



## Main events of the week

- **The main event of the week was a suicide bombing attack carried out in Turkey in the town of Suruc, near the Turkish-Syrian border. More than 30 people were killed and many dozens were injured.** The attack was carried out during a gathering attended by hundreds of Kurdish activists, in support for the rebuilding of the Syrian city of Kobani, (which was liberated from ISIS by the Kurdish forces). According to Turkish sources, **ISIS was behind the attack.** ISIS itself has not yet claimed responsibility.
- In the Sinai Peninsula, **an anti-tank missile was fired at an Egyptian patrol boat off the coast of Rafah.** The ship sank but its crew was rescued. **The Sinai province of the Islamic State claimed responsibility.** The attack is the latest in a series of showcase attacks, some of them complex, carried out by ISIS's branch in the Sinai Peninsula against the Egyptian security forces. Egyptian efforts to eradicate the activities of ISIS's branch in northern Sinai have so far been unsuccessful. In the ITIC's assessment, ISIS will make an effort to expand its operations to additional **areas in Egypt itself.**
- In the battles **in Syria and Iraq**, there were no significant developments this week. The battles in Syria took place in Al-Hasakah (where ISIS reportedly made use of chemical weapons), the T-4 (Tiyas) military airbase, the area east of Latakia, and the area of Al-Zabadani. The main event of the week **in Iraq** was a car bomb blast carried out by ISIS in a Shiite town in the Diyala province (northeast of Baghdad), which killed over 100 people. In the Al-Anbar province, most of which is controlled by ISIS, attacks continued in several areas where there are still pockets of Iraqi Army forces and Shiite militias, with no significant results.

## The international campaign against ISIS

### US and coalition airstrikes

- Recently there has been an increase in the scope of the US and coalition airstrikes against ISIS targets in Syria and Iraq. Following are the main airstrikes (CENTCOM website):

- **Syria** - the airstrikes were concentrated in the areas of Al-Hasakah, Aleppo, Al-Raqqah, Ain Issa, Deir al-Zor, Kobani and Tell Abyad. The airstrikes reportedly targeted ISIS staging zones, tactical units, vehicles, heavy machinery, battle positions, bunkers and tunnel openings. In Al-Raqqah, leaflets were dropped urging groups to rebel against ISIS's rule, entitled "Freedom will come" (The Independent, July 20, 2015).
- **Iraq** - the airstrikes were concentrated in Fallujah, Baiji, Habbaniyah, Kirkuk, Makhmur, Mosul, Ramadi, Sinjar, Tal Afar, Hawija and Haditha. The airstrikes reportedly targeted ISIS tactical units, weapons, buildings, heavy machinery, battle positions, bunkers, buildings and tunnels.

## Training Syrian operatives to fight against ISIS

- According to a senior US official with access to the training program for Syrian fighters against ISIS, the first group of fighters has entered Syria from the training facility in Jordan. The US official said that the fighters, who number **a few dozen**, would form part of one of the units of the Free Syrian Army. The US Department of Defense declined to comment on the issue. It should be noted that the issue of training the Syrian forces by the United States is under investigation after US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter told the Senate Armed Forces Committee that the program, which began in May with an allocated budget of \$500 million, **had managed to recruit only 60 fighters to date** (Washington Post, July 15, 2015).

In the ITIC's assessment, the number of Syrian fighters who have undergone training by the United States to date, as part the campaign against ISIS, **is insignificant, from a broad perspective**. The recruitment of a few dozen fighters by the Free Syrian Army fighters **is not sufficient to materially affect its combat capability and the balance of power among the rebels**.

## Call by the British Prime Minister to fight against the phenomenon of radical Islam

- In a speech given by **British Prime Minister David Cameron**, he says that it is not enough to condemn ISIS or Al-Qaeda and that it is necessary to confront groups that call for violence. In his speech, Cameron addresses moderate Muslims in Britain and calls on them to fight against the phenomenon of radical Islam. He stresses that a distinction must be made between radical Islam and Islam as a religion, in order to

create a more cohesive state that will unite the young Muslims living in Britain (www.gov.uk, July 20, 2015).

