



Spotlight on Global Jihad (January 14-20, 2016)



Main events of the week

- During the past week, the pressure on ISIS in the various combat zones in Syria and Iraq continued, **but with no significant changes on the ground**. ISIS's response was reflected in **guerrilla warfare** against its various enemies, **extensive use of suicide bombers**, and **military initiatives in Deir al-Zor** (a city in the heart of the area under ISIS's control, in and around which the Syrian Army maintains a presence). During the fighting, **ISIS massacred residents of a village northwest of Deir al-Zor** (280 dead), in order to intimidate its enemies and **deter them from cooperating with the Syrian regime**.
- While ISIS is on the strategic defensive in Syria and Iraq, **it continues to maintain the initiative in other countries**: **in Libya**, attacks on oil facilities continue; **in Jakarta**, the capital of Indonesia, ISIS carried out (for the first time) a series of elaborate terrorist attacks (shooting and grenade attacks in several locations, 17 dead). Al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations affiliated with it also **continue to carry out** showcase terrorist attacks. This week, shooting attacks and terrorist attacks for bargaining purposes were carried out in **Burkina Faso, West Africa** (about 28 dead, most of them probably foreign nationals). **ISIS and Al-Qaeda are apparently developing a sort of "competition"** in carrying out terrorist attacks, **adding new venues in countries with lax security arrangements** (in West Africa and Southeast Asia).
- **Ayman al-Zawahiri's focus on Southeast Asia**, especially **Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines**, in one of his recent speeches, is worthy of note. According to him, this region **is ripe for receiving Islamic militants**, as are other regions around the world.

The international campaign against ISIS

US and coalition airstrikes

- This week, the US and coalition forces continued their airstrikes against ISIS targets. During the week, dozens of airstrikes were carried out by means of fighter planes, attack aircraft, and UAVs. Following are the main airstrikes (US Department of Defense website):

- **Syria** - the airstrikes were concentrated in the areas of Al-Hasakah, Ain Issa, Abu Kamal, Deir al-Zor, Manbij, Tell Abyad, Marea and Al-Raqqah. The airstrikes targeted ISIS tactical units, battle positions, buildings, vehicles, operatives, and oil production sites, among other things.

- **Iraq** - the airstrikes were concentrated in the following areas: Kisik, Mosul, Ramadi, Sultan Abdullah, Hit, Sinjar, Tal Afar, Baiji and Habbaniyah. The airstrikes damaged ISIS tactical units, bunkers, tunnels, battle positions, headquarters, arsenals, fuel tankers, and command and control posts, among other things.

■ The US Department of Defense published photos documenting the attack on a building near Mosul, where ISIS had stored a large quantity of cash (US Department of Defense website, January 17, 2016).¹



Photo from the video released by the US Department of Defense

American statements

■ **US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter** recently reviewed the **goals and operating methods of the US campaign against ISIS**. According to Carter, the first goal is **concentrating the effort to harm the “cancers” in Iraq and Syria**, i.e., ISIS’s centers in **Al-Raqqah in Syria and Mosul in Iraq**. The **second goal** is to **deal with the “cancer metastases” throughout the Middle East**, and the third goal is to **protect the US from within**. Describing the achievements of the campaign against

¹ In this context, it has been claimed that after the attack on the bank in Iraq, ISIS decided to reduce the salaries of its operatives by 50%. It was also reported that ISIS’s governor in the city of Mosul had issued a *fatwa* (religious ruling) allowing ISIS to raise the taxes collected from the residents (oneindia, January 19, 2016). **These reports require verification.**

ISIS so far, Carter emphasized the need to **continue supporting the local forces** that are carrying out most of the fighting. Carter criticized Iran and Russia, saying that they are on the wrong side of the battle because of their support for Bashar al-Assad (The New York Times, January 13, 2016).

