



Spotlight on Global Jihad

(June 11-17, 2015)



Main events of the week

- This week, the Kurdish forces managed to capture the city of **Tal Abyad**, northern Syria (near the Turkish border). The battles in this area are supported by coalition force airstrikes. The takeover of the city and the border crossing to its north is perhaps ISIS's most severe blow since the takeover of Kobani (Ayn al-Arab). The Kurdish territorial achievements near the border may hamper ISIS's logistic system, which is based on the flow of foreign fighters via the border between Turkey and Syria.
- The Druze population living in the area of **Al-Suwayda**, southern Syria, is under twofold pressure by jihadi organizations: ISIS, which is attempting to take over the Khalkhalah airbase (north of Al-Suwayda) and the Al-Nusra Front and its allies, which attempt to take over the Al-Thaala airbase (west of Al-Suwayda).
- The Druze population in the northern Syrian Golan Heights (in the region of the village of Khader) fear that they will be taken over by the rebels, led by the Al-Nusra Front. Druze concerns have intensified as a result of the campaign, started by the rebels in the region of the village of Khader, and the massacre carried out by the Al-Nusra Front among residents of a Druze village (Kalb Loza), north of Idlib.

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 Kobani, Al-Raqqah, Deir al-Zor, Al-Hasakah and Aleppo. The airstrikes reportedly targeted ISIS

tactical units, battle positions, vehicles, motorcycles, weapons (including rocket system), ammunition, crude oil collection points, car bombs and more.

- **Iraq** - the airstrikes were carried out in Al-Baghdadi, Hawija, Baiji, Makhmur, Mosul, Sinjar, Tal Afar, Kirkuk, Ramadi, Al-Walid and Al-Qaim. The airstrikes reportedly damaged ISIS tactical units, battle positions, staging areas, machine gun firing positions, rocket launching positions, weapons, tunnels, buildings, bunkers, armored vehicles, and more.

The Pentagon recently revealed the costs of the US campaign against ISIS. According to these figures, since the beginning of the campaign against ISIS (September 2014) and up to the present (June 2015), **the US has spent over USD 2.74 US billion**. Airstrikes account for approximately 55% of the costs and weapons for approximately 25%. The rest of the costs were for missions and operations carried out as part of the campaign against ISIS (Thehill.com, June 13, 2015).

US statements about the campaign against ISIS

■ According to a spokesman for the **National Security Council**, the United States is considering a series of alternatives to raise the level of training and improve the equipment of the Iraqi security forces. These alternatives include sending US military personnel [to Iraq] for training purposes, focusing mainly on the Sunni militias. The number of US advisers and instructors **is currently around 3,000** (AFP, June 9, 2015).

■ According to **Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff**, the military campaign waged by the United States is based on training and equipping the Iraqi Army, along with airstrikes. According to Dempsey, the training base in the area of the Al-Anbar province will be expanded, and this will enable the American instructors to work with the Iraqi Army and with Sunni tribesmen who want to fight against ISIS. He adds that additional training bases can be set up in the area between Baghdad, Tikrit, Kirkuk and Mosul (US Department of Defense website, June 11, 2015). In response, **White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest** says that despite Dempsey's declarations, **the US has no immediate plans to build more military bases in Iraq** (Sputnik News Agency, June 11, 2015).

■ **Combined Forces Air Component Commander John Hesterman III** summed up the activities of the coalition so far in the campaign against ISIS. According to Hesterman, since the beginning of the airstrikes by the coalition forces (August 8,

2014), **ISIS's military capability has significantly decreased**, with minimal damage to local populations. The coalition's air power has helped the local ground forces regain occupied territory, remove a large number of ISIS operatives from the battlefield, and paralyze most of ISIS's oil refining capabilities (CENTCOM website, June 11, 2015).

Main developments in Syria

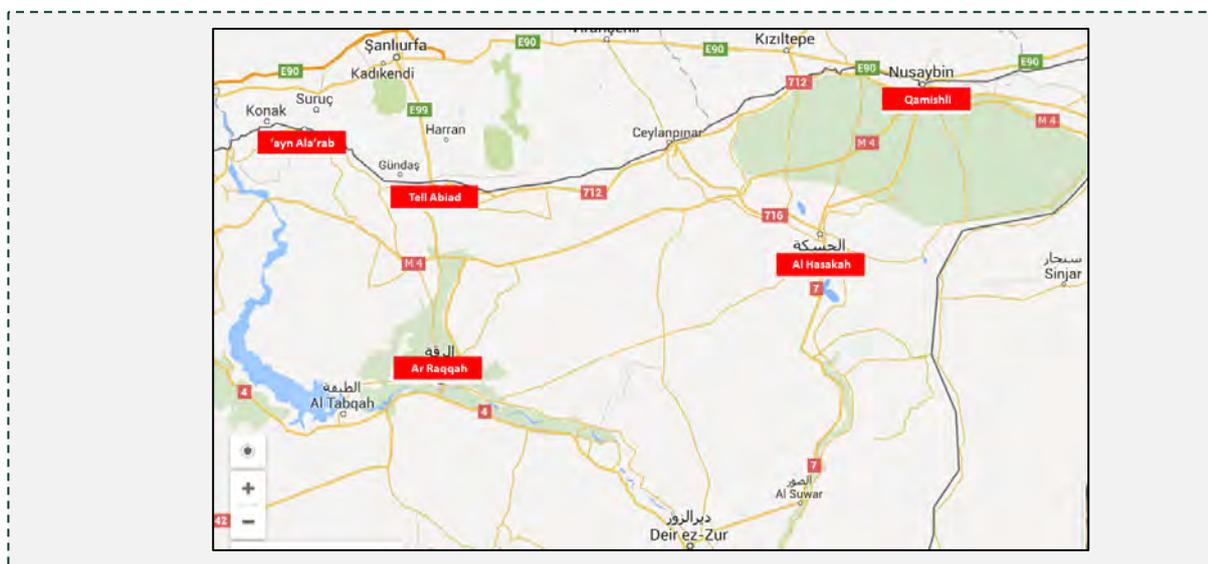


Map of Syria (Google Maps)

