Spotlight on Global Jihad
(June 4-10, 2015)

Main events of the week

■ **In Syria, ISIS continued its momentum of achievements** in several battle zones: **in the city of Palmyra**, ISIS is establishing its control and governance; in the **Al-Hasakah province**, ISIS claims that its operatives have reached the outskirts of the provincial capital, Al-Hasakah; **In the northern Aleppo province**, ISIS continues its military effort to take control of the rural area near the border with Turkey, and in **southern Syria** (**Daraa and Suwayda**), its operatives are fighting against the Syrian army and other rebel organizations (thereby posing a threat to the Druze population living in the area).

■ **In Iraq**, there were no significant developments this week: the Iraqi government claims to have local achievements in several attacks in the **Al-Anbar province** (where "pockets of presence" of the Iraqi army remained); **in the oil city of Baiji**, north of Baghdad, there is fighting between ISIS and the Iraqi army and Shiite militias (with both sides claiming to have achievements). ISIS, on its part, is making efforts to recruit members of the Sunni tribes in the Al-Anbar province into its ranks, in an effort to expand the wedge between them and the Iraqi regime, with its Shiite character.

■ **In Libya, the operatives of ISIS's branch are expanding their areas of control and influence.** This week it was reported that they **had taken over the city of Harawah**, in northern Libya, **about 70 km east of the city of Sirte**. Its operatives are approaching the oil fields located to the east and south of Harawah, and are liable to take over the oil infrastructure the way they did in Syria and Iraq.

The international campaign against ISIS

US and coalition airstrikes

■ This week, the US and coalition forces continued their airstrikes against ISIS targets. During the week, dozens of airstrikes were carried out in Syria and Iraq. The airstrikes were carried out using combat aircraft, attack aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles. Following are the main airstrikes (CENTCOM website):

- **Syria** - the airstrikes were concentrated in the areas of Al-Hasakah, Deir al-Zor, Aleppo, Al-Raqqah and Kobani. The airstrikes targeted ISIS tactical units, battle positions, armored vehicles, artillery positions, and weapons (including rockets).

- **Iraq** - the airstrikes were carried out in the areas of Al-Baghdadi, Hawija, Rutba, Baiji, Fallujah, Kirkuk, Mosul, Ramadi, Sinjar, Tal Afar, Al-Qaim, Makhmur, Habbaniyah and Haditha. The airstrikes reportedly damaged ISIS battle positions, a facility for the production of car bombs, vehicles and heavy machinery, motorcycles, artillery positions, weapons and buildings.

According to data provided by the Central Command of the US Army (CENTCOM), as at May 8, 2015, the coalition forces led by the US had carried out **6,278 attacks in Syria and Iraq.** The airstrikes damaged or destroyed a total of 77 tanks, 288 armored vehicles, 427 staging areas, 1,415 fighting positions, 1,779 buildings, 152 oil refining facilities, and 2,140 additional targets (US Department of Defense website, May 8, 2015).

Western statements about the campaign against ISIS

■ In a speech given by **US President Obama** at the end of the G7 summit in Germany, Obama says that the key to defeating ISIS is to improve training and provide more equipment to the Iraqi army. According to Obama, **the US is now rethinking several programs** aimed at increasing the Iraqi army's order of battle and improving its equipment. However, Obama says that the United States does not yet have a comprehensive strategy. He stresses that the US will continue to support the Iraqi army so that it will be able to carry out attacks and not merely be on the defensive. According to Obama, it will take time, but he is convinced that, ultimately, ISIS will be defeated and will leave Iraq (Fox News, June 8, 2015).

■ **On June 2, 2015, a meeting of representatives of the coalition countries against ISIS was held in Paris**, with the participation of 24 delegations. The representatives emphasized **that the campaign against ISIS in Syria and Iraq was a top priority, but the coalition must also address the spread of ISIS to other countries and take steps to defeat it**. In their opinion, only a political change in Syria will create the conditions necessary for dealing with terrorist organizations in that country, including ISIS. **French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius** said that the talks in Paris helped renew the coalition countries' commitment to defeat ISIS and that this is a long-term struggle (French Foreign Ministry website, June 2, 2015).
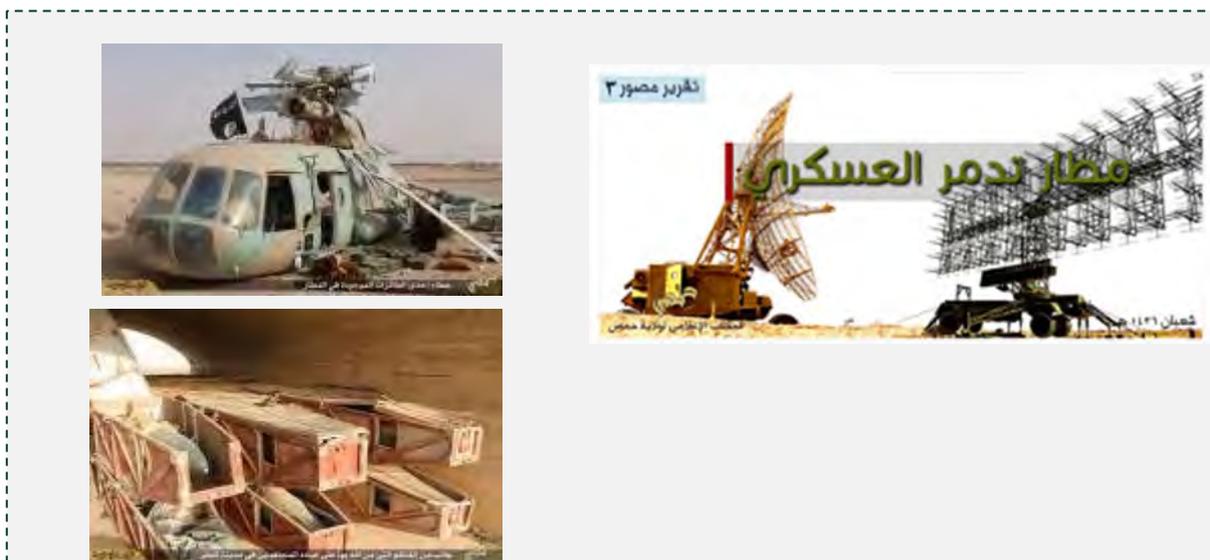
Main developments in Syria

Map of Syria (Google Maps)

Homs province

Palmyra and its environs

■ On June 4, 2015, ISIS's information office in the Homs province published photos of the **Palmyra military airfield** (near the city of Palmyra, which was taken over by ISIS). According to ISIS, it managed **to take it over from the Syrian army** on May 21, 2015 (Isdarat al-Dawla al-Islamiyya, June 4, 2015). The report on the takeover of the military airfield by ISIS requires verification.

Top left: Wreckage of a helicopter. Bottom left: Seized missiles. Right: Mobile radar systems which, according to ISIS, were seized at the military airfield (Isdarat al-Dawla al-Islamiyya, June 4, 2015).

