**, while in the **Kirkuk province**, Kurdish Peshmerga forces are fighting against ISIS.
- In Syria, **Muhammad Musallam** from East Jerusalem's Beit Hanina neighborhood was executed. According to ISIS, he was planted in the organization by Israel's Mossad. The execution was carried out by two ISIS operatives, an adult and a youth. Musallam was a young man who went to Syria and joined the ranks of ISIS. His family has denied the allegation that he served as a Mossad agent.
- ISIS published a booklet containing guidelines for the foreign fighters who join its ranks. The guidelines instruct the foreign fighters on how to travel to Turkey and Syria and how to conduct themselves vis-à-vis the authorities in their home countries and their families. In the ITIC's assessment, the guidelines were issued in light of the increased supervision by Western European countries and by Turkey, which is forcing ISIS and those who join its ranks to increase their precautions.

The international campaign against ISIS

US and coalition airstrikes

- During the week, US and coalition forces continued their airstrikes against ISIS targets. Several dozen airstrikes were carried out in Syria and Iraq. Following are the locations of the main airstrikes (CENTCOM website):

¹ 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.

- **In Syria**, airstrikes were carried out near Kobani, Al-Hasakah, Al-Raqqah, Idlib, Deir al-Zor and Tal Hamis (southeast of Qamishli). The airstrikes targeted an ISIS force, battle positions, vehicles, machine gun positions and an oil refining facility.
- **In Iraq**, airstrikes were carried out in Kirkuk, Mosul, Fallujah, Ramadi, Al-Assad, Al-Qaim, Tal Afar, Haditha and Sinjar. The airstrikes targeted a weapons storage site, ISIS forces, battle positions, vehicles (including heavy machinery) and weapons (including mortars and aerial defense systems). A workshop for assembling IEDs near Tal Afar (west of Mosul) was hit. An airstrike carried out in Samarra destroyed an ISIS car bomb.

American clarification regarding the impending attack on the city of Mosul

■ US Secretary of Defense **Ashton Carter** said that the briefing on the timing of the impending attack on the city of Mosul is an example of speculation. He said that the senior military official who briefed the media about the impending attack on the city of Mosul provided inaccurate information. He added that even if the information was accurate, the senior military official **should not have spoken about it in public**. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff promised that **the matter would be the subject of an internal investigation** and that the Central Command of the US Army would take appropriate action upon completion of the investigation (Reuters, March 3, 2015).



US Army personnel advising Iraqi Army officers (CENTCOM website, March 7, 2015)

The US Secretary of State referred to the briefing by senior US Army officers (whose names were not published), who told the American media that an attack on Mosul is expected to take place in the spring of 2015 (April-May). Senior officers subsequently said that the attack might be carried out in the autumn of 2015 (August-September). These reports led ISIS to make its initial preparations for a possible attack on Mosul and, in the ITIC's assessment, may disrupt the preparations for the attack.

Statements made by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the US Army

■ This week, several statements about the fighting in Iraq made by **Martin Dempsey**, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, were published:

- At a Congressional hearing, Martin Dempsey said that if he becomes convinced that this is necessary, **he will recommend sending a limited ground force to fight alongside the Iraqi forces or the Syrian rebels**. These forces may also **direct airstrikes from the ground** (USA Today, March 8, 2015).
- In a meeting with Iraqi officials during his visit to Iraq, Dempsey said that the coalition forces will not be able to support the fight against ISIS over time **unless the Iraqi government manages to form a united government** (Washington Post, March 9, 2015).
- During his visit on board the French aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle, he appealed for **“strategic patience” in the coalition airstrikes**. He said that increasing the pace of the airstrikes could endanger the lives of civilians and that this would play into the hands of ISIS. He said that the scope of the airstrikes also depends on the strength of the Iraqi Army and the [success] of the Iraqi government's efforts to reconcile with the Sunni population (AFP, March 9, 2015).

Main developments in Syria



Map of Syria (Google Earth)

The number of Syrians executed by ISIS

- According to the London-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), **ISIS has executed 1,969 people in Syria since the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate. Most of those executed were civilians (1,238), including six children and eight women.**

Al-Raqqah province

- Coalition forces carried out airstrikes around the Tabqa air base (west of Al-Raqqah), which is controlled by ISIS. They also carried out **two airstrikes on oil refineries in the northwestern part of the city of Tell Abyad**. At least thirty ISIS operatives who worked at the refineries were reportedly killed in the airstrike (SyriaHR.com, March 9, 2015).