Al-Raqqah province: the fighting in Tal Abyad

- This week there were clashes between ISIS operatives and the YPG Kurdish forces **in the area east and southwest of the city of Tal Abyad**. This city is **located on the border between Turkey and Syria**, east of Kobani (Ayn al-Arab). It is situated near the **Tal Abyad border crossing**, which until recently was controlled by ISIS. ISIS operatives blew up two bridges in eastern Tal Abyad to prevent the Kurdish forces from advancing.
- On June 15, 2015, the Kurdish forces announced that they **had taken over the whole city of Tal Abyad**, as well as a significant portion of the highway between Tal Abyad and Al-Raqqah. Thanks to this achievement, the highway connecting Al-Raqqah and the Turkish border was opened, as well as the supply route from Al-

Hasakah to Kobani. ISIS operatives retreated to the city of Al-Raqqah, which is under ISIS's control (Al-Akhbar, June 16, 2015). In view of the battles in the area, thousands of residents reportedly fled to Turkey (syriaahr.com, June 14, 2015; Al-Akhbar, June 15, 2015). The Kurdish attacks on Tal Abyad were supported by coalition force airstrikes.



The cities of Qamishli, Al-Hasakah, Tal Abyad and Ayn al-Arab (Kobani), in northern Syria (Google Maps). The Kurdish forces strive to create territorial contiguity along the Syrian-Turkish border.

If the Kurdish troops manage to take over the city of Tal Abyad and the border crossing to the north of the city (which is under the control of ISIS), this would be an important achievement for them, the first of its kind since the takeover of the area of Kobani (Ayn al-Arab). **In the ITIC's estimation, the goal of the Kurdish forces is to create territorial contiguity in areas under their control, along the Syrian-Turkish border**, from the city of Kobani to the city of Qamishli. Such territorial contiguity would create difficulties for ISIS's logistical system, which is based on bringing in operatives to Syria via Turkey, and would facilitate communication between the Kurdish forces in Syria and the Kurds in Turkey and in the autonomous Kurdistan Region in Iraq.

Homs province

- On June 10, 2015, it was reported that ISIS operatives had blown up the Al-Furqlus gas pipeline near Umm al-Tababir, some 51 km east of Homs. This pipeline conveys gas from a gas field located about 110 km east of Homs. The gas is used for generating electricity for the city of Homs and elsewhere in Syria. The explosion reportedly disrupted the supply of electricity throughout the area, and electricity rationing was announced (As-Safir, June 10, 2015).

Idlib province

Continued fighting on the road to Latakia

■ **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.** The Syrian security forces are trying to halt their advance. On June 15, 2015, Al-Nusra Front operatives attacked Syrian Army positions in the east of the city of Jisr al-Shughur, in an attempt to infiltrate the staging areas of the Syrian Army in the Al-Ghab plain. The Al-Nusra Front and its allies also attacked villages located along the road to Latakia, between Ariha and Jisr al-Shughur. They made an unsuccessful attempt to take over the power plant in Zeitoun (Al-Akhbar, June 15, 2015).



The cities of Idlib, Ariha and Jisr al-Shughur and Mount Nabi Younes which dominates the area (Google Maps)

The massacre of the residents of a Druze village north of Idlib

■ On June 10, 2015, **Al-Nusra Front operatives slaughtered residents of the Druze village of Kalb Loza, located approximately 25 km north of Idlib** (near the border with Turkey, see map below). **Several dozen Druze were killed in the massacre, including sheikhs and children.** The Al-Nusra Front justified the killing by claiming that the residents of the region had revolted against the organization and refused to obey the orders of the local emir, **Abu Abd al-Rahman the Tunisian.** According to a (biased?) report in the Hezbollah organ, local residents were forced to send children to training camps and to permit the organization's operatives to marry local women, to expel the families of those killed from the Syrian Army and to confiscate their homes (Al-Akhbar, June 11, 2015).



The city of Idlib and the village of Kalb Loza to its north

- After the outcry following the massacre, the Al-Nusra Front's official media institution published an **unusual statement, expressing its regret for the incident**. According to the statement, **the incident was “a mistake”** and was carried out by operatives who violated the instructions of the organization's leadership. The statement said that the Al-Nusra Front would send a delegation to the Druze villages to assure the residents that this incident was in contravention of the rules and regulations. The statement also noted that **all those involved in the incident would be brought to trial for bloodshed before the Sharia Court** (Al-Nusra Front-affiliated Twitter page, June 13, 2015).