■ At the same time, ISIS published photos allegedly indicating that daily life had returned to the city of Palmyra under its control (Isdarat al-Dawla al-Islamiyya, June 4, 2015).
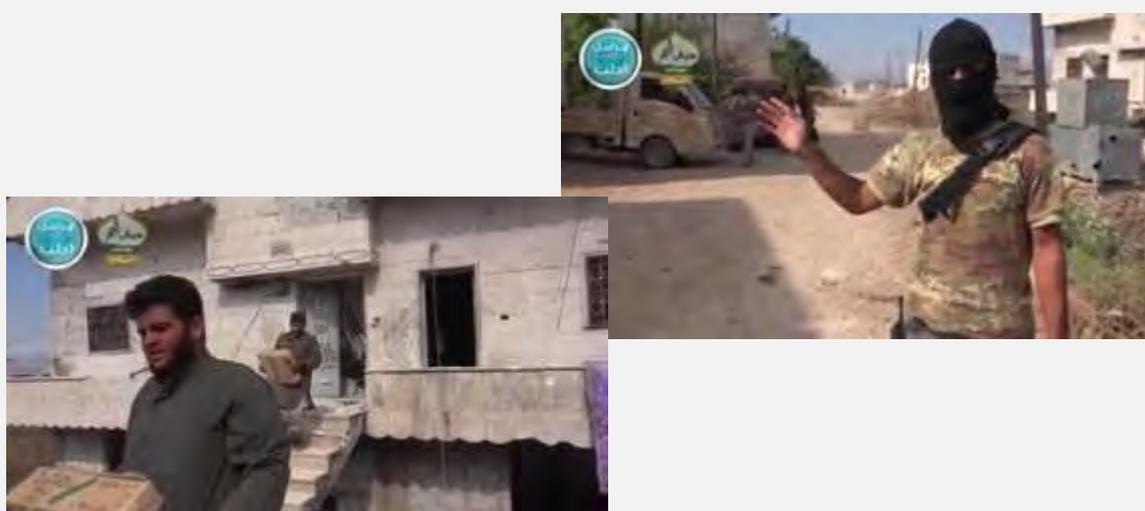

Left: Distributing water. Right: Repairing electricity lines (Isdarat al-Dawla al-Islamiyya, June 4, 2015)

The return to normal life is consistent with ISIS's modus operandi in every city that it manages to take over. ISIS takes care to quickly fill the governmental vacuum that has been created and to provide the civilian population with most of the services that enable it to maintain the routine of daily life (water, electricity, fuel, education). **In doing so, ISIS makes the residents dependent on it** and consolidates its control in the cities that it takes over. This activity is carried out concurrently with the

establishment of **alternative government institutions in the spirit of Islam** and the **brutal enforcement of Islamic religious law (Sharia) on the local population**.

Idlib province

■ The Al-Nusra Front and its allies (Jaysh al-Fatah) **continue their efforts to take over cities, towns and villages along the road from Idlib to Latakia**. This week (June 6, 2015), the Al-Nusra Front published a video stating that it has taken over a village by the name of Sanqarah, located north of the main road. The video shows Al-Nusra Front operatives carrying crates of ammunition that were seized in the village (Al-Nusra Front-affiliated website, June 6, 2015).

Left: Al-Nusra Front operatives carrying crates of ammunition that were seized in a house in the village. Right: Al-Nusra Front operative describing the takeover of the village (YouTube; Al-Nusra Front-affiliated website, June 6, 2015)

Al-Hasakah province

■ This week, there were clashes in the city of Al-Hasakah between ISIS operatives and the Kurdish militias (YPG). On June 4, 2015, it was reported that ISIS operatives had reached the **outskirts of the city of Al-Hasakah, the provincial capital** (syriahr.com, June 4, 2015). On June 5, 2015, ISIS published a **video** showing an ISIS operative at the city gate and stating that this is the entrance to the city of Al-Hasakah. The operative added that ISIS operatives were less than one kilometer from the Panorama Roundabout in the city (Isdarat al-Dawla al-Islamiyya, June 5, 2015).

The city of Al-Hasakah, capital of the province (Wikimapia)

Left: Control room of the power plant that ISIS claims to have taken over from the Syrian regime. The plant is located about 1.5 km south of the city of Al-Hasakah. Right: ISIS operative pointing to the southern gate of the city of Al-Hasakah (Aamaq, June 5, 2015)

■ Syrian army and Kurdish militia forces are participating in the fighting in the city of Al-Hasakah. According to Lebanese media reports, ISIS has applied heavy pressure on the Syrian army and so far has used 15 car bombs to attack its positions (Al-Akhbar, June 6, 2015). According to the reports, the Syrian Air Force has stepped up its airstrikes against ISIS targets in the area of Al-Hasakah and the Kurdish militias that control the city have reinforced their troops.

■ The Lebanese media (which is affiliated with Hezbollah) claimed that the Kurdish militias operating in the region would cooperate with the Syrian army in the war against ISIS. According to a subsequent report, the YPG headquarters firmly refused to do so. One of the commanders of the Kurdish militias said that the YPG

coordinated its activities **with the coalition countries and that the Syrian army and the Kurds were waging a separate campaign in Al-Hasakah** (Al-Akhbar, June 6, 2015).
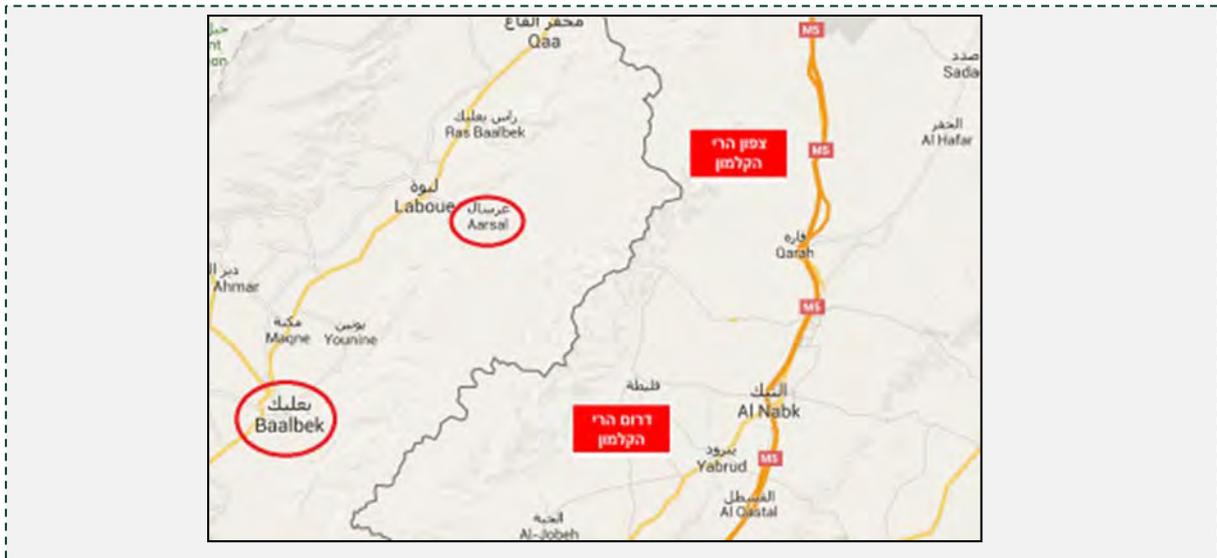
The Al-Qalamoun Mountains (along the Syrian-Lebanese border)

◼ **This week as well, fighting continued between Hezbollah and Syrian forces and the Al-Nusra Front and its allies in the Al-Qalamoun Mountains.** It appears that **the fighting is now focused on the northern part of the Al-Qalamoun Mountains**, on the ridges that dominate the Lebanese town of Arsal. According to Lebanese media reports, **Hezbollah forces have had achievements** in fighting over the past few days and have managed to regain control of large parts of Al-Qalamoun (Daily Star, June 8, 2015).

