



## Spotlight on Global Jihad (September 3-9, 2015)



### Main events of the week<sup>1</sup>

- This week as well, the fighting in Syria focused on the rural area **north of Aleppo**, which is allegedly intended to become an “ISIS-free” buffer zone. Most of the battles between ISIS and the rebel forces, with coalition air support, took place in and around the town of Marea (which is held by the rebels.) According to unconfirmed reports, ISIS is using chemical weapons (possibly mustard gas) in these battles.
- ISIS and the Al-Nusra Front are **putting pressure on the military airbases of the Syrian Air Force in the various provinces**, in order to challenge the regime’s ability to support its ground forces. As part of this activity, ISIS continues to clash with the Syrian Army in the **area of the Kuweyres military airbase**, east of Aleppo, **and the military airbase in Deir al-Zor**. The Al-Nusra Front is fighting against the Syrian forces in the area of the **Abu al-Duhur military airbase**, southeast of Idlib. According to several reports, Al-Nusra Front operatives **have taken over the airbase**.

### 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):

<sup>1</sup> Due to the High Holy Days, our next issue will be published on September 21, 2015. We wish all our readers a happy and peaceful Jewish New Year.

- **Syria** - this week the airstrikes were concentrated in the areas of Hawl (southeast of Al-Hasakah), Al-Raqqah, Deir al-Zor, Kobani, Marea (north of Aleppo) and Al-Hasakah. The airstrikes targeted ISIS tactical units, bunkers, bridges, staging areas and vehicles, among other things.

- **Iraq** - this week, the airstrikes were concentrated mainly in the areas of Fallujah, Baiji, Habbaniyah, Haditha, Kirkuk, Kisik (west of Mosul), Mosul, Hawija (south of Kirkuk), Ramadi, Sinjar, Tuz Khormato (east of Tikrit), Baghdadi and Hit. The airstrikes targeted rocket launchers, rockets, anti-aircraft weapons, ISIS tactical units, vehicles, battle positions, watchtowers, checkpoints, buildings and artillery, among other things.

■ According to US media reports, the US Army has ordered its forces stationed in Iraq to equip themselves with protective suits against chemical weapons. This is due to evidence that ISIS is using chemical weapons. The Pentagon has not confirmed that this order was given but said that the US Army is prepared for a chemical attack by ISIS (Fox News, September 4, 2015).

There are around 3,500 American soldiers in Iraq, engaged primarily in intelligence missions and training the Iraqi Army. The troops are also training Sunni tribesmen to fight against ISIS. According to a recent report, the first military training course for 500 combatants, members of Sunni tribes in Al-Anbar, has ended. The course was conducted under the supervision of the US at the Habbaniyah Air Force Base (YouTube, September 5, 2015).