## Main developments in Syria



Map of Syria (Google Maps)

### Al-Hasakah province

- According to senior commanders of the Kurdish units (YPG) in the Al-Hasakah province, the Kurds have managed to take control of several villages in southeast of Al-Hasakah. Kurdish forces also attacked ISIS operatives in the neighborhoods in the eastern part of the city of Al-Hasakah. According to reports, clashes in east Al-Hasakah still continue, and ISIS operatives are hiding in abandoned houses in the south and east of the city (aranews.net, July 18, 2015).
- According to reports by the Kurdish forces fighting against ISIS (YPG) and the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), in late June 2015, ISIS made use of **improvised 120 mm shells containing chemicals** in the fighting near the town of **Tell Brak**, in the Al-Hasakah province. According to a YPG spokesman, the type of substances used has not yet been determined and their use resulted in injuries but not deaths (Xendan Kurdish news website, July 18, 2015).

The reports of the use of chemical weapons in the Al-Hasakah province require authentication. In the past, Arab and Western media reported that ISIS had made use of chlorine gas against the Kurdish forces during the fighting in Kobani (Ayn al-Arab) in October 2014. It was previously reported that ISIS had made use of chlorine gas in Iraq as well. It seems that the use of chlorine gas is mainly for tactical-local reasons and its effect is mainly psychological.



The town of Tell Brak (Google Maps)

### The T-4 (Tiyas) airbase

■ During the week, clashes continued at the T-4 military airbase (Tiyas airbase). One of ISIS's media arms released a video from July 16, 2015, showing ISIS operatives firing artillery at Syrian Army forces concentrated at the military airbase (a3maqnews.tumblr; archive.org, July 17, 2015).



ISIS operatives shooting at the T-4 military airbase (a3maqnews.tumblr; archive.org, July 17, 2015)

■ **Liwa (General) Mohsen Makhlef**, commander of the 11th Division in the Homs province, was reportedly killed in the fighting. According to reports, Liwa Makhlef was a relative of Syrian President Bashar Assad on his mother's side (alarabiya.net, July 17, 2015). On July 16, 2015, an ISIS-affiliated website posted a video of **Naqib (Captain) Ra'if al-Ali**, a Syrian officer, describing the circumstances of his capture by ISIS in the area of the T-4 military airbase. He says that ISIS operatives ambushed a Syrian Army convoy that he was part of. The video then shows an ISIS operative with a child in uniform beside him, beheading the captive officer (isdarat.tv, July 16, 2015).<sup>1</sup>



Photos of the execution of the Syrian officer (isdarat.tv, July 16, 2015)