■ Speaking before the Senate Armed Services Committee, **former CIA director Michael Morell** said that **ISIS is growing stronger and now constitutes a significant strategic threat to the US and European countries**. According to Morell, ISIS gained popularity among the public much faster than Al-Qaeda did in the past, and operatives from 20 different countries are now fighting in the ranks of ISIS. According to him, ISIS has proven its ability to attack targets in Europe and it is very likely that it is working to carry out similar attacks on US soil. A senior US intelligence source estimated that **in 2015, more than 36,000 foreign fighters from at least twenty countries went to Iraq and Syria**. According to him, these figures are nearly double the estimate in 2014, and this proves that despite ISIS's losses in ground fighting and airstrikes, **it remains a capable military force with more and more new recruits** (Fox News, January 14, 2016).

Turkey

■ In response to the deadly terrorist attack carried out in Istanbul, Turkish Army tanks and artillery **fired at ISIS targets in Syria and Iraq**. According to Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, since the attack in Istanbul, Turkey mounted a massive 48-hour artillery attack against ISIS targets, firing approximately 500 shells. The artillery attack was carried out along the border with Syria and close to Mosul, Iraq. He claims that these attacks killed around 200 ISIS operatives. He stresses that Turkey acted after making sure that ISIS was behind the attack. He also stresses that Turkey will continue to fight against ISIS and will continue to attack the organization as long as necessary, including airstrikes (ctvnews.ca, January 13, 2016).

Russian involvement in the civil war in Syria

■ This week, **Russian airstrikes were concentrated in the following places:** Daraa, Aleppo, Latakia, Deir al-Zor, Damascus, Hama, Idlib and more. According to **Lt. Gen. Sergei Rudskoy, Chief of the Main Operational Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces**, since the beginning of Russia's involvement in the fighting in Syria, **the Russian Air Force has carried out 5,662 sorties and launched 97 cruise missiles at terrorist targets** (TASS, January 15, 2016). According to him, the Russian Air Force helps all forces fighting against terrorist

organizations in Syria, including 11 “democratic opposition groups”. He added that since the beginning of January 2016, **the Russian Air Force had hit more than 1,100 targets of jihadi operatives, most of them in Al-Raqqah and Palmyra** (RT, January 11, 2016).

■ The Russian Foreign Ministry issued a formal statement to the effect that **the Russian Air Force and the Syrian Air Force cooperated for the first time in the war on terrorism**. In this context, Russian planes carried out an airstrike with the assistance of Syrian fighter planes. According to the statement, two Russian bombers sent to attack terrorist targets in Syrian territory were escorted by two Syrian planes to and from the target. The statement stressed that the pilots had coordinated the operation the day before (Sputnik, RT January 15, 2016).

■ **Russian Defense Ministry held a press conference aimed to present the achievements of the campaign in Syria since its outset**. According to the ministry, areas totaling 1,040 square km and 217 villages and towns have been liberated. Terrorist elements are suffering from a shortage of ammunition, fuel and food, and ISIS is now having trouble recruiting new operatives. Evidence designed to refute the allegations that the Russian forces harm the civilian population was also presented at the press conference. Claims were made that such allegations should be directed against the US-led international coalition (rbth.com, January 15, 2016).

Main developments in Syria



Map of Syria (nationsonline.org)

Overview

The Syrian Army continues to establish its control in the Kuweyres military airbase in order to take over the city of Al-Bab. ISIS, on its part, announced a general mobilization in the city. In the area of the city of Al-Qaryatayn, southeast of Homs, battles are being waged between the Syrian Army and ISIS. ISIS reportedly suffered heavy losses in these battles. On the other hand, ISIS is trying to harm the Syrian regime's enclave in Deir al-Zor, using suicide bombers and car bombs. ISIS massacred the local population in a village northwest of Deir al-Zor, whose residents were suspected of collaborating with the Syrian regime.

Aleppo province

The area of the Kuweyres military airbase

- The Syrian Army continues to establish its control in the area of the Kuweyres military airbase. During the week, the Syrian Army advanced in the area north of the airbase, taking over four more villages in the area from the hands of ISIS. The Syrian Army also took control of a water pumping station serving the city of Aleppo (SANA,

January 15, 2016). The Syrian Army's goal is **to take over the ISIS-controlled city of Al-Bab**, located north of the airbase. In preparation for the anticipated confrontation, ISIS announced a general mobilization in the area of Al-Bab and called on all those who can bear arms to take part in the opposition to the Syrian regime (Al-Akhbar, January 15, 2016).