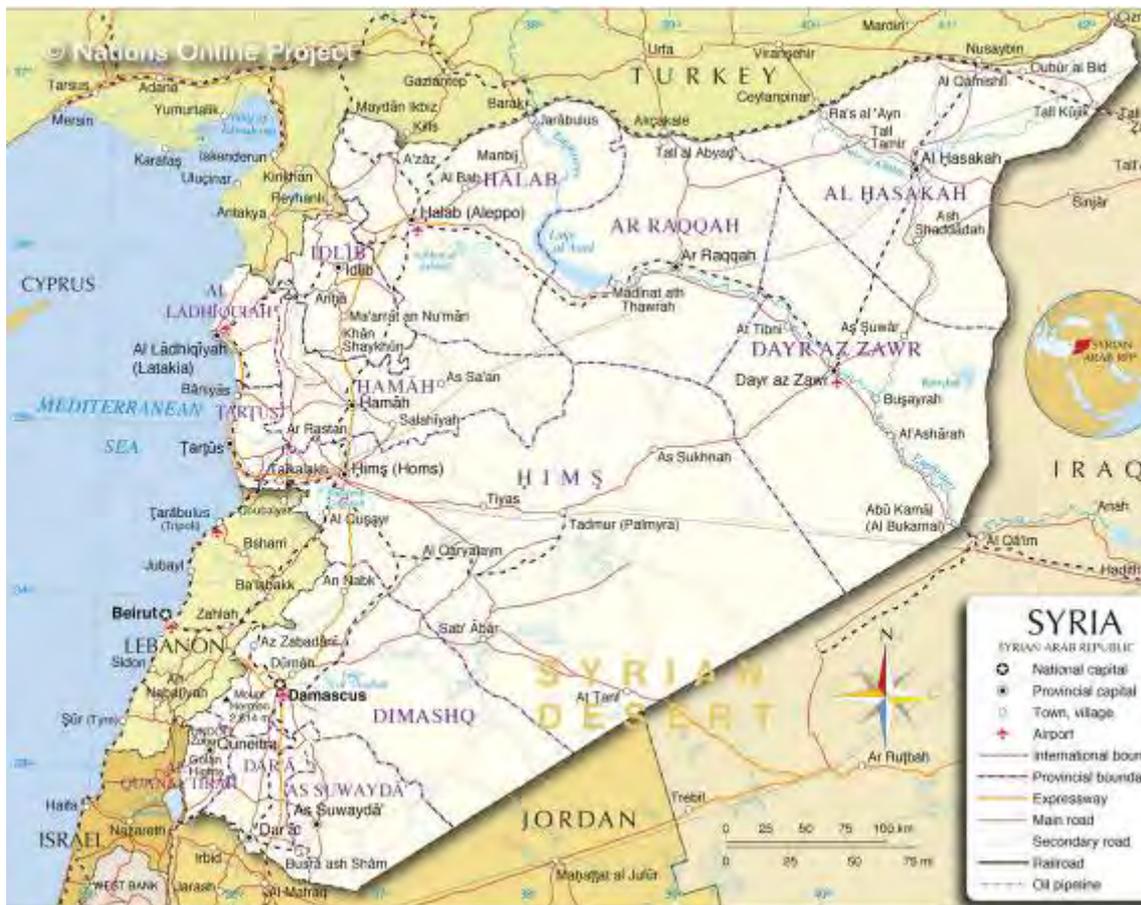
## **Statements about the need to expand the campaign against ISIS**

■ In light of **the increasing flow of refugees from Syria to Europe** and in recognition of the fact that **ISIS's brutal conduct is causing the population to flee**, the heads of state of the coalition countries have addressed the need to expand the coalition's activity against ISIS. For example:

- **US Secretary of State John Kerry** said that in order to fight ISIS, the ground troops in Syria must be reinforced. He expressed his confidence that Middle Eastern countries such as Syria's neighbors would send troops to help defeat ISIS. However, he stressed, the United States itself would not send ground forces to fight against ISIS (Al-Arabiya, September 3, 2015).

- **British Prime Minister David Cameron** is working to expand the airstrikes carried out by Britain against ISIS to Syrian territory as well (up to now, British airstrikes have been carried out mainly in Iraq). To this end, a vote is planned in the lower house of Parliament in early October 2015, to approve the decision on carrying out airstrikes against ISIS in Syria as well (Sputnik, September 6, 2015).
- According to **Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper**, military action is the only way to solve the refugee crisis and the problem of ISIS. He added that the Canadian Army must play a role in this area. Up to now, Canada has carried out 140 airstrikes against ISIS targets in Iraq but only four airstrikes in Syria (Global News, September 4, 2015).
- **French President François Hollande** said that French aircraft would begin to carry out reconnaissance flights over Syria and that France was considering carrying out airstrikes against ISIS targets in Syria. This is because there is evidence that terrorist attacks against a number of countries, including France, were planned in Syria (The Guardian, September 7, 2015).

## Main developments in Syria



Map of Syria  
(<http://www.nationsonline.org>)

### Aleppo province

#### The area of Marea

■ This week as well, fighting continued between ISIS and the rebel groups **in the area of the town of Marea, north of Aleppo** (the area allegedly designated to become an “ISIS-free” buffer zone). According to reports, the rebel forces, with air support from the coalition forces, managed to take over part of the town of Marea, which was controlled by ISIS (SNN, September 4, 2015). On September 5, 2015, the rebel groups managed to destroy car bombs that ISIS operatives had attempted to bring into the town of Marea ([www.ibtimes.co.uk](http://www.ibtimes.co.uk), September 5, 2015). An ISIS operative blew himself up after being surrounded by the rebel forces (Aks al-Sir, September 5, 2015).

■ On the other hand, ISIS reported that its operatives had managed to take over several villages near the town of Marea. From there, ISIS operatives proceeded to the

town of Marea. They claim to have occupied the eastern part of the town, inflicting heavy losses on the rebel forces. ISIS claims that its operatives then withdrew from Marea (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, September 4, 2015).