### The area of Idlib - Latakia

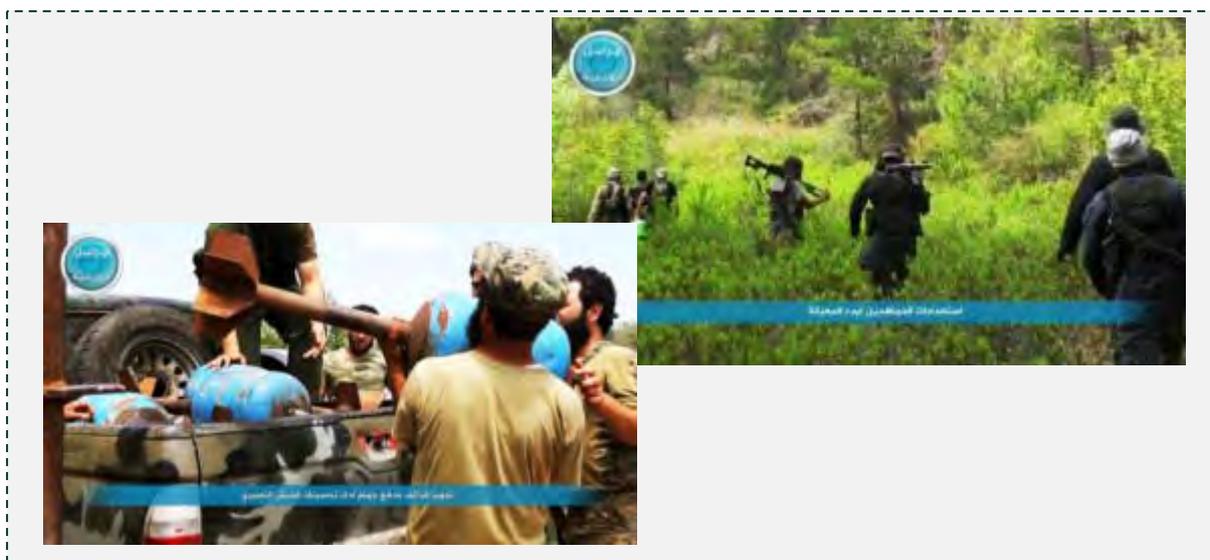
■ On July 20, 2015, there were reports of battles between operatives of the Al-Nusra Front and other rebel organizations and the Syrian Army **in the area east of the city of Latakia**. During the fighting, the Syrian security forces attempted to take over some territory in **Jabal al-Turkman**, to the east and northeast of the city. Syrian forces have managed to take over **Tel Uthman**, with artillery and air support. According to sources in the Al-Nusra Front, these are preparations for a larger attack planned by the Syrian Army in the region (Al-Arabi al-Jadeed, July 20, 2015).

<sup>1</sup> For further information about the use of children for military purposes, see the section on the conduct of the Islamic State



**Tell Uthman, the site of battles between the Syrian Army the Al-Nusra Front and its supporters (Google Maps)**

- On July 19, 2015, the Al-Nusra Front published photos documenting its operatives' preparations for fighting against the Syrian forces in Jabal al-Turkman (Al-Nusra Front-affiliated Twitter account, July 19, 2015).



**Photos documenting Al-Nusra Front operatives on their way to battle against the forces of the Syrian regime in Jabal al-Turkman (Al-Nusra Front-affiliated Twitter account, July 19, 2015)**

## Damascus province

### Al-Zabadani

- According to Arab media reports, Hezbollah and the Syrian Army have managed to take control of the Al-Sultani neighborhood, in the southeastern part of the city, and the main entrance to the city (As-Safir, July 15, 2015). According to later reports, the attempt by Hezbollah and the Syrian Army to advance toward the city from the west failed (alarabiya.net, July 18, 2015).



The city of Al-Zabadani, northwest of Damascus (Google maps)

### The rural eastern area of Damascus

■ In Al-Ghouta al-Sharqiya, the rural area east of Damascus, **disputes arose between Jaysh al-Islam and Al-Nusra Front operatives**. Armed Al-Nusra Front operatives attacked the security bureau of Jaysh al-Islam, seized weapons and detained Jaysh al-Islam commanders. In addition, a Jaysh al-Islam checkpoint was broken into and operatives were abducted (Twitter account of the Army of Islam, July 13, 2015).





The Shiite city of Khan Bani Saad (Google Maps)

- An ISIS-affiliated Twitter account reported on July 18, 2015, that **the attack was carried out by an ISIS operative codenamed Abu Ruqayah al-Ansari**. The attack was carried out in revenge for the massacre of Sunni Muslims in Hawija, in the Kirkuk province (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, July 18, 2015).<sup>2</sup>

## Al-Anbar province

- Fighting continues in the Al-Anbar province between the Iraqi military forces and the Shi'ite militias fighting alongside them, and ISIS operatives. The fighting is concentrated in several remaining pockets of Iraqi Army presence in the province, most of which is controlled by ISIS. Iraqi sources again reported that ISIS incurred many losses and that Iraqi Army was making preparations to defeat ISIS in the province, but the ITIC believes that **their reports are highly exaggerated**.
- The battle zones were as follows:
  - **Ramadi** - according to Iraqi sources, around 30 fighters belonging to the Iraqi Army and Shiite militias were killed on July 19, 2015, in an ambush set by ISIS operatives in the town of Husaybah, around 14 km east of Ramadi (aljazeera.net, July 19, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> On April 23, 2013, 54 demonstrators were killed and dozens were wounded by the Iraqi security forces, who broke into Hawija (southwest of Kirkuk) after the ultimatum that they were given to surrender those responsible for the killing of an Iraqi soldier stationed at a checkpoint elapsed. The event was dubbed the "Hawija massacre."