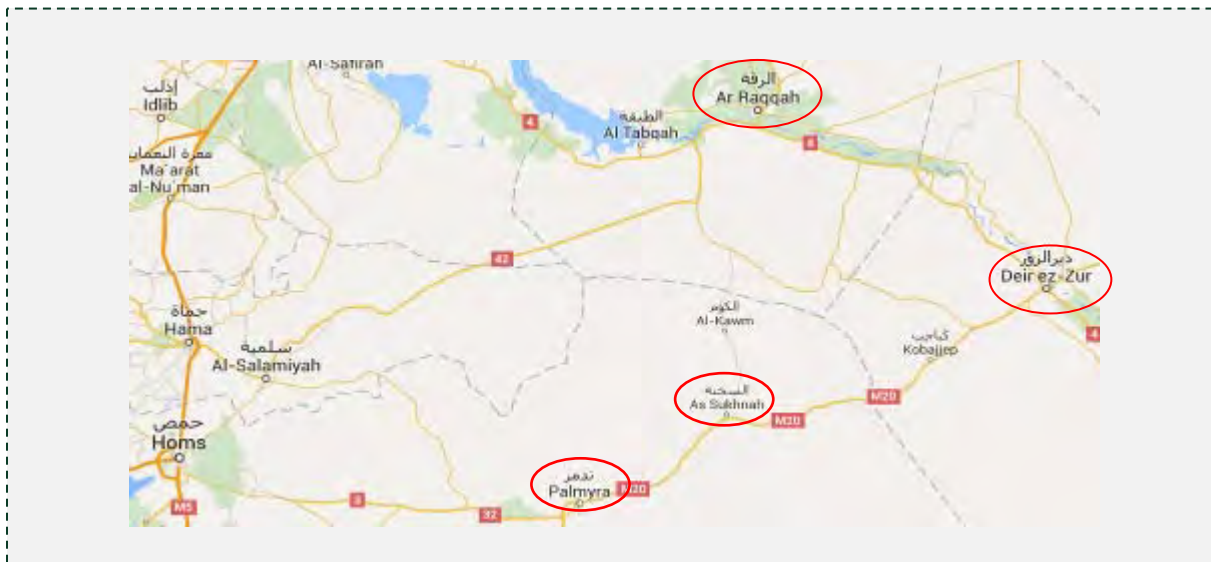
■ **In the city of Jarabulus, on the Syrian-Turkish border**, ISIS prepares to defend itself against the Kurdish forces and rebel organizations. ISIS operatives are reportedly strengthening fortifications and bringing in reinforcements. According to the Kurdish forces, ISIS operatives have transferred heavy weapons and ammunition to Jarabulus (Kurdish news agency xeber24.com, January 16, 2016). **Controlling the area of Jarabulus is of major importance to ISIS, since it is the location of the only border crossing to Turkey that it still controls.**



The city of Jarabulus and other ISIS outposts north of Aleppo (Google Maps)