■ **Oil production facilities are a preferred target of airstrikes by the coalition forces.** These airstrikes impair ISIS's ability to refine and market petroleum products and, according to American reports, they have significantly reduced ISIS's income from the sale of fuel.

Idlib province

■ According to reports, an airstrike in the Idlib area (northwest Syria) **killed a number of Al-Nusra Front commanders**, including **Abu Hammam al-Shami** (AKA **Farouq al-Suri**), a **senior military commander in the organization**. The dead also included three members of the organization's Shura Council. According to unverified reports, Al-Nusra Front leader **Abu Muhammad al-Julani** was also injured. **The media attributed the airstrike to the international coalition forces, which in turn denied the airstrike that was attributed to it** (Reuters, March 6, 2015).

■ Syria's official news agency claimed that **government forces were behind the killing of Abu Hammam al-Shami**. According to the news agency, the attack took place when several senior Al-Nusra Front operatives were at a meeting in the town of Salqin (about 40 km northwest of Idlib), near the border with Turkey. Al-Shami was considered a senior Al-Nusra Front operative. He fought in the past with the Islamist forces in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. According to sources in the Al-Nusra Front, Abu Hammam al-Shami was removed from his position some four months ago. They confirmed that he was injured in an airstrike and died of his injuries a few days later (Al-Akhbar, March 6, 2015).



Abu Hammam al-Shami (<http://syriahr.com/>, March 7, 2015)

Al-Hasakah province

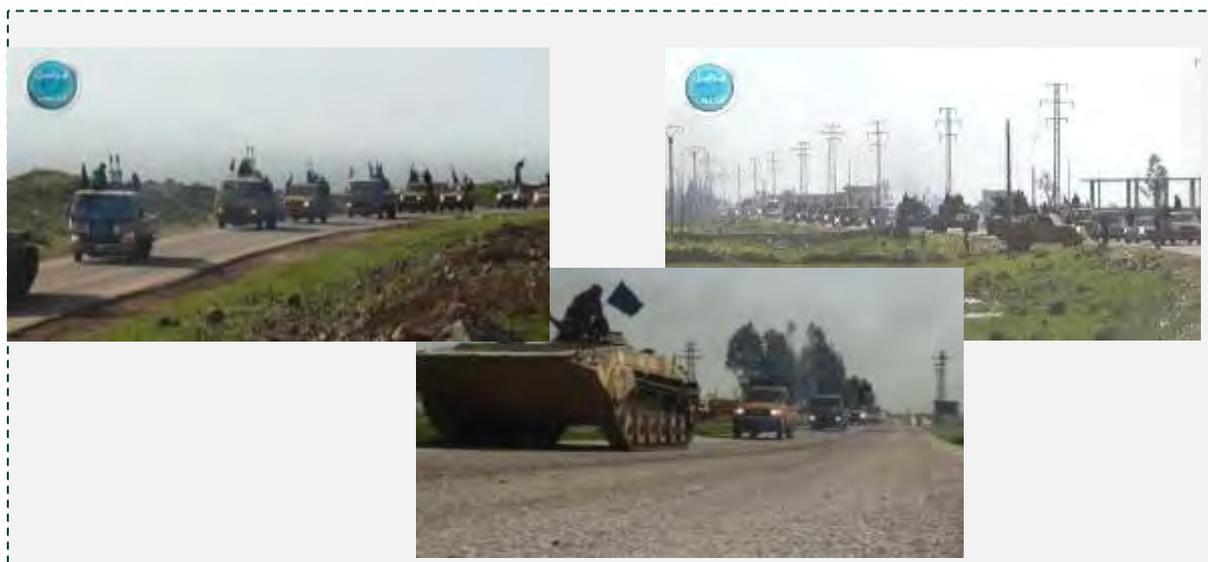
■ On March 2, 2015, it was reported that ISIS had released several Assyrian Christians who had been taken captive by ISIS in Tell Brak. According to ISIS, they were released because they had not been involved in the fighting. The fate of the remaining Assyrian hostages is unknown (Day Press, March 8, 2015).



Al-Hasakah province, where fighting took place between ISIS and Kurdish forces (YPG). The black circles are Assyrian Christian towns that have fallen into the hands of ISIS. The red circle is the town of Tell Brak, where the Kurdish forces attacked ISIS.

Southern Syria

- On March 8, 2015, photos were published showing **Al-Nusra Front forces preparing to curb the attack being carried out against them in south of the country by the Syrian regime forces**. The photos show vehicles, including armored vehicles, apparently looted from the Syrian Army. The photos were posted by the holder of a Twitter account who identified himself as a reporter for the Al-Nusra Front's main public relations arm in southern Syria (Al-Nusra Front-affiliated Twitter account, March 8, 2015).