The town of Marea, site of battles between ISIS and the rebel groups (Google Maps)

■ **Reports on the use of chemical weapons by ISIS in the battles in the town of Marea continue.**<sup>2</sup> According to the website of the Violations Documentation Center in Syria, ISIS operatives have **fired scores of tank shells containing chemical weapons at Marea**. Based on the symptoms, doctors who examined victims of this attack believe that mustard gas was used (alarabiya.net, September 5, 2015). The information has not been verified.



Dud tank shell fired by ISIS at Marea. According to unverified reports, this was a chemical shell (Shahba Press Agency's YouTube account, September 1, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> On September 1, 2015, various Twitter pages reported the use of shells containing mustard gas by ISIS operatives in the area of the town of Marea.

■ On September 4, 2015, the operations room of Al-Jabha al-Shamiya (a framework of Islamic rebel groups in the Aleppo area, including Ahrar al-Sham) reported that the **village of Sandaf**, near the border between Syria and Turkey, **had been liberated from the hands of ISIS** (Twitter account affiliated with Al-Jabha al-Shamiya; YouTube, September 4, 2015). A Twitter account affiliated with Al-Jabha al-Shamiya posted photos on the Internet ostensibly indicating that the organization had taken over the village of Sandaf, which had been occupied by ISIS (Twitter account affiliated with Al-Jabha al-Shamiya, September 4, 2015).



**Al-Jabha al-Shamiya operatives in the village of Sandaf, near the border between Syria and Turkey, after it was liberated from the hands of ISIS (Twitter account affiliated with Al-Jabha al-Shamiya, September 4, 2015)**

■ In a newspaper interview, **Abu Abdullah al-Shami**, a member of the Shura Council of the Al-Nusra Front, referred to the Turkish intervention in the fighting in the area north of Aleppo. He said that his organization had **decided not to continue its military involvement in this region and to make do with fighting against ISIS**. According to him, Islamic law does not allow the Al-Nusra Front to avail itself of the assistance of the (Western-oriented) coalition, and cooperation with it deviates from the strategy agreed upon between the organizations (Al-Manarah al-Bayda Media Foundation, September 6, 2015).

The meaning of Abu Abdullah al-Shami's statements is that the Al-Nusra Front prefers to keep a low profile in the fighting north of Aleppo. It is in order for it not to be perceived as cooperating with Turkey or with the Western coalition in the establishment of a buffer zone in this area. The dominant force fighting against ISIS in the area north of Aleppo is **the Ahrar al-Sham movement**, an umbrella framework of

Salafist Islamic organizations. However, the Al-Nusra Front will probably maintain its influence in this region, at least behind the scenes.

## Aleppo province

■ Fighting continues **in the area of the Kuweyres military airbase**, east of Aleppo. ISIS operatives continue to blockade the airbase in an attempt to capture it. According to a report from September 6, 2015, Syrian Army helicopters attacked ISIS operatives in the area of the airbase with explosive barrels (syriahr.com, September 6, 2015). **The fall of the Kuweyres military airbase into the hands of ISIS would compromise the Syrian Air Force's ability to provide air cover to the ground forces in the Aleppo area.**

