



Spotlight on Global Jihad
(July 21-27, 2016)



Main events of the week

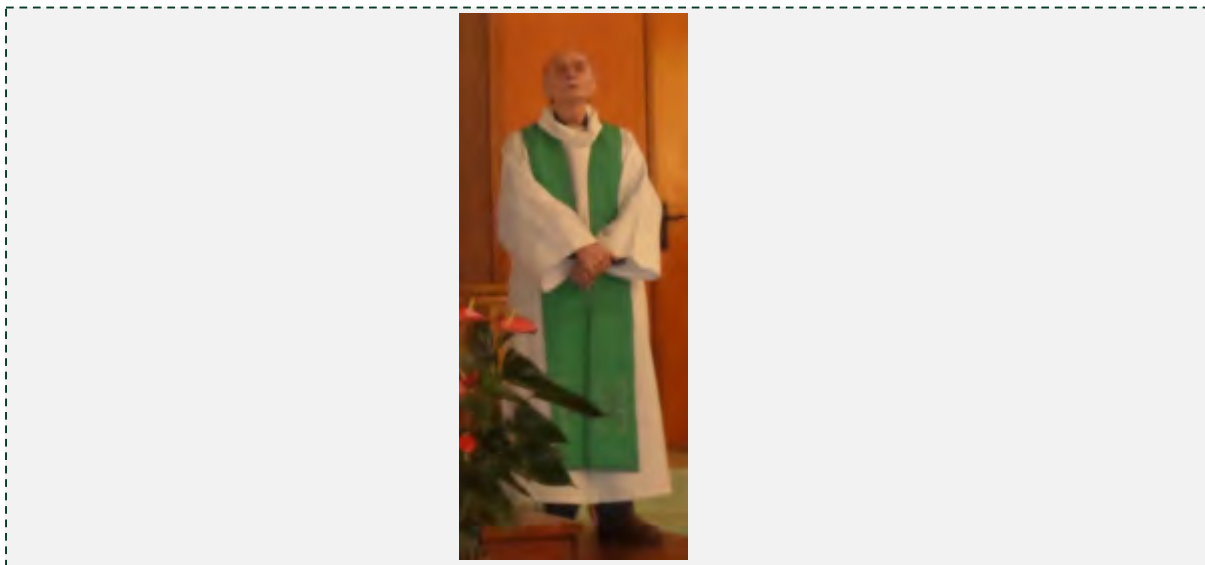
- **The wave of terrorist attacks in Germany and in France continues: in the city of Ansbach in southern Germany**, a Syrian refugee blew himself up at the entrance to a restaurant (15 injured). A video was found on the perpetrator's mobile phone, in which he pledges allegiance to ISIS's leader and calls on Muslims to continue to attack the citizens of Germany; **In a town in the French region of Normandy**, two men armed with knives killed a priest in a church by slitting his throat with a knife. Police called to the scene killed the two attackers as they tried to escape. According to eyewitnesses, the two men shouted "ISIS" and "Allah Akbar". One of the two men had previously tried to join the ranks of the jihadists in Syria but was caught and arrested.
- **In the ITIC's assessment, both of these were ISIS-inspired attacks** carried out in response to ISIS's call to kill civilians in the West. **In both cases, ISIS claimed responsibility for the terrorist attacks.** Meanwhile, **ISIS continues to threaten Western countries:** this week, two ISIS provinces in Iraq posted videos of **French-speaking operatives threatening that ISIS's attacks in France would continue and would become even worse.**
- At the same time, ISIS continues its wave of terrorist attack and guerrilla warfare in other areas in the Middle East and elsewhere: **in Baghdad and other locations in Iraq, several suicide bombing attacks and car bomb blasts were carried out** (dozens of dead and wounded); **in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan**, ISIS carried out a suicide bombing attack at a demonstration of the Hazaras, members of a Farsi-speaking Shiite minority (more than 80 dead and more than 230 wounded).

