



Spotlight on Global Jihad (August 27 – September 2, 2015)



Main events of the week

- The main battle zones in Syria this week: **in the area north of Aleppo**, which is reportedly intended to form an “ISIS-free” buffer zone, ISIS recorded several local achievements in a number of villages near the border with Turkey; **in the areas of Al-Zabadani and Idlib**, a second ceasefire agreement collapsed. The agreement linked between the removal of the rebels from Al-Zabadani and the evacuation of the Shiite residents from the villages of Fu’ah and Kafraya. **In the southern suburbs of Damascus**, ISIS took over the Al-Qadam neighborhood (or at least part of it) and expanded its presence in the region; **in Latakia**, the Al-Nusra Front and its allies continued to apply pressure from the north and northeast.
- **ISIS continues to establish its control over the important city of Sirte, in north-central Libya.** This week, ISIS’s mufti in Sirte declared the city an **Islamic emirate** subject to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Following this announcement, ISIS intends to impose Islamic law [Sharia] according to its own interpretation on the city (opening Sharia courts, changing the curriculum, imposing gender segregation in the education system, and registering commercial establishments and workshops in the city in order to collect taxes).

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, many dozens of airstrikes were carried out in Syria and Iraq by means of fighter planes, attack aircraft and UAVs.
- The main airstrikes are as follows (US Department of State website):
 - **Syria** - this week the airstrikes were concentrated mainly in northern Syria, in the area of Aleppo, Al-Hasakah, Al-Raqqah, Kobani, Hawl (southeast of Al-Hasakah) and Washiyah (northeast of Homs). The airstrikes destroyed ISIS

bunkers, checkpoints, battle positions, tactical units, vehicles and aircraft weapons, among other things.

- **Iraq** - the airstrikes were concentrated in the areas of Baghdadi, Baiji, Habbaniyah, Haditha, Kirkuk, Fallujah, Kisik (west of Mosul), Mosul, Sinjar, Sultan Abdullah (south of Mosul), Tal Afar (west of Mosul) and Tuz (east of Tikrit). The airstrikes damaged ISIS tactical units, rocket launchers and mortars, artillery, machine guns, buildings, battle positions, and sniper fire positions, among other things.

- According to US media reports, the Pentagon's Office of the Inspector General decided to investigate accusations by US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) officials related to the campaign against ISIS. According to these accusations, the intelligence assessments of the achievements of the US in the fighting against ISIS in Iraq provided an optimistic picture of the achievements, whereas in fact the situation was different. The investigation was triggered by information about evidence indicating that senior officials from the US Central Command (CENTCOM) distorted the intelligence picture presented to the political echelon, including President Barack Obama (The New York Times, August 25, 2015).

Turkey's increasing involvement in the campaign against ISIS

- **US Department of State Spokesman John Kirby** criticized Turkey for taking its time to join the international coalition against ISIS. A few days later, on August 29, 2015, Turkey's foreign minister announced that **Turkey had carried out its first airstrike against ISIS targets in Syria as part of the coalition's airstrikes against ISIS**. According to the foreign minister, the airstrikes centered on ISIS targets that posed a direct threat to Turkey's security. According to **Pentagon Spokesman Peter Cook**, the Turkish Air Force airstrike was fully integrated in the coalition airstrikes (CNN, August 29, 2015).

This was the first time that Turkish aircraft operated in Syrian territory. In July 2015, Turkey attacked ISIS targets in Syria, but did so without its aircraft crossing the border. Hence the airstrike in Syrian territory is another step that indicates Turkey's increasing involvement in the campaign against ISIS although, in the ITIC's opinion, **the full extent of the Turkish potential has not yet been manifested.**

■ As part of increasing Turkey's involvement in Syria, **Turkey has reportedly started to train a group of Syrian Turkmen.** The purpose is to establish a police force to protect the planned buffer zone in northern Syria. **Turkey called on Syrian Turkmen to volunteer, undergo training and join the force** (Daily Telegraph, August 26, 2015).

Syria has a population of **several hundred thousand Turkmen, a minority of Turkish origin.** Some of them live in the Turkmen Mountain (Jabal al-Turkman) region east of Latakia. There are also concentrations of Turkmen in the area of Aleppo, along Syria's border with northern Lebanon, and near the Syrian-Turkish border. Like other communities, the Turkmen have also suffered from the horrors of the civil war in Syria. In recent months, local Turkmen leaders and senior Turkish officials have accused the Kurdish forces in northern Syria of pushing the Turkmen out of the areas where they live and deporting them from Syria. In the ITIC's assessment, the recruitment and training of Turkmen for policing purposes is part of Turkey's preparations for the establishment of an "ISIS-free" buffer zone in northern Syria.

A new round of training for combatants against ISIS

■ US Army sources have revealed that the international coalition against ISIS led by the United States has begun training new group of 83 recruits for the war against ISIS. Of the 83 recruits, 71 are from Turkey and 12 are from Jordan. The Spokesman for the Central Command of the US Army did not confirm the figures, ostensibly for security reasons (www.tr.com, August 29, 2015).

■ This report is an indication of the **continued fundamental problems faced by the US in its efforts to establish a Syrian force to act against ISIS.** The small number of recruits and the lack of recruits from Syria prevent them from becoming an effective force in the fight against ISIS (and against the Syrian regime). This holds true even if the training of the new recruits ends successfully and they join the ranks of the fighters in Syria.



The estimated buffer zone, delineated in green, from which ISIS is to be ousted. The areas to the west and east of the zone, along the border between Syria and Turkey, are controlled by the Kurds (Google Maps)

- Following are several noteworthy incidents from the past week:
 - **On August 27, 2015**, clashes were reported between Islamic groups and ISIS in the area of the villages of **Harjalah, Dalha, Harbel** and **Sandaf, near the Syrian-Turkish border**. ISIS operatives reportedly managed to take control of these villages (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, August 27, 2015).