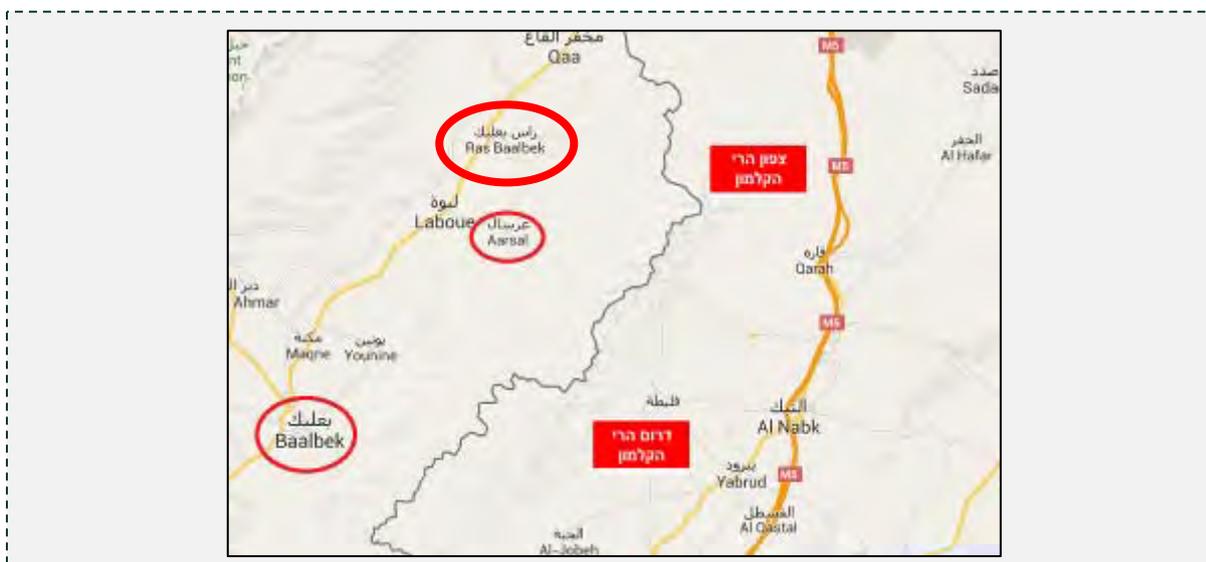
The Al-Nusra Front's message of regret and condemnation regarding the massacre in the Druze village of Kalb Loza (Al-Markaz al-Suhufi al-Suri, June 13, 2015)

The massacre in Kalb Loza exposed the true face of the Al-Nusra Front and harmed Abu Muhammad al-Julani's efforts to alleviate the Druze concerns. In an extensive interview with Al-Nusra Front leader **Abu Muhammad al-Julani** on Al-Jazeera TV, he refers, among other things, to the issue of the Druze residents in the territories occupied by the Al-Nusra Front. He said that there are Druze villages in these areas that do not support the Assad regime and are not fighting against the Al-Nusra Front and nobody is harming them. He claims that the Al-Nusra Front's activity among the Druze is carried out through preaching (*da'wah*), in an attempt to "teach them" where they deviated from religion and about "the errors in their faith."¹ However, **on the ground, things are different and this was well understood by the Druze population in Al-Suwayda and the northern Syrian Golan Heights, who feel threatened by the Al-Nusra Front and other jihadi organizations.**

The Al-Qalamoun Mountains (along the Syrian-Lebanese border)

■ **This week as well, fighting continued in the northern Al-Qalamoun Mountains between Hezbollah and Syrian forces and the Al-Nusra Front and its allies. The battles were concentrated on the ridges that dominate the Lebanese town of Arsal, in an area controlled by ISIS (Lebanon Debate, June 10, 2015). Hezbollah sources estimated the number of ISIS operatives taking part in the attacks on its outposts at **between 800 and 1,000** (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, June 10, 2015).**

¹ For the interview with Al-Julani, see the ITIC's Information Bulletin from June 1, 2014: "Al-Nusra Front Leader Abu Muhammad al-Julani said in an interview that his organization's overall goal was overthrowing and replacing the Syrian regime with an Islamic regime. He elaborated its military achievements, especially in the region of Idlib. Prominent were his attempts to represent his organization as pragmatic and different from ISIS." See also the ITIC's Information Bulletin from June 15, 2014: "In the second part of the interview granted by Abu Muhammad Al-Julani, he strongly attacked ISIS and refuted the rumors about his organization's intention to break away from Al-Qaeda, saying that the Iranians aspire to dominate the Middle East and reestablish the Persian Empire."



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

■ During the battles, ISIS attempted to take Hezbollah by surprise, by **moving the battles to the area of Ras Baalbek, north of Aarsal**. One of the most noteworthy attacks was carried out by ISIS operatives on June 9, 2015, against Hezbollah positions. The attack was unsuccessful, and **ISIS suffered heavy losses**, apparently including senior commanders on the ground (As-Safir, June 10, 2014). According to an Al-Manar TV reporter, fierce battles were waged on the Ras Baalbek ridges, in which ISIS operatives suffered a defeat and more than fifty operatives were killed (Al-Manar TV, June 11, 2015).²



Left: Hezbollah deputy secretary general Sheikh Naim Qassem, in uniform (which is rare for him) visiting Hezbollah fighters in the areas of Ras Baalbek and Aarsal (Nabatieh News Network, June 15, 2015). Right: Hezbollah firing and artillery position in the Al-Qalamoun Mountains (YouTube, June 10, 2015).

²The ITIC does not know how many losses were sustained by the Al-Nusra Front and its allies in the Al-Qalamoun battles. Hezbollah sustained scores of losses. According to the death notices published on the southern Lebanon news website, **the number of fatalities is 71**.