The Al-Nusra Front preparing to curb an attack against it by the Syrian regime forces in southern Syria

Main developments in Iraq



Map of Iraq (Google Earth). The red circles are the areas of the fighting in Tikrit and Samarra.

Salah al-Din province

Tikrit

- This past week, the large-scale Iraqi Army offensive that began on March 1, 2015, continued. The offensive was intended to capture the city of Tikrit and its environs and the Salah al-Din province in general. Iraqi and American media reported that a military force of about 30,000 Iraqi Army troops and Shiite militias had begun a ground offensive to capture the city of Tikrit. The fighting is still ongoing. There have been reports of heavy fighting in the suburbs of Tikrit. Iraqi forces are trying to surround the city, while ISIS operatives are trying to curb their progress by planting roadside IEDs and detonating car bombs (Iraqi Army website and Sky News, March 8, 2015).



Iraqi Army soldiers near Tikrit (Iraq Army website, March 8, 2015)

■ Following are statements made by senior US officials about the Iraqi attack on Tikrit:

- Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General **Martin Dempsey** said the fighting in Tikrit is the most overt Iranian involvement in Iraq so far. However, he added that there are no Iranian ground forces there. In his assessment, the combined assault on the city of Tikrit will defeat ISIS operatives in the city. This is due to the clear numerical inferiority of ISIS, **whose forces number a few hundred operatives, compared with about 23,000 Iraqi Army soldiers and the Shiite militias**. According to General Dempsey, the offensive will not succeed without US airstrikes, which keep ISIS's forces in the north of the country (AP, March 7, 2015).

- According to the **Commander of the Central Command of the US Army**, speaking before a Congressional hearing, from February 22 to March 6, 2015, coalition aircraft carried out 26 airstrikes as part of coalition forces' support of the Iraqi government. This was in order to support the Iraqi ground forces in their attacks against ISIS. He also said that, in addition to airstrikes, the coalition forces support Iraqi military operations through support teams that provide Iraqi troops and security forces with both operational assistance and intelligence (CENTCOM website, March 6, 2015).

■ The attack on the city of Tikrit, controlled by ISIS, **is the largest of its kind** carried out by the Iraqi Army and Shiite militias since ISIS's successes in the summer of 2014. **The attack is supported by Iran**. According to the Iraqi media, **Qassem Soleimani**,

Commander of the Revolutionary Guards' Qods Force, is on the ground to monitor the fighting. The American support, according to statements made by senior US officials, is manifested mainly by airstrikes against ISIS in the north of the country (and not in Tikrit itself). If the Iraqi attack on Tikrit succeeds, **this may challenge ISIS's fighting capabilities in additional combat zones to the north and west of the capital, Baghdad.**

Samarra

- **The important city of Samarra, north of Baghdad, is facing an attack by ISIS,** whose forces are operating in its environs and trying to cut it off from the roads leading to the south (to Baghdad) and north (Tikrit). This past week, the Iraqi Army and Shiite militias continued to fight against ISIS operatives in the city. According to Iraqi reports, ISIS suffered dozens of losses in the fighting (Aram News, March 6, 2015; Akhbar al-Iraq, March 9, 2015; Al-Sumaria News, March 9, 2015).
- On March 2, 2015, ISIS published photos of an ISIS operative, who identified himself as **Abu Daoud al-Amriki** (the American Abu Daoud), who allegedly carried out a suicide bombing attack against Iraqi troops and Shiite militias in Samarra, by means of a truck bomb (Al-Minbar al-I'jami al-Jihadi Forum, March 4, 2015; CNN, March 5, 2015). The identity of the perpetrator of the suicide bombing attack is not yet known.



Suicide bomber codenamed Abu Daoud al-Amriki (Al-Minbar al-I'jami al-Jihadi Forum, March 4, 2015)

Nineveh province

■ On March 5, 2015, it was reported that a network in Mosul called “the resistance movement of Mosul” killed one of the emirs appointed by ISIS in Mosul. The Emir, codenamed **Abu Snan al-Afari**, was abducted a few days earlier (Iraqi Army-affiliated Twitter account, March 7, 2015). In addition, on March 8, 2015, it was reported that the governor of Mosul on behalf of ISIS was killed in an airstrike by the coalition forces in the city (Al-Khalij, March 6, 2015).