The town of Husaybah (Google Maps)

- **Al-Qaim** - according to an announcement by the Iraqi Army, several senior ISIS operatives were killed in the attack carried out in the city of Al-Qaim on July 15, 2015. According to the announcement, one of those killed was **Abu Osama al-Azzawi** (an Iraqi resident of Fallujah), Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's representative in the Al-Anbar province. In addition, a building from which suicide bombers who had arrived a short time earlier from Syria were deployed was blown up. Twenty-three of them were killed (Al-Arabiya, July 18, 2015).

## Salah al-Din province

### Baiji

- **The fighting in the city of Baiji between ISIS and the Iraqi Army is still ongoing.** On July 18, 2015, a Twitter account posted photos from the Salah al-Din province of ISIS, showing an anti-tank missile being launched at an Iraqi Army tank and destroying it in the city of Baiji. ISIS also reported the deaths of at least seven Iraqi soldiers in attacks against three Iraqi Army posts in the south of the city (Twitter, July 18, 2015).



Right: Missile being launched at an Iraqi Army tank. Left: damage to the tank (Twitter account, July 18, 2015)

- On the other hand, the Iraqi Army reported that its troops had uncovered a cache of American missiles in the area of the city of Baiji (Iraqi Army-affiliated Twitter account, July 20, 2015).



Right: Iraqi Army soldiers displaying seized American missiles. Left: The missile cache (Iraqi Army-affiliated Twitter account, July 20, 2015)

## Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula

### Attack on Egyptian Navy boat

- On July 16, 2015, an anti-tank missile was fired at an Egyptian patrol boat off the coast of Rafah. The ship caught fire and sank. The crew was rescued. According to the Egyptian Armed Forces Spokesman, in an exchange of fire with a number of terrorists off the coast of Rafah, a naval ship caught fire, but no lives were lost (Facebook page of the Spokesman, July 16, 2015). **The Sinai province of the Islamic State has claimed responsibility for the attack on an Egyptian Navy ship off the coast of Rafah.** According to the announcement, ISIS operatives managed to fire a guided missile at the vessel and damage it.

This is the first such attack carried out against an Egyptian vessel. The attack on the Egyptian Navy vessel is **the latest in a series of showcase attacks**, some of them complex, carried out by ISIS's branch in the Sinai Peninsula against the Egyptian security forces. In the ITIC's assessment, following the success of its operation in the northern Sinai Peninsula, ISIS will make an effort to expand its operations to additional **areas in Egypt itself**.



Right: Missile being launched at the Egyptian vessel north of Rafah and hitting it. Left: The Sinai province claim of responsibility for the attack (Twitter, July 16, 2015)

## The battle between the Sinai province of the Islamic State and the Egyptian security forces

■ During the week, the Egyptian security forces continued their intensive activity against operatives of the Sinai province of the Islamic State. The Egyptian forces reportedly attacked terrorist bases in the area of Al-Arish and Sheikh Zuweid, hit car bombs and motorcycles, blew up several houses and arrested dozens of operatives. They also set up many additional checkpoints in order to reinforce their presence in the region.

■ Despite the intense activity of the Egyptian security forces, **the intensive guerilla activity by operatives of the Sinai province against the Egyptian security forces in northern Sinai has not ceased:**

- **On July 15, 2015**, it was reported that the Egyptian forces had foiled an attempted car bomb attack on the highway between El-Katameya and Suez. The car, **carrying half a ton of explosives**, was supposed to penetrate a concentration of Egyptian security forces (Facebook page of the Armed Forces Spokesman, July 15, 2015). The Sinai province of the Islamic State also claimed responsibility for an **attack in an Egyptian Army camp on the highway between Suez and Cairo** (Sinai province's Twitter page, July 15, 2015).

