



Spotlight on Global Jihad

(January 21-27, 2016)



Main events of the week

- **In Syria**, ISIS continues to exert military pressure on the Syrian Army **in the area of Deir al-Zor**, which is surrounded and cut off from the Syrian regime's main area of control. This week, ISIS made an achievement taking over a Syrian Army base northwest of Deir al-Zor and seizing a large quantity of weapons, including parts of an SA-6 anti-aircraft missile battery. ISIS took advantage of this for propaganda purposes, although the battery's operational capacity and ISIS's ability to operate it are questionable. ISIS is also making an effort to establish its control **north of Aleppo**, near the Turkish border.
- **In Iraq**, the Iraqi Army continues its efforts **to cleanse the city of Ramadi and its environs**. This week, the Iraqi Army announced the mounting of an attack aimed at a complete takeover of the city. **This goal has not yet been achieved**. ISIS is holding on to some of the city's neighborhoods and is waging guerrilla warfare (including suicide bombing attacks) against the Iraqi Army.
- **At the propaganda level**, ISIS is carrying out extensive campaigns: in a video addressing **Western audiences** (mainly France and Britain), ISIS tries to **intimidate** and threaten more attacks along the lines of the terrorist attack in Paris; **in videos addressing the residents of North African countries**, ISIS calls on viewers to overthrow the "infidel regimes" in these countries and threatens that its **activity will also spread towards Spain ("Andalusia")**. In a video issued in **Libya**, ISIS threatens attacks on oil fields and oil facilities. **In a video addressing Muslims in Egypt**, ISIS calls to topple the regime of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi by carrying out attacks in Egypt itself (i.e., in Cairo, Giza and elsewhere).

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, there were scores of airstrikes using fighter planes, attack aircraft, and UAVs. Following are the main airstrikes (according to the US Department of Defense):

- **Syria** - the airstrikes were concentrated in the areas of Al-Hasakah, Ain Issa, Manbij, Al-Hawl (east of Al-Hasakah), Marea, Deir al-Zor, and Al-Raqqah. The airstrikes targeted ISIS tactical units, traffic routes, headquarters, a bunker, 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, Baghdadi, Makhmur (southwest of Erbil), Sinjar, Tal Afar, and Baiji. The airstrikes damaged ISIS tactical units, bunkers, tunnels, battle positions, headquarters, staging zones, a workshop for manufacturing explosives, car bombs, weapons storehouses, rockets, fuel tankers, and command and control posts, among other things.

American statements

Libya

■ During the past week, senior US political and security officials have made statements **expressing concern over the Islamic State's rise to power in Libya**¹. In this context, the US and its allies have reportedly stepped up their reconnaissance flights and intelligence-gathering missions, prior to a possible decision about airstrikes and commando raids on Libyan territory². According to the reports, so far no decision has been made on when the US and its allies will expand their operations on Libyan territory, but US government officials said that **the decision would be made within a few weeks** (The New York Times, January 22, 2016).

¹ For further information about the Islamic State's rise to power in Libya, and the inherent regional and international threats, see the Information Center's study, "ISIS in Libya: a Major Regional and International Threat", January 20, 2016.

² According to the Arab media, dozens of American, British and Russian officers and soldiers have arrived in Libya. They have reportedly settled at Gamal Abdul Nasser Air Force Base in the city of Tobruk. It was also reported that a small delegation of American soldiers had been stationed at a base in western Tripoli (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat and the Libyan media, January 23, 2016). **The Libyan Army has denied these reports.**

■ In its report on the subject, The New York Times quoted **General Joseph Dunford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the US Army**. According to Dunford, the intention is to carry out a “decisive military action” against ISIS, consistent with the political process in Libya. He said that the US president made it clear that the US has the authority to use military force. Dunford added that last week there was a meeting in Europe **between representatives of the United States, Britain, Italy and France**, to discuss a **wide range of military options to pressure the Islamic State in Libya**.

Iraq and Syria

■ US officials continue to stress publicly **the precision of the American airstrikes in Iraq and Syria** (while Russia is accused of indiscriminate airstrikes). In this context, the US Central Command spokesman noted that the coalition airstrikes in Iraq and Syria were the most accurate in history. According to the spokesman, civilians are also being killed nevertheless, **because ISIS operatives use them as human shields**. He assured that efforts were being made to minimize civilian casualties.

Preparing airbases for use

■ According to Syrian, Arab and Western media reports, **Russia is working on the airbase near the Kurdish city of Qamishli**, in the northeast of Syria (the Al-Hasakah province) to prepare it for use. An estimated 100 to 200 Russian soldiers are reportedly engaged in expanding the airbase. This activity is being coordinated between Russia and the Syrian Army, which controls the airbase, and the Kurdish forces (YPG), which control the region. **This Russian activity, which is taking place not far from the Turkish border, is giving rise to concerns in Turkey**.

■ Additionally, a delegation of Russian experts has reportedly been sent to **the Kuweyres military airbase**, east of Aleppo, in order to turn it into the third airbase for Russian Air Force airplanes (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), January 22, 2016). However, Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Konashenkov responded by saying that **Russia had not established another base in Syria and did not intend to do so** (Sputnik, January 25, 2016).

■ If these reports are verified, **it may indicate Russia’s intention to expand its air presence in Syria from Latakia (Hmeymim airbase) to additional airbases in the northeast of the country (Kuweyres, Qamishli)**. Such expansion will streamline the Russian airstrikes on ISIS and other rebel organizations and will mark the intensification of Russian involvement in the civil war in Syria.

■ At the same time, according to Western media reports, **American advisers and Kurdish soldiers (from the YPG) are engaged in widening the old runway near the town of Rmelan, in the Al-Hasakah province** (which is controlled by the Kurdish forces). According to the reports, this runway may be used by cargo planes and helicopters of the coalition countries. **This information has not been formally verified by the US.** The runway in Rmelan is about 64 km away (as the crow flies) from the Qamishli airport which the Russians are reportedly preparing for use.

