



## Spotlight on Global Jihad

(November 19 - 25, 2015)



### Main events of the week

- Following the terrorist attacks in Paris, this week the French and Belgian security forces carried out intensive security activity (which paralyzed the city of Brussels). They were searching for an ISIS operative of Belgian descent who managed to escape from the scene of the attack and for additional operatives in the network that was behind the attack in Paris. ISIS, on its part, embarked on a media campaign in which it **threatened to continue and even escalate the terrorist attacks against France, Europe in general and the United States.**
- **The US, Russia and France increased their airstrikes against ISIS targets.** A key target of these attacks was the **oil infrastructure** (oil fields, production facilities and tankers) **which are ISIS's main source of income.** In the meantime, the international coordination of the countries taking part in the battle against ISIS, which appeared to have been making progress recently, **suffered a major setback with the interception of a Russian plane by Turkey, which claimed that the aircraft had entered into its airspace** (the Russians deny this). The interception of the plane clearly illustrates the existing **potential for entanglement and miscalculation in Syria**, an arena where many countries with different interests are carrying out air operations.

### 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, a few dozen airstrikes were carried out by means of fighter planes, attack aircraft and UAVs. Following are the main airstrikes (US Department of Defense website, November 12, 2015):

- **Syria** - the airstrikes were concentrated in the areas of Al-Hasakah, Abu Kamal and Deir al-Zor. The airstrikes damaged ISIS buildings, sniper positions, artillery positions, and **sites for the distribution of petroleum and its products**, among other things.
- **Iraq** - the airstrikes were concentrated in the areas of Kirkuk, Kisik (west of Mosul), Mosul, Ramadi, Sinjar and Sultan Abdullah (south of Mosul). The airstrikes targeted ISIS weapons, artillery positions, operatives, battle positions and roads used by ISIS, among other things.

## Destruction of oil infrastructure

■ Last week, the airstrikes by the US and the coalition countries and Russia concentrated on **ISIS's oil infrastructure**, including oil production sites and oil tankers that distribute oil to various consumers. The airstrikes were **intended to significantly impair ISIS's revenues from oil and oil products**, one of its main sources of income:

- **On November 20, 2015**, US and Russian airstrikes reportedly **destroyed 500 ISIS oil tankers**. **The tankers were making their way from Syria's northeastern desert to Iraq, where it was to be refined**. In addition, Russian planes reportedly launched air-to-surface missiles against ISIS oil facilities **in the provinces of Idlib and Aleppo**. In addition, according to a US Army report, airstrikes in the area of Deir al-Zor and Al-Hasakah **destroyed 283 oil tankers used by ISIS to carry oil** from the oil fields in eastern Syria where it was produced to the smuggling points (AP, November 23, 2015).
- Russia announced that its fighter planes had destroyed **15 oil facilities and attacked more than a thousand tankers carrying oil**. According to Russian estimates, ISIS's oil production capacity was significantly reduced after these airstrikes, resulting in a significant reduction in its revenues (TASS, November 20, 2015). According to Syrian media reports, on November 23, 2015, Russian planes **hit 80 oil tanks in the area of Al-Raqqah** (Dimashq al-Aan, November 23, 2015).

■ ISIS is a terrorist organization that managed to take over most of the oil and gas fields in Syria and some oil fields in Iraq, thus becoming **the wealthiest terrorist organization in the world**. The profits that ISIS derived from the sale of oil products were previously estimated at **several million dollars a day** and were its main source of income. In the past year, oil facilities and oil tankers have become a **target of**

**American airstrikes** which, according to American reports, have significantly reduced ISIS's income. But in retrospect, these reports appear to have been overly optimistic and there has apparently not been a significant drop in ISIS's revenues from oil products.<sup>1</sup> **Now the impact of recent US and Russian airstrikes on ISIS's oil production and marketing infrastructure must be examined.**

■ According to a report in the Lebanese newspaper **Al-Akhbar**, due to the airstrikes on oil production and transportation sites, ISIS is in a state of crisis. This is reflected, inter alia, in the termination of the work on a significant portion of ISIS's oil wells and refineries, the rise in oil prices, and the creation of an electricity and fuel crisis in areas under ISIS's control (Al-Akhbar, November 22, 2015). **This information has not yet been verified.**

## The United States

■ **US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter** discussed the possibility of intensifying the battle against ISIS. According to Carter, alongside the tactical change which has been reflected in **attacking ISIS's oil tankers in Abu Kamal**, the United States also intends to change the rules of engagement in order to reduce the restrictions on the airstrikes. He welcomed France's decision to step up its actions against ISIS and expressed the hope that other European countries would also broaden their efforts. Referring to Russia, Secretary of Defense Carter said that Russia should change its strategy in order to contribute more to the campaign against ISIS (Washington Times, November 19, 2015).

## France

■ According to **French President François Hollande**, who spoke at a meeting of mayors in France, France is now in a state of war against ISIS, which threatens the welfare of the entire world. The President said that **France had stepped up its operations in Syria and that the aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle, which was sent to the region, would double the number of airstrikes against ISIS** (Sky News, November 18, 2015).

■ According to a report from November 23, 2015, the aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle, which is equipped with 26 fighter planes, **carried out its first airstrike against ISIS targets in Mosul and Ramadi, Iraq** (news executive Twitter account, November

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<sup>1</sup> According to a report in The Times, ISIS's revenues from smuggled oil in 2015 are expected to exceed USD 500 million (alarabiya.net, November 20, 2015).

23, 2015). ISIS posted a video on behalf of its Al-Raqqah province, **threatening to kill citizens in France in response to the airstrikes which, according to ISIS, were carried out by French aircraft in Al-Raqqah** (YouTube, November 14, 2015).

## International cooperation in the campaign against ISIS

■ At a meeting held on November 20, 2015, **the interior ministers of the European Union decided to introduce systematic control of European citizens who cross borders**. This differs from the procedure that has been in force until now, with virtually free movement throughout Europe and only superficial inspections. According to the proposal, the superficial inspection process will take place only among citizens from countries that are signatories to the Schengen Convention.<sup>2</sup> This will be for a limited time until the European Commission makes changes to the Convention in accordance with the terrorist threats. **The new procedure will require careful registration of foreign citizens who enter countries that have signed the Convention** (The Guardian, November 23, 2015).

■ A decision, which was passed by a unanimous vote by the 15 members of the UN Security Council, called on all countries to **significantly intensify the fight against ISIS and the Al-Nusra Front and to coordinate these efforts**. The decision, which has only a declarative nature, called the threat of ISIS an unprecedented threat to international security. The draft resolution was proposed by France following the terrorist attacks in Paris (UN Security Council website, November 20, 2015).

■ According to **Russia's representative at the UN**, Russia submitted its own draft proposal concerning cooperation in the fight against terrorism. It was filed in the wake of the recent terrorist attacks in Paris and Egypt. According to him, all members of the international community must **work together to prosecute the jihadi operatives who carried out these attacks** (Sputnik, November 19, 2015).

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<sup>2</sup> The Schengen Convention - an agreement signed by European countries on the introduction of a coordinated immigration and border control policy. The treaty was signed by 26 of the EU countries (Britain and Ireland have not signed) and four other countries that are not members of the EU.