- **On July 17, 2015**, two IEDs were deployed against military vehicles in Al-Arish. No casualties were reported (Akhbar al-Youm, July 17, 2015).

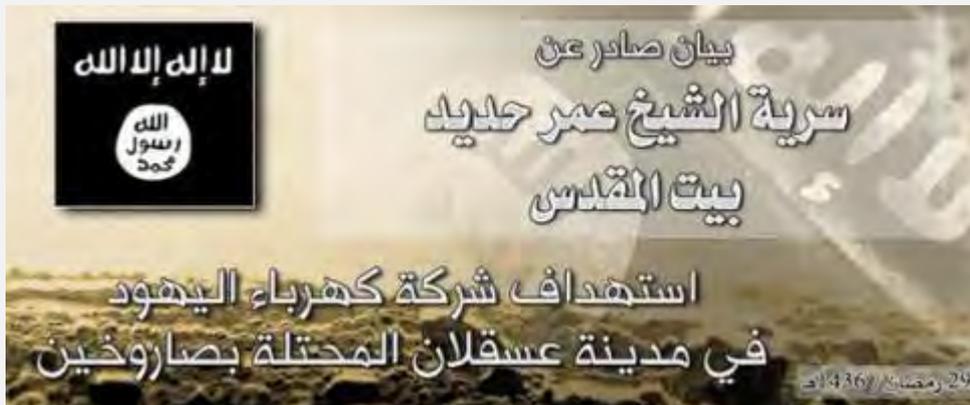
- **On July 18, 2015**, a rocket was fired at a checkpoint manned by Egyptian security forces on the road between Sheikh Zuweid and Al-Jora. Six members of the Egyptian security forces were killed and six others were wounded in the ensuing exchange of fire. Helicopters were used against the perpetrators of the attack (Al-Masry al-Youm, Facebook page of the Egyptian armed forces spokesman, July 18, 2015). The Sinai province of the Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack (official Twitter page of the Sinai province of the Islamic State, July 18, 2015).

## Palestinians

### Firing from the Gaza Strip at Israel

■ **On July 16, 2015, a rocket hit was identified in the Israeli Hof Ashkelon Regional Council.** The rocket fell in an open area. There were no casualties and no

damage was caused. An ISIS-affiliated network calling itself the Company of **Sheikh Omar Hadid – Bayt al-Maqdis**<sup>3</sup> claimed responsibility for the rocket fire. The claim of responsibility states that two rockets were fired as part of the “Sheikh Abu Abdullah al-Muhajer raid.”<sup>4</sup> The claim adds that the rockets were fired in response to “Israel’s crimes” against the Palestinians in Jerusalem and because Israeli jets are attacking in the Sinai Peninsula. According to the claim, the rockets hit an Israel Electric Corporation facility in the city of Ashkelon (Twitter account of the Company of Sheikh Omar Hadid, July 16, 2015).



Claim of responsibility by the Company of Sheikh Omar Hadid (Twitter, July 16, 2015)

## A series of explosions in the Gaza Strip

■ At approximately 06:00 hours on **July 19, 2015**, a series of explosions occurred in the **Sheikh Radwan and Al-Nafaq neighborhoods of Gaza City**. The explosions were caused by **IEDs that were planted in five vehicles belonging to senior operatives of the military wings of Hamas and the PIJ who live in the area**. **ISIS-affiliated graffiti** was sprayed near the site of one of the explosions. Two passersby