ISIS-inspired attacks in France and Germany

The murder of a priest in a church in France (initial report)

- On July 26, 2016, at about 09:00, two men armed with knives murdered a priest in a church in a suburb of Saint-Étienne-du-Rouvray, in Normandy (near the city of

Rouen). The two men, who identified themselves as supporters of ISIS, broke into the church through the rear entrance during prayers. They forced the 86-year-old priest to kneel down **and slit his throat while filming themselves.**



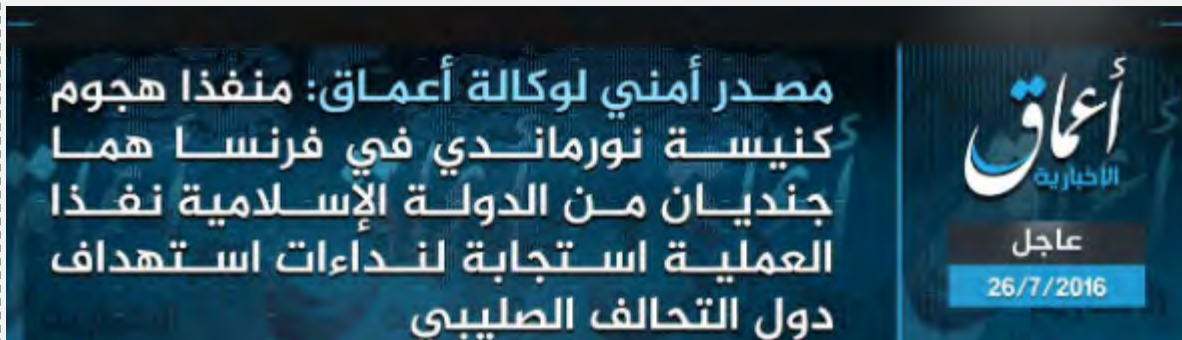
Father Jacques Hamel, whose throat was slit with a knife (Al-Arabiya, July 26, 2016)

- The two attackers seized five (or four) hostages, including two nuns, and held them for nearly two hours. Another nun managed to escape. Police called to the scene killed the two attackers as they tried to escape. According to eyewitnesses, the attackers shouted “ISIS” and “Allah Akbar” when they entered the church and when they tried to escape.
- According to a statement by the French Prosecutor General and media reports, one of the attackers was **Adel Kermiche**, 19, a native of Saint-Étienne-du-Rouvray (probably of North African descent). He lived near the church where the murder was committed. In 2015, he made two attempts to travel to Syria and join the jihadists. The first time he was caught by authorities in Germany and the second time by the Turkish authorities. He was imprisoned in France and was released in March 2015 with an electronic monitoring bracelet. He apparently removed it before the attack. The identity of the second terrorist is still unknown.



Terrorist Adel Kermiche (Al-Ikhbariya al-Tunisiya, July 27, 2016)

- **ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack.** According to the statement released by ISIS, the perpetrators of the terrorist attack at the church in Normandy are two soldiers of the Islamic State. They carried out the attack in response to [ISIS's] calls to attack the Crusader coalition countries (Amaq, July 26, 2016). **This wording is very similar to the wording of the statement released after the suicide bombing attack in Ansbach (see below). In the ITIC's opinion, it is designed to terrorize Western countries and deter them from further attacking the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.**