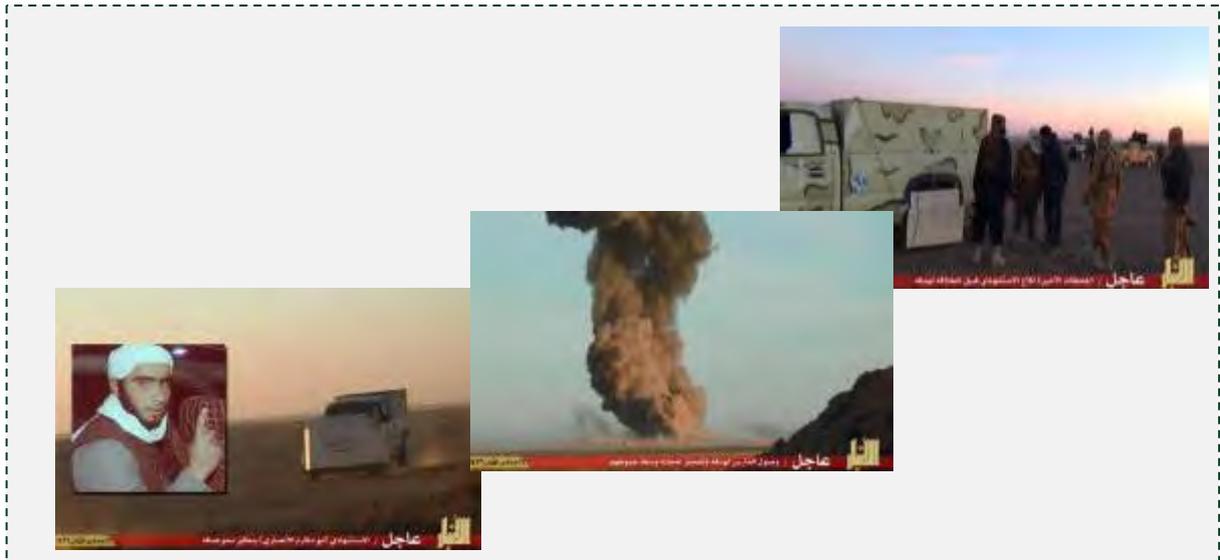


The body of one of the ISIS commanders in Mosul (emir), codenamed Abu Snan al-Afari. The inscription on the photo reads: “ISIS operative eliminated” (Twitter account of an opponent of ISIS, March 7, 2015).

Al-Anbar province

■ On March 6, 2015, the Iraqi Army announced that with the help of Sunni tribes and international coalition aircraft, **it had regained control of the city of Al-Baghdadi from the ISIS**. The city of Al-Baghdadi is located near the Al-Assad Iraqi Air Force base, which is under attack by ISIS operatives (Reuters and Al-Khalij, March 6, 2015).

■ On March 7, 2015, a suicide bombing attack against an Iraqi Army border guard post near the Jordanian border was carried out **by means of a truck bomb**. The attack was carried out by an operative codenamed **Abu Makarem al-Ansari**. A large part of the post was destroyed and dozens of Iraqi military personnel were killed (ISIS’s Al-Minbar al-I’lami al-Jihadi Forum, March 7, 2015).



Suicide bombing at the Iraqi border guard post near the Jordanian border
(Al-Minbar al-I'jami al-Jihadi Forum, March 7, 2015)

Al-Janub province

- On March 7, 2015, photos were uploaded to an ISIS-affiliated Twitter account. The photos show **the process for making self-produced Al-Farouq 1 rockets** (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, March 7, 2015). The fact that ISIS is producing its own rockets may indicate a shortage of standard weapons, at least in some areas that are not a priority for ISIS.



Documentation of part of the process for making self-produced Al-Farouq 1 rockets (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, March 7, 2015)

Kirkuk province

- On March 9, 2015, Kurdish Peshmerga forces began a massive operation against ISIS operatives in the Kirkuk province, with the help of airstrikes by the coalition forces. The Kurds reportedly killed several dozen ISIS operatives and managed to regain control of several villages in the south of the province (Aram News, March 9, 2015).