Deir al-Zor

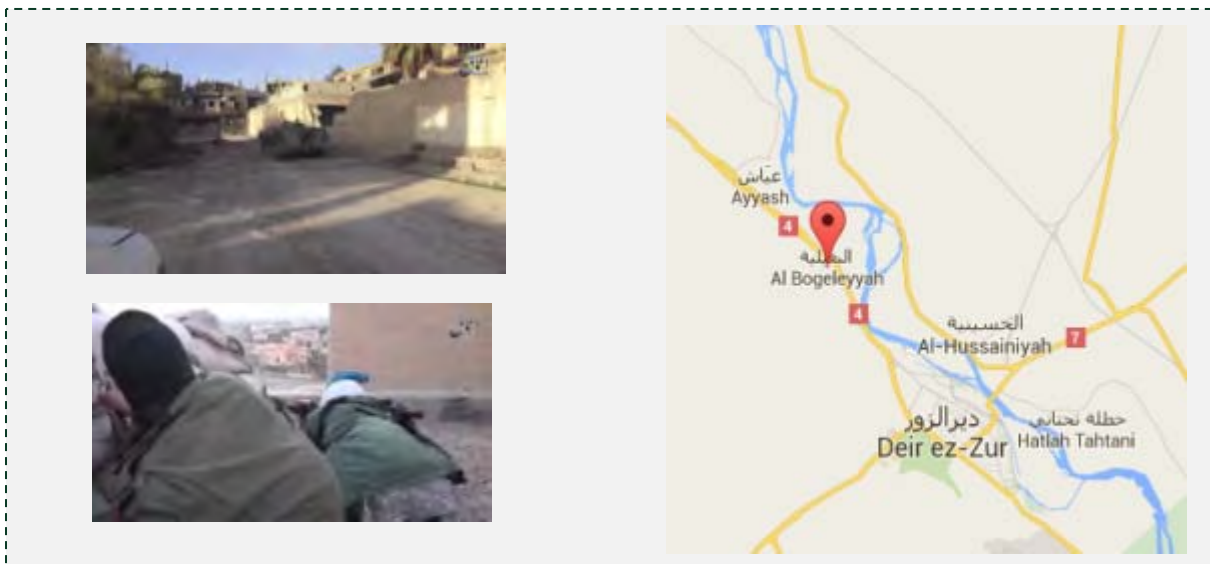
■ While ISIS is on the defensive in the various areas of northern Syria, it is now trying to harm the Syrian regime's military and civilian enclave **in the area of Deir al-Zor**. This enclave is in the heart of the territory controlled by ISIS and, from a tactical standpoint, ISIS has an advantage over the Syrian Army.



The area of Deir al-Zor (right) in the heart of the area controlled by ISIS in eastern Syria (Google Maps)

■ According to a report by ISIS's media foundation from **January 17, 2016**, ISIS has taken over territory in western and northwestern Deir al-Zor from the Syrian Army. According to the report, ISIS operatives control most of the eastern part of the city while the Syrian Army controls other parts, including the civilian airport. The takeover of the city was carried out with **car bombs and a large number of suicide bombers**, who blew themselves up with explosive belts among Syrian soldiers. According to the reports, ISIS operatives carried out more **than 30 suicide bombing attacks in 48 hours** (Al-Masdar, January 18, 2016). According to ISIS, the Syrian Army lost more than 100 soldiers, and at least five soldiers were captured (Amaq, January 17, 2016).

■ The villages taken over by ISIS include **the village of Al-Baghiliyah, located 7.5 km northwest of Deir al-Zor** (see map). In this village, **ISIS committed a mass slaughter of the residents, including women, children and the elderly**. According to the reports, **280 civilians were killed in the village**. Around 400 people were reportedly taken hostage (around half of whom were later released). According to the reports, **the mass killing was carried out on suspicion that the villagers cooperate with the forces of the Syrian regime**. It should be noted that the massacre was carried out the day after Russian planes dropped supplies for the residents (RT, January 17, 2016).



Left: ISIS operatives fighting in the area of Deir al-Zor (archive.org file-sharing website, January 17, 2016). Right: The village of Al-Baghiliyah (Google Maps)

Damascus

■ The Syrian Army, in coordination with the United Nations, reportedly destroyed **ISIS's weapons in the area of Al-Hajar al-Aswad** (south of Damascus). It was also agreed that ISIS operatives would leave the area through the areas of Al-Qadam and Al-Assali, two places in the area of Al-Hajar al-Aswad, near the highway leading to Damascus (Al-Durar al-Shamiya, January 18, 2016). **These steps are apparently being taken as part of the implementation of the UN-sponsored agreement for the evacuation of ISIS operatives from the Al-Yarmouk refugee camp and from the nearby neighborhood of Al-Hajar al-Aswad.**

Main developments in Iraq



Map of Iraq (nationsonline.org)

Overview

The Iraqi Army is still fighting to cleanse the city of Ramadi and its environs from ISIS's pockets of resistance. However, ISIS still has outposts in this area. The Iraqi Army and the international coalition countries are attacking ISIS in other cities in the Al-Anbar province and their environs. According to an Iraqi source, dozens of ISIS operatives were killed in an attack on ISIS's headquarters in the city of Hit and the surrounding areas (northeast of Ramadi).