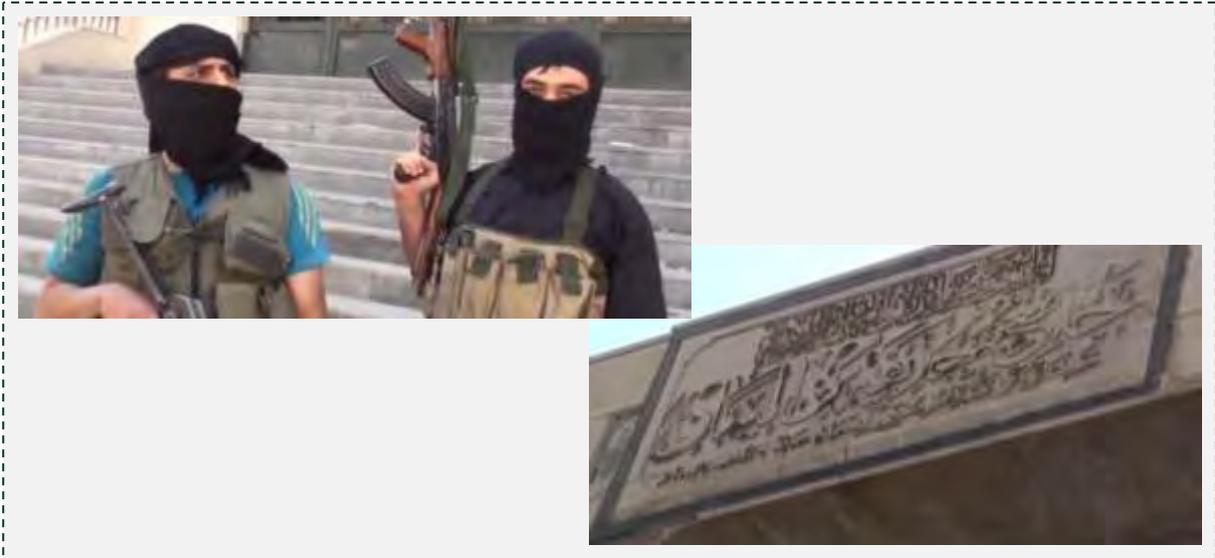


The Kuweyres military airbase (Wikimapia)

## Damascus province

■ During the week, clashes continued **in the southern part of Damascus**. The rebel groups reportedly decided to establish a unified operations room in the **Al-Qadam neighborhood, south of Damascus**. This is in order to coordinate the fighting and prevent ISIS from advancing (Al-Akhbar, September 3, 2015). According to previous reports, ISIS managed to take over parts of the Al-Qadam neighborhood, and it is the site of battles between ISIS and the rebel organizations.

■ One of ISIS's media arms posted a video on the Internet showing two ISIS operatives near the Hudhayfah Ibn al-Yaman Mosque in the Al-Qadam neighborhood. This was done in order to prove that the allegations regarding the withdrawal of ISIS operatives from the neighborhood are false (YouTube, September 2, 2015).



Right: An inscription carved in stone indicating that this is the Hudhayfah Ibn al-Yaman Mosque in the Al-Qadam neighborhood. Left: Two armed ISIS operatives in front of the Hudhayfah Ibn al-Yaman Mosque (YouTube, September 2, 2015)

## Al-Zabadani

■ **The battles in the city of Al-Zabadani continue after the collapse of the second ceasefire.** The Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese media and the Syrian media have reported a number of local successes by Syrian Army troops, with the support of Hezbollah. Syrian Army troops have reportedly taken over several buildings and neighborhoods on the outskirts of Al-Zabadani. According to additional reports, Hezbollah suffered many losses in the fighting in and around the city of Al-Zabadani (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), September 3, 2015). According to a report from September 8, 2015, Hezbollah operations commander Hassan Mahdi Siblini Murtada was killed in the fighting (SNN, September 8, 2015).

## Idlib province

■ This week as well, **fighting continued at the Abu al-Duhur military airbase southeast of Idlib**, which was attacked by the Al-Nusra Front and its allies. The Syrian security forces attacked the area of the airbase from the air (Khatwa News Agency, September 4, 2015). According to a report from September 9, 2015, Al-Nusra Front operatives have managed to take over the airbase (Sawt al-Sham, September 9, 2015).



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

## Homs province

- ISIS operatives have reportedly expanded their control in the area of the **Jazal oil and gas field, northwest of Palmyra**. The Syrian security forces reportedly suffered losses and casualties in the clashes with ISIS in the region (Facebook, September 5, 2015; SOHR, September 6, 2015).
- ISIS operatives continue to destroy antiquities **in the city of Palmyra**. On September 4, 2015, the operatives destroyed three ancient tower tombs containing unique relics from the Roman period. According to a report by ASOR's Syrian Heritage Initiative (SHI), ISIS operatives have destroyed seven such tower tombs to date. This is in addition to the destruction of many ancient temples and buildings (CBC, September 4, 2015).
- After taking over **the Christian village of Qaryatayn** (around 70 km southeast of Homs), ISIS and the Christian villagers signed **an agreement containing 12 clauses**. The agreement permitted the Christians to return to their homes but imposed **a large number of restrictions on them**, including **payment of a "head tax"** of four dinars in order for them to be considered *dhimmis*<sup>3</sup> of ISIS. It also required the Christians not to do anything that contradicts Islam and imposed a long list of prohibitions and restrictions on them: they are forbidden to wear a cross, to use their holy books and to perform religious ceremonies in public. They are also forbidden to build churches, monasteries and homes for monks in the area, to bear arms and to sell pork or alcohol in the markets (Al-Akhbar, September 5, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> A historical term referring to non-Muslim citizens of an Islamic state.