■ In a speech given by Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, he referred to the battles in the Al-Qalamoun Mountains. According to Nasrallah, the high ridges of Al-Qalamoun are now under the control of the Syrian Army and Hezbollah. He added that Hezbollah had made important achievements in the battles on the ridges dominating Aarsal. He said that on June 9, 2015, **hundreds of ISIS operatives attacked Hezbollah operatives in the area of Ras Baalbek** near the Syrian-Lebanese border, utilizing the element of surprise. He added that dozens of ISIS operatives were killed and wounded in this attack. Nasrallah ended his speech by saying that ISIS was the one that started the campaign in Al-Qalamoun and that it would continue as long as necessary until the objectives are achieved, whatever the number of victims (Al-Manar TV, June 10, 2015)

The area of Damascus

■ On June 10, 2015, the Al-Nusra Front published a communiqué calling on all the organizations in the rural area east of Damascus (Al-Ghouta al-Sharqiyya), and especially jihadi operatives, to **jointly set up the “Al-Fatah Army in Al-Ghouta al-Sharqiyya”** (Al-Nusra Front-affiliated Twitter account, June 10, 2015). **This call is intended to set up a united military force of rebels in Damascus, which could threaten the Syrian capital and regime, with the Al-Nusra Front being the dominant organization in the united force (like the force set up in the Idlib province and the Al-Qalamoun Mountains).**

■ **Some of the organizations refused to heed the Al-Nusra Front’s call.** On June 12, 2015, the “United Military Headquarters of Al-Ghouta” (an umbrella framework of the rebels) published a communiqué stating that **Abu Muhammad al-Fateh**, head of the headquarters, rejected the Al-Nusra Front’s call for joint military operations. The communiqué called on Al-Nusra Front operatives to join the umbrella framework headed by Abu Muhammad Al-Fateh. According to the communiqué, there is no need to establish a new framework, since there is already an operations room in the area that successfully coordinates the military operations of the various organizations (Al-Nusra Front-affiliated Twitter account, June 12, 2015).



Left: Communiqué of the United Military Headquarters in Al-Ghouta al-Sharqiyya (June 12, 2015).
 Right: Al-Nusra Front communiqué (June 10, 2015).

Aleppo province

■ **ISIS’s military efforts to take over the rural areas in the northern Aleppo province, near the border with Turkey, continue.** An ISIS-affiliated website posted a video of an interview with an ISIS operative, in the company of three armed men, on the outskirts of Umm Hosh, a town located about 23 km north of Aleppo. The speaker says that his operatives are preparing to take over Umm Hosh and then **“with the help of Allah we are heading for Aleppo”**. Later in the video, an ISIS operative codenamed **Abu Yusuf al-Shami** (i.e., the Syrian) appears, before carrying out a car bomb attack against a military camp in **Tall Rifat**, about 30 km north of Aleppo. The video also shows a car bomb explosion, allegedly carried out against **rebel forces who do not belong to ISIS, in Al-Shaykh Rih**, about 4.5 km northeast of Soran (Isdarat al-Dawla al-Islamiyya, June 12, 2015).



The various battle zones: the city of Soran and the towns of Tall Rifat, Umm Hosh and A-Shaykh Rih (Google Maps)



Left: ISIS operative Abu Yusuf al-Shami (i.e., the Syrian) before carrying out a car bomb attack in the city of Tall Rifat. Right: ISIS operatives on the outskirts of the village of Umm Hosh (Isdarat al-Dawla al-Islamiyya, June 12, 2015)

Southern Syria (the areas of Daraa and Al-Suwayda)

■ On June 10, 2015, a number of organizations announced the **start of the campaign to take over the Al-Thaala airbase, west of Al-Suwayda**. Groups of Al-Nusra Front operatives attacked the Syrian forces defending the airbase from several directions, but their attempts to take it over proved unsuccessful (Al-Akhbar, As-Safir, June 12 and 13, 2015). Opposition sources claimed that after blockading the Al-Thaala airbase, they managed to take control over large parts of it but not the entire airbase. According to Syrian media reports, forces of the regime sent reinforcements,

based on the homeland security forces, which repulsed the rebel forces (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, June 13, 2015).

■ There were no significant developments this week in the clashes between ISIS and the Syrian Army forces in the area of the Khalkhalah airbase, north of Al-Suwayda. However, the massacre of the residents of the Druze village of Kalb Loza, north of Idlib, carried out by the Al-Nusra Front, **intensified the sense of threat among the Druze residents in Al-Suwayda, who fear the collapse of the Syrian regime's forces and a takeover by ISIS, the Al-Nusra Front and other rebel organizations.**



The Druze in the area of Al-Suwayda are now under pressure from ISIS (from the north) and the Al-Nusra Front and other rebel organizations (from the west). The possible takeover of the Al-Thaala and Khalkhalah airbases, west and north of Al-Suwayda, would weaken the Syrian forces in southern **Syria and may place the Druze population in the area under a genuine threat of takeover by the jihadi organizations.**

■ In addition, the Druze who live in the village of Khader, in the northern Syrian Golan Heights, fear the campaign against the Syrian Army, which has begun in the region. Within the campaign, the rebel organizations led by the Al-Nusra Front strive to take over the village of Khader and its environs. According to Israeli media reports, the Israeli defense establishment is preparing for the possibility of an influx of Druze refugees seeking asylum in Israel (Haaretz daily, June 17, 2015).