Al-Anbar province

Ramadi

- The Iraqi Army continues to cleanse the city of Ramadi and its environs from the presence of ISIS operatives. The Iraqi Army reportedly controls most of Ramadi's Al-Sufiya neighborhood and is preparing to enter the neighborhood of Al-Sajariya, in the eastern part of the city (Al-Jazeera, January 15 and 17, 2016).
- On the other hand, ISIS claims to have made achievements around the city of Ramadi. According to ISIS, its operatives control eight Iraqi Army camps northeast of the city (Amaq, January 14, 2016). On January 17, 2016, ISIS announced that it had attacked the Iraqi security forces north of Ramadi and it was controlling seven bases of the Iraqi security forces in the area (Amaq, January 17, 2016).

The area of Haditha

- The Iraqi Army posted a video from the city of Haditha, showing the city's return to routine. This was after battles in which the Iraqi Army managed to overcome ISIS (Iraqi Army website, January 17, 2016).



Message that life has returned to normal. Left: Photo from the city of Haditha. Right: Interview with shopkeepers in Haditha (Iraqi Army website, January 17, 2016)

The Lake Tharthar area

- On January 16, 2016, the Shiite militias that support the Iraqi government **in the fight against ISIS** announced that they had cleansed the area **southeast of Lake Tharthar** from the presence of ISIS (Al-Sumaria, January 16, 2016). ISIS operatives who fled from Ramadi during the takeover of the city by the Iraqi Army recently arrived at outposts maintained by ISIS in the lake area.



Lake Tharthar, north of the city of Ramadi (Google Maps)

Hit

■ According to an Iraqi security source, the US-led international coalition and the Iraqi Army carried out a massive attack against the ISIS headquarters in the city of Hit and its environs. According to the report, the attacks killed dozens of ISIS operatives, destroyed vehicles, and caused heavy material damage to ISIS (Hamrin News, January 18, 2016).

Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula

■ During the week, the Egyptian security forces continued their activity against ISIS targets. The security activity was carried out in the area of Sheikh Zuweid and Al-Arish, and included airstrikes. According to the reports, terrorist operatives were killed, including senior operatives, operatives were detained, and vehicles and weapons were confiscated. The Egyptian security forces also reportedly killed six ISIS operatives, including **Fahd Abu Hanif**, ISIS's commander in Sheikh Zuweid (Al-Watan, January 15, 2016).

■ Despite the intensive activity by the Egyptian security forces, **ISIS's Sinai province continued its guerrilla activities**, some of which were foiled by the security forces: One prominent incident occurred on January 14, 2016, when ISIS operatives carried out an attack against the Egyptian Army in the suburbs of Sheikh Zuweid. The attack focused on the village of Al-Tuma, southwest of the city. Four soldiers were killed. The Egyptian Army responded with artillery fire and massive airstrikes.

■ Other incidents are as follows:

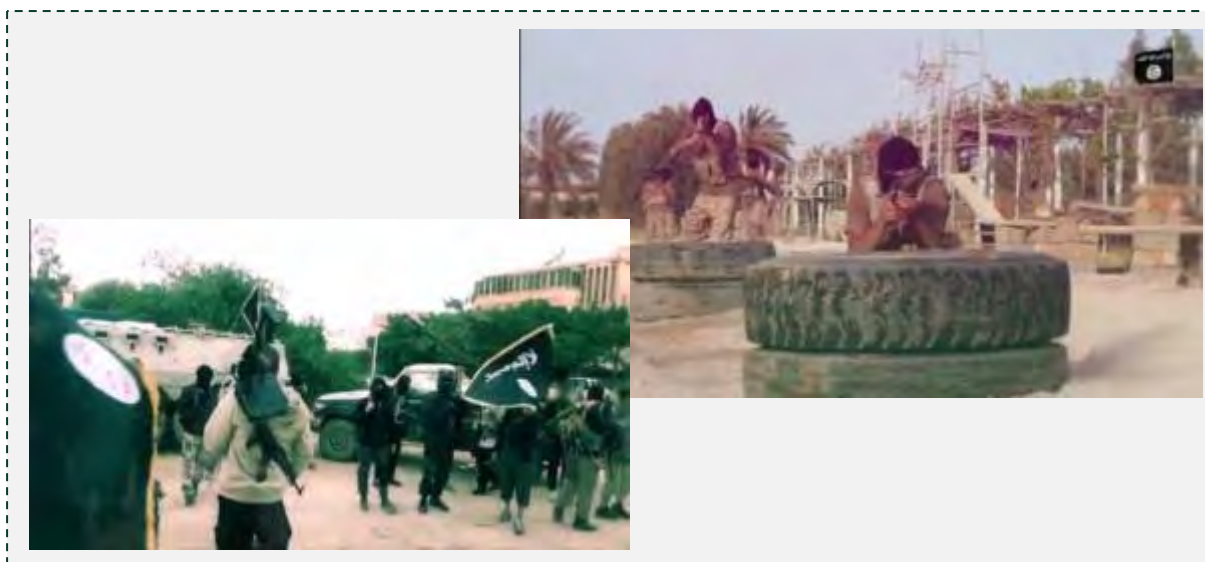
- **January 18, 2016:** Two Egyptian police APCs blew up on the coastal road in Al-Arish as a result of an IED planted there. There were no casualties (Twitter, January 18, 2016).
- **January 17, 2016:** The Egyptian security forces blew up four IEDs that were planted in the area of the hospital in Sheikh Zuweid. There were no casualties (Al-Masry al-Youm, January 17, 2016).
- **January 16, 2016:** Two military vehicles in Sheikh Zuweid were damaged when IEDs exploded. One soldier was killed and six others were injured. The Egyptian security forces neutralized three other IEDs in Sheikh Zuweid (Al-Bawaba, January 16, 2016).
- **January 15, 2016:** A driver of a water tanker belonging to the water company in northern Sinai was injured by an IED while driving in Rafah. The wounded man was taken to the hospital in Al-Arish. The tanker was damaged (Al-Youm al-Sabea, January 15, 2016)

The global jihad in other countries

Libya

Benghazi

- The Barqa province of ISIS's branch in Libya **issued a video documenting ISIS operatives training in the city of Benghazi and attacks carried out by ISIS**. The video shows the operatives pledging allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. At the end of the video, a masked gunman codenamed **Abu Omar al-Muhajer** is shown attacking the Libyan Army and its supporters, and calling on Muslims worldwide to join the Islamic State (Isdarat al-Dawla al-Islamiyya, January 16, 2016).



Photos from the video: Left: ISIS operatives pledging allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Right: ISIS operatives training at a training camp in the area of Benghazi (Isdarat al-Dawla al-Islamiyya, January 16, 2016)

- ISIS's media foundation in the Tripoli province issued a video entitled "**Message to our brothers in Somalia**". The video shows two masked Somali gunmen, codenamed **Sayf al-Din al-Somali** (speaking in English) and **Abu Qadameh al-Somali** (speaking in Somali). **They congratulate the operatives of the Somali organization Al-Shabab** on joining ISIS and pledging allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. They also urge their fellow Al-Shabab operatives to join them. The two men call on Al-Shabab leaders to stop fighting against operatives who joined ISIS. **At the end of the video, the operatives pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi** (Akhbar Dawlat al-Islam, January 12, 2016).
- It should be noted that at the end of October 2015, **a senior Al-Shabab operative announced that he was joining ISIS**. In response, another senior operative issued a warning that anyone who pledged allegiance to ISIS would be executed by Al-Shabab.



Left: The operatives pledging allegiance to Al-Baghdadi. Right: The two Somali speakers in the video (Akhbar Dawlat al-Islam, January 12, 2016)

Ra's Lanuf

- According to a source at one of the Libyan oil companies operating in the area of Ra's Lanuf, on January 14, 2016, **an oil pipeline located a few dozen kilometers south of the port of Ra's Lanuf was sabotaged**. The pipeline that was sabotaged conveys oil to the port of Al-Sidr. The explosion caused a fire and the fire-fighting team that arrived on the scene determined that the pipeline had been sabotaged. According to the source, ISIS's branch in Libya was behind the incident (Akhbar Libya 24, January 14, 2016).
- **ISIS's Barqa province** claimed responsibility for an attack against **a checkpoint of the oil facility security guards on the highway connecting Marada and Zillah, south of Ra's Lanuf**. According to the announcement, ISIS operatives killed four people and seized vehicles and weapons. According to Libyan media reports, ISIS operatives raided the headquarters of a Turkish company that had been awarded a contract for paving the Marada to Al-Aqila highway, abducted four security guards and took control of two vehicles (Ain Libya, January 14, 2016; file-sharing website, January 15, 2016; Al-Wasat, January 15, 2016).