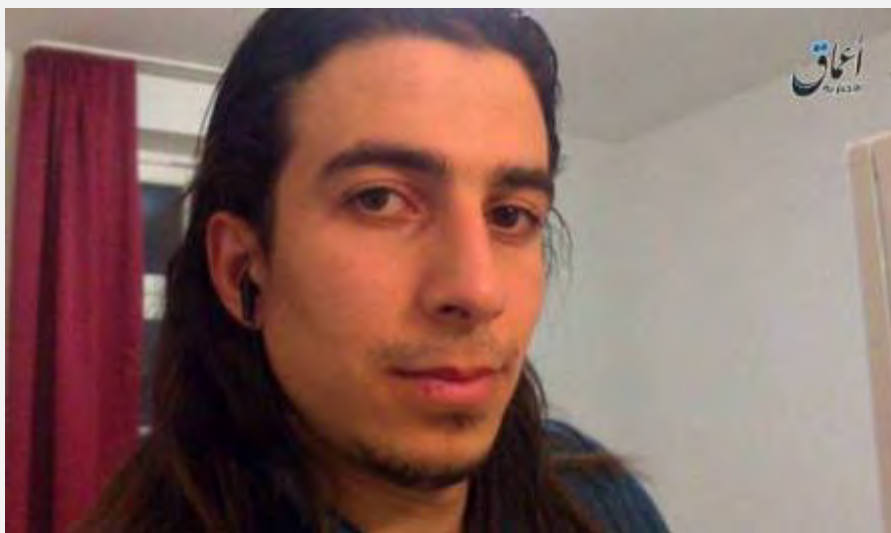


ISIS's claim of responsibility (Amaq, July 26, 2016)

Suicide bombing attack in Germany

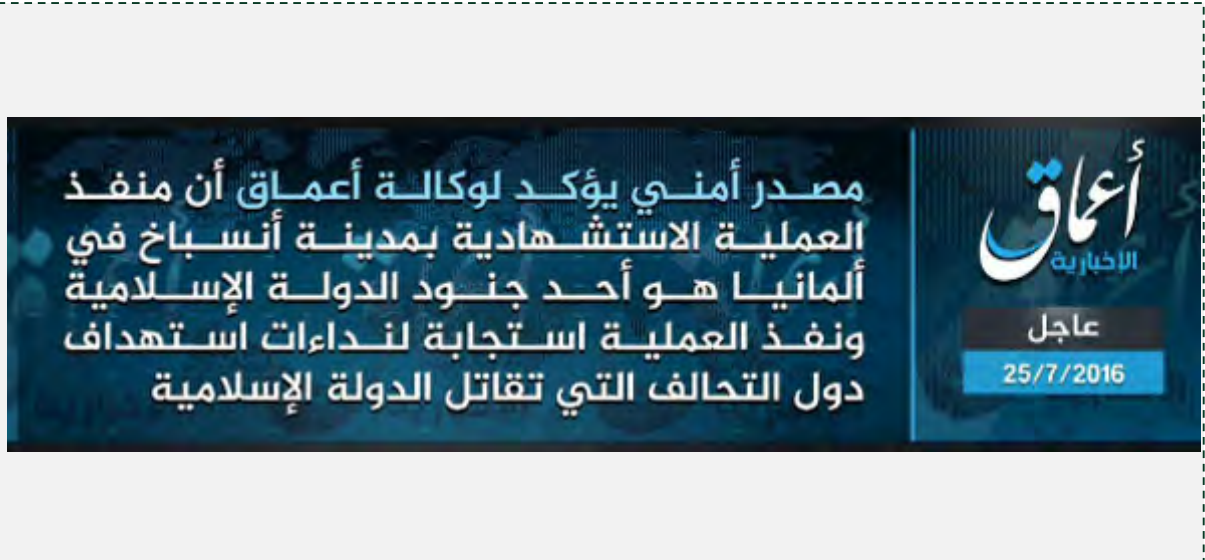
- On the evening of July 25, 2016, **there was a suicide bombing attack in the city of Ansbach, in southern Germany.** A young refugee from Syria **blew himself up at**

the entrance to a restaurant after trying unsuccessfully to enter a music festival held nearby. A total of 15 people were wounded, three of them critically. The terrorist who carried out the attack was **Mohammad Daleel**, 27, who came to Germany some two years ago and applied for asylum. His application was turned down last year by the German authorities. Since then he was staying temporarily in Germany **and faced deportation to Bulgaria.**



Mohammad Daleel, perpetrator of the terrorist attack in Ansbach (Aamaq, July 26, 2016)

■ On July 25, 2016, the Aamaq News Agency published a claim of responsibility for the attack in Ansbach. According to the announcement, the attack was carried out by “one of the soldiers of the Islamic State” in response to ISIS’s call to carry out attacks hurt in the countries of the coalition against ISIS (Aamaq, July 25, 2016). This version, as mentioned above, is very similar to the wording of the claim of responsibility after the murder in the church in Normandy.