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Main developments in Iraq

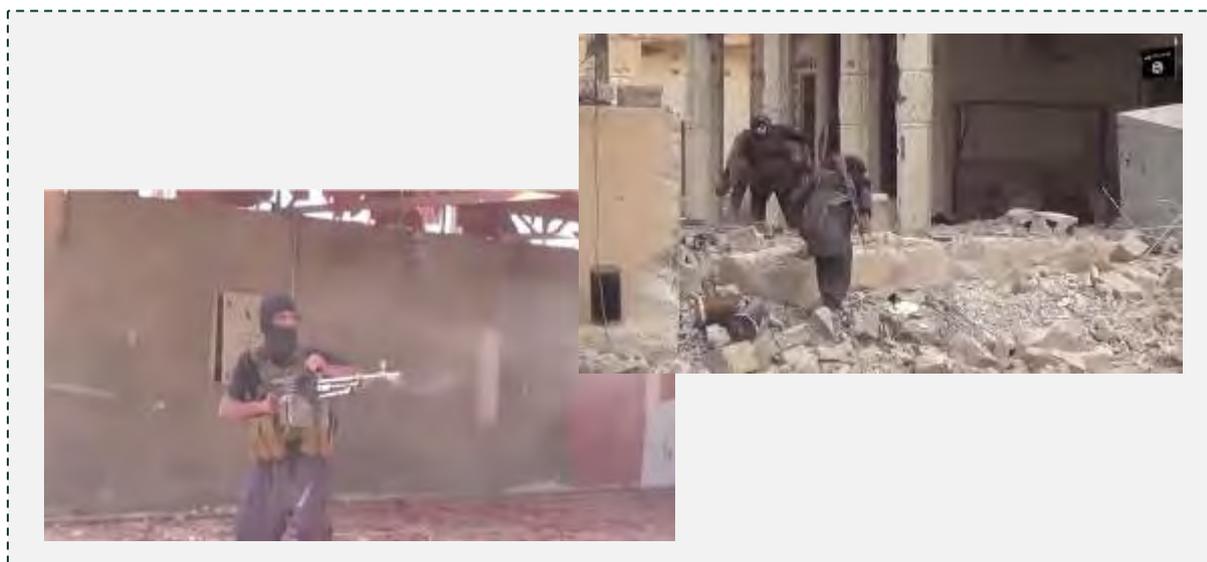


Map of Iraq (Google Maps)

Al-Anbar province

Ramadi area

- In the Al-Anbar province and around the city of Ramadi, local battles continue between ISIS and “pockets” of Iraqi Army presence. On June 13, 2015, Iraqi security forces reported that they had killed four ISIS operatives and destroyed an ISIS rocket launcher east of Ramadi (Al-Sumaria News, June 13, 2015).
- **ISIS is making an effort to leverage its takeover of the city of Ramadi for media purposes.** To this end, it issued a video entitled “Ramadi is the Cemetery of the Enemies,” documenting the takeover of Ramadi. It is unclear when the video was filmed. The video shows considerable destruction in the city, including damaged buildings previously used by the Iraqi Army, Iraqi Army casualties, and booty seized by ISIS from the Iraqi Army (YouTube, June 10, 2015).



Scenes of the fighting in Ramadi in a video posted by ISIS (YouTube, June 10, 2015)

- After the takeover of Ramadi, ISIS operatives installed giant screens in the city and showed videos expressing the threat that ISIS would take other parts of Iraq. The videos show soldiers being taken prisoner, young people training, and young people being encouraged to obey the laws of Islam (Reuters, January 14, 2015).

Salah al-Din province

The city of Baiji

- **In the city of Baiji and the refinery compound, fighting continues between the Iraqi forces and ISIS.** ISIS published photos of seven suicide bombers who carried out simultaneous car bomb attacks against Iraqi forces and Shiite militias in the Baiji refinery compound on June 13, 2015. The seven car bomb attacks were carried out by suicide bombers from Britain, Germany, Dagestan and Kuwait. They also included a Palestinian terrorist and an Uighur terrorist (a Chinese Muslim). One of the suicide bombers, codenamed **Abu Yusuf the Briton**, was identified as a young Briton of Pakistani descent.³

³ **Abu Yusuf the Briton** was identified by his family as **Talha Asmal**, 17, who ran away from his home in Yorkshire in March 2015 to join the ranks of ISIS. According to his family, which is of Pakistani descent, he flew to Turkey along with a friend, also 17. It is not yet known what happened to his friend (The Independent, June 14, 2015). **He was apparently the youngest British terrorist to carry out a suicide bombing attack. According to British intelligence estimates, at least 600 British citizens have gone to Syria and Iraq** to fight in the ranks of ISIS and other rebel organizations (Ilf and Al-Arabiya TV, June 15, 2015).



Three of the seven suicide bombers: Left: Abu Abdul Aziz the Palestinian. Center: Abu Siddiq the Turkmen (Uighur). Right: Abu Yusuf the Briton (Ilaf, June 15, 2015).

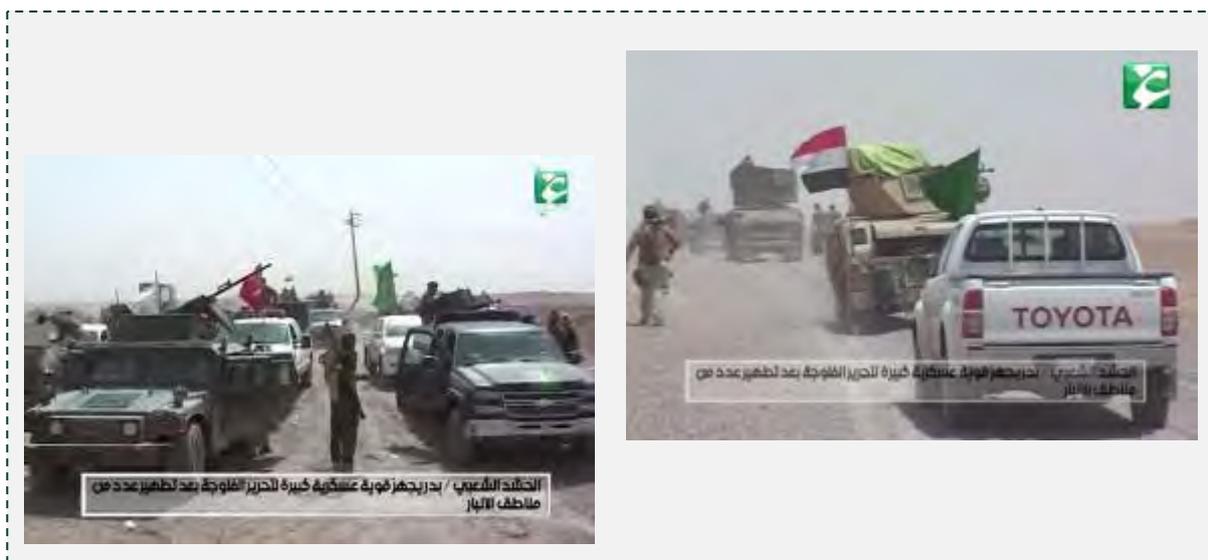
The use of suicide bombers is a widespread modus operandi of ISIS in which it has “specialized” for some years, since the time when it was Al-Qaeda’s branch in Iraq. ISIS generally precedes its attacks against its enemies by detonating car bombs by means of suicide bombers. As part of this modus operandi, ISIS customarily makes operational and propaganda use of foreign fighters, including **Arabs, Muslims and Westerners**. ISIS considers the foreign fighters to be suitable candidates for carrying out suicide attacks because of their ideological fervor on the one hand, and their lack of military experience on the other (which, in many cases, precludes their being sent to professional missions in the battlefield). ISIS also deploys local suicide bombers, both Iraqi and Syrian.