The conduct of the Islamic State

The execution of a young man from East Jerusalem

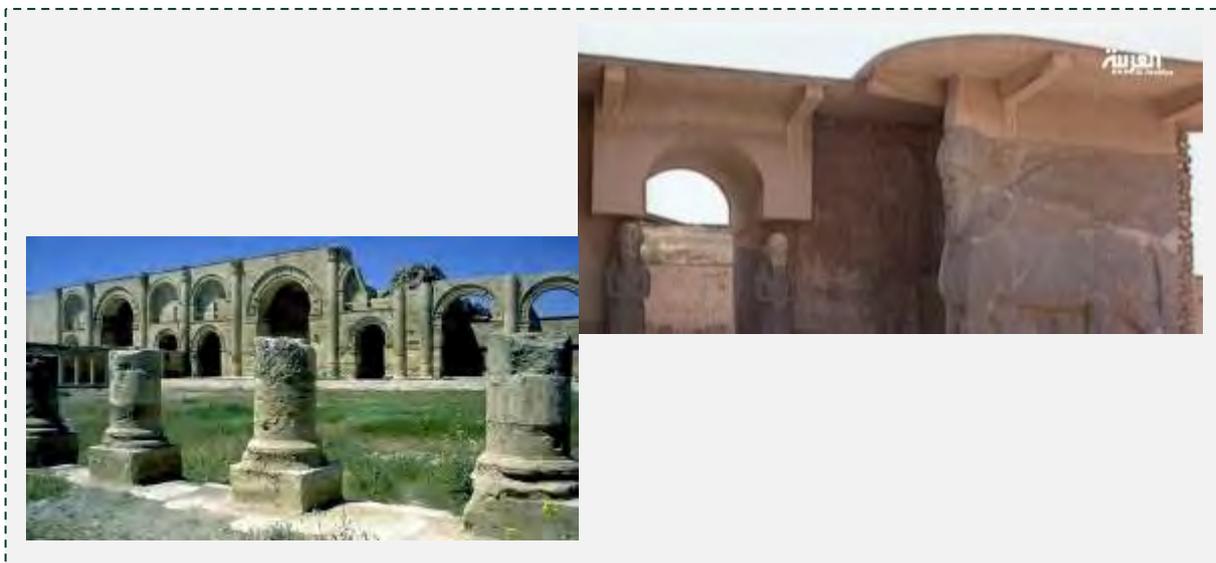
- On March 10, 2015, ISIS published a video documenting the execution of a young man by the name of **Muhammad Musallam**, from East Jerusalem's Beit Hanina neighborhood. The young man had gone to Syria and joined ISIS. According to ISIS, he was planted into its ranks by Israel's Mossad. Muhammad Musallam's family denied this allegation.
- He was shot and killed by two ISIS operatives, an adult and a youth. In the video distributed by ISIS, the operative mentions the killing of Jews in a terrorist attack in France and notes that the Islamic State will kill all Mossad agents and will liberate the Temple Mount. A photo of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount appears at the end of the video.



The execution (YouTube, March 10, 2015)

Further destruction of historic sites by ISIS

■ **ISIS continues to destroy historic sites and rare archaeological artifacts from the beginning of human civilization, in Iraq and Syria.** This is due to its perception that this is an infidel culture of idol worshippers. On March 6, 2015, ISIS used bulldozers and tractors to destroy the Assyrian city of **Tell Nimrud** in northern Iraq, south of Nineveh, which was established in the 13th century BC. ISIS then destroyed the nearby city of **Al-Hadr**, an ancient city that existed over 2,000 years ago. Last week, ISIS published a video documenting the destruction of the exhibits in a museum in the city of Mosul, including rare items from the beginning of civilization, primarily from the Assyrian Empire (Reuters, March 7, 2015; Al-Arabiya TV, March 6, 2015).