## Deir al-Zor province

■ In some neighborhoods in and around the city of Deir Al-Zor there were clashes between the Syrian Army and militants loyal to it and ISIS operatives. ISIS operatives also attacked the Syrian security forces **at the military airbase in Deir Al-Zor** (local coordinating committees, September 4, 2015).

## Al-Raqqah province

■ According to a report by ISIS's Al-Raqqah province, ISIS has revealed an oil tanker which was used to conceal weapons. ISIS claims that the Kurdish forces are behind the smuggling of weapons into the city (Isdarat.tv, September 3, 2015).



Right: The oil tanker used to conceal weapons. Left: The weapons found inside the oil tanker. (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, September 4, 2015)

## Al-Hasakah province

■ On September 3, 2015, ISIS reported that ISIS operatives had carried out an attack at the **Al-Yarubiya crossing on the Syria-Iraq border** (see map). Most of the Kurdish fighters manning the crossing were killed. During the attack, an IED was activated against a car that had come to help the Kurdish forces (isdarat.tv, September 3, 2015). The border crossing is on the Iraqi side of the border and is located near the village of Al-Yarubiya in the rural area of Qamishli. **The border crossing has been controlled by the Kurdish forces since 2014.**



Al-Yarubiya, near the border with Iraq (Google Maps)

## Main developments in Iraq



Map of Iraq  
(<http://www.nationsonline.org>)

## Iraqi Air Force airstrikes

- Speaking at a press conference, **Iraqi Air Force Commander Hamed al-Maliki** said that Iraq had started to attack ISIS targets using F-16 aircraft received from the United States in July 2015. According to Al-Maliki, over a hundred ISIS operatives were killed, including a number of senior officials, in airstrikes in the areas of Baiji and Ramadi and around Fallujah (Shafaq News, September 6, 2015).

## Al-Anbar province

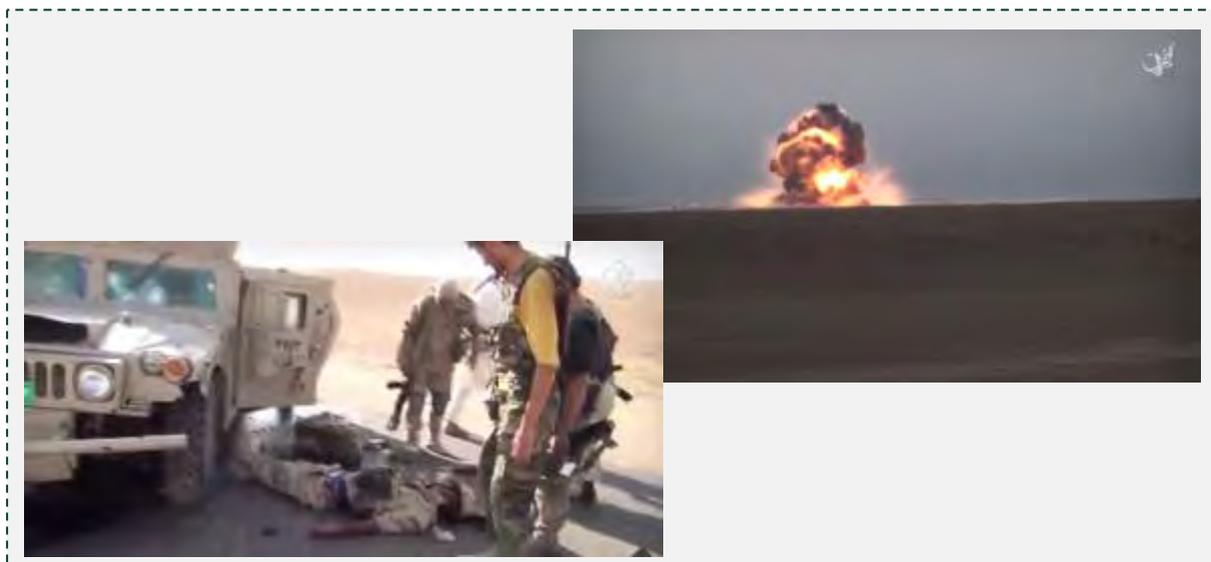
- Fighting continues between ISIS and “pockets of presence” of the Iraqi Army in the Al-Anbar province, with neither side gaining the upper hand. According to an Al-Jazeera report from September 6, 2015, hundreds of Sunni tribesmen from the Al-Anbar province, who were trained by US forces, are now joining the fighting against ISIS (Al-Jazeera TV, September 6, 2015).