Tikrit

- The Iraqi Army announced that it repelled an attack by ISIS on June 13, 2015, northeast of the city of Tikrit. As part of this attack, ISIS intended to activate car bombs driven by suicide bombers. At least seven members of the Iraqi security forces and 25 ISIS operatives were killed in the battles (Sky News in Arabic, June 13, 2015).

Fallujah

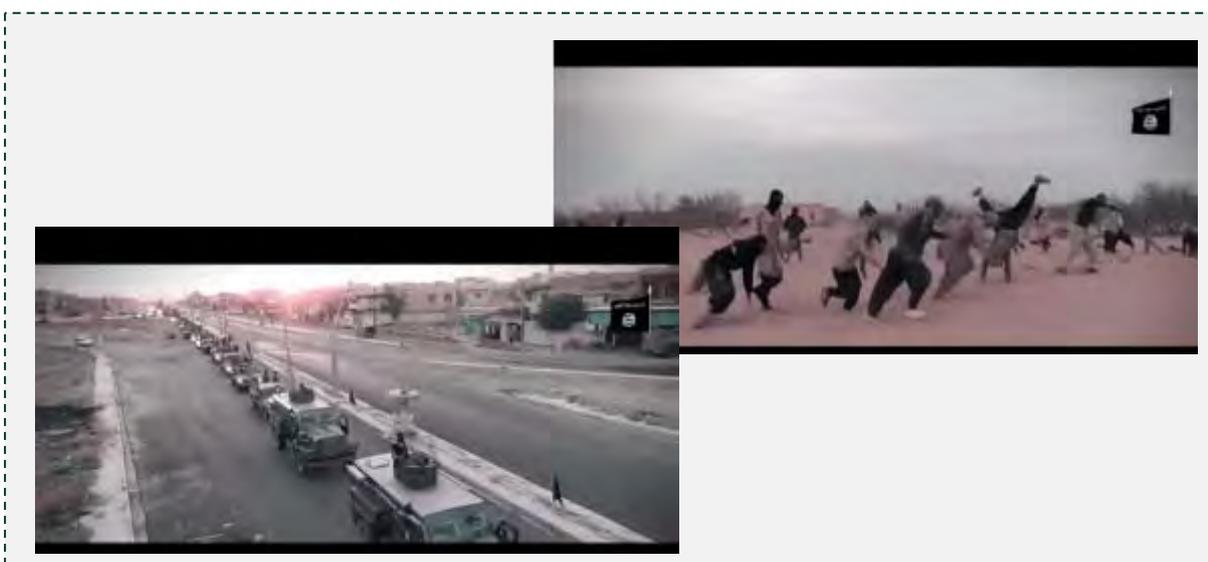
- Iraqi and Arab media claimed that the Iraqi Army and Shiite militias operating as part of the “Popular Mobilization Forces” planned to lay siege to the city of Fallujah, an ISIS stronghold. The Shiite militias reportedly reinforced their forces in the city and have hundreds of Iranian rockets that will be launched at Fallujah.



Shiite militias from the Popular Mobilization Forces preparing to carry out an operation against Fallujah (Al-Ghadeer TV, June 14, 2014)

The city of Mosul (Nineveh province)

■ On the first anniversary of the takeover of Mosul, ISIS issued a propaganda video about the takeover of the city, from the training stage, which took place in the desert between Syria and Iraq, until it stormed the city. According to ISIS, the city was taken over by a force of more than 300 of its operatives. These operatives broke into the city along three routes and were followed by more forces. The initial force carried out a bombing attack at a hotel where senior Iraqi Army officers were staying, by means of a truck bomb, and this sped up the takeover of the city. The video goes on to show ISIS convoys entering the city after the Iraqi forces had fled (YouTube, June 12, 2015).