## Russian involvement in the civil war in Syria

- Russian warplanes have **significantly increased their airstrikes, probably due to the interception of the Russian aircraft in Sinai**. Most of the airstrikes were carried out in areas of Hama, Idlib, Deir al-Zor, Aleppo, Homs, Daraa, and Damascus. Between November 17 and November 21, 2015, **the Russians carried out 522 combat sorties in Syria, during which over a hundred cruise missiles were launched and about 1,400 tons of bombs of various types were dropped**. In addition, **18 missiles were launched from a vessel located in the Caspian Sea at seven targets in Al-Raqqah, Idlib and Aleppo** (RT, November 21, 2015). According to a report by the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), since Russia's airstrikes in Syria began (in late September 2015), **403 civilians have been killed, including 166 women and children** (SOHR, November 20, 2015).
- According to **Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu**, Russia has doubled the number of its combat aircraft operating in Syria to 69 aircraft (RT, November 21, 2015). However, a spokesman for the Russian president noted that **Russia would not expand its campaign in Syria and would not put boots on the ground there** (Reuters, November 17, 2015).
- The great intensity of the airstrikes has already led to a **serious incident**, which clearly illustrates the **risks of complications and miscalculations inherent in the Syrian arena**. On November 24, 2015, a Turkish fighter plane shot down a Russian Sukhoi-24 fighter plane. The aircraft fell in the Turkmen Mountains, northeast of Latakia. According to media reports, the two Russian pilots were killed, apparently by gunfire from the ground (according to other reports, one of the pilots was rescued). A Russian helicopter sent to rescue them was shot down.
- **The incident led to severe tension between Russia and Turkey**, with the latter being supported by NATO and the United States. The Turks insist that **the Russian plane entered Turkish airspace** and that Turkey warned the pilot ten times, but the pilot did not respond. A spokesman for the Pentagon confirmed this version. However, **the Russian Ministry of Defense claims that the aircraft flew only in Syrian territory**. In response to the incident, Russia has taken various measures, including suspension of military contacts with Turkey and **discontinuation of the security coordination between the two countries**. According to media reports, Russia intends to send a rocket ship equipped with advanced anti-aircraft interception systems to the Eastern Mediterranean.

■ In the meantime, even before the interception of the aircraft, Russia and the United States **exchanged media blows**: commenting on Russia's role in the crisis in Syria, **US President Barack Obama** said that so far Russia had focused on **supporting Bashar al-Assad**. According to Obama, the Russian plane crash in the Sinai Peninsula **led to a change in Russia's policy and it is now focusing on ISIS**. However, the President said it was unclear whether Russia could make the necessary strategic adjustments in order to become an effective partner of the United States and the coalition countries (CNCNews, November 22, 2015). In response to these statements, **Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev** said that **the US was the one that caused the emergence of ISIS**, through the erroneous policy that it adopted when it failed to take the sensitive situation in the Middle East into consideration (Sputnik, November 22, 2015).

## Main developments in Syria



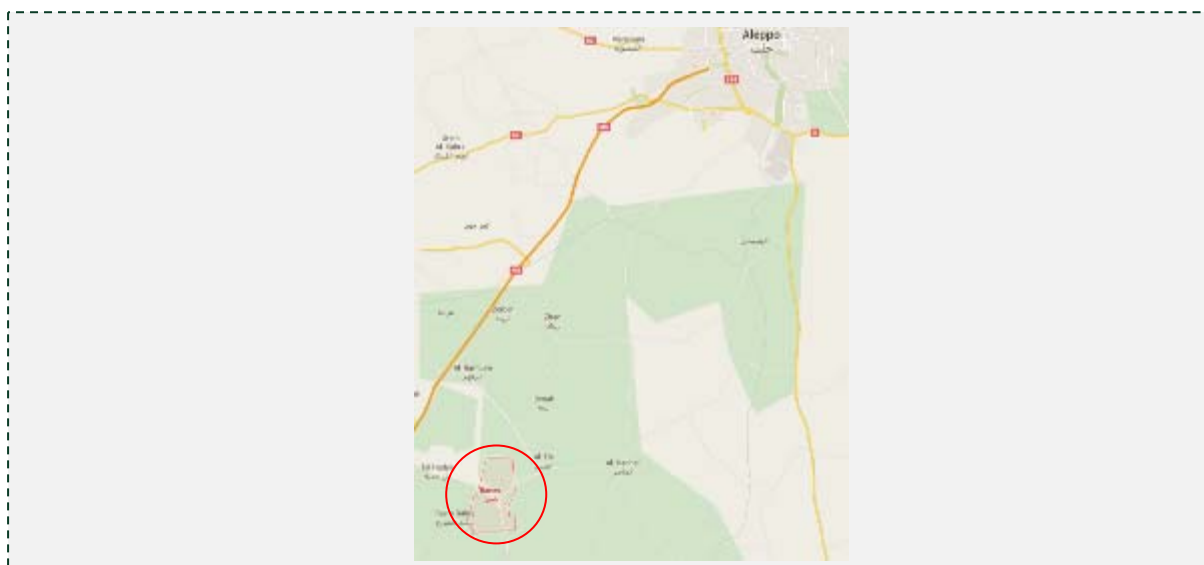
Map of Syria ([www.nationsonline.org](http://www.nationsonline.org))

## The area of Aleppo

■ This week as well, **the fighting continued in the rural area south of Aleppo**. There were also battles between the Syrian Army and the rebel organizations in Aleppo itself. ISIS continues to exert pressure on the Syrian Army around the Kuweyres military airbase, through suicide bombing attacks. **In all these areas there were no significant developments this week.**

■ **Following are details of some of the battle zones in the Aleppo region:**

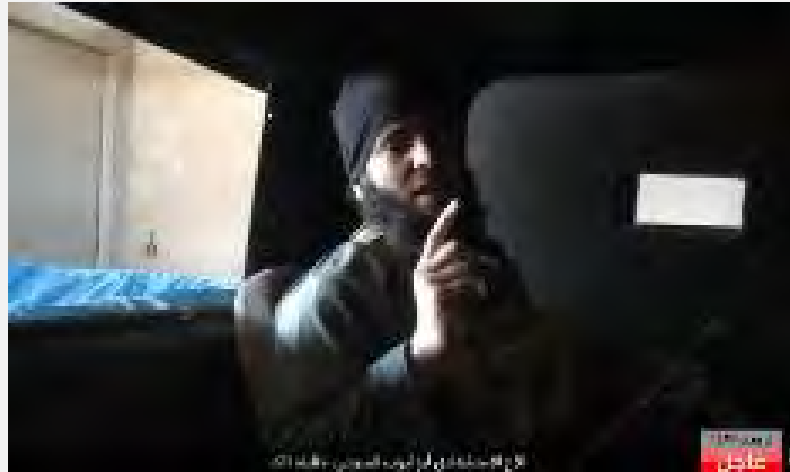
- **In the rural area south of Aleppo**, battles took place between operatives of Jaysh al-Fatah, an umbrella framework of rebel organizations of which the most dominant is the Al-Nusra Front, and the Syrian security forces (supported by Hezbollah operatives and Iranian soldiers and officers). Jaysh al-Fatah reportedly managed to take over new areas **around the village of Banes** in the rural area south of Aleppo and near the main road from Hama to Aleppo (Al-Durar al-Shamiya, November 18, 2015). According to a Jaysh al-Fatah commander, 18 Iraqi fighters in the ranks of Hezbollah were killed in the village of Banes when **Jaysh al-Fatah operatives took control of the village** (this probably refers to operatives of the Shiite militias from Iraq that are handled by Iran).



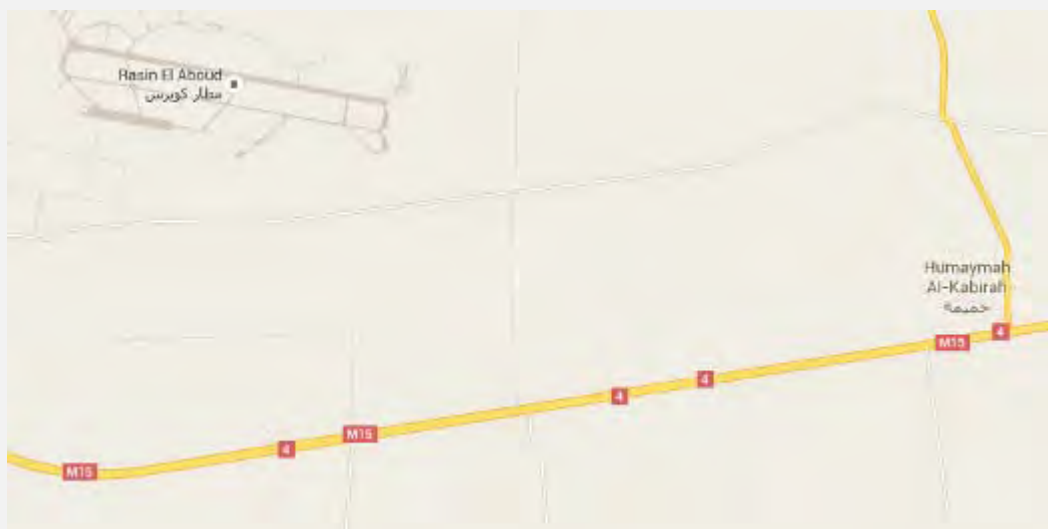
**The village of Banes, about 30 km southwest of the Aleppo city center, near the M-5 main road (Google Maps)**

- **In the area east of Aleppo**, the Syrian Army reportedly took control of the village of Al-Jamiliya, **south of the Kuweyres military airbase** (Al-Mayadeen, November 18, 2015). The Syrian Army also regained control of **the village of Al-Humaymah**, east of Kuweyres (see map). Many ISIS operatives were killed and

injured in the battle there (Al-Manar TV, November 19, 2015). On November 21, 2015, an ISIS-affiliated website posted ISIS's claim of responsibility for a suicide bombing attack using a truck bomb, against a concentration of Syrian Army troops in **the village of Qasqeas**, near the Kuweyres military airbase. The suicide bomber was **Abu Ayyub al-Manbij** (i.e., from Manbij, northeast of Aleppo) (dabiqnews.com, November 21, 2015).