◼ **According to Hezbollah's combat information unit, the organization now controls 90% of the Al-Nusra Front's positions. This means that 512 of the 800 square kilometers that were controlled by the Al-Nusra Front and ISIS are now under the control of Hezbollah and the Syrian army** (As-Safir, June 9 2015). At the same time, the **Lebanese Army reportedly took control of the entrances to the town of Arsal** and is preventing "armed groups" (i.e., jihadists) from entering the town (Lebanon Debate, June 6, 2015).

◼ According to reports by the Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese media, **Hezbollah operatives, with the help of the Syrian army, took control of a large number of hills in the mountain ranges that dominate the town of Arsal** (Al-Akhbar, June 6, 2015). During the fighting, Hezbollah special forces reportedly broke into a cave used by **Abu Malek al-Tal**i, commander of the Al-Nusra Front in Al-Qalamoun, who escaped. Weapons and numerous documents were found in the cave (Daily Star, June 8, 2015). Abu Malek al-Tali and several other commanders reportedly fled into the town of Arsal and mingled with the Syrian refugees there (Al-Mustaqbal, June 9, 2015).

◼ On June 9, 2015, Hezbollah operatives warded off an attack by ISIS on Hezbollah outposts in the Baalbek ridges and Bekaa Valley on the Syrian-Lebanese border. This is the first confrontation between Hezbollah and ISIS since the fighting in Al-Qalamoun began (Al-Jazeera TV, June 9, 2015).

The battle zone in the Al-Qalamoun Mountains (Google Maps)

■ Hezbollah Secretary General **Hassan Nasrallah** mentioned the fighting in Al-Qalamoun in a speech given at the ceremony marking the thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of the Imam al-Mahdi Scouts youth movement. According to Nasrallah, **Hezbollah makes a distinction between the town of Arsal and the ridges that dominate it (in Syrian territory). In his view, responsibility for liberating the town of Arsal from the groups that have taken it over (i.e., jihadists) rests with the Lebanese Army and the state (and not Hezbollah).** On the other hand, Hezbollah is concentrating its fighting on the ridges that dominate the town of Arsal. Nasrallah stressed that Hezbollah was not an attacker, but rather a "liberator." According to Nasrallah, **Hezbollah's campaign in Arsal will continue indefinitely** until all the goals are achieved (Al-Manar TV, June 5, 2015).

Damascus area

■ According to media reports, **ISIS operatives formally withdrew from the Al-Yarmouk refugee camp** to the city of **Al-Hajar al-Aswad** (a city controlled by ISIS and located south of Damascus, near the Al-Yarmouk refugee camp). It was also reported that ISIS gave up its positions in the refugee camp to **the Al-Nusra Front** and to **Ahrar al-Sham** (Zaman al-Wasl, June 6, 2015). For the time being, there is no verification of the report that ISIS has withdrawn from the Al-Yarmouk refugee camp.

On April 1, 2015, many hundreds of ISIS-affiliated operatives attacked the Al-Yarmouk refugee camp located in the southern outskirts of Damascus. They clashed mainly with operatives of a Palestinian organization by the name of Aknaf Bayt al-Maqdis (i.e., Environs of Jerusalem) and with armed Palestinians from other organizations. In the first stage of the attack, ISIS operatives managed to take control of large parts of the

refugee camp (about 80%-90%), but were subsequently ousted from the areas under their control. In late April, Palestinian organizations (most of them supporters of the Syrian regime), apparently with the help of several rebel organizations, managed to regain control of part of the refugee camp occupied by ISIS. If the report of ISIS's withdrawal from the Al-Yarmouk refugee camp is reliable, this is further evidence of its weakness in the southern periphery of Damascus **and another achievement of the rival jihadi organization, the Al-Nusra Front.**

Aleppo province

◼ **ISIS's military efforts to take over the rural areas in the northern Aleppo province continue.** This week, ISIS reportedly sent reinforcements to the northern periphery of Aleppo in order to take control of the city of **Marea**, reinforce its control in **Soran** and **A'zaz,** and proceed toward the **Bab al-Salameh** border crossing (see map) (As-Safir, June 4, 2015).

◼ The Al-Nusra Front and other rebel organizations reportedly took control of two villages located near the city of Soran, which is controlled by ISIS (Al-Quds al-Arabi, June 5, 2015). Syrian opposition sources claimed that more than two hundred Al-Nusra Front operatives had deserted their organization and pledged allegiance to ISIS in the northern periphery of Aleppo. It was also reported that in order to put an end to the phenomenon of desertion, Al-Nusra Front leader Abu Muhammad al-Julani published strict directives aimed at preventing any contact between Al-Nusra Front operatives and ISIS operatives (Damascus Now, June 4, 2015).

The rural areas in the northern Aleppo province, which ISIS is attempting to take over (Google Maps)

Southern Syria (Daraa and Al-Suwayda)

■ According to "Syrian opposition sources," **rebel groups have managed to regain control of the area of Al-Lajat, north of Daraa, after clashing with ISIS operatives**.[1] ISIS operatives reportedly **tried to block the main road in northern Al-Lajat in order to cut off southern Syria from Damascus**. The "opening shot" for the attacks carried out by ISIS was the detonation of a car bomb, with the goal of taking over the main road connecting the villages in the region (Al-Jazeera TV, June 3, 2015). According to Arab media reports, the Syrian regime controls most of the Al-Suwayda province (Al-Jazeera TV, June 9, 2015).

■ **On June 5, 2015, there were clashes between the Syrian regime and ISIS in the area of Khalkhalah, north of Al-Suwayda.** As a result, the regime's forces reinforced their positions near the military airbase in the area. ISIS's positions are just 8 kilometers away. **ISIS reportedly transferred operatives from Deir al-Zor and Homs to the south to fight in the area of Al-Suwayda**. The number of ISIS-affiliated operatives in the area i**s estimated at around 700** (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, June 6, 2015). **ISIS's progress towards Al-Suwayda poses a threat to the Druze population**, the dominant community in the region, and has **given rise to serious concern among that population**.

Daraa, Al-Suwayda and the Khalkhalah airbase (Google Maps)

■ On June 5, 2015, ISIS's Damascus province published a video showing an armed ISIS operative with an ISIS flag in the background (and another operative beside him). The speaker addresses the **residents of Daraa and Quneitra and warns them**

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[1] **Al-Lajat** is an area of volcanic rock that stretches from some 40 km southeast of Damascus to southern Syria. The name Al-Lajat means "refuge," because the area was once a hideout for asylum seekers, due to the fact that it is impassable.

against joining organizations that do not belong to ISIS. The speaker emphasizes that those who join these organizations will not be forgiven (Isdarat al-Dawla al-Islamiyya, June 5, 2015).