Marada and Zillah, south of Ra's Lanuf (Google Maps)

Indonesia

- On January 14, 2016, a series of attacks was carried out in the Indonesian capital Jakarta, including shootings and detonation of IEDs at several locations, including near the UN building. Seventeen people were killed, including five policemen, seven civilians and five terrorists. In addition, several people were wounded. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attacks in a statement issued in Arabic and French. According to the Indonesian police report, the attacks were carried out by terrorists on motorcycles who threw grenades at the targets. Between 10 and 15 terrorists were reportedly involved in the attack (Al-Masdar, January 14, 2016). This is the first time that such an attack was carried out in the capital of Indonesia. According to a police spokesman, in the past, ISIS had threatened to turn its attention to Indonesia (RT, January 14, 2016).
- On January 17, 2016, the Jakarta police revealed the details of the terrorist responsible for planning the series of attacks. The terrorist, Bahrun Na'im, aka Singgih Tamtomo or Abu Rayan, is an IT expert. He was sentenced on February 21, 2011 for possession of ammunition. Bahrun is suspected of recruiting supporters through social networks (Jakarta Post, January 17, 2016). It should be noted that according to past reports, dozens of Indonesians have gone to Syria to fight in the ranks of jihadi organizations.

Burkina Faso

- On January 15, 2016, a series of attacks was carried out in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, West Africa. At least four militants, including two women, began shooting, detonating IEDs and setting fire to cars in the city center. The

militants then entered the Cappuccino Café and set fire to it (NDTV, January 16, 2016; AP, January 16, 2016). From the café, they proceeded to the **Hotel Splendid and stormed the hotel casino**, shouting Allah Akbar and firing in all directions. According to eyewitnesses, one of the assailants cried, “what happened in France will happen here” (The Wall Street Journal, January 16, 2016).

■ After an exchange of fire lasting over 12 hours, local security forces, aided by French Special Forces, managed to take over the hotel. **They killed three terrorists and freed around 150 hostages**. A fourth terrorist escaped to a nearby hotel and was also killed by the security forces (The Wall Street Journal, January 16, 2016). **In total, around 28 people were killed**, mostly foreign nationals. The dead included six Canadians, five locals, two French citizens, two Swiss citizens, one Dutch citizen and one American (the identities of the other fatalities is still unknown).



Three Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) operatives who carried out the attack in Burkina Faso (Al-Arabiya, January 18, 2016)

■ Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Al-Qaeda’s branch in North Africa, claimed responsibility for the attack. **The terrorists belonged to the Al-Mourabitoun Battalion**, led by Mokhtar Belmokhtar, which operates as part of AQIM. **Both of these organizations were also involved in the attack at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Bamako, the capital of Mali** (November 20, 2015).



Top left: The Al-Mourabitoun Battalion's claim of responsibility for the attack in Burkina Faso's capital (Twitter, January 15, 2016). Bottom left: Mokhtar Belmokhtar, leader of the AQIM's Al-Mourabitoun Battalion (Al-Nahar, November 29, 2015). Right: Burkina Faso (Google Maps)

- On January 15, 2016, AQIM carried out **two other attacks in the north of Burkina Faso**, near the border with Mali. In one attack, around 20 terrorists raided a village, killing two militiamen. On January 16, 2016, an Australian couple was abducted by jihadi operatives near the city of Baraboule, near the border with Mali. AQIM claimed responsibility for these attacks.

Counterterrorism and preventive activity

The United States

- The US Department of State has added ISIS in the Khorasan province to its list of terrorist organizations. The US decision comes a year after the announcement of Khorasan as a province of the Islamic State. The province, based in Afghanistan and Pakistan, consists mainly of former operatives of the Taliban. Since its establishment, the province has carried out a number of suicide bombing attacks, shooting attacks with small arms, and abductions of Afghan civilians and security forces.