ISIS suicide bomber Abu Ayyub al-Manbij, who blew himself up with a truck bomb (dabiqnews.com, November 21, 2015)



The village of Al-Humaymah, located around 6 km southeast of the Kuweyres military airbase (Google Maps)

- According to reports by the Turkish news agency and the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), the rebel organizations have carried out attacks on the villages of **Dalha** and **Harjalah**, with air cover from the coalition forces. **Both**



villages are very near the **Syrian-Turkish border**, southeast of the Turkish city of Kilis. According to these reports, the attacks constitute a first step in the implementation of the **plan to establish a buffer zone in the area north of Aleppo**, which will receive Syrian refugees (Al-Hayat, November 22, 2015).<sup>3</sup>



The villages of Dalha and Harjalah, near Syria's border with Turkey  
(from almodon.com, a Lebanese website that monitors the events in Syria)

- In the city of Aleppo itself, there were battles between the Syrian regime's forces and the Islamic rebel organizations in two neighborhoods: **Al-Shahba al-Jadeedah**, northwest of the city center, and **Jam'iyat al-Zahra**, west of Al-Shahba al-Jadeedah (syriahr.com, November 22, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> There have been reports in the past about the intention of the Turks and the US-led coalition to establish a buffer zone north of Aleppo, near the border with Turkey. According to a recent report by official Turkish sources, Turkey intends to establish a buffer zone on the border between Syria and Turkey, **between the Jarabulus crossing and A'zaz**, to be used by the rebels in Syria (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, November 22, 2015).



Aleppo's Al-Shahba al-Jadeedah neighborhood (Google Maps)

## The area of Hama

- In the rural area north of Hama, battles continued **around the town of Morek** (approximately 26 km north of Hama). **There has been no significant change** in the situation on the ground this week.

## Al-Hasakah province

- Battles continued between the Syrian Army and ISIS in the rural area east and southeast of Al-Hasakah. ISIS operatives attempted to take over areas **near the city of Al-Shadadi** (about 50 km south of Al-Hasakah). One of ISIS's targets is apparently **the oil and gas fields in Al-Jabsa** (syriahr.com, November 19, 2015). **There is a gas plant in Al-Jabsa** that was used by ISIS in July 2014. Due to the presence of ISIS (and other rebel organizations), the site was the target of airstrikes by the US and its allies and possibly the Syrian regime as well (thiqah1.com).



Al-Shadadi and the rural area surrounding Al-Hasakah (Google Maps)



The gas plant in Al-Jabsa (YouTube)

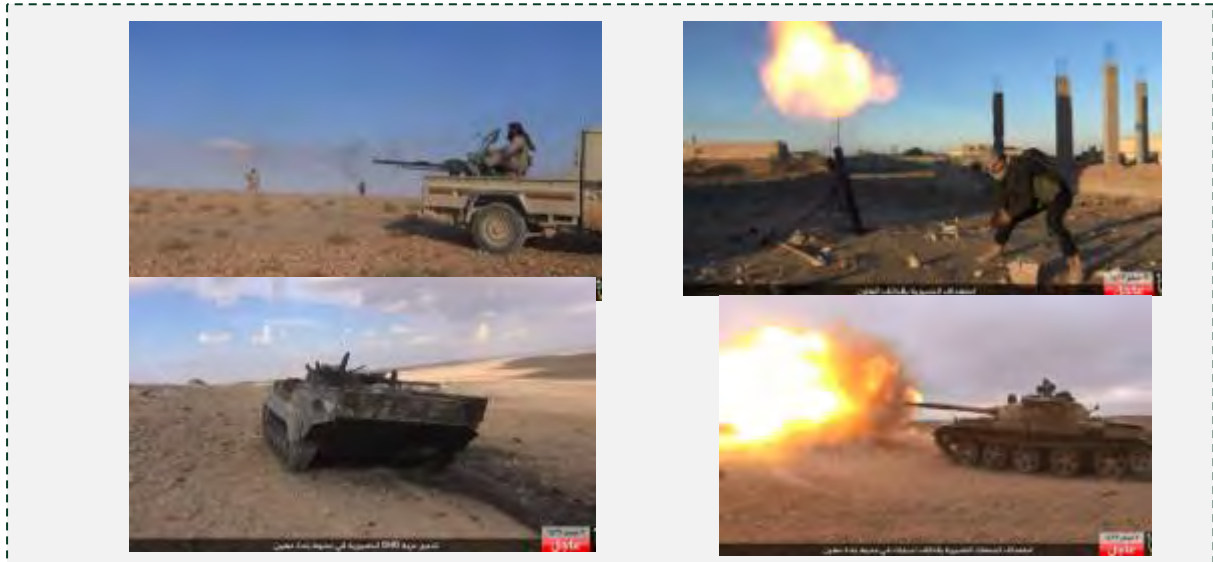
## Deir al-Zor

■ In the area of Deir al-Zor, **ISIS operatives continue to try to take over the military airbase**, which is controlled by the Syrian regime. The Syrian Army managed to repel an attempted attack on the airbase by ISIS operatives, killing 30 ISIS operatives (Al-Mayadeen; Hosein Mortada's Twitter account, November 20, 2015). Following the intense fighting, ISIS reportedly closed all schools in the province (local coordinating committees, November 23, 2015).

## Homs province

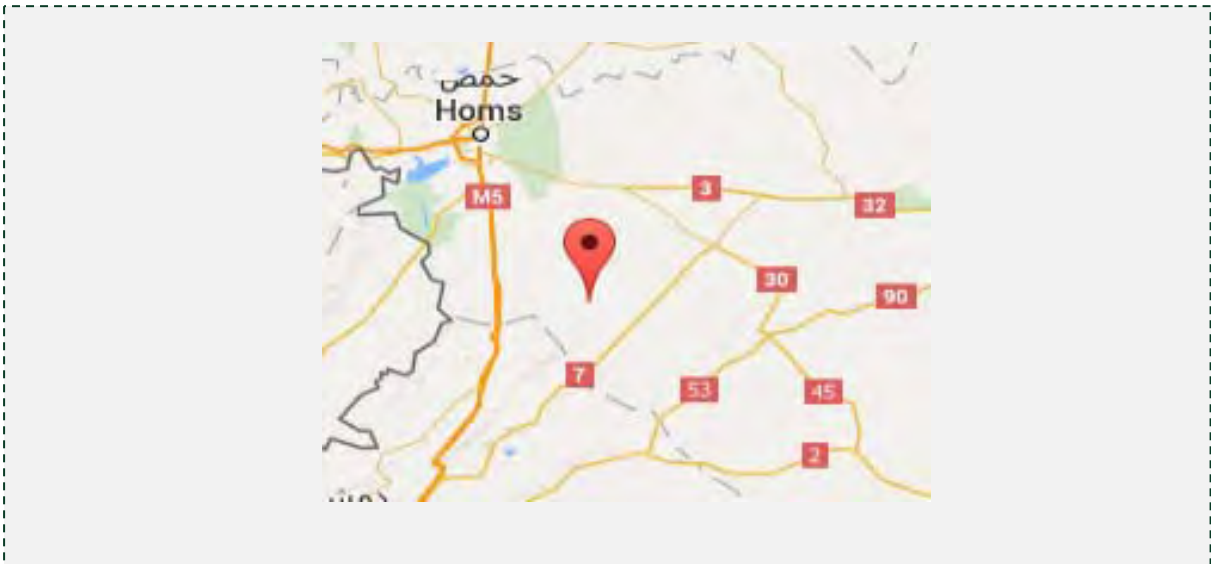
■ In the area of the **town of Mheen**, southeast of Homs, there were battles this week between the Syrian Army and ISIS. On November 19, 2015, an ISIS-affiliated website

posted photos showing ISIS operatives attacking the Syrian Army forces around the town of Mheen, southeast of Homs. The photo shows a Syrian Army BMP armored personnel carrier that was hit by gunfire by ISIS (muslims-news.net, November 19, 2015). There were also reports of a car bomb that exploded in the village of al-Hadath, near the town of Mheen (Syria Mubashir, November 19, 2015).