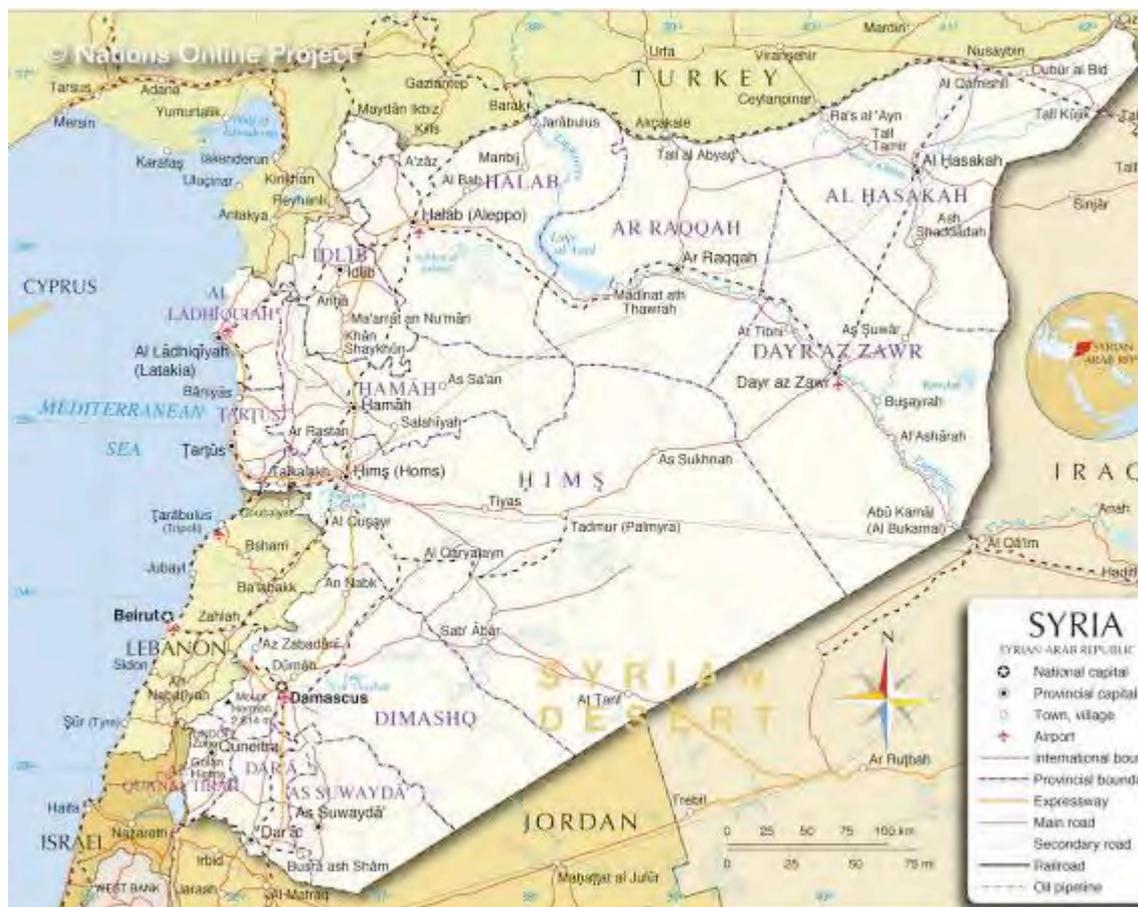


The Qamishli airport and the town of Rmelan (Google Maps).

Statement by the Russian Chief of Staff

■ According to **Russian Chief of Staff Valery Gerasimov**, the Russian Air Force airstrikes helped the Syrian regime take the offensive on the various fronts, for the first time since the civil war began in 2011. According to him, ten fronts where the Syrian Army is currently fighting are offensive. He added that since the Russian Air Force began to support the Syrian forces against the terrorist organizations, **more than 6,000 sorties had been carried out**, hitting “terrorist targets.” According to Gerasimov, it is clearly evident that ISIS operatives are leaving Syria *en masse* and fleeing to other countries (Sputnik, January 22, 2016).

Main developments in Syria



Map of Syria (nationsonline.org).

Overview

This week, **ISIS continued to exert military pressure on the Syrian Army in the area of Deir al-Zor**, where local Syrian forces are surrounded and cut off from the Syrian regime's main area of control. ISIS made an achievement **taking over a Syrian Army base near the town of Ayyash and seizing a large quantity of weapons, including an SA-6 anti-aircraft missile battery** (its operational capacity and ISIS's ability to operate it are questionable). **The fighting in the area of Deir al-Zor is still ongoing**. In addition, ISIS is making an effort to take over outposts held by other rebel organizations north of Aleppo, **near the Turkish border**.