Left: ISIS convoy entering the city after the Iraqi forces had fled. Right: Training to take over the city (YouTube, June 12, 2015)

Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula

The battle 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 security forces killed Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis operatives, detained additional operatives, detonated IEDs, destroyed terrorist infrastructure and confiscated cars, motorcycles and weapons (Dot Misr, Al-Masry al-Youm, Al-Youm al-Sabea).
- As part of their counterterrorism activity, the Egyptian security forces announced that they had detained senior operatives of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (ISIS's branch in Sinai). The detainees include **Ahmed Abdullah Salameh**, a senior operative from Sheikh Zuweid accused of killing a commander of the Egyptian forces in Rafah, and **Mustafa al-Shurbaji**, who, according to the Egyptians, is one of the main funders of the organization (Sky News, June 14, 2015). On the other hand, **intensive jihadi activity against the Egyptian security forces in northern Sinai 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 detonation of IEDs.
- A noteworthy incident this week was the shooting at Al-Jura Airport. On June 10, 2015, there were reports **of mortar shells and rockets falling in the area of the airport where the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) is stationed**.⁴ There were no casualties (Al-Arabiya TV, June 10, 2015). An Egyptian security source denied reports that the Multinational Force had been hit (Al-Watan, June 10, 2015). On June 10, 2015, an Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis-affiliated Twitter account reported that Al-Jura Airport, which belongs to "Crusader forces" that protect the Jews, had been destroyed (Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis-affiliated Twitter account, June 10, 2015).

⁴ The Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) was established in Sinai following the signing of the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt in 1979. The force was officially established in August 1981 and began its mission in April 1982, the official end of Israel's withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula. The force is responsible for upholding the military appendix of the Israeli-Egyptian peace agreement.



One of the Twitter accounts that posted claims of responsibility on behalf of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis for the shooting at the airport where the MFO is stationed (Twitter, June 10, 2015).

Assuming that the airport was indeed fired at, **this is the first attack by operatives of the Islamic State's Sinai province against the MFO in the Sinai Peninsula.** Up to now, its operatives have attacked targets of the Egyptian security forces but have refrained from attacking the MFO.

■ Another noteworthy incident is the **attack on an Egyptian M-60 tank by Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis operatives on June 14, 2015.** The attack took place at the Karam al-Quadis checkpoint in southwestern Sheikh Zuweid. **According to a report by Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, the tank was attacked with a Kornet anti-tank missile** (an indication that Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis is equipped with such an advanced anti-tank system). An Egyptian soldier was killed and another soldier was wounded (Al-Arabi al-Jadeed, June 14, 2015).

Terrorist attacks throughout Egypt

■ According to the Egyptian press, **ISIS has begun to carry out a plan, which it calls the “burning summer,” consisting of carrying out terrorist activities throughout Egypt.** In this context, an ISIS operative codenamed **Abu Khattab the Egyptian** called on its operatives to set up terrorist cells **and carry out attacks near tourist sites in order to harm “Crusaders”** (i.e., Western tourists), so that the Egyptian authorities would experience a “burning summer.” According to reports, one of the websites affiliated with jihadi organizations published a list of “targeted” tourist sites, including the Pyramids in Giza, the Karnak Temple and the Luxor Temple (Al-Watan, June 12, 2015).

On June 10, 2015, a terrorist attack was carried out in the plaza of the Karnak Temple in the city of Luxor, when three terrorists of Tunisian descent tried to break through a checkpoint leading to the site. Five people were injured, including a policeman. **The ITIC does not know the identity of the terrorists or their organizational affiliation.** No organization claimed responsibility for the attack. The possibility that the terrorists were inspired by ISIS cannot be ruled out.

The Gaza Strip

Rocket fire from the Gaza Strip targeting the western Negev

■ This week, an ISIS-affiliated Salafist-jihadi network calling itself the Company of Sheikh Omar Hadid – Bayt al-Maqdis was behind another incident of **rocket fire from Gaza into Israel**. The rocket fell inside the Gaza Strip. There were no casualties and no damage was caused. **This is the third incident of rocket fire in the past two weeks for which operatives of this network have claimed responsibility.** In the two previous shooting incidents, rocket hits were identified in the western Negev.

Deaths of Gaza Strip residents fighting in the ranks of ISIS

■ This week, two more names of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip who were killed in the fighting in the ranks of ISIS in Iraq and Syria were published. The fatalities:

- **Ahmed Khalil Mahmoud Badwan**, aka **Abu Tareq al-Ghazawi**, 26, from the Bureij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip. He joined the ranks of ISIS and was killed in the coalition airstrikes on the outskirts of Ramadi (Al-Anbar province, western Iraq). He reportedly left the Gaza Strip after Operation Protective Edge, went to Syria and from there to Iraq. **His brother was detained by Hamas on charges of belonging to a Salafist organization** (SAWA, June 9, 2015; PNN, PALDF and Maan News Agency, June 10, 2015; ISIS-affiliated Twitter account).



Ahmed Badwan during his stay in Syria in the ranks of ISIS (justpaste.it)

- **Wahid Maher al-Hu**, aka **Abu Abdallah al-Ghazawi**, 24, from Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip. He joined the ranks of ISIS and was killed in the coalition airstrikes in the northern part of the Syrian province of Al-Raqqah. He had reportedly studied education at Al-Zahar University in Gaza City and left the Gaza Strip about six months ago (Ebadalrhman forum, June 10, 2015).



Wahid al-Hu, operative from Gaza who joined ISIS (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account)



Poster issued by the Ibn Taymiyyah Media Center, announcing the death of Wahid Maher al-Hu, aka Abu Abdallah (The Ibn Taymiyyah Media Center's Twitter page, June 9, 2015)

The global jihad in other countries

Lebanon

- A Palestinian resident of the **Ein al-Hilweh refugee camp (near Sidon)** was killed in Homs while fighting in the ranks of ISIS. The Palestinian, **Ahmed Harish (?)**, aka **Abu Mus'ab al-Maqdisi**, detonated a car bomb near the Syrian security forces. At the Ein al-Hilweh refugee camp, loudspeakers announced his death and shots were fired in the air (Daily Star, June 15, 2015).