The area of the village of Harjalah, near the Syrian-Turkish border (Google Maps)

- After taking over these villages, ISIS operatives began to **advance towards the town of Marea, north of Aleppo** (www.bbc.com/Arabic, August 29, 2015). An operative affiliated with the **Ahrar al-Sham movement**, an umbrella framework of Salafist Islamic organizations leading the fight against ISIS, posted

a video on YouTube. The video documented an attack on two ISIS operatives riding a motorcycle near the village of Sandaf (YouTube, August 27, 2015).



Ahrar al-Sham movement operative shooting and hitting two ISIS operatives in the village of Sandaf (YouTube, August 27, 2015)

- **In the area of the town of Marea**, more than fifty people were reportedly killed in clashes between the rebel forces and ISIS (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), August 29, 2015). Some of them were apparently killed by a car bomb detonated by ISIS at the entrance to the town (SNN, August 28, 2015). On September 1, 2015, various Twitter pages reported the use of shells **containing mustard gas** by ISIS operatives in the area of the town.



Message on an ISIS-affiliated Twitter account to Muslim residents of Marea, Tall Rif'at and the surrounding villages, warning them to stay away from the positions of the (rebel) forces that ISIS is fighting against (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, August 30, 2015)

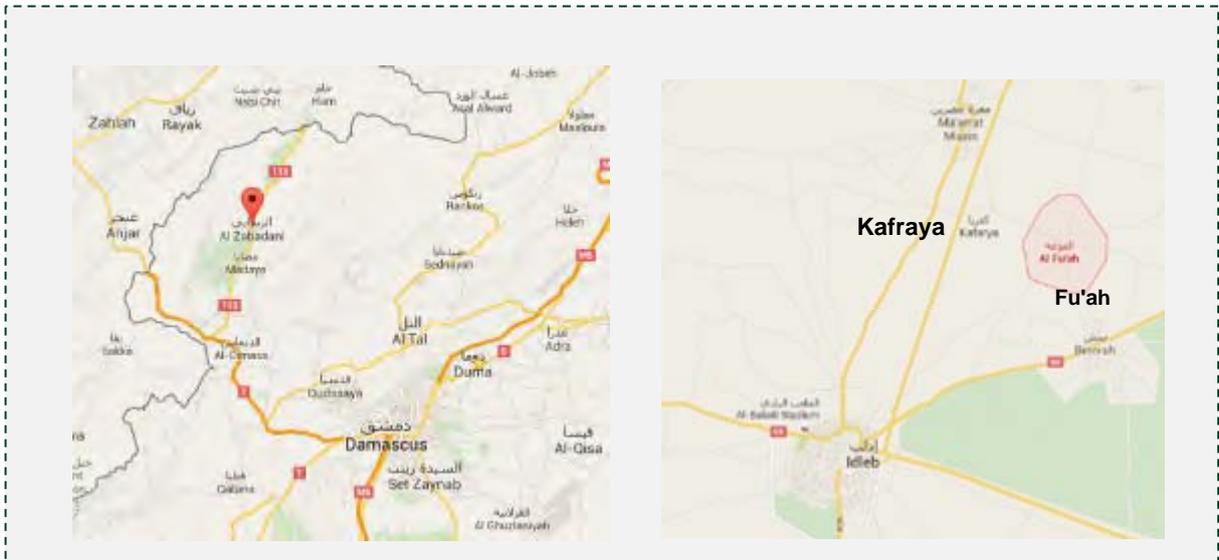
- **On August 29, 2015**, ISIS's Aleppo province reported that its operatives had curbed an attempt by rebel forces to infiltrate the town of **Talalin** (some 35 km north of Aleppo). According to the report, 19 people were killed during the fighting and several operatives were captured by ISIS. Weapons also fell into ISIS's hands (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, August 29, 2015)

The Idlib and Al-Zabadani regions

■ **The fighting in the Al-Zabadani region has continued for some two months, with neither side emerging as the victor.** According to Arab media reports, over the past two weeks, the Syrian Army, with the support of Hezbollah, has been gaining the upper hand. **During the past week, an additional ceasefire was achieved and came into effect on August 27, 2015**, between Hezbollah and the Ahrar al-Sham rebel organization (representing other rebel organizations). A previous ceasefire, which came into effect on August 12, 2015, linked the fighting in the Al-Zabadani area with fighting in the Shiite villages of Fu'ah and Kafraya, northeast of Idlib (see map). The first ceasefire collapsed three days later and the fighting resumed.

■ The second ceasefire was based on the previous ceasefire and included the **removal of hundreds of militants belonging to Ahrar al-Sham** (as well as other rebel organizations) **from the city of Al-Zabadani** (Al-Mayadeen, August 27, 2015). Sources with access to the negotiations reported that the arrangement consisted of **two phases: First**, evacuating the wounded from Al-Zabadani and the Shiite villages of Fu'ah and Kafraya. **In the second phase**, residents of Fu'ah and Kafraya will be allowed to leave their besieged villages in exchange for the departure of Ahrar al-Sham's forces from Al-Zabadani (Radio Sham, August 27, 2015).

■ **The second ceasefire also collapsed (August 29, 2015).** In light of the breach of the ceasefire, Jaysh al-Fatah, the umbrella framework of the rebel organizations in the Idlib province, began to attack the villages of Fu'ah and Kafraya (SNN, August 29, 2015). The parties to the conflict have accused each other of responsibility for the collapse of the ceasefire. The Syrian regime claims that Jaysh al-Fatah is the one that violated the truce by attacking the villages of Fu'ah and Kafraya. On the other hand, the rebel organizations claim that the Syrian Army is the one that has violated it (Al-Mayadeen, August 29, 2015). The residents of Fu'ah and Kafraya demonstrated and blocked the main road, demanding that the siege on the two villages be lifted (Al-Jazeera, August 31, 2015).