**Top right: ISIS operative launching a mortar shell at the Syrian Army forces near the town of Mheen. Top left: ISIS operative firing a heavy machine gun mounted on an SUV at the Syrian Army forces near the town of Mheen. Bottom right: ISIS tank shelling the Syrian Army forces near the town of Mheen. Bottom left: Syrian Army BMP APC that was hit by gunfire by ISIS near the town of Mheen (muslims-news.net, November 19, 2015).**

■ According to a later report, **the Syrian Army managed to take over ISIS storage facilities in the town of Mheen** (Al-Jazeera TV, November 19, 2015). On November 22, 2015, the Syrian Army reported that it had advanced to the outskirts of the town of Mheen, with Russian combat helicopter cover (Hosein Mortada's Twitter account, November 22, 2015).

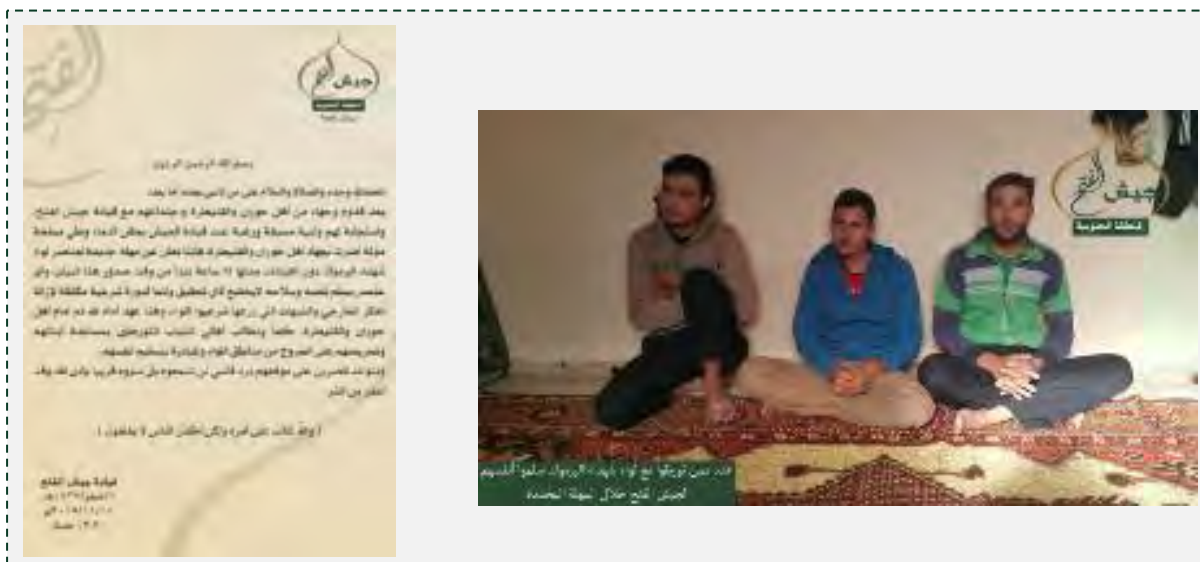


The town of Mheen, the site of battles between the Syrian Army and ISIS (Google Maps)

## Daraa province

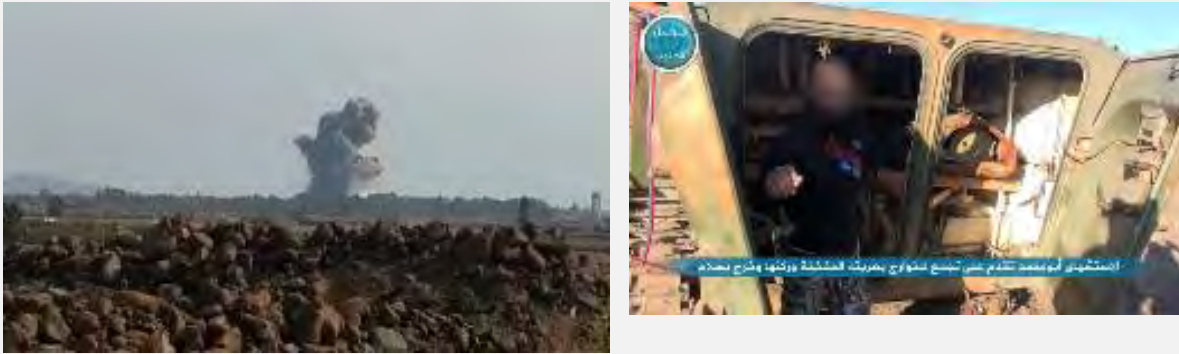
■ The Shuhada al-Yarmouk Brigade (Al-Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade) is an **ISIS-affiliated** military framework that operates in the southern Syrian Golan Heights. Last week, the brigade suffered a serious blow following the killing of its commander and two other senior commanders. **The Al-Nusra Front** and other rebel organizations associated with it apparently **took advantage of the elimination of the brigade's senior leadership and began a campaign intended to take over the brigade's strongholds in the southern Syrian Golan Heights.**

■ **Jaysh al-Fatah**, led by the Al-Nusra Front, **issued an ultimatum calling on Al-Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade operatives to turn themselves in within 24 hours** (SNN, November 22, 2015). According to the announcement, anyone belonging to the Al-Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade who turns himself in and surrenders his weapons will not be interrogated but will be obligated to take a course on Sharia (Muslim religious law) in order to “eradicate the misconceptions” instilled in them by the Brigade's Sharia staff. The ultimatum was set for 24 hours, **starting on November 18, 2015** (Twitter account affiliated with Jaysh al-Fatah, November 21, 2015). On the other hand, the Al-Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade called on residents of the villages controlled by Jaysh al-Fatah to leave their homes, and has declared the area a closed military zone (Al-Durar al-Shamiya, November 18, 2015).

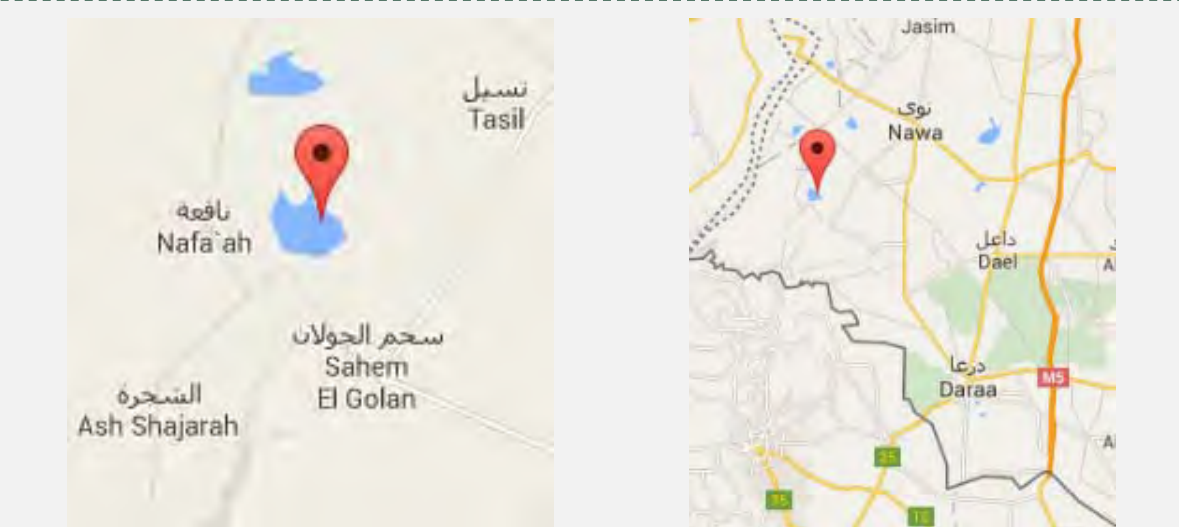


**Right: Three Al-Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade operatives who obeyed the ultimatum and surrendered to Jaysh al-Fatah. Left: The ultimatum set by Jaysh al-Fatah to operatives affiliated with the Al-Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade (Twitter, November 18, 2015)**