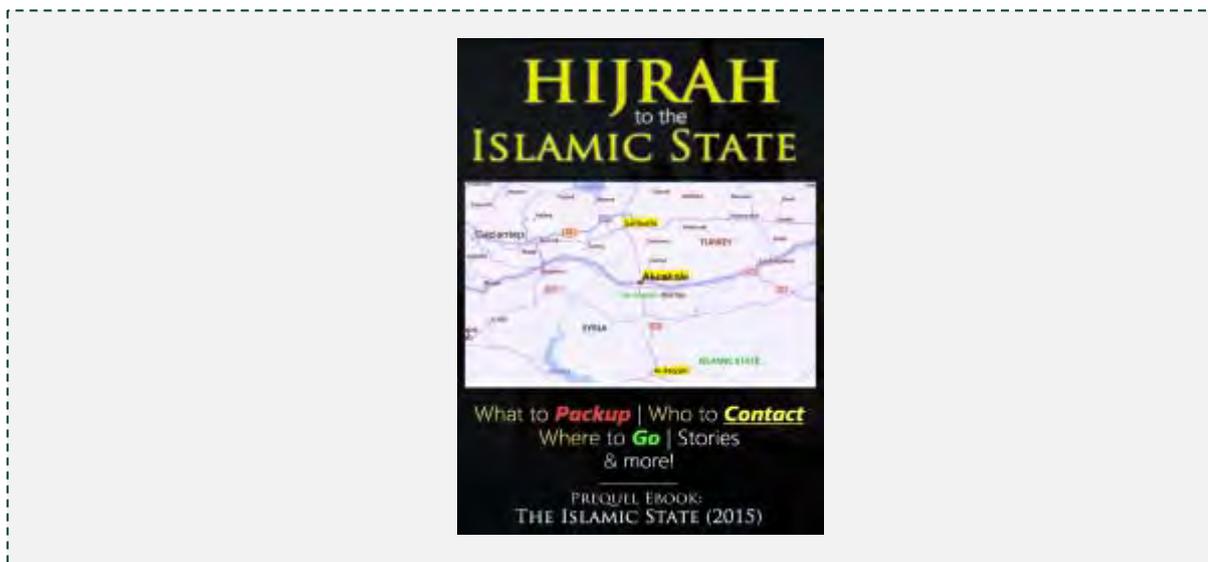
Left: The ancient city of Al-Hadr (Al-Ahed, March 8, 2015). Right: Tell Nimrud antiquities before being destroyed (Al-Arabiya TV, March 6, 2015)

Security guidelines for foreign fighters who join the ranks of ISIS

■ **ISIS published a fifty-page booklet distributed online under the name of “Hijrah to the Islamic State, 2015”.** The English-language booklet is a **guide for foreign fighters from Western countries who want to join the ranks of ISIS.** The booklet includes, among other things, recommendations for the **preferred transit routes from Turkey to Syria, and notes that traveling via Turkey has recently become more difficult.**

■ **According to the recommendations, it’s better to fly to Greece or Spain and from there to Turkey, rather than fly directly to Turkey.** The booklet recommends purchasing a round-trip airline ticket so as not to arouse the suspicion of the

authorities. It also advises foreign fighters **not to inform their families of their intention to go to Syria** and join the ranks of ISIS.



The cover of the guide for those interested in going to fight in the ranks of the Islamic State

Western European countries have recently tightened their supervision of citizens who travel to Syria. Turkey has also tightened its supervision of those entering its territory and of its border with Syria. ISIS's publication of security guidelines for foreign fighters suggests that these developments have forced ISIS and those joining its ranks to increase their precautions in order to try to circumvent the preventive measures taken by Turkey and the West.

Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula

Counterterrorist activity by the Egyptian security forces

- Egyptian security forces continued their counterterrorism and preventive activities in the Sinai Peninsula. To that end, it was reported that the Egyptian Army carried out an extensive security operation in southern Rafah and Sheikh Zuweid. Terrorist operatives from Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis were arrested in the operation. According to the reports, several dozen Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis operatives were killed, homes were destroyed, and cars and motorcycles were confiscated (Al-Masry al-Youm, March 6, 2015, Al-Youm al-Sabea, March 7, 2015).
- Egyptian security sources said that immediately after his inauguration, the **new Interior Minister of Egypt, Magdi Abdel Ghaffar**, took care to publish a number of decisions pertaining to Army and police officers in the northern Sinai Peninsula,

intended to ensure their safety and protect them from possible terrorist attacks against them. The decisions included closing their Facebook and Twitter accounts and permitting them to live only in neighborhoods intended for Army and police officers exclusively (Dot Misr, March 6, 2015).

The global jihad in other countries

Boko Haram pledged allegiance to ISIS

- On March 7, 2015, it was reported that **Abubakar Shekau, leader of Boko Haram, which operates in Nigeria, pledged allegiance to the leader of ISIS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.** The pledge of allegiance was published in Arabic and was distributed on a Boko Haram Twitter account. Following is the wording of the announcement: “We announce our allegiance to the Islamic Caliphate. We’ll hear and obey it in times of difficulty and prosperity, both when it is easy and when it is hard.” The announcement includes subtitles in English and French.
- The pledge of allegiance **was accompanied by a wave of terrorist attacks by Boko Haram, in which 54 people were killed and 143 injured.** Boko Haram, which claimed responsibility for the terrorist attacks, announced that they were carried out **in retaliation for attacks on the organization by the West African coalition forces** (Boko Haram’s Twitter page).