Left: The city of Al-Zabadani. Right: The villages of Fu'ah and Kafraya, northeast of the Idlib province (Google Maps)

Idlib province

The Abu al-Duhur military airbase

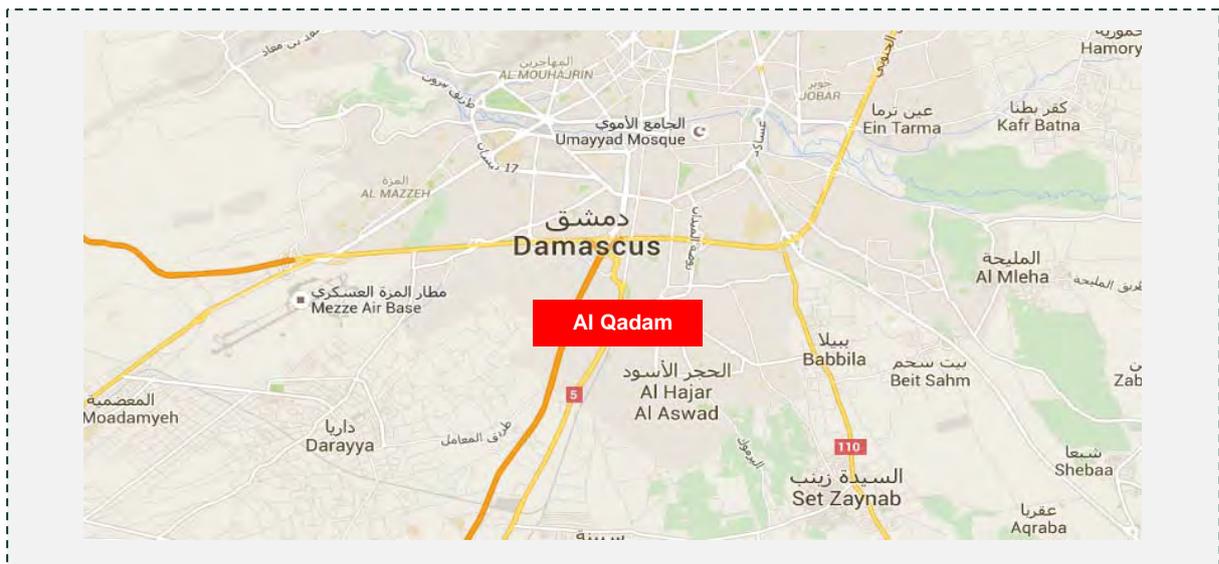
■ This week as well, **the fighting continued at the Abu al-Duhur military airbase**. Operatives of **the Al-Nusra Front** and its allies mounted a new attack on the airbase from its main entrance (Al-Nashra, August 28, 2015). The Al-Nusra Front and its allies reportedly managed to take control of the entrance to the airbase (Orient, August 26, 2015). According to a report from September 1, 2015, the Syrian forces, with air support, managed to repel an attack by Al-Nusra Front operatives (Dimashq al-Aan, September 1, 2015).



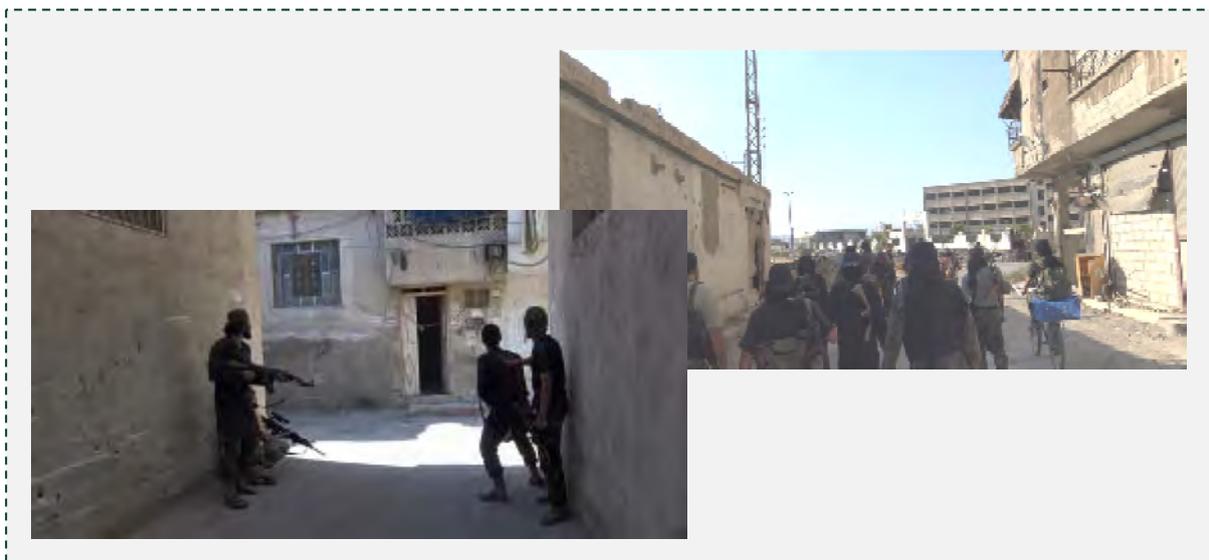
The Abu al-Duhur military airbase southeast of Idlib (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, August 20, 2015)

Damascus

- Operatives of the rebel organization **Ajnad al-Sham**, which is part of the Jaysh al-Fatah umbrella framework, captured and killed two ISIS operatives. In response, ISIS operatives mounted an attack **intended to take over the Al-Qadam neighborhood** in south Damascus (see map). Both sides reportedly suffered losses and casualties (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), August 30, 2015).
- On August 30, 2015, ISIS's media arm in Damascus published photos showing **ISIS operatives in the Al-Qadam neighborhood**. The photos show armed ISIS operatives marching in the streets. Photos of weapons seized by ISIS operatives were also posted (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account; Justpaste.it; Isdarat.tv; August 30, 2015). According to Arab media reports, the Al-Qadam neighborhood has been taken over by ISIS (Al-Arabi, September 1, 2015). According to a different version, ISIS operatives have taken over the eastern part of the neighborhood (As-Safir, September 1, 2015).