■ When the ultimatum expired, **Jaysh al-Fatah mounted an attack against the Al-Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade**. On November 22, 2015, it launched an aggressive attack on the village of **Ain Dhikr**. The attack began with the detonation of a booby-trapped APC at the entrance to a village where Al-Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade operatives were staying (Khatwa, November 22, 2015). On the morning of November 22, 2015, Al-Nusra Front operative attacked concentrations of Al-Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade operatives in several areas: **Saham al-Jawlan Dam** (about 26 km northwest of Daraa), the suburbs of the **town of Nafea** (about 28 km northwest of Daraa) and **Al-'Alan** (syriahr.com, November 22, 2015). In addition, Jaysh al-Fatah operatives reportedly took over a school where Al-Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade operatives had barricaded themselves, killing several of them (Twitter, November 22, 2015).



Right: Al-Nusra Front booby-trapped APC that was detonated against a concentration of Al-Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade operatives (Twitter, November 22, 2015). Left: Booby-trapped APC being detonated near a concentration of Al-Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade operatives (Twitter, November 22, 2015)



Right: Saham al-Jawlan Dam (Google Maps). Left: Saham al-Jawlan Dam and the villages of Al-Nafea and Saham al-Jawlan (Google Maps)

- According to an unverified report on a Twitter account, the new commander of the Al-Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade, **Abu Obeida al-Qahtan**, who was appointed to his new post on November 15, 2015, was wounded in Daraa in unknown circumstances and **died of his wounds** (Twitter, November 20, 2015). **Abu Obeida al-Qahtan** was appointed as the new commander of the brigade after the elimination of its former commander **Abu Ali al-Baridi**, and the brigade operatives pledged allegiance to him (see last week's edition of the ITIC's Spotlight on Global Jihad). If the report of the death of Abu Obeida al-Qahtan is verified, **then this is another blow, in practical terms and in terms of morale, for the ISIS-affiliated Al-Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade.**



Announcement to the effect that Abu Obeida al-Qattan, the new commander of the Al-Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade, was appointed to replace Abu Ali al-Baridi, who had died of his injuries (Twitter, November 20, 2015)

## Main developments in Iraq



Map of Iraq (nationsonline.org)



## Overview

ISIS continues to **carry out major attacks, including suicide bombing attacks, in Baghdad**. These attacks are directed against targets affiliated with the Iraqi government and the Shiites. In response, the Iraqi security forces have stepped up their security measures in the city. **The Iraqi Army continues its efforts to expand its control around the city of Ramadi**, but is still refraining from entering it. **In the city of Sinjar**, which was taken over by the Peshmerga last week, the Kurds are establishing their control. The Kurdish government in Erbil reportedly wants to turn the region into an administrative province of the Kurdish autonomy region, which has displeased the central government in Baghdad.

### The city of Baghdad and its environs

- **ISIS continues to carry out terrorist attacks against Baghdad.** During the week, **dozens of Iraqis were killed and wounded in a series of attacks** carried out throughout the city. Following the attacks, the Iraqi government intensified its security activity. This included both setting up checkpoints and continuous patrols by the security forces.
- During the week the following attacks were carried out:
  - **On November 20, 2015**, an IED exploded, after which a suicide bombing attack was carried out in southern Baghdad, killing nine Iraqi civilians and injuring dozens more. ISIS has claimed responsibility for the incident (Al-Arabi al-Jadeed, November 21, 2015; Russia al-Youm, November 20, 2015).
  - **On November 21, 2015**, a policeman was killed and five others were injured in an explosion of an IED against a police patrol in southern Baghdad. In another incident, two soldiers and a civilian were killed by shots fired at a security checkpoint south of the city, in the town of Al-Yousefia.

### Nineveh province

#### Sinjar

- The Kurdish Peshmerga forces, who took over the city of Sinjar and its environs last week, are establishing their control. The Peshmerga forces are reportedly digging defensive trenches around the city to prepare for possible attacks by ISIS (Muhit, November 21, 2015). At the political level, the Kurdish government in Erbil reportedly

wants to turn the region of Sinjar, which is a district, into an administrative province of the Kurdish autonomy region, which has displeased the central government in Baghdad (Shafaq News, November 21, 2015).



The city of Sinjar (Source: Google Maps)

## Al-Anbar province

### Hit

- ISIS is working to establish its rule **in and around the city of Hit**, east of Ramadi. This week, ISIS published photos showing tribal leaders in the village of Kubeisa, near the city of Hit, renewing their pledge of allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (Akhbar al-Muslimeen, November 21, 2015). **ISIS attaches great importance to supporting the Sunni population, and Sunni tribal leaders are an important “target audience” from its perspective.**



Top right: Tribal leaders in the village of Kubeisa renewing their pledge of allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Top left: ISIS's morality police (Hisba) in the open market in the village of Kubeisa. Bottom: The market area in the village of Kubeisa (Akhhbar al-Muslimeen, November 21, 2015)

## Fallujah

- ISIS continues to consolidate its rule in the city of Fallujah. To this end, it has placed the emphasis (as elsewhere) on **the establishment of an education system that will train the next generation of operatives**. This week, ISIS posted photos of male and female schoolchildren at its schools of (Akhhbar al-Muslimeen, November 18, 2015).



Top right: Boys in class. On the desk there are booklets with the ISIS flag. Top left: Students sitting opposite a school teacher. Bottom: A class of girls (Akhhbar al-Muslimeen, November 18, 2015)

## ISIS's Terrorist Attacks

### Jewish Teacher Stabbed in Marseille

■ The Marseille prosecutor reported that on November 18, 2015, **three people affiliated with ISIS** stabbed a history teacher from the Jewish school in Marseille. The teacher sustained minor wounds. The three terrorists escaped.

### Terrorist Attack in France (Update)

- A week after the terrorist attack in Paris, additional information has been released:
  - **The terrorist squads:** Three terrorist squads carried out the attack, one at the Stade de Paris stadium in northern Paris, one at the Bataclan Theater and one at the bars and restaurants. **There may also have been a fourth squad planning an attack in the La Défense business district and at Charles de Gaulle Airport** (francetvinfo.fr, November 21, 2015).
  - **The terrorists' identities:** So far **seven of the terrorists** have been identified. An eighth terrorist, **Salah Abdeslam**, escaped. The leader of the terrorist network was **Abdelhamid Abaaoud**, a Belgian ISIS operative, who was sent from Damascus to establish a terrorist network in Belgium and France.<sup>4</sup> Abaaoud was killed by French security forces in a raid on a house in the St. Denis quarter in northern Paris on November 18, 2015. A female cousin and another operative died when the operative detonated an explosive belt.



Abdelhamid Abaaoud with the ISIS flag. The picture was taken in Syria (Dabiq, Issue 7, February 2015)

<sup>4</sup> For further information, see the November 19, 2015, bulletin, "Abdelhamid Abaaoud, ISIS Terrorist of Belgian Origin Who Orchestrated the Terrorist Attack in Paris (Updated to November 19, 2015)."

- **Salah Abdeslam**, the eighth terrorist, escaped and **is still being sought**. An explosive belt which apparently belonged to him was found in a trash can in south Paris. After the attack, he fled to Belgium and went into hiding, apparently near Brussels. **Brussels was put on high alert and everyday life was paralyzed**. Salah Abdeslam was reportedly planning to go to Syria. After an extensive series of detentions in Brussels on the night of November 23, 2015, the Belgian security forces **reported that Abdeslam had escaped towards Germany**.