ISIS operative warning the residents of Daraa and Quneitra against joining organizations that do not belong to ISIS (Isdarat al-Dawla al-Islamiyya, June 5, 2015)
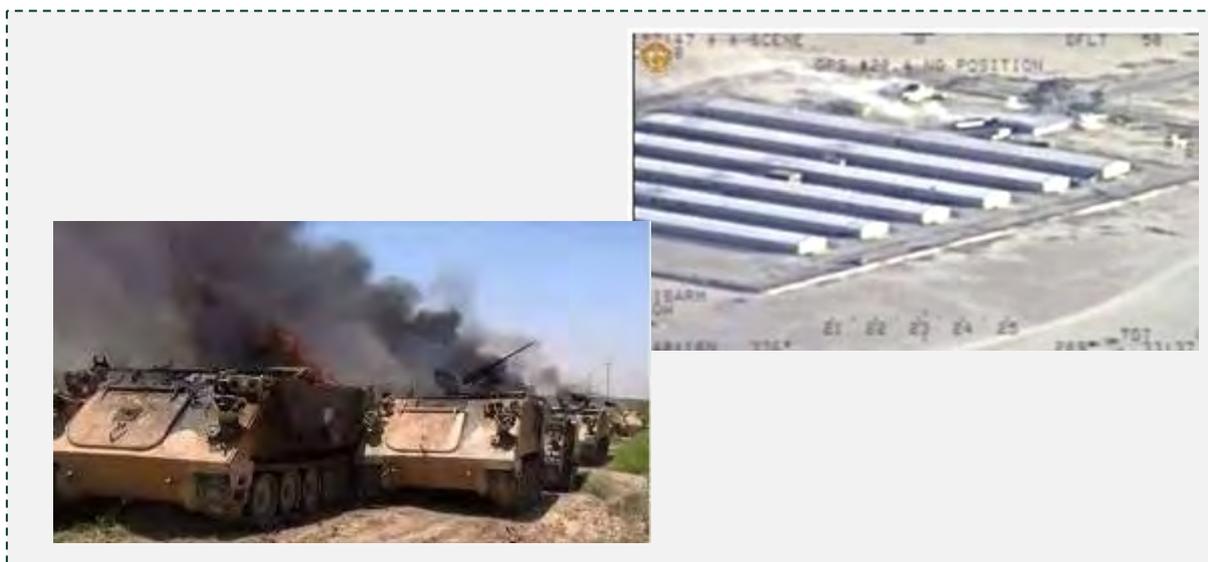
Main developments in Iraq

Map of Iraq (Google Maps)

Al-Anbar province

Iraqi Air Force airstrikes

■ On June 3 and June 5, 2015, the Iraqi Defense Ministry published videos documenting Iraqi Air Force airstrikes against ISIS targets in the Al-Anbar province (Iraqi Defense Ministry, June 3 and June 5, 2015). On June 3, 2015, Al-Iraqiya TV, which is affiliated with the Iraqi government, reported that about 300 ISIS APCs and Humvees, which were on their way to the area of Ramadi in Iraq, went up in flames (probably a result of an airstrike carried out against them). The report included a photo showing the APCs on fire (Al-Iraqiya TV's Facebook account, June 3, 2015). These reports require verification.
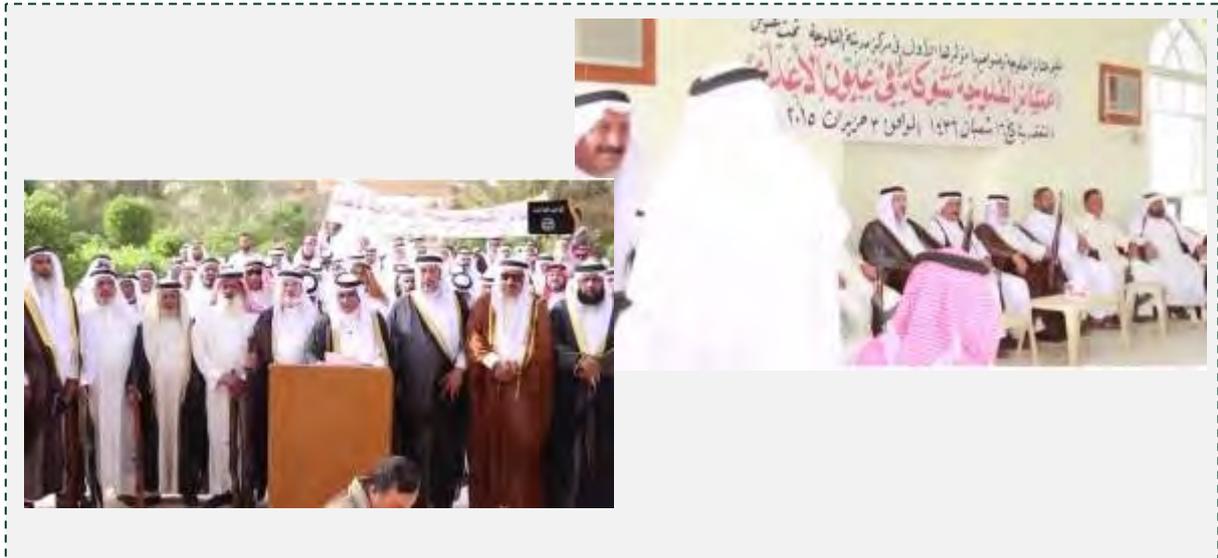
Left: Iraqi APCs on fire after being attacked from the air (Al-Iraqiya TV's Facebook account, June 3, 2015). Right: ISIS building attacked by Iraqi Air Force in the Al-Anbar province (Iraqi Defense Ministry, June 5, 2015)

The Ramadi area

■ On June 6, 2015, **ISIS operatives attacked the city of Hasibah near Ramadi**, which is controlled by the Iraqi army. The attackers reportedly withdrew from the city after several hours of fighting, leaving behind destroyed vehicles and five dead. According to the Iraqis, during the clashes, their forces fired Kornet anti-tank missiles, destroying four car bombs that ISIS attempted to use against them (Fox News, June 7, 2015).