## Baghdad

- The detonation of an IED in south Baghdad on September 6, 2015, resulted in the deaths of eleven Iraqi civilians. ISIS was apparently behind the attack (Al-Quds al-Arabi, September 7, 2015). ISIS sporadically carries out deadly attacks in Baghdad, mainly in the city’s Shiite neighborhoods.

## Euphrates province (on the Syrian-Iraqi border)

- ISIS posted a video documenting an attack on an Iraqi Army base in the province by means of a truck bomb, roadside bombs and a sniper ambush targeting Iraqi Army vehicles (Isdarat al-Dawla al-Islamiyya, September 6, 2015).



Left: Sniper ambush for vehicles. Right: Truck bomb explosion (Isdarat al-Dawla al-Islamiyya, September 6, 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. On September 7, 2015, the Egyptian Army began a large-scale operation against sites of ISIS terrorism in the central and northern Sinai Peninsula. Dozens of operatives were reportedly killed and injured (Al-Watan; the Sky News Twitter account, September 7, 2015).
- Sinai province operatives continued their attempts to carry out attacks against the Egyptian security forces. Following are a number of incidents:
  - **On September 7, 2015**, two Egyptian Army soldiers were killed and six were wounded by an IED planted on a highway in southern Rafah (Aswat Masriya, September 7, 2015).
  - **On September 6, 2015**, ISIS's Sinai province claimed responsibility for the firing of 107 mm rockets at a military camp in the area of Sheikh Zuweid (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account).
  - **On September 5, 2015**, Egyptian security forces blew up an IED planted south of Al-Arish's Al-Masaid neighborhood. There were no casualties (Al-Youm al-Sabea, September 5, 2015).

- **On September 5, 2015**, three ISIS operatives were killed while riding motorcycles during an operation of the Egyptian security forces in Sheikh Zuweid (Facebook page of the Egyptian Armed Forces, September 5, 2015).

- **On September 3, 2015, several members of the Multinational Force & Observers (MFO) in Sinai were injured in two IED explosions.** A vehicle convoy of the **force's Fiji battalion** was hit by an explosion of an IED apparently planted by operatives of ISIS's Sinai province. An American force that arrived on the scene of the attack was hit by a second IED. Some members of the Multinational Force were injured and were evacuated for treatment at a hospital in Israel (Al-Mayadeen; Al-Watan, September 3, 2015). Apparently, this was not a pre-planned attack against the Multinational Force.

- ISIS's Sinai province issued a video presenting "the greatest operations" carried out by ISIS. The attacks mentioned in the video also include attacks against Israel, **including the attack on Israeli No. 392 bus**<sup>4</sup> (YouTube, September 2, 2015).

## Palestinians and Israeli Arabs

### Another Salafist operative from the Gaza Strip killed in the ranks of ISIS in Iraq

- According to reports on Palestinian websites, **Muhammad Salim Muhammad Abu Dabusa**, aka **Abu al-Abed the Gazan**, was killed fighting in the ranks of ISIS in Iraq. Muhammad Abu Dabusa was a 26-year-old Salafist operative from the Khan Yunis refugee camp. He was killed in the province of Kirkuk, in northern Iraq. The first reports of his death in Iraq appeared on a Hamas Internet forum on August 17, 2015 (Hamas Internet forum, August 17, 2015).

- Before leaving for Iraq, Muhammad Abu Dabusa had been a teacher. According to Palestinian sources, Abu Dabusa left the Gaza Strip around two years and a half ago and had been detained by Hamas security forces in the past, due to his Salafist-jihadi affiliation (Quds Net, September 3, 2015).

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<sup>4</sup> **On August 18, 2011**, a series of terrorist attacks was carried out on Highway 12 near the border between Israel and Egypt. Terrorists opened fire on a No. 392 bus. Afterwards they opened fire on another bus and on cars of civilians. Seven Israelis were killed and forty were wounded. An IDF soldier and a combatant from the Israel Border Police special counterterrorism unit were also killed. Seven of the terrorists were killed. In addition, five Egyptian soldiers were killed in the chase after the terrorists.