<sup>3</sup>**Omar Hadid** is the codename of **Omar al-Muhammadi**, who previously called for the overthrow of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and was sentenced to death by hanging. After receiving a presidential pardon, he returned to Fallujah, where he served as commander of the forces fighting against the Americans. He was killed in battle in 2004. ISIS, which announced his death, described him as one of its most prominent commanders (eldorar.com, June 12, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> **Sheikh Abu Abdullah al-Muhajer**, aka **the Syrian**, is **Khaled Hassan Muhammad Banat**, who was a senior operative in the jihadi organization **Jund Ansar Allah**. He was a former Hamas operative who was close to Khaled Mashal. He previously fought against the Russians in Afghanistan and subsequently moved to Iraq. In 2008, acting on orders from Khaled Mashal, he arrived in the Gaza Strip through the tunnels in order to provide advanced military training to Hamas operatives. Abu Abdullah subsequently left Hamas because he felt that Hamas had not implemented Sharia law after its takeover of the Gaza Strip. He pledged allegiance to the global jihad (Al-Qaeda) and was eliminated by Hamas on August 15, 2009, in the Ibn Taymiyyah Mosque in Rafah, along with 21 other operatives.

sustained minor injuries and homes were damaged. An ISIS-affiliated organization claimed responsibility for the attacks (Al-Jazeera TV, July 19, 2015).

■ **Iyad al-Bazm**, spokesman for the Hamas ministry of the interior, said the security apparatus had begun an investigation and that a number of suspects had been caught and were being interrogated (Al-Jazeera TV, July 19). According to a posting on the Facebook page of the association of Salafist families of detainees in the prisons in the Gaza Strip, a few hours after the explosions, **Hamas' security forces initiated a wave of detentions of Salafist operatives**. According to the posting, the Salafists in the Gaza Strip were in no way involved in the IED attacks, **and would respond to Hamas's detentions of their operatives by firing rockets at Israel**.

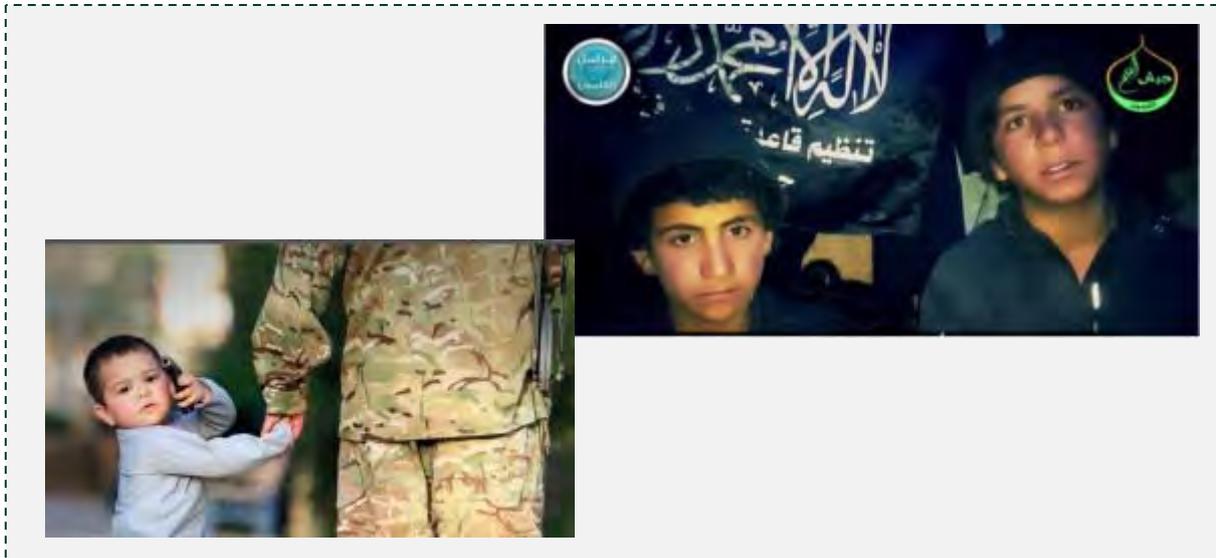
## The conduct of the Islamic State

### Exploitation of children for military purposes

■ There has recently been an increase in the reports of **ISIS's extensive use of children and youth for terrorist purposes**:

- Dima Nassif, reporter for (Hezbollah-affiliated) Al-Mayadeen TV, wrote article about the exploitation of children by ISIS. According to the article, **more than 50 children**, operating in the framework of **Ashbal al-Khilafah** ("The Lion Cubs of the Caliphate"), ISIS's children and youth units, have been killed in **terrorist attacks they have carried out for ISIS**. According to the article, **dozens of children of Asian appearance from Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and China are also training at ISIS's camps in Al-Raqqa**. The article also states that at least 12 of the 37 suicide bombing attacks that took place during the recent clashes in the area of Al-Hasakah were carried out by children (Al-Mayadeen, July 17, 2015).
- According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), **more than 50 children** who were recruited by ISIS and fought alongside its older operatives **were killed in Syria over the past year**. Some of them were used as **suicide bombers**. The children, who enlist in ISIS in an organization framework as the Lions of the Caliphate, are all under the age of 16.
- Fox News aired a report about **Yazidi children who were taken by ISIS for "reeducation"**. ISIS operatives force these children to convert to Islam and train them to become Jihad fighters. The young people are recruited by means of gifts, threats and brainwashing. Thus, the children become murderers and suicide

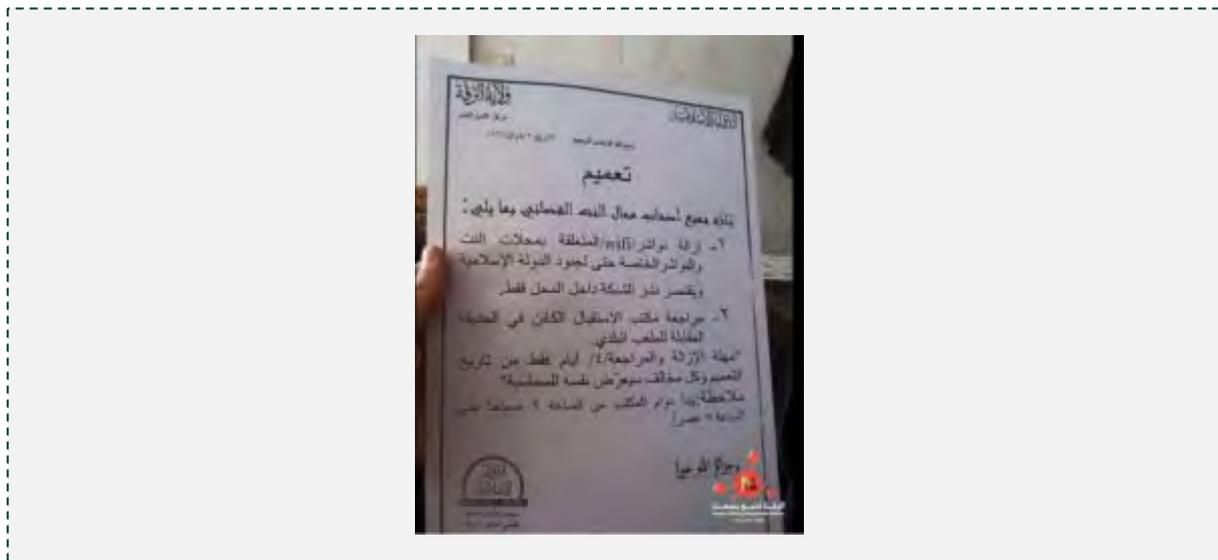
bombers. A video recently posted by ISIS shows a child fighting in Syria under the supervision of an adult operative. A video posted previously shows children executing soldiers captured by ISIS (Fox News, July 20, 2015).



Right: Photos of youths fighting and children holding weapons, published in ISIS's media (Dabiq, July 10, 2015)

## Blocking access to Wi-Fi networks

■ While making extensive use of Western media, **ISIS is taking steps to prevent such media from having an undesired propaganda effect on its residents and operatives.** In Al-Raqqah, ISIS's capital in Syria, ISIS reportedly blocked access to Wi-Fi networks, leaving the possibility of surfing the Internet only at Internet cafés where it monitors those who log on to the networks (Al-Raqqah Twitter page, July 19, 2015).