Left: The pledge of allegiance to ISIS by the leader of Boko Haram (Twitter, March 7, 2015). Right: The leader of Boko Haram (Bawabat al-Harakat al-Islamiyya website, September 25, 2014)

Boko Haram is an **extremist Salafist-jihadi terrorist organization operating in Nigeria** (its official name is *Jama'at Ahl al-Sunna lil-Da'wa wal-Jihad*). It was established in 2002 with the aim of **implementing Islamic religious law and preventing Westernization of its residents**. In 2009, the organization began an **armed revolt against the government of Nigeria**, and it now controls an area of about 50,000 square kilometers in the north. The organization is responsible for atrocities against the local population and for the abduction and murder of many civilians in Nigeria. Boko Haram's activity sometimes extends to neighboring countries (Chad, Niger and Cameroon). **So far, ISIS has not published an official statement accepting the pledge, as it did in previous cases (Libya, the Sinai Peninsula)**. Even if ISIS confirms the pledge, it is unclear **whether this will have any practical significance** (Will ISIS influence Boko Haram's activity? Will Boko Haram receive any practical assistance from ISIS?) In any case, **Boko Haram's pledge of allegiance could enhance ISIS's prestige and demonstrates that its ideological influence extends beyond the borders of Iraq and Syria**.



The Boko Haram insignia (Wikipedia)

Nine foreign workers in Libya were abducted by ISIS

■ Eight Libyans were killed and nine foreign workers were abducted in Libya on March 6, 2015, by ISIS operatives, who raided the Al-Ghani oil field south of Sirte. Four of the foreign workers who were abducted were from the Philippines, one was from Bangladesh and one from Austria. The nationality of the other three is unknown. According to the Libyan authorities, the nine were employed by an Austrian oil

services company. One of the organizations that pledged allegiance to ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack on the oil field (UPI, The Guardian, March 9, 2015).

Counterterrorism and preventive activity

Arrest of an operative in Germany who received militarily training in Syria

■ **Marc B. Karim**, 22, was arrested at the airport in Düsseldorf. According to the prosecution, Karim went to Turkey in March 2013. From there he went to Syria and joined the ranks of one of the jihadi organizations. He returned to Germany in early 2014 and in July of that year he returned to Syria. **According to the prosecution, he received military training in Syria and planned to carry out terrorist attacks** (www.radikal.com.tr, March 4, 2015).

■ According to the German interior minister, **to date, German security services have identified around 650 people who traveled from Germany to the war zones in Iraq and Syria**. This is in addition to around 1,000 German citizens defined as high risk, who are also liable to go there. **According to him, this figure, which is rising from one month to the next, reflects a similar trend in France and Belgium**. Conversely, he said that **in Britain** there has been a marked drop in the number of those leaving (www.thelocal.de, March 6, 2015)

■ In early 2014, the number of German citizens who went to Syria was estimated at over 200.² **This means that in the past year, the number of German citizens who went to Syria and Iraq has tripled. In the ITIC's assessment, this reflects the significant increase, which began over the past year, in the number of Western European nationals who join the ranks of ISIS.**

A female operative who recruited women into the ranks of ISIS was arrested in Spain

■ **Samira Yerou**, a Moroccan national, was arrested at the airport in Barcelona. Samira Yerou left Spain in December 2014, along with her three-year-old son. She was found in Turkey when she tried to enter Syria illegally. Her investigation raised suspicions that she recruited women from Europe and North Africa into the ranks of

² According to a report by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV), published in the German media.

ISIS. **According to the Spanish authorities, around one hundred Spaniards have joined the ranks of ISIS to date** (AFP, March 7, 2015).

Legislative changes in Britain

■ According to British Immigration Minister **James Brokenshire**, the British authorities **intend to enact new laws in an attempt** to prevent those who join the ranks of jihadi organizations from flying. The proposed law will enable the authorities to prevent airlines from carrying passengers, including children, if it is known that their intention is to join the jihadi organizations. The British security services believe that **six hundred Britons have gone to Syria and Iraq to fight in the ranks of jihadi organizations** (Reuters, March 9, 2015).

■ In early 2014, the number of British citizens traveling to fight with ISIS and global jihad organizations was estimated at **around 200-350** (a figure based on estimates of the British intelligence services, published in the British media). Hence the current estimate (around 600 Britons) reflects **a significant increase in the number of British citizens** (although it is possible that this trend has been curbed recently).