The area of Deir al-Zor

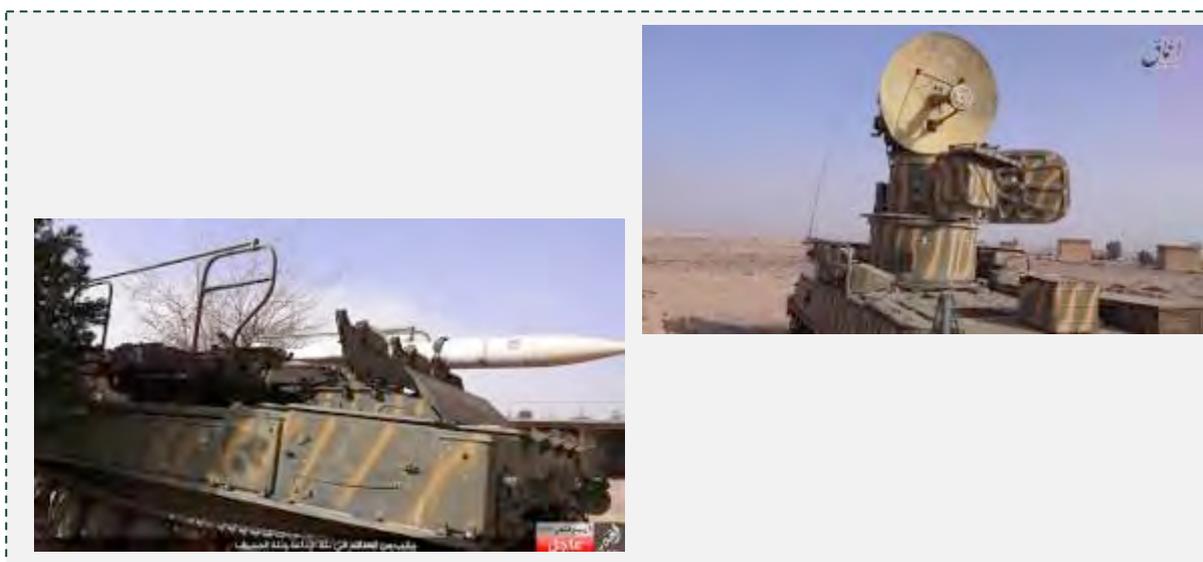
■ This week ISIS continued to attack the Syrian Army in the area of Deir al-Zor. ISIS recorded some successes, including **the takeover of a military base with a large armory near the village of Ayyash** (10 km northwest of Deir al-Zor). According to a report by ISIS, its operatives killed 50 Syrian Army soldiers (website of ISIS's Al-Khayr

province). Large quantities of weapons fell into ISIS's hands, including an **SA-6 anti-aircraft missile battery**. ISIS also took over the **Syrian TV broadcasting towers near Ayyash**.



The village of Ayyash, near a Syrian Army base taken over by ISIS, along with its large armory (Google Maps).

■ According to Syrian media coverage of the fighting, parts of an SA-6 anti-aircraft missile battery fell into ISIS's hands, including a launch vehicle, radar and two missiles. ISIS, as usual, took advantage of its achievement **for propaganda purposes**, posting photos of the two anti-aircraft missiles and the radar. However, according to Syrian media reports, the missile system that was seized is not complete, it is not operable, it is doubtful whether ISIS has the skill to operate it, and it is not clear whether ISIS will be able to remove it from the zone where fighting is still taking place.



The SA-6 battery that fell into ISIS's hands near the village of Ayyash. Right: Photo of the radar as it appeared in a video released by ISIS (Amaq, archive.org file-sharing website, January 20, 2016). Left: One of the anti-aircraft missiles (csnn.tk, January 20, 2016).



SA-6 model anti-aircraft missile that fell into ISIS's hands in the area of Ayyash (csnn.tk, January 20, 2016).



Right: Syrian Army APC that was hit by ISIS near the village of Ayyash. Left: Abandoned Syrian Army armored vehicle near Ayyash (Aamaq, archive.org file-sharing website, January 20, 2016).

■ Following the fall of Ayyash, **the Syrian Army launched a counterattack** (January 21-22, 2016) **in order to retake the areas taken over by ISIS and stabilize the security situation around Deir al-Zor**. This attack was carried out **with intensive air support by Russian and Syrian aircraft**, which attacked ISIS targets in the areas of Ayyash, the military airbase and the entire area of Deir al-Zor³. Russian and Syrian planes also dropped military equipment, ammunition and humanitarian aid to the Syrian forces and the population in the region. On the other hand, ISIS fired mortar shells at the neighborhood of Al-Jura, in northwestern Deir al-Zor, causing deaths and injuries

³ According to a Russian Army official, between January 22 and January 24, 2016, Russian planes carried out 28 airstrikes in Deir al-Zor, hitting ISIS targets (TASS, January 25, 2016).

among the population. ISIS operatives also attacked the Deir al-Zor airbase, which is controlled by the Syrian Army.

Aleppo province

■ **The Syrian Army continues to expand its control base around the Kuweyres military airbase**, east of Aleppo. On January 23, 2016, the Syrian Army took over several villages to the north and northwest of the airbase. In addition, **the Syrian Army began to encircle the area of the city of Al-Bab**. On the other hand, ISIS continued its guerrilla attacks against the Syrian Army. ISIS fired artillery and rockets and carried out a suicide bombing attack which, according to ISIS, killed 20 Syrian Army soldiers (Syrian Press Center, January 24, 2016; Amaq, January 24, 2016).

■ **In the area north of Aleppo, ISIS is making an effort to establish its control near the Turkish border, west of its outposts in Jarabulus and Al-Bab**. This week, ISIS operatives reportedly took over the villages of **Baraghedeh** and **Al-Bal** from the hands of Islamic rebel organizations. In response, the Turkish Army reportedly attacked the village of Al-Bal and other villages near the border (Amaq; archive.org file-sharing website, January 23, 2016).