Turkey

- Following the attack in Istanbul, police detained more than 12 suspects. Three of the detainees are Russian citizens (Reuters, January 13, 2016). The Russian consul in Antalya confirmed that three Russian citizens had been detained (Sputnik, January 13, 2016). The Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman confirmed that one of the detainees, **Aidar Suleimanov**, born in 1984, resident of the Republic of Tatarstan, was detained due to his ties with ISIS (TASS, January 14, 2016).

■ The Turkish press has revealed additional details about the perpetrators of the deadly attack in Istanbul. Following the attack, eight suspects from Syria were detained. Four of them arrived together with the terrorist **Nabil Fadli**. The perpetrators of the attack used TNT and RDX type explosives, traces of which were found in the bomber's belt. About a week before New Year's Day, the suspects came from Syria to the city of Urfa (eastern Turkey), and from there to Ankara. They then went to Istanbul. The terrorist Nabil Fadli **registered with the Turkish immigration authority** and was even fingerprinted (Milliyet, January 14, 2016).

Kyrgyzstan

■ According to **Stalbek Rahmanov**, representative of the counter-terrorism and counter-extremism department of the Interior Ministry of Kyrgyzstan, **508 citizens of Kyrgyzstan** (387 men and 121 women) have gone to Syria and Iraq. Most of them have **joined the ranks of ISIS**. According to him, 83 of them are minors who were taken to these countries by their parents. Thirty-three civilians have been killed. He added that around 40 have already returned to Kyrgyzstan and are expected to be interrogated (TASS, January 15, 2016).

The battle for hearts and minds

ISIS's new news channel

■ **ISIS has reportedly inaugurated a new satellite channel that broadcasts news, features and videos.** The channel's broadcasts are received mainly in the area of Mosul, but ISIS also managed to hack the Egyptian satellite Nilesat, so many viewers in the Arab world also receive its broadcasts. According to a senior executive at Nilesat, it is impossible to block the channel's broadcasts because they don't broadcast on the satellite's frequencies (Al-Masriya, January 16, 2016).

Reported decline in the scope of ISIS's propaganda

■ An article posted on a Shiite website reviews the means used by ISIS for its propaganda. According to the article, after the propaganda momentum in 2014, which left the impression that ISIS was spreading rapidly, **the quantity and quality of its propaganda materials dropped in 2015.** This article lists several ways in which ISIS distributes its propaganda, using skilled professionals (Imam Hussain website, January 17, 2016):

- **Twitter accounts:** According to studies, as at December 2015, ISIS had 46,000 Twitter accounts, mostly in Arabic. These accounts have thousands of followers. Twitter has shut down more than 2,000 of ISIS's accounts. According to websites monitoring ISIS's media activity, ISIS posts around 49,000 tweets a day.
- **Social networks:** ISIS has adopted methods and schemes for the purposes of communication between its operatives and for recruiting new operatives. Among other things, ISIS makes use of electronic games for internal communication between its operatives. Servers for these games are spread out around the world and are difficult to monitor.

Statements of Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri

■ Al-Sahab, Al-Qaeda's media foundation, has released a **series of statements by its leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri**, entitled "Islamic Spring". The series includes two voice messages and one written declaration (YouTube, January 14, 2016):

- **The first speech** is about the execution in Saudi Arabia of over 40 Al-Qaeda operatives and Shiite cleric **Nimr al-Nimr** (known as "Iran's man in the eastern Arabian Peninsula"). **In his speech, Al-Zawahiri attacks the Saudi regime, calling it a collaborator with the "Zionist-Crusader coalition," and urges the Saudi people to overthrow the regime.**
- **The second speech** focuses on **Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines**. According to Al-Zawahiri, **the area is ripe to receive Islamic fighters, like other parts of the world**. Al-Zawahiri addresses Muslims in Indonesia and other Muslim countries, saying that Al-Qaeda aspires to establish a caliphate and unite the nation, while disassociating itself from ISIS's activity.
- The written declaration includes **condemnations of Saudi Arabia** and the role that it plays in the war in Syria.



The audiotape by Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri (YouTube, January 14, 2016)