Fallujah

■ On June 7, 2015, ISIS posted a video designed **to promote the recruitment of Sunni tribesmen from Fallujah into its ranks**. The title of the video: "The Tribes of Fallujah are a Thorn in the Eyes of the Enemies." The video shows tribal leaders in Fallujah expressing support for ISIS and warning against the Shiite-Iranian threat to the Sunnis in Iraq and throughout the Middle East (Isdarat al-Dawla al-Islamiyya, June 7, 2015).
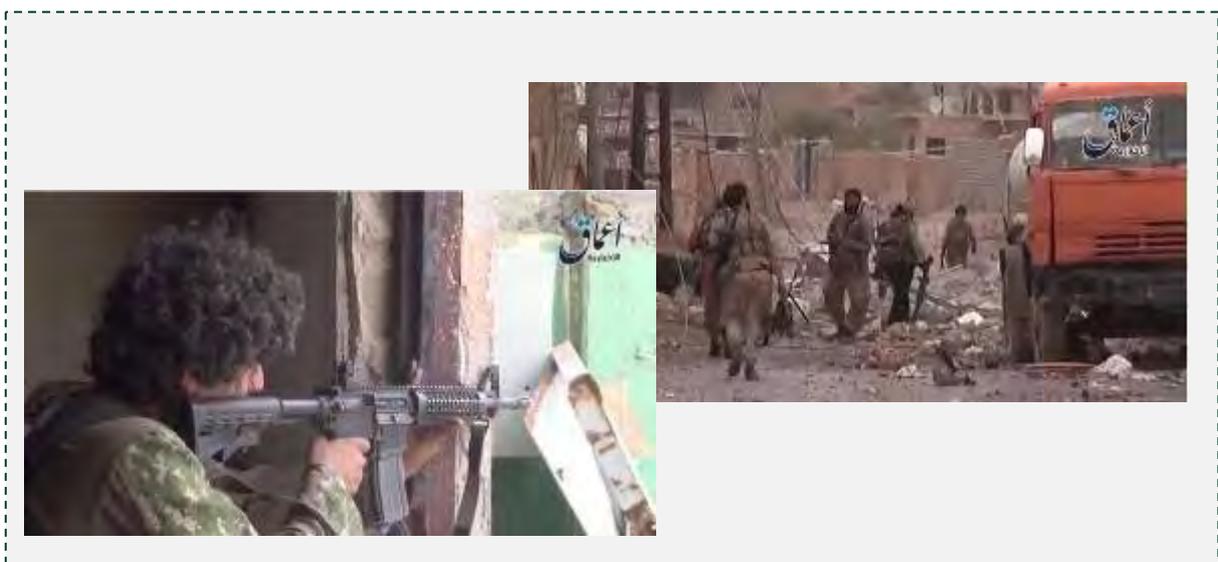
Tribal leaders in Fallujah expressing their support for ISIS
(Isdarat al-Dawla al-Islamiyya, June 7, 2015)
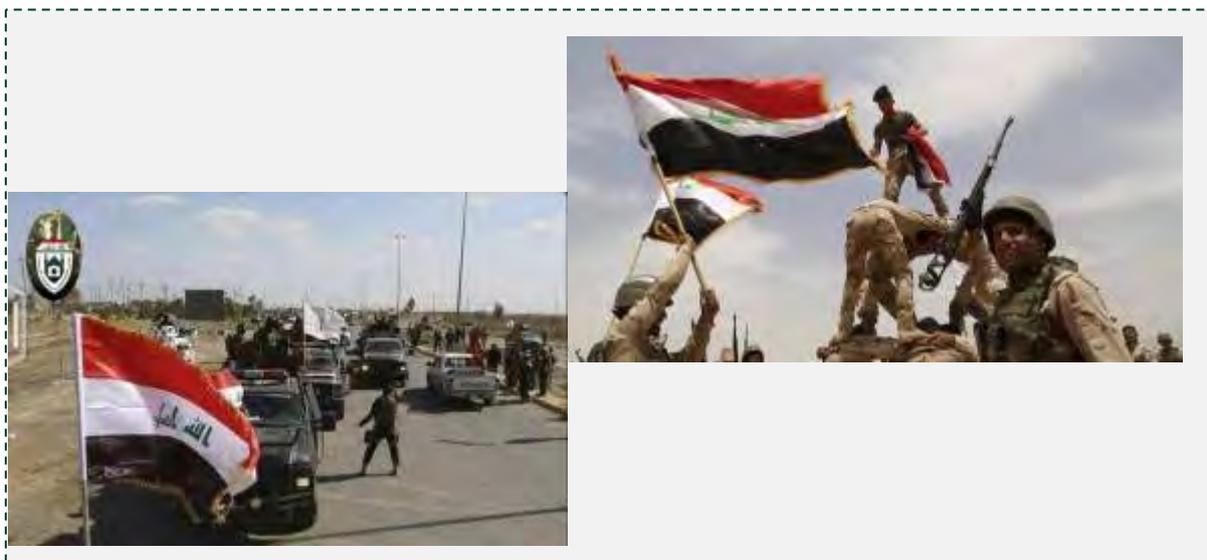
Salah al-Din province

Baiji

■ **The "war of versions" between ISIS and the Iraqi government about the control of the city of Baiji and its surroundings continues:** on June 5, 2015, ISIS's media arm released a video documenting the fighting in Baiji. The video shows ISIS operatives in the city of Baiji itself (not in the refinery compound). The video also shows damaged Iraqi army vehicles (Aamaq, June 5, 2015). On the other hand, the Iraqi army and Shiite militias that support the Iraqi regime published "victory photos" which, so they say, prove that they have fully liberated the city of Baiji.

ISIS's version

Left: ISIS operative firing a light weapon. Right: ISIS operatives in the city of Baiji
(Aamaq, June 5, 2015)
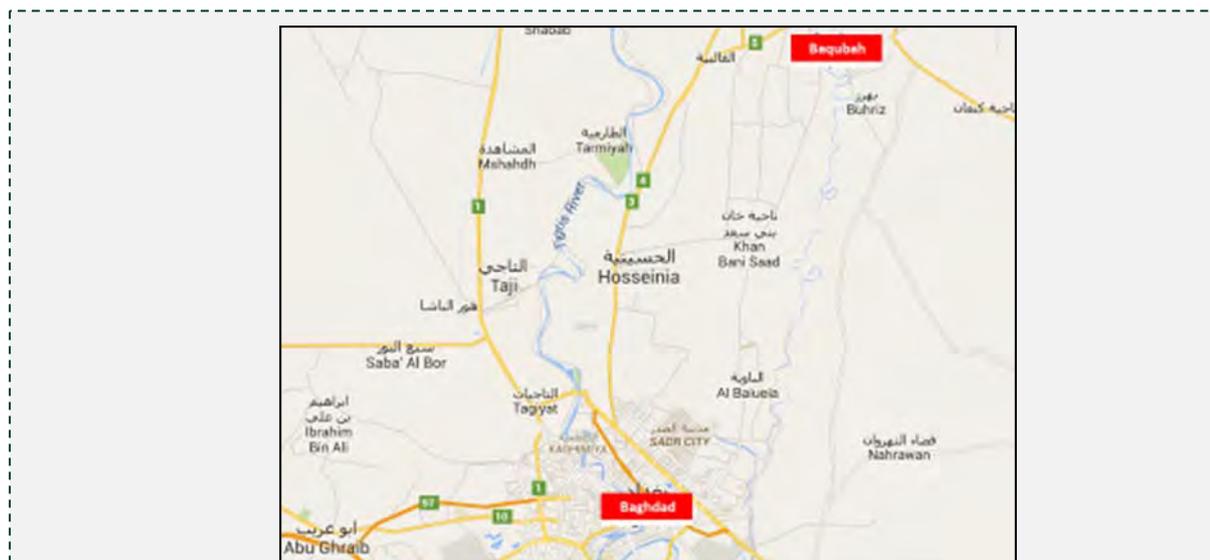
The Iraqi government's version

Left: Photo published by militia forces belonging to the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), ostensibly indicating that the Iraqi security forces have taken over Baiji (Twitter account affiliated with the Popular Mobilization Forces, June 6, 2015).[2] Right: The Iraqi army's "victory photo," which the army claims was taken in Baiji (The Iraqi army's Facebook page, June 7, 2015)

Diyala province (north of Baghdad)

■ **This week, ISIS carried out a number of serious attacks in the area of the city of Baqubah:** on June 3, 2015, 24 people were killed and 21 others were injured in a series of terrorist attacks carried out by means of IEDs in the city and its environs (Al-Bawaba, June 3, 2015). On June 6, 2015, a suicide bombing attack was carried out by means of a car bomb, southeast of the city of Baqubah. Fourteen people were killed (Sada al-Balad, June 6, 2015; iraq99.com website, June 6, 2015). At the same time as the suicide bombing attack, mortar shells were fired at the northeastern part of the city of Baqubah (al-Baghdadia, June 6, 2015).

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[2] **The Popular Mobilization Forces (Al-Hashd al-Shaabi)** - an umbrella framework of Shiite militias supported and controlled by Iran. In light of the weakness of the Iraqi army, these militias are the "spearhead" of the forces fighting against ISIS.

The city of Baqubah, north of Baghdad, site of bombing attacks by ISIS (Google Maps)

Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula

The battles between the jihadists and the Egyptian security forces

■ The Egyptian security forces continued their intensive security operations against the global jihad operatives in the Sinai Peninsula. Among other things, the Egyptian security apparatus thwarted a number of terrorist attacks that were planned for June 30, to mark the end of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's first year in office and the anniversary of the revolution (Al-Rai, June 6, 2015). During their counterterrorist and preventive activity, the Egyptian security forces uncovered large quantities of weapons, explosives, vehicles, and more.