The Al-Qadam neighborhood in south Damascus (Google Maps)



ISIS operatives in Damascus's Al-Qadam neighborhood (Justpaste.it, August 30, 2015)

In the past, ISIS operatives managed to take control of large parts of the Al-Yarmouk refugee camp south of Damascus. They were removed from the refugee camp, but continued to maintain a presence in the adjacent neighborhood of **Al-Hajar al-Aswad**, south of Al-Qadam. If ISIS operatives have indeed managed to take control of all or part of the Al-Qadam neighborhood, then they have **expanded their presence in the southern outskirts of Damascus**.

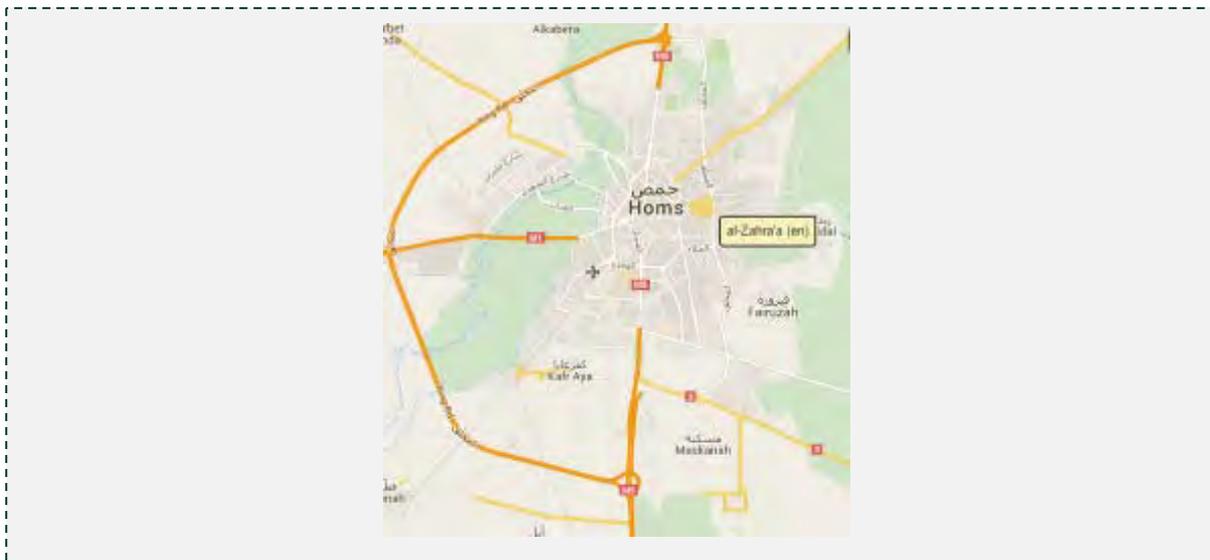
Latakia province

■ Fierce battles reportedly took place between the Syrian security forces and the Al-Nusra Front and its allies **in the village of Dourin, in the northern part of the Latakia province**. Both sides reportedly suffered losses (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), August 28, 2015). The Al-Nusra Front and its allies have recently begun to exert pressure on the Latakia area **from the north as well**, concurrently with the pressure exerted on it from the area of Idlib (from the northeast).

Homs province

■ On August 29, 2015, Amaq, one of ISIS's media arms, reported that a suicide bomber codenamed **Abu al-Mu'atasem al-Ansari** had blown himself up by means of a car bomb in the Al-Zahra neighborhood, in the eastern part of the city of Homs. **This neighborhood has an Alawite population** (a3maqnews.tumblr), August 29, 2015). On August 29, 2015, ISIS issued a statement claiming responsibility for the attack. According to the statement, the explosion killed and injured dozens of Alawites (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, August 29, 2015). According to a report by the Syrian

Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), the car bomb attack killed five people and injured over twenty (August 29, 2015).



The Al-Zahra neighborhood in the eastern part of Homs, which has an Alawite population (Wikimapia, Google Maps)