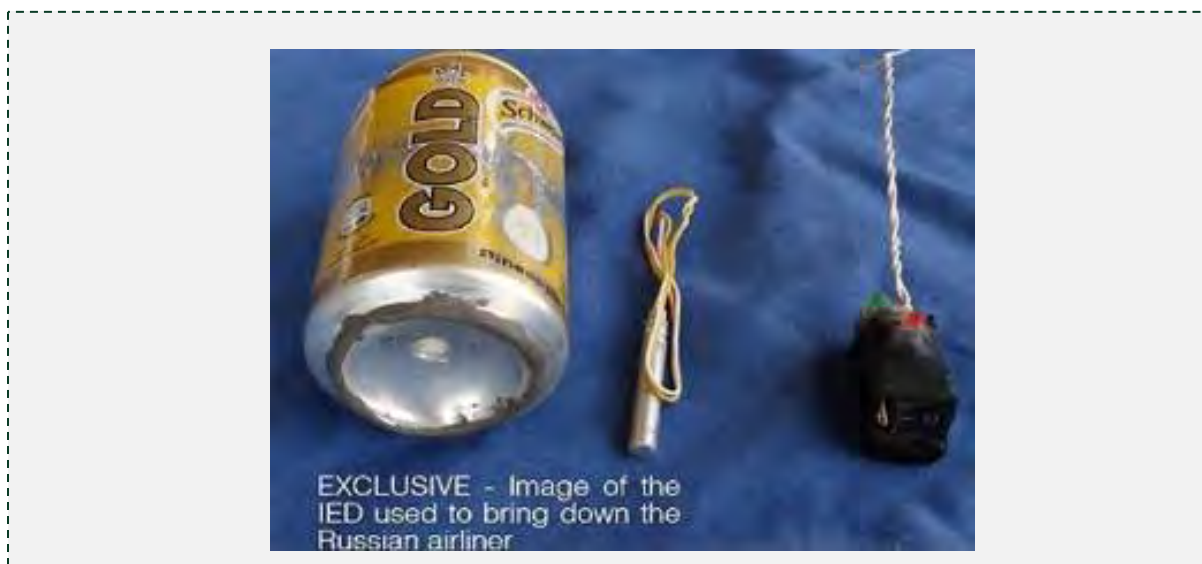


Salah Abdeslam, the eighth operative who carried out the attack in Paris (Twitter account of the Paris police department, November 15, 2015)

- **Turkey** reported that a **Belgian national of Moroccan descent** and two other individuals had been detained in Antalya. The Belgian was suspected of having gone to Paris to choose locations for the terrorist attacks.

## Interception of the Russian Plane in the Sinai Peninsula (Update)

- The day after the Russians admitted that their passenger plane had crashed in the Sinai Peninsula because a bomb had exploded on board, ISIS issued **photos of a soft drink can, claiming it had been used as an IED and caused the plane to crash**. ISIS also issued **photos of Russian passports**, claiming they belonged to passengers killed in the crash. The pictures were published in Dabiq, ISIS's English-language magazine. ISIS did not reveal what type of explosive it had used (Dabiq, November 18, 2015). According to the Russians, the IED on the plane weighed about one kilogram (2.2 pounds).



The kind of soft drink can ISIS planted on board the Russian plane (Dabiq, November 18, 2015)

- The Arab media reported that according to ISIS, **its initial objective had been to bring down a Western airplane over the Sinai Peninsula**. However, **because of Russia's attacks on ISIS in Syria, ISIS attacked a Russian plane** instead. ISIS claimed it had planted the IED on the plane **after having discovered a loophole in security at the Sharm el-Sheikh airport** (Al-Jazeera, November 18, 2015).

### Organization affiliated with Al-Qaeda carries out terrorist attack for bargaining purposes in Mali

- **On November 20, 2015, an organization affiliated with Al-Qaeda carried out a terrorist attack at the Radisson Blu luxury hotel in Bamako, the capital of Mali.** A group of terrorist operatives held 170 people hostage for more than seven hours. Eventually, local security forces invaded the hotel and released most of the hostages. **More than 20 people were killed during the attack.** Eighteen of them were **foreign nationals**, among them **one Israeli**. At least two terrorists were killed when security forces raided the hotel and a search for those who escaped is being carried out.
- **A terrorist organization called Al-Mourabitoun, affiliated with Al-Qaeda, claimed responsibility for the attack.** The number of terrorists who took part in the attack is not known. According to Mali television reports, the terrorists entered the hotel in the morning. Some of them came in a car with diplomatic plates and broke through the hotel's security barrier while others came on foot. They shouted "Allahu Akbar" and began shooting indiscriminately and throwing hand grenades. Two security guards at the entrance to the hotel were killed. During the attack, between 10 and 15 people who were able to recite Quran verses were released.

■ **Al-Mourabitoun was established by an Algerian Al-Qaeda operative named Mokhtar Belmokhtar.** It operates mainly in Mali's northern desert region, and most of its operatives are Arabs from the Tuareg tribe. It issued a statement claiming the attack was carried out by Al-Qaeda's Sahara Emirate. In 2012, radical militias occupied northern Mali, some of them affiliated with Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb. The fall of the region to radical Islam and the destruction of the ancient relics in Timbuktu led France to wage an operation against the jihadists. In 2013, the Islamists were pushed northward and the central administration regained a measure of control over the cities, towns and roads in most of the desert areas (although its control is not absolute and terrorist attacks in Mali continue).

## Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula

■ During the past week the Egyptian security forces continued their campaign against ISIS in the Sinai Peninsula. They carried out intensive activities, especially in the Rafah – Sheikh Zuweid – Al-Arish region. They killed dozens of jihadi operatives and detained dozens of suspects, confiscated weapons and neutralized a large number of IEDs (Al-Watan, November 28, 2015).

■ According to “Egyptian security sources” in northern Sinai, during a search along the shore on November 17, 2015, commandos killed a senior ISIS operative who was wearing an army uniform. They confiscated an automatic weapon and ammunition found in his possession (Al-Watan, November 18, 2015). According to initial reports, on November 24, 2015, an Egyptian policeman was killed and four people were wounded during a terrorist attack on a hotel where the judges overseeing elections in Al-Arish were staying.

## Palestinians and Israeli Arabs

### Israeli-Arab ISIS network exposed

■ The Israeli security forces **exposed a network of Israeli-Arab ISIS supporters from the village of Jaljulia (near the city of Kfar Saba).** They planned to go to Syria to join the ranks of ISIS. The investigation of the network began after the apprehension of **Nidal Hamed Saleh Saleh**, from Jaljulia, who tried to cross the border into Syria from the Golan Heights using a hang glider on October 24, 2015 (Israel Security Agency, November 18, 2015).

■ During the investigation, **two brothers from Jaljulia were detained: Jihad Nidal Yussuf Hijlah and Ihab Nidal Yussuf Hijlah.** They were known to the Israeli security

forces as ISIS supporters. **Jihad, the older of the two, spent half a year in Syria fighting in the ranks of ISIS in 2013.** He returned to Israel and was detained, tried, sentenced to prison and released in November 2014. **The two brothers helped Nidal Saleh leave for Syria.** During the past few months, Nidal and Jihad practiced paragliding in order to get to Syria from the Golan Heights. They chose that route so that **Nidal would not have to pass through Ben Gurion Airport, where his security record would be discovered.**

- The investigation revealed the names of **four other operatives from Jaljulia who belonged to the network.** The group had been active for a number of months and was led by Jihad Hijlah. They met at his house for religious instruction, where he preached the path of ISIS to them. They decided they would all go to Syria. It was also agreed upon that Jihad and Nidal would go by paraglider from the Golan Heights while the others went through Turkey. They would contact one another via the Internet and meet in Syria.

- In the end, two of the squad changed their minds and decided not to go to Syria. The other two went to Turkey in October 2015 **and tried to arrange their entry into Syria with ISIS operatives in Turkey.** When they were unsuccessful they returned to Israel. A week previously, two other Israeli Arabs tried to cross the border into Syria with paragliders, but following a technical mishap with one of the paragliders, they were unsuccessful. **Thus, of the six planning to paraglide into Syria, only Nidal Hijlah succeeded.**

## Two Palestinians from the Gaza Strip killed in the ranks of ISIS in Syria

- Palestinian sources reported **the deaths of two Palestinians from the Gaza Strip who had joined the ranks of ISIS in Syria.** They were killed on November 17, 2015, in an airstrike on the city of Al-Raqqah, ISIS's so-called capital in Syria. The Gazans (according to Kanaan network, Khabar Press, Panet website, November 17 and 18, 2015) were:

- **Ismail Harzallah**, 24, from the Al-Shati refugee camp. According to Palestinian sources, before he went to Syria, six months ago, he was an operative in the Hamas military-terrorist wing.