Muhammad Abu Dabusa, who was killed recently in the ranks of ISIS in northern Iraq (WATHEQPRESS Twitter account, September 3, 2015)

## The conduct of the Islamic State

### Sending materials for manufacturing weapons for ISIS via Turkey

- According to an article in the Turkish media, **the transfer of arms and materials used to manufacture weapons for ISIS** was recently documented at the **Akçakale (Tell Abyad) border crossing** between Turkey and Syria. The items included steel plates, fertilizer, barrels of explosives, electrical and electronic equipment and more. According to the article, around one or two truckloads of material passed through the crossing each day, **thanks to the assistance and cooperation of the Turkish customs personnel** stationed there (Bugün, September 1, 2015).



**Transfer of materials used for manufacturing weapons for ISIS. Left: Transferring barrels of explosives in front of the Turkish customs officials, marked with a red circle. Right: Transferring sacks of fertilizer (www.bugun.com.tr, September 1, 2015)**



**Right: Transferring steel plates. Left: ISIS's use of the steel plates from Turkey (www.bugun.com.tr, September 1, 2015)**

The **Tell Abyad border crossing** is located in the northern Al-Raqqah province opposite **the Turkish town of Akçakale**. It used to be one of the most important border crossings between Syria and Turkey. In late 2012, the Free Syrian Army took control of the crossing. The crossing was taken over by ISIS in January 2014 and its Turkish side was closed. **Although the border is officially closed, traffic through it has not stopped**, and ISIS continued to send its casualties for treatment at hospitals in Turkey. **After the area of Kobani was captured from ISIS, the Kurds seized the border crossing and it is now under their control**. If the Turkish article is reliable, then this is evidence that **ISIS continues to take advantage of the crossing for its purposes, possibly as a result of local “arrangements” reached with Turkish and**

**Kurdish customs officials.** The article also indicates that **the Turkish security measures against ISIS's logistics system are not effective enough.**

## Training children by the Al-Nusra Front

- Abdullah Muhaysini, an Al-Qaeda operative in Syria, posted a video about a training camp for the children apparently located in the northwestern Idlib province (The Long War Journal, September 4, 2015).



Photos from the video showing children being trained (The Long War Journal, September 5, 2015)

The jihadi organizations in Syria, the Al-Nusra Front and ISIS, attach great importance to instilling their ideas among the younger generation. They establish formal and informal “educational” frameworks in the areas under their control. The informal frameworks consist mainly of military training camps for children and teenagers. At these camps, the children and teenagers undergo military training and radical Islamic indoctrination. These camps assist the jihadi organizations in training their next generation of fighters.

## The global jihad in other countries

### Libya

#### Derna

- In and around the city of Derna, eastern Libya, the battle for control between ISIS and a local jihadi organization affiliated with Al-Qaeda continued. According to reports from the city of Derna, 11 Shura Council operatives were wounded in the fighting

between ISIS operatives and operatives of the Shura Council of the Rebels of Derna. Eleven ISIS operatives were also reported killed (Akhbar Libya, August 31, 2015).

■ According to an ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, fighting is taking place in **Ras al-Hilal**, west of Derna, between ISIS and groups that oppose it (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, September 4, 2015).

## Algeria

■ According to recent reports, a number of organizations affiliated with Al-Qaeda in Algeria **have pledged allegiance to ISIS and its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi:**

- **On September 3, 2015**, a video was posted on the Internet showing nine armed operatives belonging to a network by the name of ***Sariyyat al-Ghuraba*** (i.e., **the Company of Foreigners**). The operatives pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in the **city of Constantine**, in northeast Algeria. One of the operatives called on all Muslims to pledge allegiance to Caliph Al-Baghdadi and help him with all the means at their disposal (Twitter; YouTube, September 3, 2015).