ISIS's claim of responsibility for the attack in Germany (Aamaq, July 25, 2016)

- On July 26, 2016, ISIS's media foundation (Aamaq) released a video in which **Mohammad Daleel documented himself before the attack, apparently using his cell phone** (similar to the earlier documentation by the perpetrator of the terrorist attack on the train near Würzburg). This video was identified on one of the cell phones found in Mohammad Daleel's apartment after the attack (in the apartment there were two cell phones and a laptop containing instructions on self-manufacturing explosives).
- The video shows **Mohammad Daleel (masked) pledging allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi**. He also announces his intention to carry out a sacrificial attack for the sake of Allah (i.e., a suicide bombing attack) in the city of Ansbach. He says that he intends to carry out the operation in response to "crimes" perpetrated by the countries of the coalition, in which Germany is a member. He addresses the residents of Germany and says: "[...] **You will not enjoy life as long as you fight the Islamic State [...] We will blow your home [...] This is an operation carried out with an IED [...] There will be more IEDs [...]**" **Mohammad Daleel then calls on Muslims to continue to attack the citizens of Germany** (Aamaq, July 26, 2016).

The US-led campaign against ISIS

- During the week, the US-led coalition continued its airstrikes against ISIS targets in Syria and Iraq. In Syria, most of the airstrikes were concentrated mainly in and around the city of Manbij, where the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) are fighting against ISIS. Airstrikes were also carried out in the area of Al-Raqqah and Deir al-Zor. In Iraq,

the airstrikes were concentrated in the areas of Erbil, Mosul, Ramadi, Sinjar and Habbaniyah (US Department of Defense website).

US Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense meet with foreign ministers and defense ministers of the coalition countries

■ On July 21, 2016, the US Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense met in Washington with the foreign ministers and defense ministers of the US-led international coalition against ISIS. A number of issues were discussed at the meeting, including prioritizing the various areas of activity against ISIS, dealing with the issue of foreign fighters, funding the fight against terrorism and stabilizing regions that have been liberated from the presence of ISIS (US Department of State website, July 21, 2016). In a speech before the meeting, **US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter** said that the coalition had managed to neutralize 20 ISIS operatives who had planned to carry out terrorist attacks against the United States (US Department of State website, July 21, 2016).

■ On that occasion, **Secretary of Defense Carter** met with his French counterpart. Carter welcomed France's announcement that it would increase its efforts to combat ISIS. These efforts will include, among other things, **sending the aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle (to the eastern Mediterranean Sea)** to support the efforts of the international coalition (US Department of State website, July 20, 2016).

A cooperation agreement between Russia and the US is being formulated

■ According to Arab media reports, talks are still ongoing between Russia and the United States in order to finalize the details in the draft agreement between the two countries regarding the fighting in Syria. According to the agreement, **the two countries will exchange intelligence and will engage in military cooperation with regard to the fight against ISIS and the Al-Nusra Front**. In addition, Russia will discontinue its airstrikes against the rebel organizations that oppose the Assad regime **and they will be concentrated on ISIS and the Al-Nusra Front**. At the same time, Syrian flights will be prohibited in regions where aircraft of the coalition countries and Russia operate (As-Safir, July 24, 2016).

■ The agreement began to take shape after several incidents in which Russian planes attacked targets of the international coalition against ISIS. **The last such incident was on July 16, 2016, when the Russians attacked a base where US and**

British Special Forces were staying, near the Al-Tanf border crossing on the Syrian-Jordanian border (The Wall Street Journal, July 22, 2016). According to Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Gennady Gatilov, Russian and American military experts are expected to meet soon to agree on methods for distinguishing between the “moderate opposition” and the Al-Nusra Front, in order to carry out joint airstrikes (TASS News Agency, July 26, 2016).