■ On the other hand, intensive jihadi activity against the Egyptian security forces in the northern Sinai Peninsula continued. During the week, several members of the Egyptian security forces were killed and wounded in a number of terrorist attacks, particularly mortar fire and the planting of IEDs.

The Gaza Strip

Rocket fire from the Gaza Strip targeting the western Negev

■ This week, Salafist-jihadi networks were behind **two instances of rocket fire** from the Gaza Strip **to Israeli territory**. In these incidents, three rocket hits were identified:

• At 2300 hours on **June 3, 2015, two rockets were fired into the western Negev**. One fell in an open area in the region of the coastal city of Ashqelon and the other in the area of the Sdot Negev Regional Council (in the vicinity of the Gaza Strip). There were no casualties and no damage was caused.

• At 2130 hours on **June 6, 2015**, **a rocket was launched from the Gaza Strip into the western Negev**. The rocket fell in an open area in the Ashqelon region. There were no casualties and no damage was caused.

■ In both instances, responsibility for the rocket fire was claimed by **an ISIS-affiliated Salafist-jihadi network in the Gaza Strip calling itself the Company of Sheikh Omar Hadid – Bayt al-Maqdis**. **The rocket fire was presented as a protest against the activity of the Hamas security apparatus against them.** This was after a Salafist-jihadi operative named **Yunis Hanar** (according to another version, Yahya Hanar) was killed on June 2, 2015. He was killed during an attempt by the Hamas police to detain him after he refused to surrender. The rocket fire was preceded by an ultimatum to release the organization's operatives who were detained by Hamas (http://justpaste.it, June 3, 2015).

The leaflet published by an ISIS-affiliated Salafist-jihadi network, claiming responsibility for the rocket fire at the western Negev (http://justpaste.it, June 3, 2015)

The rocket fire from the Gaza Strip, carried out by ISIS-affiliated Salafist-jihadi operatives, **is contrary to the policy of Hamas, which seeks to preserve the truce with Israel**. The background for the rocket fire is the **tension between Hamas and Salafist-jihadi networks in the Gaza Strip**, which led to the detention of jihadi operatives and the killing of some of them. **In the ITIC's assessment, the rocket fire**

at Israel is designed to exert pressure on Hamas to release the detained jihadi
operatives and to ease the pressure on the jihadi networks in the Gaza Strip.

The death of a Palestinian from the Gaza Strip in the ranks of ISIS

■ On June 7, 2015, social networks reported the death of a Palestinian by the name
of **Muhammad Roqa** (AKA **Abu Anas al-Muhajer**) while fighting in the ranks of ISIS.
Muhammad Roqa arrived in Syria from the Shati refugee camp in western Gaza and
was killed in a coalition airstrike in the eastern part of the city of Al-Raqqah in Syria.
According to reports, Muhammad Roqa left Gaza three years ago for Lebanon and
from there he went to Syria to join ISIS. Prior to joining ISIS, Roqa was an operative in
the military arm of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades website,
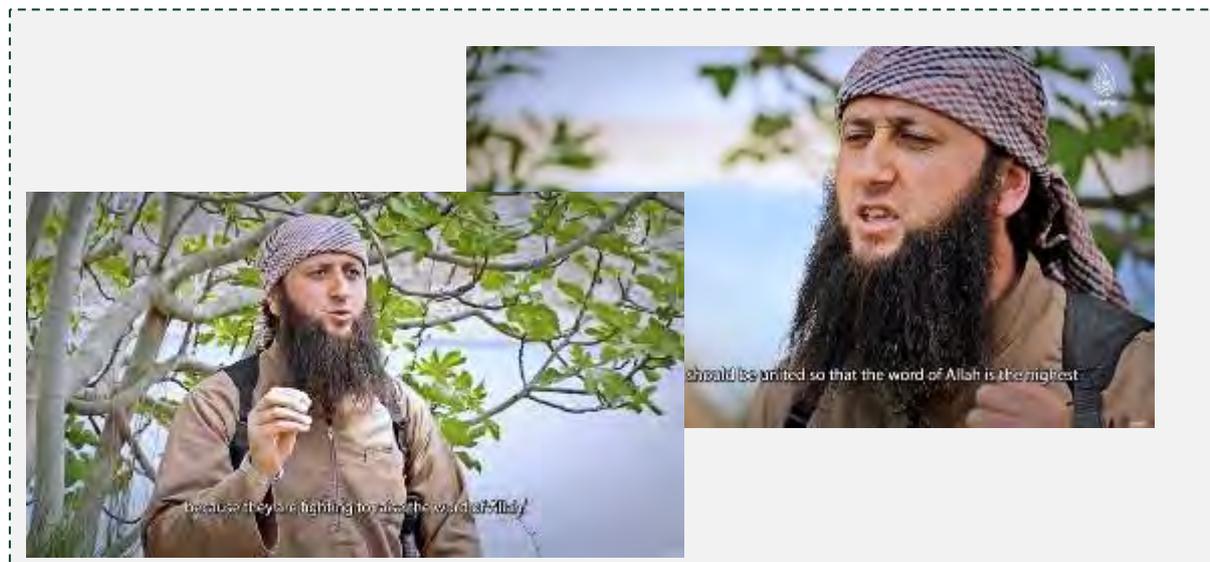PALDF, Fatah 1965 and YouTube, June 7, 2015).

الشهيد المجاهد: محمد روقة أبو أنس، تقبله الله من سكان مدينة غزة
استشهد دفاعا عن شريعة السماء في معارك الخلافة شرق ولاية الرقة

Muhammad Roqa in Syria (Watan 24 Facebook page, June 7, 2015)

The global jihad in other countries

The Balkans

■ **Al-Hayat Media Center**, the media wing of ISIS, **released a video in English
addressing jihadi operatives from the Balkans and calling on them to join the
ranks of ISIS in Syria and Iraq**. The video shows 12 ISIS operatives, presented as
fighters, who came to the Islamic State from **Albania, Bosnia and Kosovo**. Some of
them came with their families. In the video, one of the operatives relates the history of
the Balkans. After that other operatives appear, including operatives who identified

themselves as **Abu Jihad the Bosnian** and **Salah al-Din the Bosnian**, who explain why operatives from the Balkans should go to Syria and join ISIS.