Order prohibiting the use of Wi-Fi in the city of Al-Raqqah (Al-Raqqah Twitter page, July 18, 2015)

## The global jihad in other countries

### Libya

#### Derna

On July 13, 2015, a Libyan Air Force plane attacked concentrations of ISIS operatives in the city of Derna. According to reports, ISIS suffered losses in the airstrike and some of its equipment was destroyed (Akhbar Libya, July 15, 2015). On July 18, 2015, there were battles in the area of the Martuba road (20 km southeast of Derna) between a Libyan Army force and ISIS operatives (Akhbar Libya, July 18, 2015).

#### The area of Sirte

- On July 18, 2015, ISIS executed a civilian in the western entrance to the city of Sirte, where battles took place between the Libyan Dawn militias and ISIS, which controls the city. The man was executed on charges of espionage for Libyan Dawn (Akhbar Libya, July 19, 2015).

- ISIS's branch in Libya announced that on July 18, 2015, it had abducted three people in Nofaliya, an area controlled by ISIS, located to the southeast of the city of Sirte. This was later confirmed by the Libyan Army spokesman. The hostages, whose photos and passports appeared in the media, are reportedly **Christians from Egypt, Nigeria and Ghana** (Akhbar Libya, July 18, 2015).

### Turkey

- **In the town of Suruc**, near the Turkish-Syrian border, an attack was carried out **during a gathering of young Kurds, which took place at the local Amara Cultural Center**. The gathering, attended by hundreds of Kurdish activists, was held in support for the rebuilding of the Kurdish city of Kobani, in Syria (which was liberated from ISIS by the Kurdish forces). During the gathering, a member of the audience, probably a young woman, blew herself up. **About 30 people were killed and over 100 were wounded**. The Turkish Prime Minister confirmed that according to Turkish intelligence, **ISIS was behind the attack**. The Prime Minister said that the perpetrator has been identified and connection to ISIS is now being investigated. ISIS itself has not yet claimed responsibility for the attack (Daily Mail, 20 July 2015).

### Europe

- According to an investigative report by the Daily Mirror, ISIS has set up recruitment and training bases in Europe. According to the newspaper, ISIS operatives are

secretly purchasing properties in isolated villages near forests, where they set up recruitment and training camps for operatives. According to security sources, one of the camps is located in the Bosnian village of Osve, and at least 12 operatives have gone from there to Syria in recent months. There is concern that these training camps may also be used as a base for carrying out terrorist attacks in Europe (The Sunday Mirror, July 18, 2015).

## Counterterrorism and preventive activity

### Saudi Arabia

■ According to the Saudi Ministry of Interior, on July 18, 2015, the authorities detained **over 400 people suspected of belonging to ISIS** in several places throughout the kingdom. According to the Saudi interior minister, the suspects were detained during the course of several weeks as part of a broader operation to prevent terrorism. The detainees include both Saudi nationals and foreign nationals. Some of the detainees were involved in carrying out suicide bombing attacks (The Independent, July 19, 2015).

## The battle for hearts and minds

### New issue of the organ Dabiq

■ On July 2015, the new issue No. 10 of Dabiq came out. Dabiq, ISIS's English-language organ, is published by ISIS's Al-Hayat Media Center. Most of the issue deals with ISIS's "superiority" over all other jihad organizations, with an emphasis on the Al-Nusra Front and Al-Qaeda. Among the articles published in this issue: questions from Taliban operatives regarding the pledge of allegiance of the Khorasan province (Pakistan-Afghanistan) and the operatives' commitment to this pledge; an article about the Kurds; an article about the Caucasus Region and its inclusion as part of the Islamic State; profiles of the various ISIS operatives and more. The issue also includes a propaganda video produced by ISIS in the **Uyghur language** (the language of the Muslim minority in China), translated into English, and a **Turkish-language** propaganda video.



Issue 10 of ISIS's organ Dabiq (July 2015)