Main developments in Syria



Map of Syria (www.nationsonline.org)

The Aleppo campaign

■ The Syrian forces and their allies continue to encircle the rebel organizations in Aleppo. **This week, no significant changes on the ground were reported.** ISIS reportedly transferred weapons and ammunition from its warehouses located west of Deir al-Zor to Aleppo (Al-Ahed, July 24, 2016). The UN has called for a humanitarian ceasefire of at least two days in Aleppo (Al-Durar al-Shamiya, July 26, 2016).

The Manbij campaign

■ In the city of Manbij, fighting continued between ISIS operatives and the SDF. The Military Council of Manbij and the SDF **have given ISIS operatives 48 hours to**

leave the neighborhoods of Manbij that they are occupying (Syria Mubasher, July 21, 2016). According to an SDF spokesman, ISIS is apparently not complying and therefore he expects the clashes to escalate (Reuters, July 23, 2016).

■ On July 24, 2016, the SDF forces took over the Al-Banawi neighborhood in southern Manbij, and they are trying to advance in other places in the city (Dimashq al-Aan, July 24, 2016). According to Turkish sources, **so far, around 400 SDF fighters and 150 ISIS operatives have been killed in the fighting in and around Manbij** (haberturk.com, July 20, 2016).

■ According to a few human rights organizations in Syria, **several dozen civilians, including women and children, were killed in airstrikes carried out on July 19, 2016, north of Manbij, apparently by the US-led coalition countries.** At a press conference held in Baghdad, Col. Christopher Garver, spokesperson for the US Army forces in Iraq and Syria, admitted that the coalition forces had caused the deaths of dozens of civilians in Syria in airstrikes targeting the city of Manbij. According to him, the attacks were intended to hit buildings and vehicles belonging to ISIS. He added that various sources indicated the possibility that **ISIS operatives made use of civilians as human shields.** According to him, the incident is under investigation (SANA, July 23, 2016).

Main developments in Iraq



Map of Iraq (www.nationsonline.org)

Nineveh Province

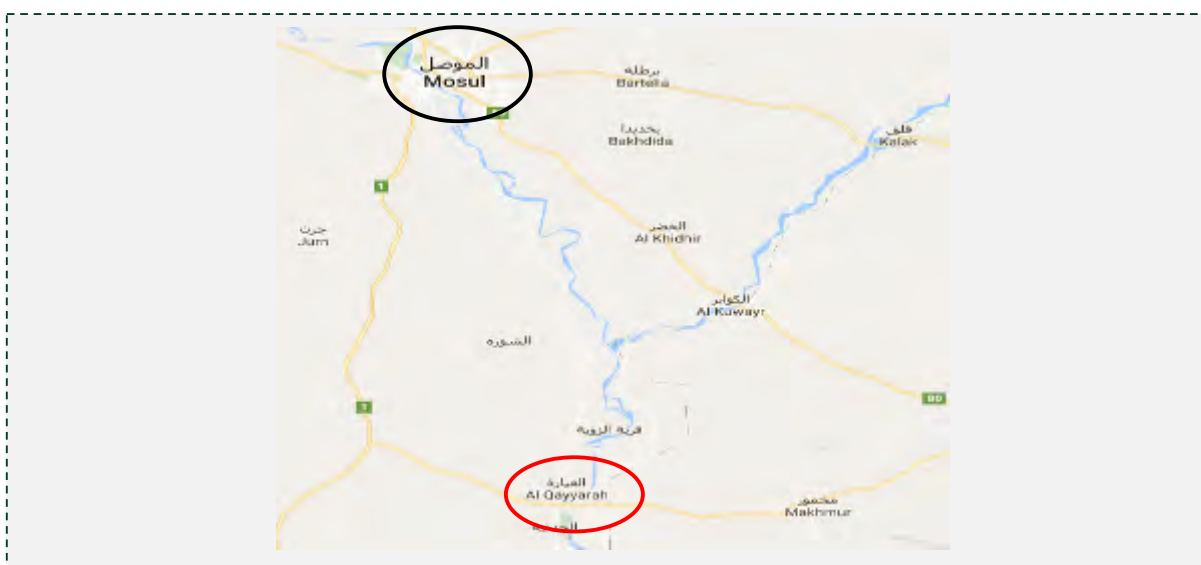
■ The Iraqi Army, with US support, continues to consolidate its control in the town of Qayyarah, about 60 km south of Mosul. **This area is perceived as a launching pad for the future takeover of the city of Mosul.**