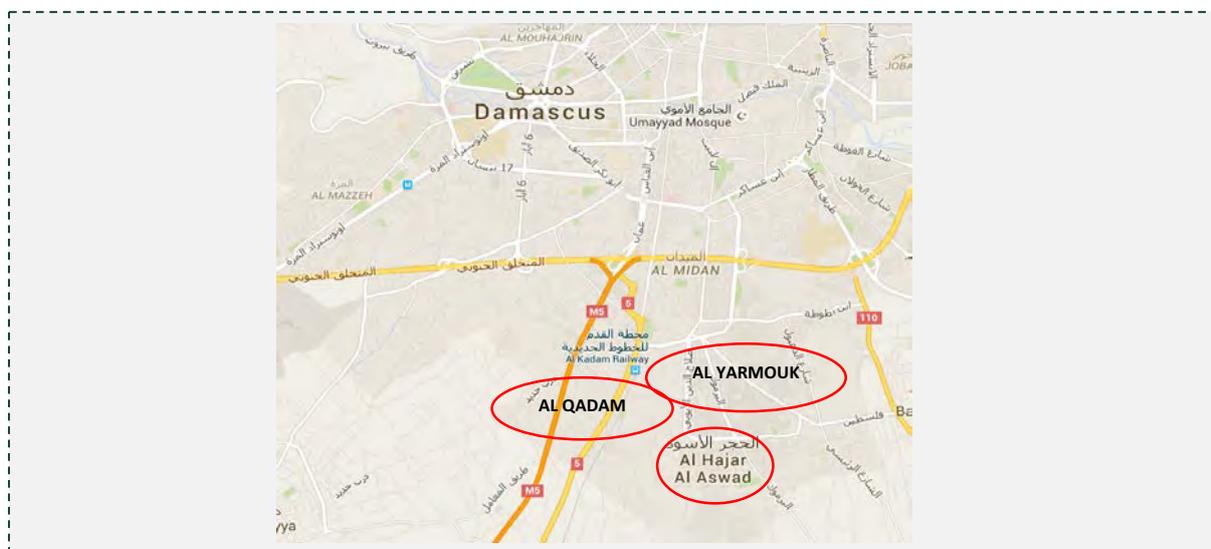
The villages of Baraghedeh and Al-Bal, taken over by ISIS (Google Maps).

■ ISIS targets in **Jarabulus** and **Manbij**, two major ISIS strongholds north of Aleppo, **are under attack by Russian and coalition aircraft**. ISIS operatives are reportedly preventing the residents of these cities from leaving their homes (ARA News, January 23, 2016). According to Syrian and Arab media reports, a Turkish engineering corps force is preparing to dismantle land mines laid by ISIS operatives in the area of the city

of Jarabulus, in preparation for the Turkish Army's entry into Syria (Orient; Al-Durar al-Shamiya, January 19, 2016).

Damascus province

■ According to Syrian and Arab media reports from this week, **thousands of residents have begun returning to the Al-Qadam neighborhood and other neighborhoods south of Damascus** (Al-Jazeera; SOHR, January 20, 2016; Al-Watan, January 21, 2016). The return of the residents **may indicate the beginning of the implementation of the agreement whereby ISIS operatives are supposed to leave their strongholds south of Damascus** (the Al-Hajar al-Aswad neighborhood and the Al-Yarmouk refugee camp) and go to the north. So far we have no verification that the implementation of the agreement has been completed.



The Al-Qadam neighborhood south of Damascus, whose residents have begun to return. The Al-Yarmouk refugee camp and the Al-Hajar al-Aswad neighborhood, both of which ISIS operatives are supposed to leave, are located to the east of the Al-Qadam neighborhood (Google Maps).

Main developments in Iraq



Map of Iraq (nationsonline.org).

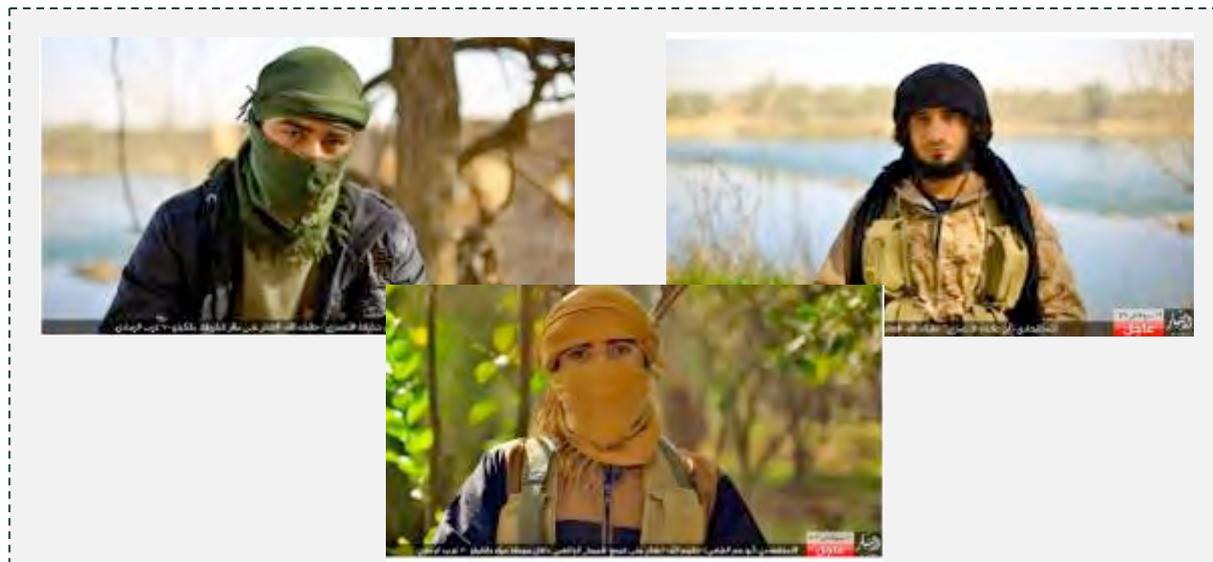
Overview

The Iraqi Army continues its efforts to cleanse the city of Ramadi and its environs. **ISIS is still holding on to these areas and continues to conduct guerrilla operations against the Iraqi Army**, which finds it difficult to uproot it from its outposts.