Bosnian operatives in the video distributed by ISIS (YouTube, June 4, 2015)

Operatives from the Balkans began to join the Al-Nusra Front and ISIS in 2013. At that time, they were estimated at **several hundred**. However, **the current figure is probably higher**. They are Muslim foreign fighters, most of whom adopted Salafist-jihadi Islam in their native countries. In the past, Salafi leaders in the Balkans used to deny accusations that they were recruiting or sending fighters to Syria, claiming that those who go to Syria do so as individuals and not in an organized manner. However, in the ITIC's assessment, **organized recruitment activity is carried out in the Balkans among Muslims, in which jihadi operatives are located and sent to Syria and Iraq**. The return of these operatives to their home countries is liable to pose a **terrorist threat not only in the Balkans but also in the countries of Central and Western Europe**.
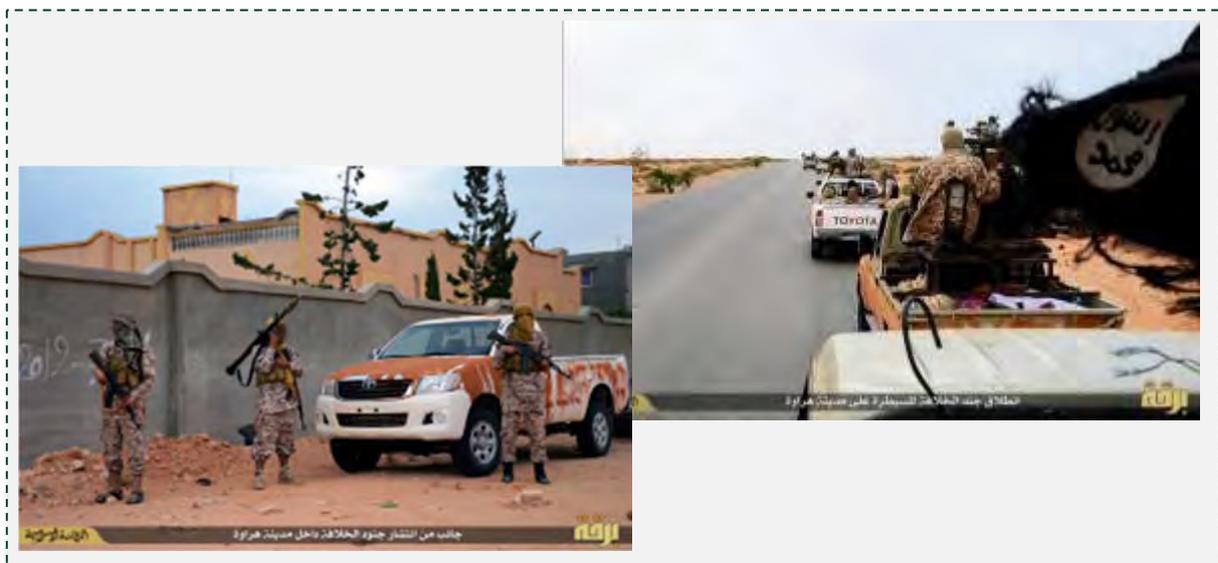
Libya

◼ **ISIS forces are expanding their areas of control and influence from the city of Sirte eastward. On June 4, 2015**, ISIS's branch in Libya (the organization of Jund al-Khilafah) managed to take over the city of **Harawah, located about 70 km east of the city of Sirte**. The takeover of the city came after successful negotiations between local leaders and ISIS operatives for the return of three local hostages who had been taken prisoner by ISIS. The takeover of the city was apparently made possible following the withdrawal of operatives of **Fajr Libya** (Libyan Dawn, an umbrella framework of Islamic organizations operating alongside the government in Tripoli). Their withdrawal
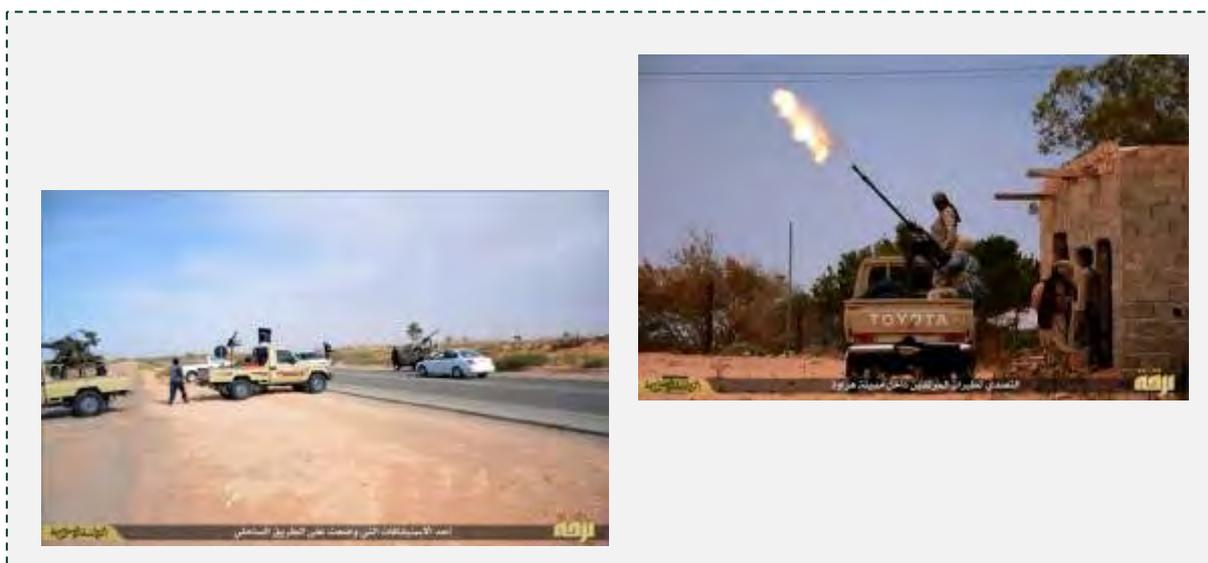
contributed to the local inhabitants' decision to surrender to ISIS (libyaherald.com, June 6, 2015).

The city of Harawah, about 70 km east of the city of Sirte (Google Maps)

Right: ISIS operatives on their way to Harawah. Left: ISIS operatives in the city of Harawah (Dump.to file sharing website, June 6, 2015)

Left: One of the roadblocks set up by ISIS on the coastal road near Harawah. Right: ISIS operatives firing at a Libyan government aircraft in the city of Harawah (Dump.to file sharing website, June 6, 2015)

ISIS's takeover of the city of Harawah has expanded its areas of control and influence in northern Libya. This apparently has economic significance: Harawah is just 120 kilometers west of **the oil port of Ras Lanuf.** In addition, ISIS operatives are approaching the **Al-Mabruk oil field**, located about 150 km south of Harawah, near which small forces of ISIS have already been seen (Ayn Libya, June 7, 2015). On May 30, 2015, ISIS forces entered **the area of Al-Jufra, in the center of the country, where there are oil fields**. Hence the various reports indicate that **ISIS's branch in Libya is trying to take control of the oil infrastructure, as ISIS did in Syria and Iraq, which would increase its financial, administrative and military capabilities**.

Harawah (left), Ras Lanuf (right) and the Al-Mabruk oil field (bottom): Will ISIS manage to take over the oil infrastructure in Libya as it did in Syria and Iraq? (Google Maps)

■ On June 3, 2015, **ISIS operatives in Libya abducted 86 Eritrean Christians** from a group of Eritrean refugees/infiltrators staying in western Libya. The hostages were taken by truck to an unknown destination. The information was provided by nine Eritreans who managed to escape from their abductors (Telegraph, June 4, 2015). **The hostages, or at least some of them, are liable to be executed by ISIS.**

■ ISIS published photos of masked operatives **beheading a soldier in the city of Darnah**, in eastern Libya, which is under its control. The execution was carried out before a group of children aged six to eight, in a plaza outside a mosque, and was intended, according to ISIS, for "educational purposes." The executed soldier was **Abdulnabi al-Shargawi**, from Bayda, a postal clerk who had enlisted in the Libyan Army. He was led to the town square, wearing orange clothing, and was executed. Photos of his execution were distributed on social networks by ISIS operatives (Daily Star, June 5, 2015).