Main developments in Iraq



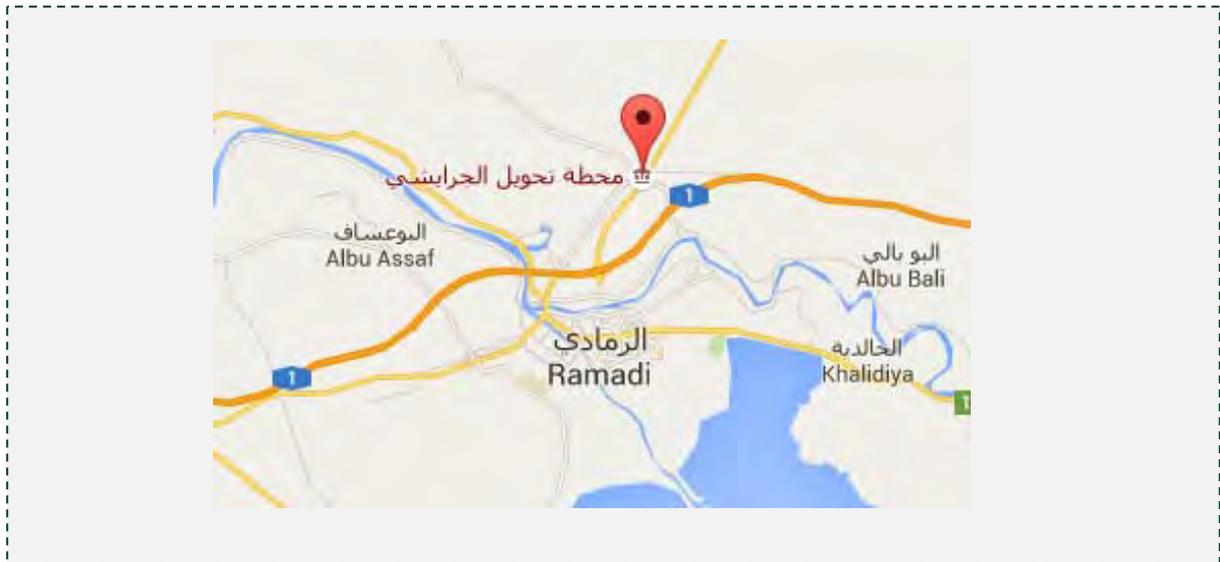
Map of Iraq (www.nationsonline.org)

Al-Anbar province

- In the Al-Anbar province, fighting continues between ISIS and “pockets” of Iraqi Army presence, particularly in the area of Ramadi. According to media reports, the Iraqi Army continues to suffer losses, mainly as a result of suicide bombing attacks carried out by ISIS. At the same time, ISIS operatives suffered losses as a result of the airstrikes against them.
- Following are the main incidents:
 - **On August 28, 2015**, ISIS’s Al-Anbar province issued a statement claiming responsibility for detonating two car bombs, one after the other, in a convoy of the Iraqi Army and the Shiite militias that support it, near the University of Al-Anbar (in

Ramadi). According to ISIS, the convoy was destroyed (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, August 28, 2015)

- **On August 27, 2015**, ISIS issued a statement claiming that operatives of its air defense unit had shot down an Iraqi Army helicopter near Al-Jaraishi, north of Ramadi. According to the statement, all the helicopter crew members were killed in the crash (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, August 27, 2015).



The area of Al-Jaraishi, north of Ramadi (Google Maps)

- According to a report from **August 29, 2015**, ISIS suffered dozens of losses in an airstrike carried out by the Iraqi Air Force west of Ramadi. According to an Iraqi security source, the target of the airstrike was an ISIS workshop where its operatives manufacture car bombs (Al-Hurra, August 29, 2015).

Fallujah

- The Iraqi Army announced that it had carried out an airstrike against a convoy of 11 ISIS vehicles to the north of the city. It also announced that one of its special forces had seriously injured one of ISIS's commanders north of Fallujah and that four of the commander's escorts had been killed in the attack (Fars, August 29, 2015).

Salah al-Din province

Baiji

- Iraqi security officials reported that on August 30, 2015, the Iraqi Army had advanced into the city of Baiji, reaching the neighborhood of Al-Asri in the western part of the city. According to the report, the fighting is now concentrated in the

southern part of the city (Shafaq News, August 30, 2015; AFP, August 31, 2015). **At this stage, the fighting in Baiji is still ongoing, with neither side on the upper hand, although both sides have claimed achievements.**

Baghdad

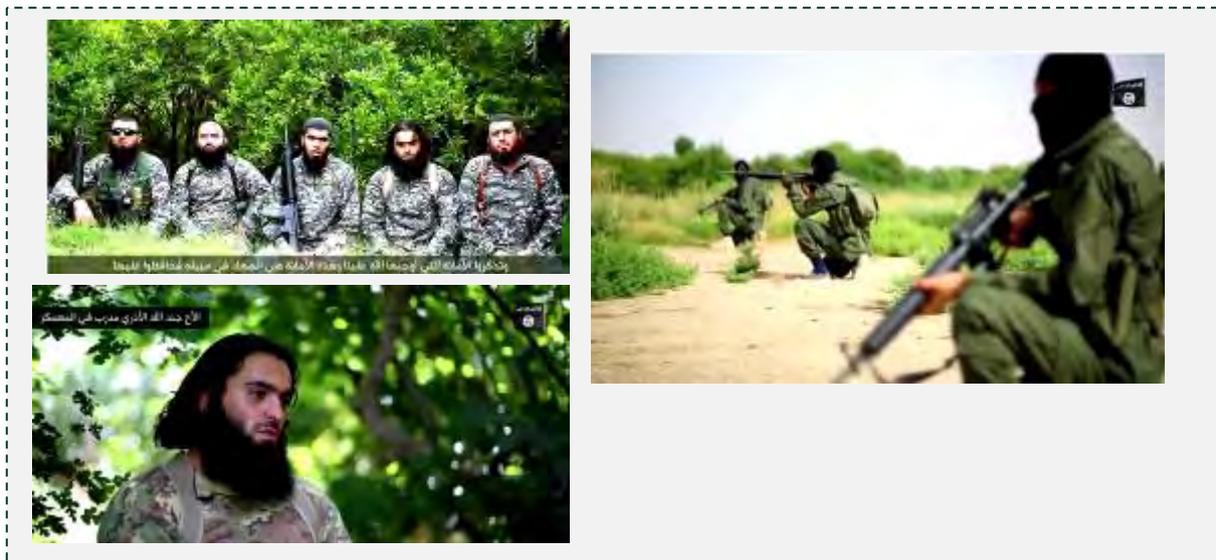
■ On August 28, 2015, ISIS claimed responsibility for a **car bomb attack at the police station in the Al-Za'franiyah neighborhood**, in the southeastern part of Baghdad. Before exploding, the car seemed suspicious and was towed to the police station. The explosion killed and injured a number of policemen (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, August 29, 2015).