Ramadi

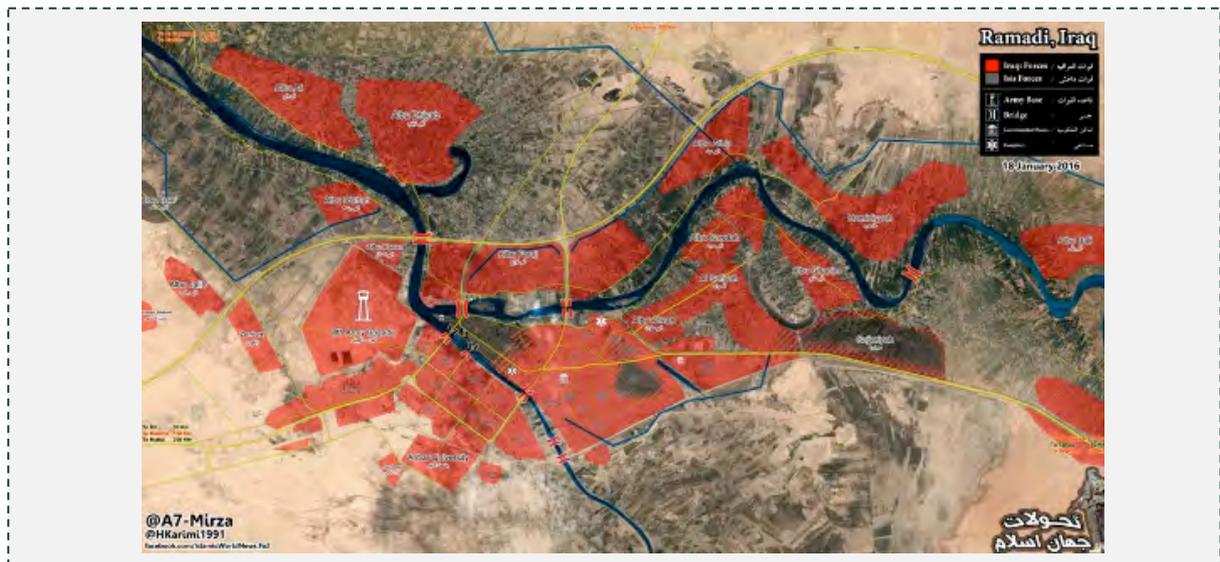
■ **On January 23, 2016**, the Iraqi government announced the **launching of an attack aimed at a complete takeover of the city of Ramadi** (Sky News in Arabic, January 23, 2016). **ISIS, on its part, continues to carry out guerrilla warfare against the Iraqi Army**. On January 23, 2016, ISIS announced that it had killed 72 Iraqi soldiers in Ramadi, in three suicide bombing attacks against the police headquarters in western

Ramadi, and published photos of three suicide bombers (Amaq, January 23, 2016; Akhbar al-Muslimeen, January 23, 2016; Al-Jazeera, January 23, 2016).



Right: Suicide bomber codenamed Abu Aisha. Right: Suicide bomber codenamed Abu Hudhaifa al-Ansari. Bottom: Suicide bomber codenamed Abu Omar al-Shami (Akhbar al-Muslimeen, January 23, 2016).

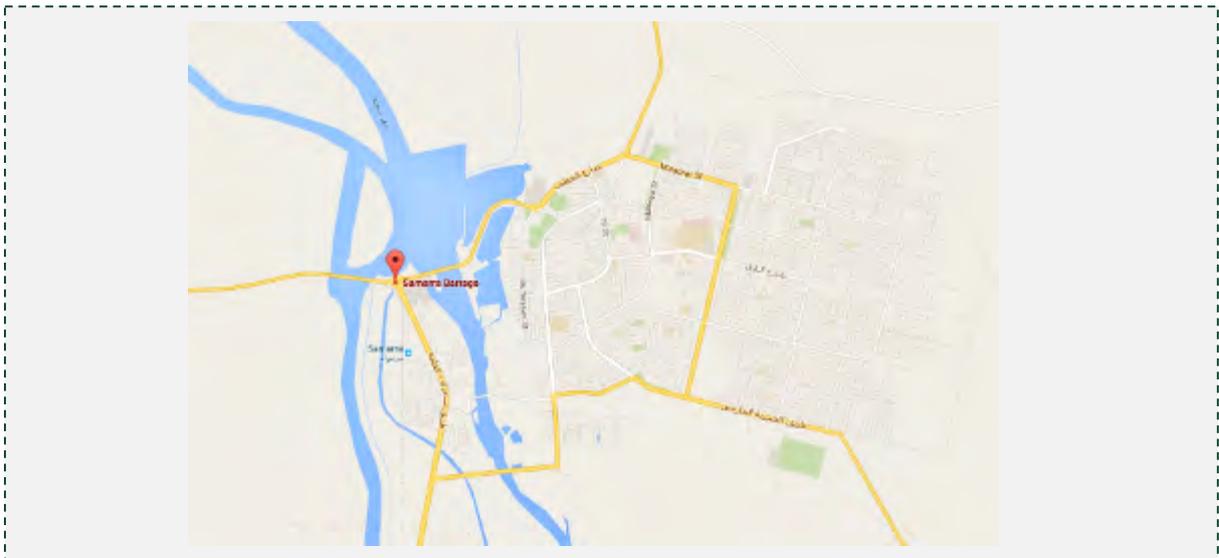
■ According to an Iranian source, ISIS operatives are concentrated in the **Al-Sajariya neighborhood** in eastern Ramadi, and south of **Albu Faraj**, in central Ramadi (Twitter, January 18, 2016). According to an **ISIS-affiliated Iraqi source**, the **Al-Sajariya neighborhood is under the absolute control of ISIS**, and about 50% of the **Al-Sufiya neighborhood** and 60% of the **Albu Aytha neighborhood** are in ISIS's hands. ISIS also has complete control of the **Al-Hamidhiyah neighborhood in the northwestern part of the city** (Twitter, January 21, 2016).