The battle for hearts and minds conducted by ISIS

ISIS's propaganda activities by means of Twitter

■ **ISIS makes excellent use of social networks, and Twitter in particular, to disseminate propaganda, recruit operatives, and promote terrorist attacks.** The following is evident from a comprehensive study carried out by a Brookings Institute think tank (www.cent.com, March 8, 2015):

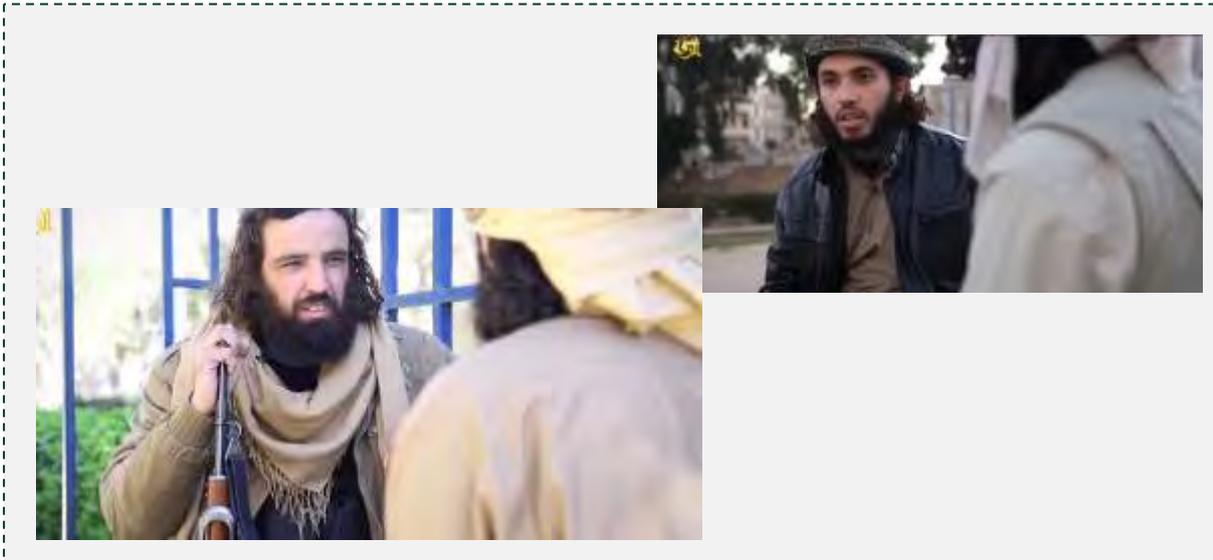
- Between September–December 2014, **ISIS managed to operate at least 46,000 Twitter accounts.** According to the study, which attempted to gain an in-depth understanding of the use of social networks, **many of the Twitter accounts affiliated with ISIS supporters are from Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the United States and Egypt.**
- In most of these accounts, **Arabic** is the main language. In a smaller number of accounts, **the language is English.** It is also evident that each account **has 1,000 followers on average**, a higher number than the average number of followers per account.

- Each such account posts an average of **50 tweets per day**. This is a **very large number of updates in comparison with other Twitter accounts**.
- Most of the ISIS's success on social networks is due to **relatively small groups of active tweeters, numbering between 500 and 2,000**, who update the network frequently.
- According to Twitter's managers, **extensive efforts are being made to block these accounts**. Since October 2014, thousands of ISIS-affiliated accounts have been blocked.

Due to the importance that ISIS attaches to the use of Twitter in the battle for hearts and minds, ISIS supporters recently threatened the lives of Twitter's operators. They claim that the reason for the threats is the network's practice of blocking accounts of people involved with ISIS. A post in Arabic uploaded to a file sharing website says **that the virtual war waged by Twitter against ISIS will lead to a real war against it**. They threatened that the Twitter operators "have become a target for the soldiers of the Caliphate and their supporters" (The Guardian, March 2, 2015). **ISIS has also provided its supporters with instructions on how to open accounts on social networks and to outwit those attempting to block them.**

ISIS is waging a battle for hearts and minds

- A video published by ISIS from the city of Al-Raqqah (the organization's stronghold in Syria) shows ISIS operatives **talking about the great importance of the media campaign in ISIS's struggle**. The operatives note that the media war **helps ISIS elicit widespread support among Muslims around the world; provides reliable information from the ground as a substitute for "the Western media distortions" and strengthens the fighters on the ground. The operatives call on additional Muslims to take part in this war** by using social media to disseminate information provided by ISIS (ISIS-affiliated website, March 8, 2015).



Left: An operative noting that those working for the Islamic State at the media level are carrying out jihad no less than those who are fighting on the ground. Right: Another speaker in the video glorifying the importance of ISIS's media war. He noted that this war is "halfway to victory".