Children watching the execution in Libya (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, June 3, 2015)

The United States

■ A policeman and an FBI agent in Boston shot and critically wounded a man who threatened them with a knife. The attacker is suspected of having been inspired by ISIS. The suspect, **Osama Rahim**, has been under close surveillance by the American security services for quite some time. During the attempted arrest, he threatened the security personnel, was shot and later died of his injuries. Osama Rahim was a member of a network that included at least two additional radical Muslims. The network planned to assassinate Pamela Geller, an anti-Islamist activist who heads an

organization by the name of the American Freedom Defense Initiative (New York Post, June 5, 2015).

Sweden

■ On June 2, 2015, Swedish police detained two people, one in the capital, Stockholm, as part of the police force's efforts to prevent the recruitment of young people to fight in the ranks of ISIS. One of the detainees is suspected of training recruits. It is estimated that **around 300 Swedish nationals have gone to Syria and Iraq to join al-Qaeda and ISIS**. Around 35 of them have been killed. **Around 80 of them have already returned to Sweden.** The Swedish government is reportedly planning to make it illegal for operatives to leave Sweden (Reuters, June 3, 2015).

The battle for hearts and minds conducted by ISIS

The sale of ISIS's organ by Amazon

■ In early June 2015, a British newspaper reported that copies of ISIS's English-language organ, Dabiq, could be found on Amazon.uk and were offered for sale to anyone. The price of each issue was GBP 27 and they were sent to buyers without shipping costs (along with a gift). According to the website, it was distributed by the **Al-Hayat Media Center, an important media arm of ISIS.** Dabiq is described as a periodical focusing on various topics including jihad, as well as filmed reports documenting events, and informative articles on topics related to ISIS. Similar periodicals are reportedly sold on Amazon's websites in the US, France, Germany, Italy and Spain (Daily Mail, June 7, 2015).

According to a BBC report on June 6, 2015, **Amazon has stopped selling the issues of Dabiq**. Amazon also announced that the periodical was no longer for sale.

The sale of ISIS's organ, Dabiq, on Amazon (from an article in the Daily Mail, June 7, 2015)

Dabiq is ISIS's English-language organ and is published monthly by the Al-Hayat Media Center. The organ includes a large quantity of propaganda about the Islamic State and ISIS's activity. It has published a call to kill "Crusaders" (i.e., Western civilians) in each country that has joined the battle against the Islamic State, as well as an article justifying the execution of American journalist Steven Sotloff.[3] **ISIS uses social media and Western media to spread its Salafist-jihadi propaganda and make it available to operatives who identify with ISIS.**
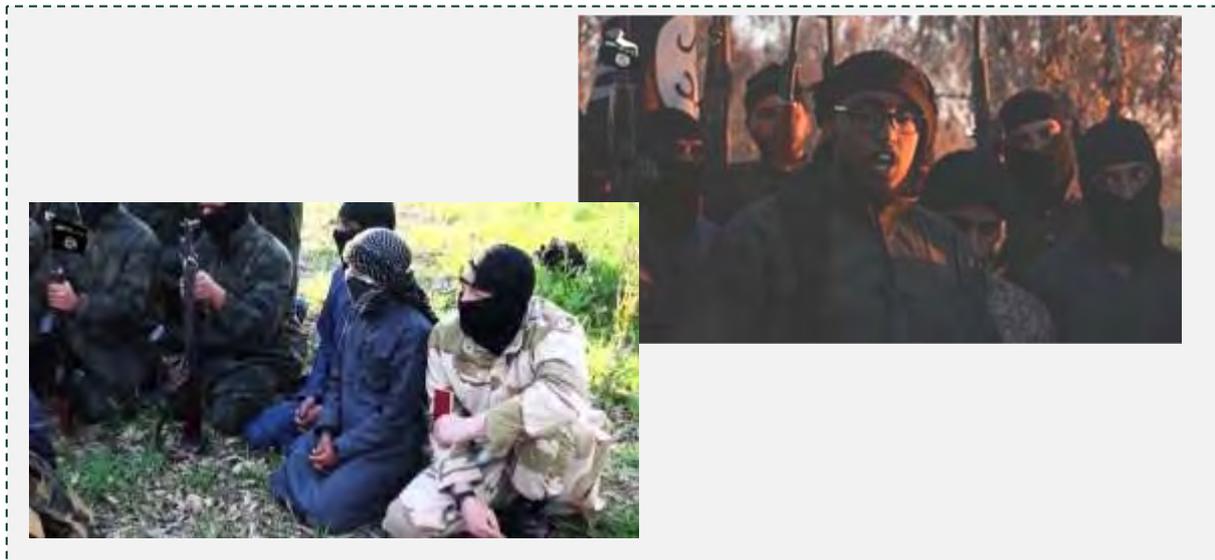
Threats to Jordan and the West

■ On June 7, 2015, a video was posted on YouTube showing ISIS operatives from various countries tearing up their passports, burning them and declaring that they have only one identity - Islamic. **The speakers also made threats against the leaders of Jordan, Canada and the United States.**

■ One of the operatives **is shown tearing up his Jordanian passport while wearing an explosive belt**. He declares that he has no need for a passport and advises his family and his relatives to go to Syria. Another young man, with a Jordanian passport, is shown **threatening the life of the King of Jordan:** "We say to the tyrant of Jordan, we are the descendants of Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi who are coming to you to slaughter (you)". Another operative, speaking in fluent English, says that he left his comfortable life to go to the Islamic State. He **threatened Canada and all the "American tyrants."**

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[3] For further information, see the ITIC's study from November 27, 2014: "ISIS: Portrait of a Jihadi Terrorist Organization," pp. 248-249.

Left: Young ISIS operative with a Jordanian passport, threatening the life of the King of Jordan. Right: ISIS operative holding a Jordanian passport and wearing an explosive belt (YouTube, June 7, 2015)

Left: ISIS operative holding a European passport (possibly German). Right: ISIS operative speaking in fluent English threatening US President Barack Obama (YouTube, June 7, 2015)

Counterterrorism and preventive activity

Interpol has revealed the identity of some 4,000 foreign fighters who joined ISIS in Syria and Iraq

■ Interpol officials said that they have revealed the **details of more than 4,000 operatives who joined the ranks of ISIS in Syria and Iraq.** In September 2014, Interpol announced that it had **identified more than 900 such operatives**. This could indicate an increase in the number of those who join ISIS as well as an improvement

in the Interpol's ability to reveal the identity of the foreigners who join (Al-Arabiya TV, June 4, 2015).

Algeria

■ On June 5, 2015, Algerian intelligence services reported that due to the fact that **only 1,000 km of open desert separate ISIS's forces in Libya from the border with Algeria**, the Algerian military command ordered its forces to increase their air and ground patrols along the border. According to a "security source," the Algerian army facilitated the rules of engagement **to allow wider freedom of action to the forces in opening fire** on suspected terrorists in the border area. The army also sent 50,000 troops to reinforce the border area (Al-Khabar, June 5, 2015).

Morocco

■ **On June 3, 2015, Moroccan authorities announced the exposure of an ISIS-affiliated terrorist cell.** The cell consisted of nine operatives, who helped recruit volunteers to fight in the ranks of ISIS. It was mentioned that the cell provided logistical and financial support to fighters leaving the country. According to a security source, the exposure confirms that ISIS is determined to gain a foothold in Morocco using sleeper cells of Moroccan citizens who received military training from ISIS. It was also mentioned that this was the beginning of a period in which attempts would be made to carry out dangerous terrorist attacks in Morocco (Sky News, June 3, 2015).