**Company of Foreigners operatives in Algeria pledging allegiance to the leader of ISIS (YouTube, September 3, 2015)**

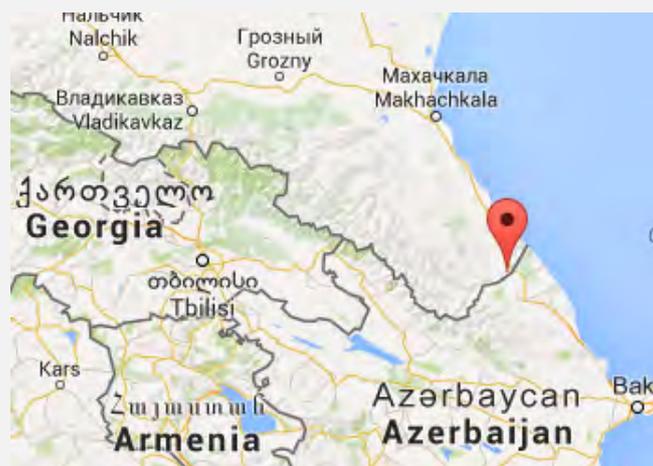
- An ISIS-affiliated website posted an audio file on behalf of a network by the name of ***Katibat al-Ansar*** (i.e., **the Battalion of Supporters**) in the Algiers province. The network operatives pledged allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (Isdarat.tv, September 4, 2015). In response to the announcement, Al-Qaeda in North Africa issued a statement to the effect that only a small group of its operatives, numbering fewer than ten, had joined ISIS.

## Yemen

■ **ISIS's Sanaa province in Yemen** claimed responsibility for the twofold attack against a Shiite mosque in the **Al-Jeraf neighborhood** in the north of the capital, Sanaa. According to reports, at least twenty people were killed and a few dozen were wounded. The suicide bomber, codenamed **Qusai al-Sanaani**, entered the Al-Muayad Mosque in the neighborhood and blew himself up with an explosive belt. Immediately afterwards, a car bomb exploded at the entrance to the mosque (Isdarat.tv, September 2, 2015). **Shiite mosques are a preferred target for ISIS operatives in Yemen.**

## The Caucasus region

■ **ISIS's Caucasus province** has claimed responsibility for the **attack on a Russian Army checkpoint in southern Dagestan**. The attack was carried out near the village of Magaramkent, around 165 km east of Makhachkala, the capital of Dagestan. According to the announcement, **the attack killed and injured a number of Russian soldiers**. The president of Russia and the head the Chechen Republic claim that there is no presence of ISIS in the area (Ibttimes, September 2, 2015). If this announcement is correct, **then this is the first attack carried out by the Caucasus province of the Islamic State since the announcement of its establishment in June 2015** (Businessinsider, September 2, 2015).



The village of Magaramkent in Dagestan, where the attack against Russian soldiers was allegedly carried out (Google Maps)

## Counterterrorism and preventive activity

### Britain

■ In a speech in Parliament, British Prime Minister David Cameron said that **three British citizens were killed in recent attacks by the coalition forces in Syria**. According to Cameron, **British intelligence believes that at least two of them were involved in planning attacks against the West**.

■ British citizen **Riad Khan** and two of his friends, one of whom was also a British citizen, were killed in an airstrike carried out by a British UAV on August 21, 2015, in the area of Al-Raqqah. Three days later, British citizen **Junaid Hussain** was killed in an airstrike carried out by the US Air Force in the area of Al-Raqqah ([www.uk.gov](http://www.uk.gov), September 7, 2015).

## ISIS's battle for hearts and minds

### Severe criticism of Hamas in a message from ISIS to the Palestinians

■ A video issued by ISIS's Damascus province **shows two masked operatives conveying a message to their "brothers" in Palestine**. They say they are "delayed" in helping their brothers in Palestine because they are busy with the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate. They note that it is necessary to fight for Palestine in order to impose Islamic law there. **They say that ISIS does not see any difference between the areas under the control of the Jews (i.e., Israel) and those controlled by the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, who have abandoned Islam** (Isdarat.tv, September 2, 2015).

■ The speaker in the video **harshly criticizes Hamas** on the grounds that, like the Arab countries, it does not impose Islamic law (Sharia), and does not permit Gaza to be turned into an Islamic emirate. The speaker addresses "Muslims in Palestine," noting that they are at the center of the conflict **and therefore they must help ISIS by adopting its ideas**. According to the speaker, the problem of Palestine should be seen as an Islamic issue and Palestine's liberation should be fought for (Isdarat.tv, September 2, 2015).



ISIS operatives addressing their “brothers” in Palestine (Isdarat.tv, September 2, 2015)

## ISIS threatens the President of Turkey

- The ISIS-affiliated Al-Battar Media Foundation **has issued a *fatwa*** (i.e., religious ruling) **sanctioning the killing of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan**. This is because Turkey is participating in the coalition airstrikes. The *fatwa* states that “Erdoğan, who has renounced Islam, deserves to die for his support of the international coalition led by the United States” (Amaq News Agency’s Google Plus account, September 1, 2015).



The beginning of the fatwa sanctioning the death of Erdoğan (Amaq News Agency’s Google Plus account, September 1, 2015)