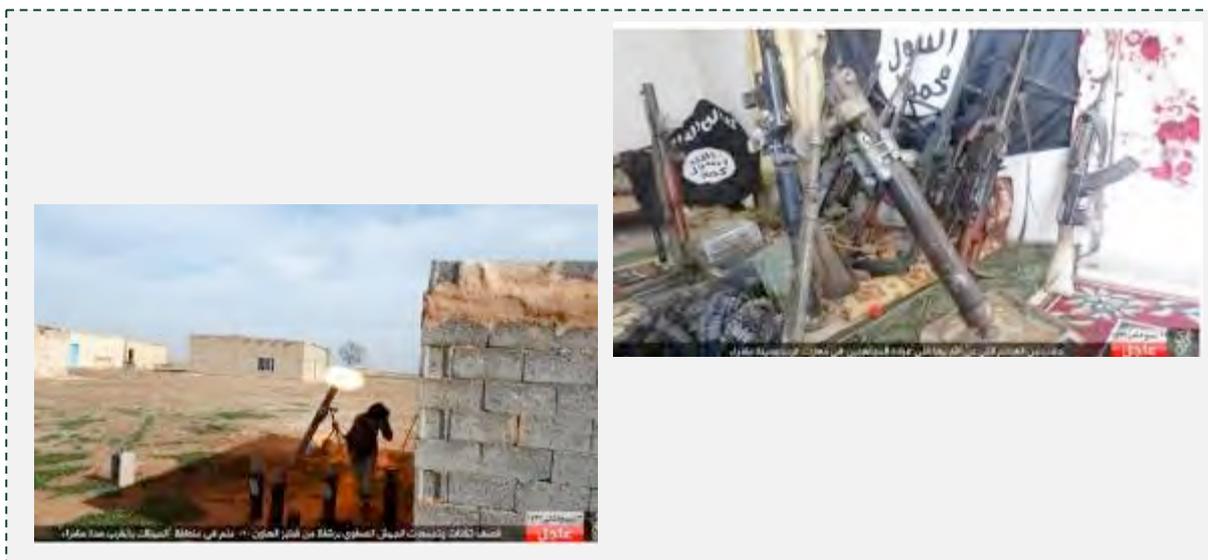
Ramadi city map, distributed by an Iranian source on January 18, 2016: According to the map, ISIS operatives are concentrated in the area of Al-Sajariya, in the eastern part of the city (marked in dark gray) and south of Albu Faraj, in the city center. The map also shows an ISIS enclave between these two areas (Twitter, January 18, 2016).

Samarra

■ On January 22, 2016, ISIS announced that it had attacked Iraqi Army positions near the Samarra Dam. According to the announcement, ten soldiers were killed and booty was taken from the positions (Amaq, January 22, 2016). ISIS published photos documenting Grad rockets and mortar shells being launched at Iraqi Army positions in the area (Akhbar al-Muslimeen, January 23, 2016).



Samarra Dam, in the eastern part of the city of Samarra (Google Maps).



Left: Mortar shells being fired at Iraqi Army positions in the area of the Samarra Dam. Right: Some weapons taken from the Iraqi Army positions near the Samarra Dam (Akhbar al-Muslimeen, January 23, 2016).

Baiji

■ According to Ahmed al-Karim, Iraqi government council chairman of the Salah al-Din province, a decision to close the Baiji refinery has been made. This is probably due to the unstable security situation in the region (Sawt al-Iraq, January 23, 2016). The day before, the Iraqi Army had repelled an attack by ISIS near the city, during which ISIS operatives arrived near the city by boat (Al-Jazeera, January 22, 2016).

Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula

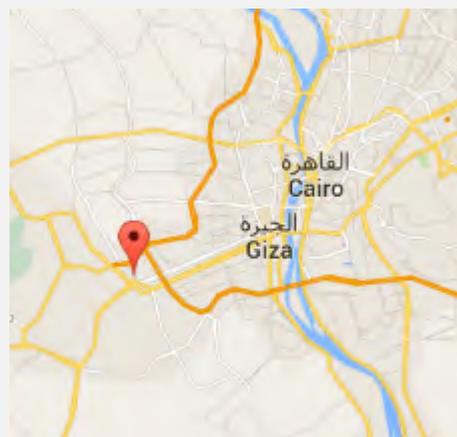
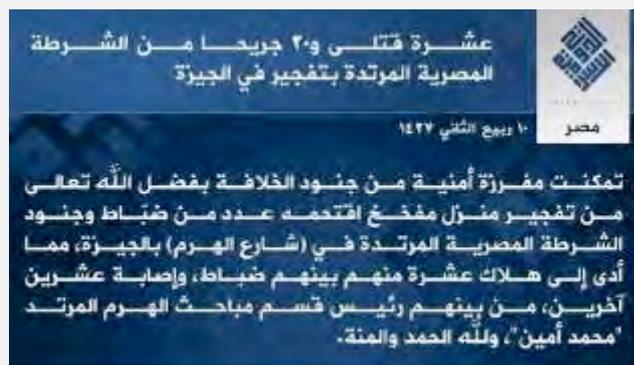
■ During the week, the Egyptian security forces continued their activity against ISIS targets. In this context, intensive security activity was carried out in Sheikh Zuweid and Rafah, in the northern Sinai Peninsula. The Egyptian security forces seized large quantities of weapons and explosives, and detained dozens of operatives. On the other hand, ISIS's Sinai province continued its guerrilla activities. Several noteworthy incidents:

- **January 23, 2016** - an Egyptian Army APC was attacked south of Sheikh Zuweid. Five soldiers were reported killed and several wounded.
- **January 22, 2016** - Egyptian forces were attacked by armed men in Sheikh Zuweid and south of Al-Arish.

- **January 20, 2016** - armed men shot at a police checkpoint in central Al-Arish. Nine Egyptian policemen were reported killed. The Sinai province of the Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack.
- **January 19, 2016** - an IED was detonated against a police APC on the highway between Al-Arish and Qantara. Five people were reported injured, including a police officer.