■ This week's reports in this context:

- The Iraqi Army has encircled **the town of Qayyarah**, south of the city of Mosul, and has begun taking over the surrounding villages. The Iraqi forces have advanced toward the town of Qayyarah **via a floating bridge set up for this purpose on the Tigris River** (Al-Jazeera, July 22-24, 2016).
- According to the office of the Iraqi Prime Minister, around 200 American experts will come to Iraq to **recommission the Qayyarah Airport**. The intention is for it to be used in the future as an airbase for an airstrike on the city of Mosul (Shafaq News, July 24, 2016).



Iraqi Army truck driving on the floating bridge which was set up on the Tigris River (Al-Jazeera, July 22, 2016)



The town of Qayyarah, near the Tigris River, a staging zone for the Mosul campaign (Google Maps)

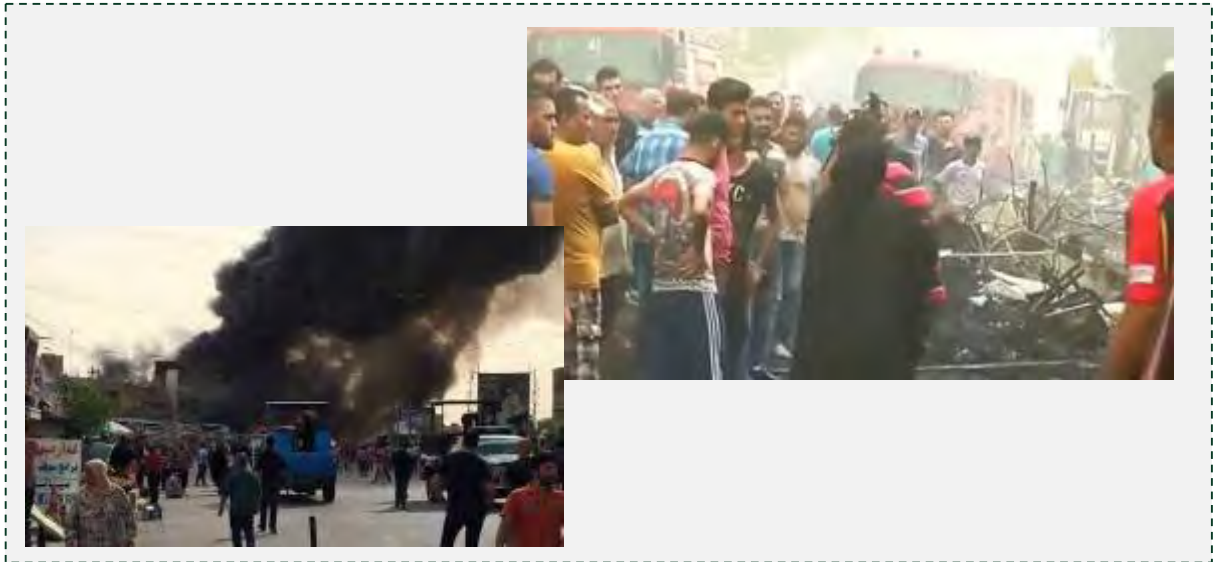
ISIS continues its terrorist attacks and guerrilla warfare