The Al-Za'franiyah neighborhood (Google Maps)

Al-Jazeera province (the area of Sinjar, on the Iraqi-Syrian border)

■ ISIS's Al-Jazeera province issued a video documenting training carried out by its operatives in the Abu Issa camp in Sinjar. **The video shows Azeri instructors and trainees.** The video is in the **Azeri language**, with Arabic subtitles (Isdarat al-Dawla al-Islamiyya, August 30, 2015).



Top left: The course instructors. Bottom left: One of the course instructors, a speaker of the Azeri language codenamed Jund Allah the Azeri. Right: Shooting practice (Isdarat al-Dawla al-Islamiya, August 30, 2015)

In the ITIC's assessment, the Azeri-language video was issued in order **to further ISIS's effort to recruit operatives from the Islamic republics of the former Soviet Union**. This effort has increased since the establishment of the North Caucasus province of the Islamic State was announced. On June 5, 2015, as part of its call on target audiences in the Caucasus and Central Asia, ISIS announced the establishment **a new Russian-language media arm by the name of Furat Media**. ISIS also published a **Russian-language pamphlet entitled "Hijrah (Migration) to the Islamic State."** The pamphlet provides information for those interested in joining the ranks of ISIS (how to cross from Russia into Turkey and how to act in Turkey, among other things). According to Russian sources, there has been a significant increase in the **number of foreign fighters with Russian citizenship who have joined the fighting in Syria and Iraq**. Russian Foreign Minister **Sergei Lavrov** said that **an estimated 2,000 operatives from Russia are now fighting in Syria and Iraq** (The Guardian, July 13, 2015).

Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula

ISIS's Sinai province's campaign against the Egyptian security forces

- During the week, the Egyptian security forces continued their intensive counterterrorism activities against operatives of the Sinai province of the Islamic State. As part of the operation, the Egyptian security forces have carried out numerous airstrikes, mainly against terrorist bases in the areas of Al-Arish, Rafah and Sheikh Zuweid. The Egyptian forces hit car bombs and motorcycles, blew up several

houses, neutralized IEDs, killed several dozen operatives and detained several dozen suspects.

■ Sinai province operatives continued their attempts to carry out attacks against the Egyptian security forces. Following are a number of incidents:

- **On August 28, 2015**, Egyptian security forces blew up three IEDs that were planted in south Sheikh Zuweid (Al-Masry al-Youm, August 28, 2015).
- **On August 30, 2015**, Egyptian security forces blew up two additional IEDs that were planted in the area (Al-Masry al-Youm, August 30, 2015).
- **On August 30, 2015**, seven operatives of ISIS's Sinai province were reported killed in clashes between them and the Egyptian security forces in south Al-Arish (Al-Masry al-Youm, August 30, 2015).
- **On September 1, 2015**, a suicide bombing attack against the Security Center in Al-Arish was reportedly foiled (Al-Arabiya, September 1, 2015).

Palestinians and Israeli Arabs

Israeli resident went to Syria to join the ranks of ISIS

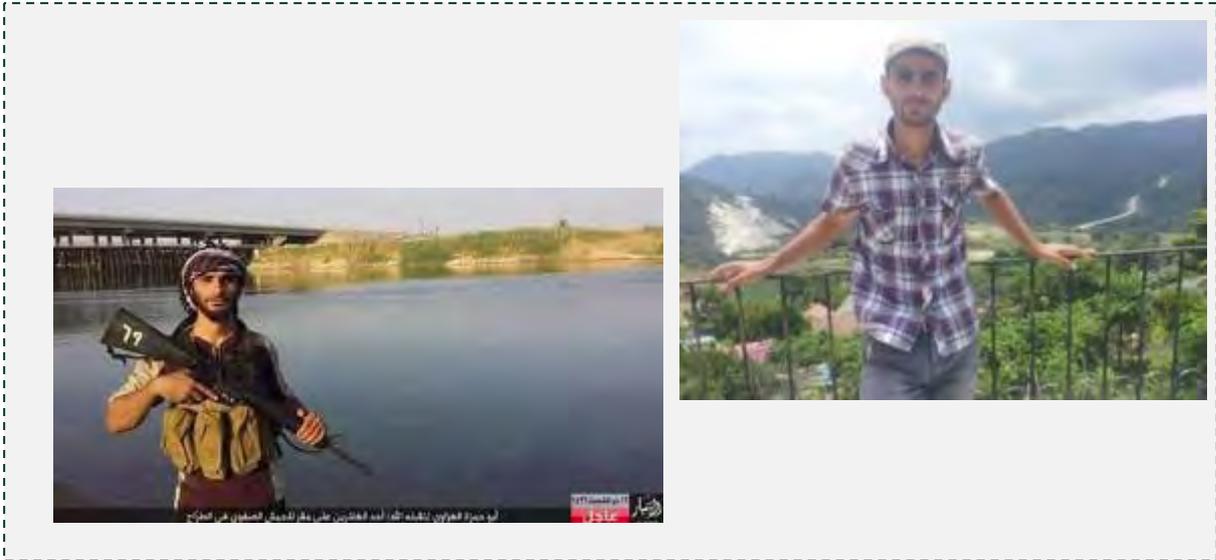
■ An Israeli-Arab resident of Shefar'am in northern Israel, married with children, left Israel and **flew to Turkey in an attempt to reach Syria and join ISIS**. Her family, who knew nothing about her intentions, approached the Israeli authorities and Interpol in order to prevent her from crossing the border (Al-Arab, August 29, 2015).