Explosion in an apartment in Giza

- **On January 21, 2016, an IED exploded while the Egyptian security forces were trying to neutralize it in an apartment belonging to terrorist operatives in Giza's Al-Haram neighborhood.** The explosion killed around 10 people, including seven policemen. The fatalities included the head of the Egyptian Police Investigations Department (Al-Jazeera's Twitter account; Akhbar Misr Twitter account, January 21, 2016). Explosives and 500 remote controls used to detonate car bombs and IEDs were found in the apartment (Al-Watan; Al-Youm al-Sabea, January 21, 2016).
- **The Islamic State's Sinai province and ISIS in Egypt itself claimed responsibility (each of them separately) for the incident on Twitter accounts affiliated with them** (January 22, 2016). Their claims of responsibility state that the organization's operatives managed to blow up a booby-trapped apartment in Giza, eliminate 10 policemen and injure 20 more.
- According to Egyptian sources, the tenants of the apartment were terrorist operatives, **some of whom had been trained in Syria.** Three operatives who were arrested, **who belong to ISIS,** admitted that **an ISIS network in Giza was responsible for all the recent attacks carried out in the area over the past few months** (Al-Masry al-Youm, January 24, 2016).



Right: Al-Haram (Google Maps). Left: Claim of responsibility by ISIS's Sinai province (Twitter account of ISIS's Sinai province, January 22, 2016).

The exposure of ISIS's network in Giza is apparently related to the series of attacks carried out in the city in recent months. Most of them were shooting attacks directed against Egyptian security officials. In one incident (January 7, 2016), a squad of around 15 masked gunmen opened fire at a tour bus waiting for a group of Israeli Arabs who were touring in the Giza area. ISIS's branch in Egypt itself claimed responsibility for these attacks.

ISIS calls on Muslims in Egypt to oppose the regime

■ The media foundation of ISIS's Sinai province recently issued a video entitled "Messages from the Soil of Sinai," addressing Muslims in Egypt. The video calls on Muslims to oppose Egyptian President Abd al-Fattah el-Sisi and to turn their weapons at him. The speaker in the video says that operatives of the Islamic State in Sinai have laid the groundwork to harm the Egyptian regime and the Egyptian security forces, despite their small number and limited equipment. **The video also encourages the operatives of the Islamic State in Egypt itself to continue fighting by carrying out terrorist attacks in Cairo, Giza and elsewhere.**

The global jihad in other countries

Libya

Ra's Lanuf

■ On January 21, 2016, a fire broke out in five of the Harouge company's oil tanks in Ra's Lanuf as a result of the fighting in the area. The tanks sustained heavy damage

(Akhbar Libya 24, January 22, 2016). ISIS posted a video of an **operative codenamed Abu Abdelrahman al-Libi threatening further attacks on the oil ports, oil fields, oil facilities and other sites in Libya**: “Today Es-Sider port and Ra's Lanuf and tomorrow the port of Brega and after the ports of Tobruk, Es-Serir, Jallo, and Al-Kufra”⁴ (Reuters in Arabic, January 21, 2016; Majdi Alshrif’s Facebook page, January 21, 2016).



Abu Abdelrahman al-Libi threatening further attacks on oil facilities and other sites in Libya (Libya al-Aan Twitter account, January 21, 2016).

Sirte

■ **ISIS continues to establish its presence in the city of Sirte**, its center of control in Libya. On January 21, 2016, ISIS’s media foundation in the Tripoli province published a series of photos showing ISIS’s morality police carrying out public executions in the city of Sirte. According to Libyan sources, the man reading the verdicts is the commander of ISIS’s morality police, whose codename is **Abu Omar the Egyptian** or **Abu Omar al-Muhajir** (Akhbar Libya 24, January 23, 2016; Majdi Alshrif’s Twitter account, January 22, 2016).

⁴ **Brega**, a port city in eastern Libya, where there are oil refining facilities; **Al-Kufra**, an airport in southeastern Libya; **Es-Serir**, the largest oil field in eastern Libya; **Jallo**, a trade city in eastern Libya.



Abu Omar the Egyptian, commander of ISIS's morality police in Sirte (justpaste.it file-sharing website, January 21, 2016).

The battle for hearts and minds

ISIS's campaign against the regimes in North Africa

ISIS recently launched a media campaign, **calling to overthrow the “infidel regimes” in the countries of North Africa** and impose Islamic law in their place. It also threatens that the **Islamic Caliphate will also spread to Spain (Andalusia)**. In the ITIC's assessment, the campaign was triggered by Western statements about the need to curb ISIS's establishment in Libya, against the backdrop of ISIS's setbacks in Iraq and Syria in recent months.

■ ISIS has released four videos as part of the campaign. Following are the main messages that appear in two of them:

- **The first video** was released on January 19, 2016, and is entitled **“They Bewitched the Eyes of the People and Struck Terror Into Them.”** The video was released by ISIS's Nineveh province in Iraq (where the city of Mosul is located). It shows an operative codenamed **Abu Mu'adh the Moroccan** calling the rulers of the Maghreb countries and North Africa **“collaborators with the Jews and the Crusaders.”** The video shows ISIS operatives **calling on residents of the Maghreb to join the Islamic State and carry out attacks in their countries.** The aim is to topple the “infidel regimes” in their countries and implement Islamic law. The speaker goes on to accuse the regimes in the Maghreb countries of spreading Islamic mysticism (Sufism) among the masses as a means of bewitching them and cutting them off from Islamic law. The

speaker also threatens Spain, saying that **the Caliphate will return to Cordoba, Seville and other places in Spain** (file-sharing website, January 19, 2016).



ISIS operative codenamed Abu Mu'adh the Moroccan attacking the rulers of the Maghreb countries and calling them “collaborators with the Jews and the Crusaders” (archive.org file-sharing website, January 19, 2016).