■ **ISIS continues its terrorist attacks and guerrilla warfare against targets of the Shiite community, the Iraqi security forces, and the Iraqi regime.** Scores of civilians and members of the security forces were killed and injured this week in terrorist attacks carried out in Baghdad and the various provinces in Iraq. This week's noteworthy events:

- **On July 25, 2016**, at least 15 people were injured by a car bomb in the **town of Al-Khalis, about 50 km north of Baghdad** (Al-Sumaria, July 25, 2016). Another car bomb exploded **in the Al-Amil neighborhood in southwestern**

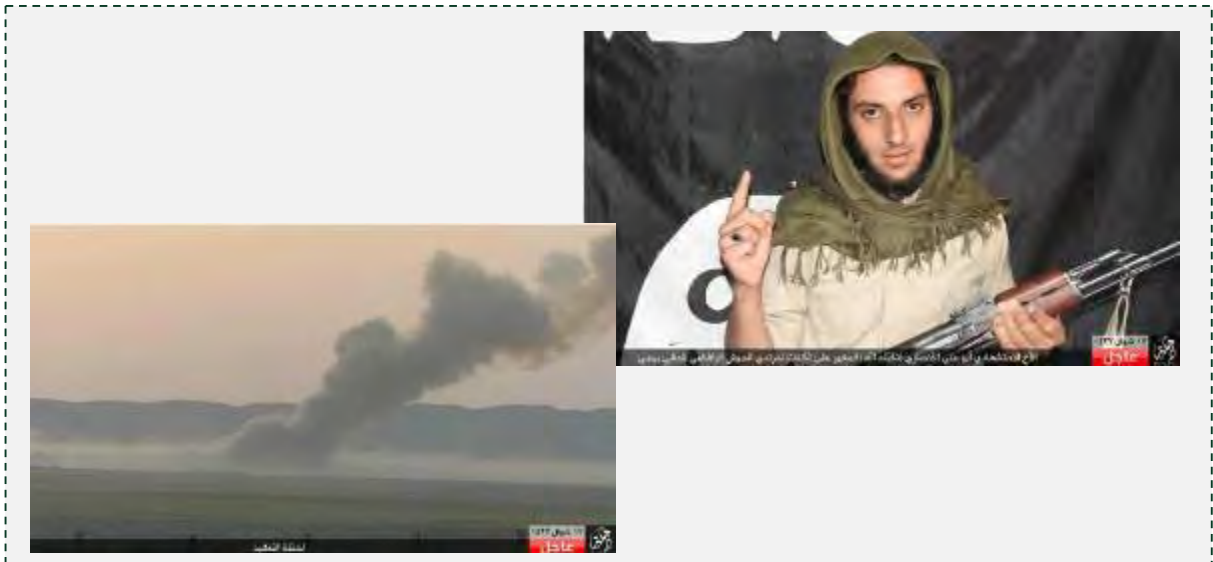
Baghdad, where Sunnis and Shiites live. Three passersby were injured (Al-Sumaria, July 25, 2016).

- **On July 24, 2016**, a suicide bombing attack was carried out by a terrorist who detonated an explosive belt in the predominantly Shiite **Kadhimiyah neighborhood in northeastern Baghdad**. A total of 23 people were killed and 35 others were injured (Al-Sumaria, July 24, 2016; al-Hurra, July 24, 2016). ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack.