Libya

- On June 9, 2015, ISIS's branch in Libya announced that its operatives **had managed to take over the power plant west of the city of Sirte** (BBC in Arabic, June 9, 2015). This is further evidence of **ISIS's spread in the environs of the city of Sirte**.
- **In the city of Derna**, ISIS operatives apparently suffered a local defeat. A local Islamic organization by the name of "Majlis Shura al-Madina" announced that after a long struggle with ISIS, it had managed to take over a large area in the city of Derna. The organization's operatives reportedly took over the courthouse in the city and detained the commander of ISIS. The detainee is a Yemeni operative codenamed **Abu al-Baraa al-Azadi**, who was sent to Libya in 2014 by ISIS (Al-Arabiya TV, June 13, 2015).
- The Eastern government in Libya, which is recognized by the international community, announced that on June 14, 2015, the US killed **Mokhtar Belmokhtar**, an

Algerian-born jihadi operative, formerly identified as a senior Al-Qaeda operative. According to the announcement, he was killed in an airstrike. Several other jihadi operatives were killed along with him. The death of Mokhtar Belmokhtar in an airstrike is still unconfirmed (New York Times, June 16, 2015).

Yemen

■ According to security sources in Yemen, **Nasir al-Wuhayshi, leader of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)**, was killed on June 12, 2015, in the area of Hadhramaut, Yemen. He was killed in an attack carried out by the US by means of a UAV. According to a Twitter page and an AQAP-affiliated forum, Nasir al-Wuhayshi was killed in a US attack and two more operatives were killed along with him. The sources also said that **Abu Harira Qassem al-Rimi**, the organization's military commander, was appointed to lead the organization in his place. US officials confirmed that he had been the target of the attack but said that intelligence officials **have yet to verify his death**. Nasir al-Wuhayshi, 38, also served as deputy to Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri (CNN, June 16, 2015).

Afghanistan

■ **Mula Akhtar Mohammad Mansour**, deputy leader of the Taliban, sent a message to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, **warning him against calling for an uprising in Afghanistan**. ISIS has never officially announced its presence in Afghanistan, but recently there has been growing concern that it is trying to infiltrate the area. The message was sent after reports of desertions and a number of clashes between the Taliban and operatives loyal to ISIS. In the message, Mula Akhtar Mohammad Mansour stresses that the jihad against the US and its allies must take place under one flag and one leadership and that having multiple jihadi organizations is harmful for the jihad and for the Muslims (Al-Arabiya TV, June 16, 2015).

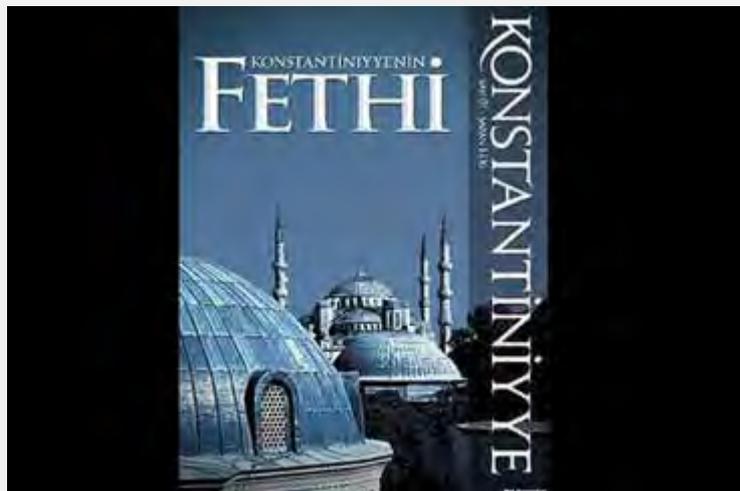
The battle for hearts and minds conducted by ISIS

ISIS's Turkish-language organ

■ **In late May 2015, ISIS launched the first issue of its Turkish-language organ**. The organ will apparently be issued on a monthly basis. The organ is called Konstantiniyye (Constantinople in Turkish, the name of Istanbul before the Ottoman conquest). The title page of the organ states that it is designed to provide readers

with access to Turkish translations of all the publications issued by the Islamic State. This in order for them to “gain a better understanding” of the Islamic State. The first issue contains articles dealing with the “liberation” of the Al-Yarmouk refugee camp and the aid provided by ISIS to the hungry children of the camp. The organ also deals with the “deficiencies” of Turkish democracy.

As part of the battle for hearts and minds conducted by ISIS, **it takes care to provide readers with informational and propaganda materials in their native languages.** To this end, ISIS publishes an **English-language organ (Dabiq)**, whose ninth issue recently came out. In order to expand the exposure to additional target audiences, **ISIS has begun to publish organs in Russian, French and Turkish.** These organs contain ISIS’s Salafist-jihadi messages, along with an attempt to show the “positive aspect” of ISIS and to **recruit more operatives for the organization.** Publishing organs in these languages can also attest to **the priority that ISIS attaches to the various target audiences in the US and Western Europe, Turkey, the Caucasus and Central Asia.**



The first issue of ISIS’s Turkish-language organ

Counterterrorism and preventive activity

ISIS's propaganda system may be encountering difficulties

- This week, it was evident that ISIS's propaganda system was keeping a relatively low profile compared with recent months. Expressions of this: fewer ISIS videos distributed on social networks; ISIS-affiliated websites and forums ceased operation (these include, among others: Shumukh al-Islam and Isdarat al-Dawla al-Islamiyya); ISIS's forum website, Al-Minbar al-I'lami al-Jihadi, became a subscribers-only website as of this week, thereby reducing the number of visitors.
- The ITIC has no information that could explain this phenomenon. It could possibly be attributed to the international struggle taking place against ISIS's propaganda system. It is also possible that the reduction in its activity stems from the fact that recently ISIS has not had any significant achievements that it is trying to leverage in terms of propaganda.