- Another video, entitled “To the Horsemen of the Islamic Maghreb,” was released on January 20, 2016, by ISIS’s Euphrates province (on the Iraqi-Syrian border). The announcer describes the spread of Islam in North Africa in the 8th century, and stresses the **Maghreb’s importance in the fight against the infidels and in the expansion of the Islamic Caliphate**. Then an ISIS operative appears, saying that the Islamic Caliphate has **also spread from the Maghreb to Andalusia (Spain) and has gotten “as close to Paris as possible.”** The speaker notes that the Islamic State of ISIS has reached the Maghreb countries in order to topple the tyrannical regimes that are loyal to the “Crusaders” (i.e., the West) and to implement Islamic law. **He calls on all Muslims in the Maghreb to join the Caliphate of ISIS and participate in jihad “in any way they can.”** Finally, he threatens the local rulers in the Maghreb, saying that the Caliphate of ISIS is on its way to them (Isdarat, January 20, 2016).



ISIS operative calling on Muslims in the Maghreb countries to join the Islamic State of ISIS (Isdarat, January 20, 2016).

ISIS video threatening France and other Western countries

■ On January 24, 2016, ISIS's media foundation released a **video threatening France and other Western countries** and calling for the killing of Western civilians. The video is partly in Arabic (with French subtitles) and partly in French (with Arabic subtitles). ISIS also released **another version of the video in English** (Akhbar al-Muslimeen, dabiqnews.cf, January 24, 2015).

The video is designed primarily to terrorize the target audiences in France and in English-speaking countries and to try to deter Western countries from continuing their attacks on ISIS. The first part of the video shows horrific footage from French TV news broadcasts covering the terrorist attack in Paris on November 13, 2015. It then shows nine French operatives beheading prisoners with knives. **The nine men threaten the West with terrorist attacks in Paris, Rome** and elsewhere. One of them promises to "liberate Palestine" even though Palestine is only mentioned in passing in the video. The video also includes threatening messages against senior figures in France and Britain.

■ The video includes **photos and names of nine ISIS operatives** (Belgian, French and Iraqi), claiming that they were involved in the terror attack in Paris. The caption that appears below the photos of the nine men states the following, among other things: "These are the last messages of the nine lions of the caliphate who were mobilized from their lairs to make a whole country, France, get down on its knees..." (Akhbar al-Muslimeen, January 24, 2016). It has not been verified that all those who appear in the

video were involved in the attack in Paris. One of them, codenamed **Abu Omar the Belgian**, headed the network that carried out the terrorist attack in Paris and was killed in a raid by the French security forces in Saint-Denis⁵. In the ITIC's assessment, **it is an old video that was released at this time in order to serve ISIS's propaganda purposes towards the West.**

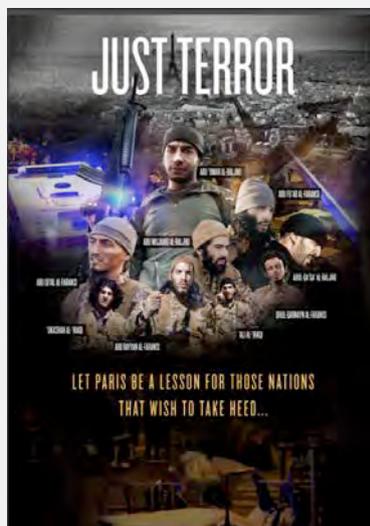


Image showing the nine ISIS operatives who, according to ISIS, carried out the terrorist attack in Paris. The man shown standing at the top is Abdelhamid Abaaoud, aka Abu Omar the Belgian, the Belgian terrorist operative who headed the network (Dabiq Magazine, January 13, 2016).

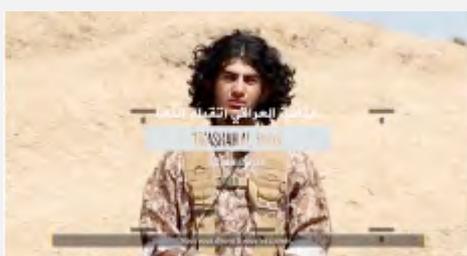
■ **Abu Omar the Belgian**, one of the nine operatives, sends all the countries participating in the fight against ISIS the message that ISIS will continue to fight until the last drop of blood. Abu Omar the Belgian also threatens additional attacks: **“We will not stop fighting you. Everywhere in the world, whether you are on vacation, a business trip or asleep in your beds. By Allah, you will not live safely forever. If you send aircraft to bombard the Muslims, the Islamic State has sent you hunters thirsty for the blood of the infidels.”** Other terrorist operatives in the video convey similar threatening messages.

⁵ See the Information Center's Information Bulletin from November 19, 2015: "Abdelhamid Abaaoud, ISIS Terrorist of Belgian Origin Who Orchestrated the Terrorist Attack in Paris."



Abu Omar the Belgian, who headed the squad that carried out the attacks in Paris and was killed in a raid by the French intelligence services in Saint Denis (Akhbar al-Muslimeen, January 24, 2016).

Threats by some operatives who appeared in the video



Top: Abu Qital the Frenchman: “Soon in the Élysée.” Right: Ali the Iraqi: “You will not enjoy security as long as you attack the Caliphate [...] We will come to Rome as conquerors [...] Then you will know that sovereignty in the world belongs only to the Muslims.” Left: Akasha the Iraqi: “We will fight you on your doorstep [i.e., in the Western countries]” (Akhbar al-Muslimeen, January 24, 2016).

- At the end of the video there is a segment that was encrypted using PGP software⁶. It is unclear whether the intention was indeed to send an encrypted message or whether this is simply a case of ISIS boasting about its capabilities, intended for propaganda purposes.

⁶ Software for home users enabling easy and simple encryption of messages.