Gazan killed in the ranks of ISIS in Syria

■ **The Ibn Taymiyyah Media Center**, which is affiliated with the Salafists in the Gaza Strip, issued a poster in memory of a Palestinian resident of the Al-Shati refugee camp in Gaza City, who was killed in Iraq. According to the text of the poster, **Abdullah al-Jamal**, aka **Abu Hamza the Gazan**, carried out a suicide bombing attack against the Iraqi Army in the Al-Anbar province, on behalf of ISIS (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, August 28, 2015).

■ **Abdullah al-Jamal, 24, was a former operative in the Hamas military wing**. He suddenly left the Gaza Strip a few months ago and went to Turkey. From Turkey, he crossed the border into Syria and subsequently reached Iraq (Qudsnews, August 28, 2015). On his Facebook page, his name appears as Abu Hamza Abdullah (or Abu

Hamza al-Ramlawi). He posted photos of himself during his stay in Turkey on this page, apparently while he was on his way to Iraq (Facebook, June 26, 2015).



Photos from the Facebook page of Abu Hamza Abdullah (Abdullah al-Jamal). Left: Photo of him as an ISIS operative in Iraq. Right: Photo apparently taken during his stay in Turkey (Facebook, June 26, 2015)



Poster in memory of Abdullah al-Jamal, issued by the Ibn Taymiyyah Media Center, the media arm of the Salafist groups in Gaza (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, August 28, 2015)

The conduct of the Islamic State

Executions carried out by ISIS

- According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), ISIS executed **more than 90 people** (including 32 civilians) in Syria in August. **In total, since the announcement of the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate in June 2014, ISIS**

has executed 3,156 people in Syria, including 1,841 civilians (www.syriahr.com, August 30, 2015).

■ On August 29, 2015, **Imad al-Dulaimi**, the man in charge of the Rutba governorate in the area of the Iraq-Syria border on behalf of the Iraqi government, said that **ISIS had handcuffed around 200 residents of the governorate to electricity poles in preparation for killing them**. He said that the reason was the protest rally against ISIS held by the residents (Al-Hadath, August 30, 2015).

Senior ISIS operative killed in an airstrike

■ According to a Syrian media report, **Abu Muslim al-Tawhidi the Jordanian**, a senior ISIS operative in the city of Al-Raqqah, was killed in an airstrike a few days ago. According to the report, Abu Muslim al-Tawhidi was the “brain” behind ISIS’s battles and some say that he was the most dangerous operative in Syria (Al-Durar al-Shamiya, August 30, 2015). The information has not been verified.

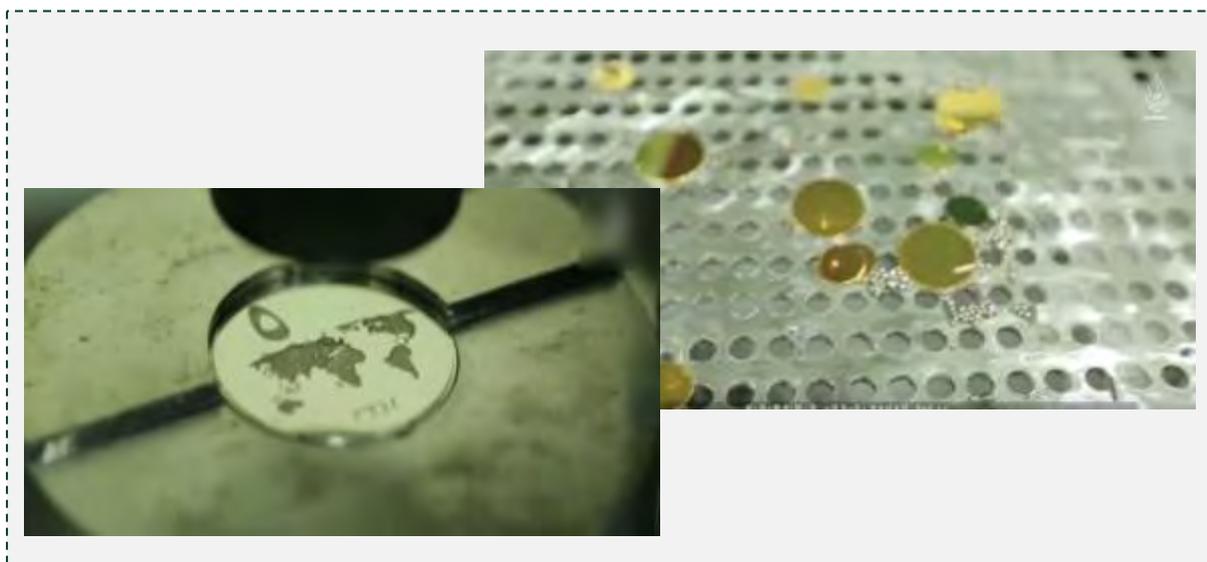
Destruction of antiquities and mosques and damage to churches

■ **ISIS continues to destroy the antiquities in Palmyra. ISIS operatives blew up the Temple of Bel**, one of the largest antiquities sites in the city, causing considerable damage (The Independent, August 30, 2015).

■ In Iraq, ISIS used IEDs to destroy the **Abu Bakr Mosque in the Al-Shura quarter of the city of Mosul**. ISIS operatives also removed paintings of historical value **from two churches in the city center**. According to ISIS, the mosque contained a tomb, which its operatives blew up (ibttimes.co.in, August 31, 2015).