Ismail Harzallah, Hamas terrorist operative who joined ISIS (Facebook page of Al-Fajar Al-Jadeed, November 17, 2015)

- **Ali Faez al-Aswad**, 23, from the Tel al-Hawa neighborhood in Gaza City. He left the Gaza Strip six months ago and joined the ranks of ISIS in Syria. Fatah in eastern Gaza City issued a formal death notice for him. Fatah's Facebook page in eastern Gaza City claimed he was a journalist named Ali Faez al-Aswad, aka Abu Ali (Facebook page of Fatah in eastern Gaza City, November 18, 2015).



Left: The official Fatah death notice for Ali Faez al-Aswad (Facebook page of Fatah in eastern Gaza City, November 18, 2015). Right: Ali Faez al-Aswad (Khabar Press, November 17, 2015)

## The Global Jihad in Other Countries

### Libya

#### ISIS plans to attack the oil fields in southern Libya

- On November 20, 2015, **ISIS operatives reportedly invaded the Zelten oil field**, one of the largest in Libya. During his Friday sermon, **Abu Jaafar al-Ansari, the ISIS Emir in Sirte**, said that the zero hour for attacking the oil field would be November 22, 2015. He said ISIS operatives were prepared to attack the oil fields in the **town of Maradah**, the **al-Sahel oil field** and the **Zelten oil field** (see map). He threatened that the security personnel guarding the oil fields would be killed and that foreign employees would be taken hostage (Akhbar al-Hadath, November 20, 2015).
- The commander of the Libyan armed forces' operations room in the region of the oil fields was quick to deny the reports. He said that so far, security had not been breached and that **most of the oil fields were operating normally**. He added that the operations room had all the necessary measures at its disposal, including warplanes, to deal with ISIS's activity (Akhbar Libya, November 21 and 24, 2015).



Circled in red: The Libyan oil fields in Maradah and Zelten (and Zillah), in the southern part of the country. Circled in black: the city of Sirte, ISIS's stronghold in Libya (Google Maps)

#### Derna

- On November 15, 2015, the Shura Council of the Mujahedeen in Derna, a coastal city in eastern Libya, loyal to Al-Qaeda, declared **it had begun a ground offensive to liberate the region of Al-Fataeh in the southeastern part of Derna, from ISIS**. The jihadi operatives, with support from army forces from the cities of Al-Bayda and Tobruk, attacked the ISIS forces. The operatives of the Shura Council claimed they had taken

control of the ridge overlooking the Derna region. They also claimed to have killed close to 30 ISIS operatives, among them Egyptians, Tunisians and Chadians (Al-Jazeera, November 15-16, 2015; Akhbar Al-Hadath, November 18, 2015). **The attack is further indication that ISIS has lost power in Derna.**

- On November 21, 2015, ISIS operatives in Derna declared that **they would reward anyone who killed Libyan General Khalifa Haftar and other high-ranking Libyan Army officers located in the eastern part of the country** (who supported the Tobruk government). They offered 20 million Libyan dinars (a little over USD 14 million) for Haftar's head; ten million for the head of the commander of the air force; five million for the heads of the commander of the commando forces and the spokesman of the general headquarters of the Libyan armed forces. A spokesman for the Libyan ministry of the interior said that three people from Libya had contacted him and offered him 20 million dinars in return for killing Haftar. He said he had reported the offer to the authorities (Akhbar Al-Hadath, November 21, 2015).

- On November 21, 2015, ISIS in the Barqa province issued photos from the **city of Nofaliya**, southeast of Sirte, taken during the Friday prayers in one of the mosques in the city. The photos were meant to offer proof of ISIS's control of the city (Akhbar al-Muslimeen, November 21, 2015).



Upper left: Worshippers in a mosque. Upper right: Worshippers taking off their shoes at the entrance to a mosque in the city of Nofaliya. Center: Worshippers in a mosque listening to the Friday sermon (Akhbar al-Muslimeen, November 21, 2015).

- “Sources in Derna” **denied the Pentagon report of the death of the leader of ISIS in Libya, Wissam Abd al-Zubaydi aka Abu Nabil al-Anbari, in a targeted airstrike.** The sources claimed that he left Derna two weeks before the attack and was

currently in the region of Sirte (News portal of Africa Bawabat Ifriqiya al-Ikhbariya; Libya al-Mustaqbal, November 16, 2015).

## Khorasan

■ **The Khorasan province of the Islamic State**, ISIS's branch in Afghanistan and Pakistan, posted photos of a training camp on Twitter. The camp was named after **Shekih Jalaluddin, the Mufti of Khorasan**, killed by American forces last month. His death has not been confirmed by ISIS but naming the camp after him would seem to indicate that he was killed. **The camp is located in Nangarhar in the Jalalabad region, on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.** There are ISIS operatives in the area. The pictures show at least 40 operatives in training (The Long War Journal, November 20, 2015).



The ISIS training camp in Nangarhar (ISIS's Twitter account)

## Bangladesh

■ On November 19, 2015, Aamaq News, ISIS's media foundation, reported that **ISIS operatives in Bangladesh had shot and critically wounded an Italian missionary named Piero Parolari.** The attempted assassination was carried out in the Dinajpur province, about 277 kilometers (141 miles) northwest of the capital city of Dacca (Tumblr account of a3maqagency.wordpress.com, November 19, 2015). Western sources reported that Dr. Parolari had been attacked by three operatives and shot with a pistol with a silencer. **It was the fifth attack carried out by ISIS operatives in Bangladesh during the past few months** (Reuters.com, November 19, 2015).

## Yemen

- ISIS issued **two videos to convince Al-Qaeda operatives in Yemen to join the ranks of the Islamic State**. The videos do not mention going to Syria or Iraq, and thus it can be assumed that they were meant to convince Al-Qaeda operatives to desert and join **the ranks of ISIS in Yemen itself**.
- On November 16, 2015, ISIS's information office in the Al-Khayr province (Deir al-Zor) issued a video entitled "Al-Qaeda in Yemen, where are you going?" The following day, ISIS's information office in the Nineveh province in Iraq issued a video entitled "To Al-Qaeda in Yemen." Both videos claim **that Al-Qaeda has strayed from the true path and collaborates with foreign intelligence agencies from Iran and Pakistan**. The videos also attack Ayman al-Zawahiri and claim that if the Yemenis want an Islamic Caliphate, **they have to support ISIS and not Al-Qaeda, which has lost its way**.

## Preventive activities

### Belgium

- On November 21, 2015, the Belgian government declared a state of emergency and a Level Four alert as the result of an "immediate and dangerous" threat. The Belgian authorities closed the subway system, cafés and universities in Brussels and asked civilians to avoid large gatherings. The security forces carried out detentions at many sites in and around the city (Sky News, November 21, 2015). As of November 24, 2015, the state of emergency is still in force. **So far it is doubtful whether the intense activities of the Belgian security forces have produced results**.

### Kuwait

- The Kuwaiti ministry of the interior reported it had exposed **a network which equipped ISIS in Syria with weapons**. According to the authorities, the network had ten members, six of whom had been detained: two Kuwaitis, two Syrians, an Egyptian and a Lebanese. An Australian living outside the country and three others have not yet been apprehended.
- One of those detained was **Osama Muhammad Sayyid Khayyat**, a Lebanese born in Kuwait accused of joining the ranks of ISIS and responsible for coordinating the dispatch of operatives and for funding the organization and providing it with logistic support. Khayyat confessed to having signed an arms deal with Ukraine for the

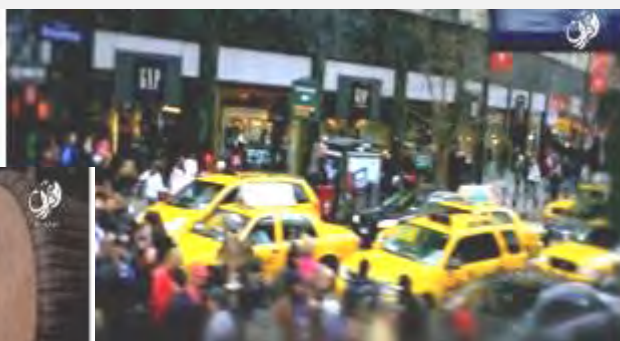
purchase of arms and FN-6 anti-aircraft shoulder-launched missiles. **He said the weapons had been transported to Turkey by truck and from there to ISIS operatives in Syria.** His contact person in Ukraine was a Syrian named **Abd al-Karim Muhammad Salim**, an arms dealer who owned a Ukrainian company (Alarabiya.net, November 19, 2015).