ISIS issues its own gold coins

■ ISIS’s Al-Hayat Media Center posted a video in English entitled “The Rise of the Khilafah and the Return of the Gold Dinar,” **announcing the issue of gold coins of various denominations, intended for trade and sale**. The video provides a detailed explanation about the nature of ISIS’s proposed financial system. According to ISIS, its system will topple the “system of capitalist enslavement” of the West. According to ISIS, **the use of gold coins will begin in Iraq’s Nineveh province** (YouTube, August 30, 2015).



Left: The coins being minted. Right: Dies for minting the coins (YouTube, August 30, 2015)

As part of the establishment of governance mechanisms in the Islamic State, ISIS is printing official passports and identity cards, and displaying the trappings of control and administration. According to reports in the past, ISIS wants to reintroduce the gold and silver dinar coins that were used in the early days of Islam (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, November 12, 2014). **So far this has not materialized.** Issuing the coins is intended to reinforce the governmental trappings in the areas under ISIS's control and distinguish them from the areas controlled by the regimes in Iraq and Syria.

The global jihad in other countries

Libya

Sirte

- **Hassan al-Karami al-Misrati**, ISIS's mufti in Sirte, declared **the city of Sirte an Islamic emirate subject to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi**. The declaration was made on August 28, 2015, during the Friday sermon at the Qurtuba Mosque in Sirte, whose name was changed to the Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi Mosque (Al-Zarqawi is the "founding father" of ISIS). In his sermon, Al-Karami said that **the Islamic State in Sirte would continue to expand "against the will of all the infidels"**. He also noted that ISIS was not afraid of those who call themselves "the Arab coalition" because they are nothing but a "coalition of infidels".

■ As part of making the city of Sirte an emirate of ISIS, Hassan al-Misrati said that **the emirate intended to carry out a number of administrative changes in the city, including** (Akhbar Libya, August 29, 2015):

- **Establishing the Islamic law (Sharia) institutions**, including the opening of Sharia courts.
- **Establishing an education bureau that will change the curriculum.**
- **Reopening the University of Sirte after closing several faculties, such as the Faculty of Law.**
- **Imposing gender segregation** at all schools and institutes and at the university.
- **Registering all the commercial establishments and workshops in the city**, thus making it possible to impose a tax on all merchants and craftsmen.

This conduct on the part of ISIS in Sirte is **similar to its conduct in other big cities that it took over in Iraq and Syria (Mosul, Al-Raqqah)**. Immediately after taking over these cities, ISIS distributed the “city charter” (*wathiqat al-madina*). The “city charter” defines the conduct in accordance with Islamic law (Sharia) that is binding on ISIS and the local population and regulates the relationship between ISIS and the residents. According to the principles of ISIS’s “city charters,” the governance mechanisms should be conducted in accordance with the codes of Islamic law as interpreted by ISIS.



Hassan al-Karami al-Misrati delivering the Friday sermon at Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi Mosque in Sirte (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, August 29, 2015)

Benghazi

■ A “senior source” in the army of the Tobruk government said on August 27, 2015, that ISIS’s branch in Libya planned to send reinforcements, including foreign fighters, to Benghazi (in eastern Libya). They will arrive **via the port of Sabratah, west of Tripoli**. He warned that any vessel to approach the shores of the city of Benghazi would be attacked by fighter planes and helicopters.

The port city of Sabratah, west of Tripoli, is also apparently under the control of ISIS. According to Sky News, the city of Sabratah is not officially under the control of an ISIS, although jihadi sources claim that ISIS controls it. According to Libyan media reports, **the city serves as a training center for ISIS operatives.** The training there is carried out under the supervision of Libyan and foreign nationals (Akhbar Libya, August 27, 2015). The city also serves as a **home base for ISIS operatives carrying out attacks in Tripoli** (Sky News, August 25, 2015).



Sabratah, located about 70 km west of Tripoli, near the border between Libya and Tunisia (source: Google Maps)

Counterterrorism and preventive activity

The United States

■ The US Army has confirmed that **Junaid Hussain**, a British hacker in the service of ISIS, was killed in the Al-Raqqah area. According to an announcement by the spokesman for the Central Command of the US Army, **Junaid Hussain was a hacker and also used the Internet to try to persuade people to carry out attacks for ISIS** (Reuters, August 28, 2015).

■ **Junaid Hussain**, 21, aka **the British Abu Hussain**, was one of **ISIS's senior hackers**. He was accused of having been responsible for recruiting “lone wolves” over the Internet. His wife, rap singer Sally Jones, a Briton who converted to Islam, joined him in Al-Raqqah (Al-Arabiya TV, August 27, 2015).



Right: British hacker Junaid Hussain before he moved to Syria and joined ISIS.
Left: Photos posted by Junaid Hussain on social networks after he joined the ranks of ISIS (Al-Arabiya TV, August 27, 2015)

On June 17, 2015, ISIS published video in Arabic with English subtitles, threatening the United States and Europe with “electronic warfare” via the Internet. The speaker addresses the West, noting that Islamic hackers will be the “electronic army” that will conduct the electronic warfare and will assist the fighters on the ground (YouTube, June 17, 2015). Junaid Hussain was a key operative in ISIS's group of hackers, known as the “Electronic Army”.

Saudi Arabia

■ Saudi security forces detained 45 suspects, including an Egyptian, a Palestinian and operatives from Trinidad and Tobago, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, on suspicion of belonging to ISIS (Al-Youm al-Sabea, August 29, 2015).

■ Lebanese security forces detained a Lebanese citizen who is an ISIS operative who allegedly took part in the double suicide bombing attack carried out in **Jebel Mohsen in Tripoli** in January 2015, causing nine deaths. The Lebanese citizen was charged with sheltering two ISIS operatives who carried out the attack. According to the reports, he also recruited operatives to the ranks of ISIS and trained them, mainly in the use of explosives (Al-Durar al-Shamiya, September 1, 2015).