## The Battle for Hearts and Minds

### ISIS scare campaign targets the West

■ Following the attack in Paris, ISIS initiated a media campaign **boasting of its successes in Paris and the panic its attacks have sown around the globe. It issued videos threatening attacks in Europe and the United States:**

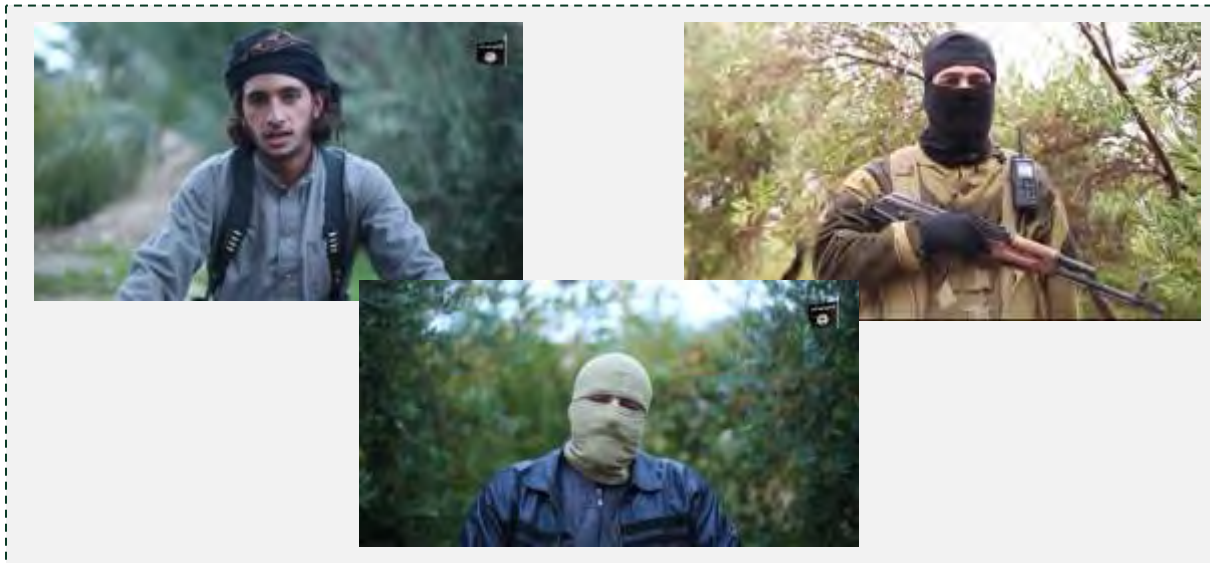
- A video issued by ISIS's information office in Iraq was entitled "Our battalions will overcome." It ended with **pictures of New York** (Akhbar al-Muslimeen, November 18, 2015). The New York Police Department reported it was aware of the video, which may suggest that New York was a potential target for a Paris-like attack. The police reported that the authorities were on high alert (Reuters, November 19, 2015).



Scenes from the video. Left: An ISIS operative holding what might be a hand grenade, and is then shown putting on an explosive belt. Right: Times Square (Akhbar al-Muslimeen, November 18, 2015).

- An ISIS video issued by ISIS operatives in Homs province in Syria shows a masked ISIS operative armed with a Kalashnikov assault rifle and praising the attack in Paris. **He threatens that similar attacks will be carried out until all the Christians in Europe have converted to Islam or have paid *jizya* (poll**

**tax**). He promises “difficult days ahead,” like the days after the 9/11 attacks. He says that in the “Christian countries” [i.e., Europe], **there are hundreds of suicide bombers waiting for Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISIS, to give them the order to act**. A different operative addresses his remarks to the “countries of the Cross” and says **the attacks in Paris were only the beginning and that ISIS operatives will reach Rome and Spain, and blow up the White House, Big Ben and the Eiffel Tower** (Muslims-news.net, November 19, 2015).



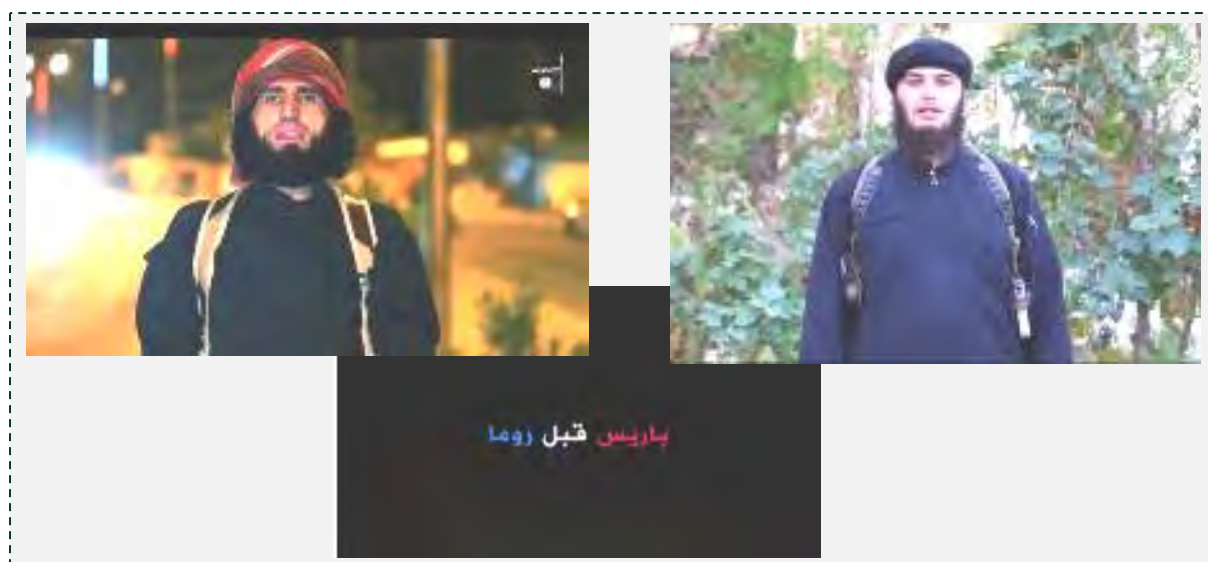
**ISIS operatives threaten terrorist attacks in Europe and the United States (Muslims-news.net, November 19, 2015).**

- ISIS's Al-Baraka (Al-Hasakah) province in Syria issued a video in which **ISIS operatives, all speaking fluent French** (and apparently all French nationals) **threaten more terrorist attacks in Europe and America** (mediafire.com file-sharing website, November 21, 2015).



Upper left: The speaker says, “We will reach Europe. We will continue to all of Europe: France, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland – all of Europe and America.” Upper right: The speaker says, “The war you are waging against the Muslims will turn against you. You should know that the soldiers of the Caliphate are only a few kilometers from you...” Bottom: The masked speaker in the center says, “Your blood will continue to be shed. We have men in your country ready to sacrifice themselves...” (mediafire.com file-sharing website, November 21, 2015).

- A video issued by Tigris province in Iraq entitled "**Paris before Rome.**" An ISIS operative praises the terrorist attack in Paris and threatens that **it was only the beginning**. He adds that after Paris, the next target will be the White House (Akhbar al-Muslimeen, November 19, 2015).



Upper right: The first operative threatens that the attack in Paris was only the beginning and that the next target will be the White House. Upper left: The other operative threatens more attacks like the one in Paris. Bottom: The title of the video, "Paris before Rome" (Akhbar al-Muslimeen, November 19, 2015).