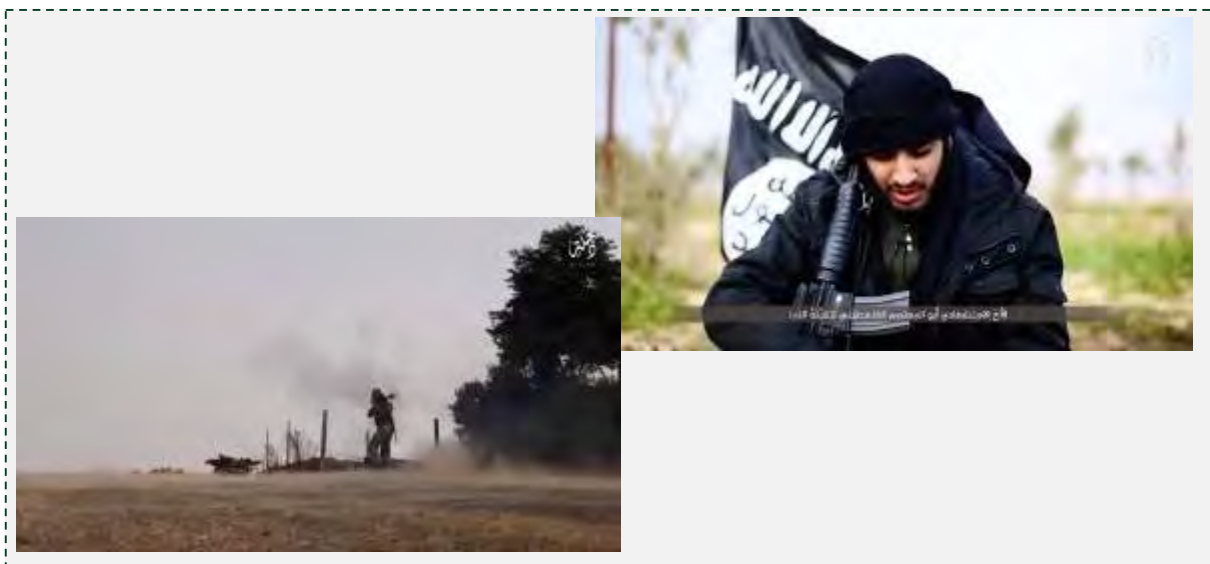
Right: The scene of the attack in the Kadhimiyah neighborhood (Al-Jazeera, July 24, 2016). Left: Smoke rising from the area of the terrorist attack in Al-Khalis (Al-Sumaria, July 25, 2016)

- **On July 23, 2016**, ISIS claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing attack carried out by an Iraqi operative codenamed **Abu Ali al-Ansari**. The attack was carried out against an Iraqi Army base **north of Baiji** (Haqq, July 23, 2016). The number of casualties was not reported.



Right: Suicide bomber Abu Ali al-Ansari. Left: The terrorist attack being carried out (Haqq, July 23, 2016)

- On July 19, 2016, ISIS released a video showing an operative codenamed **Abu al-Moatassem the Palestinian**, who carried out a suicide bombing attack at the entrance to the Iraqi Army barracks in **western Makhmur** (south of Mosul). Following the attack, fighting broke out between the Iraqi Army and ISIS operatives. The date of the incident was not specified but it apparently took place in the past few days (Haqq, July 19, 2016).



Right: Suicide bomber Abu al-Moatassem the Palestinian. Left: The fighting that followed the terrorist attack (Haqq, July 19, 2016)

The Sinai Peninsula

- This week, the Egyptian Air Force **carried out massive air operations in the areas of Al-Arish and Sheikh Zuweid**. According to security sources, ISIS “terrorist targets” south of Al-Arish were attacked, causing the deaths of about 30 operatives

(Masrawy, July 24, 2016). According to ISIS's Aamaq News Agency, Israeli airstrikes were carried out (Aamaq, July 25, 2016). On the other hand, ISIS operatives in the Sinai Peninsula continued their guerrilla activities against the Egyptian security forces, mainly by planting IEDs and sniper fire.



Egyptian police officer Ra'ed (Chief Inspector) Ahmed Hassan, 35, from Cairo, who was shot to death by unknown assailants while driving his car in central Al-Arish (Al-Youm al-Sabea, July 24, 2016). ISIS's Sinai Province claimed responsibility for the assassination and posted photos of his car and his police officer certificate (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, July 25, 2016).

The conduct of the Al-Nusra Front

Media reports stating that the Al-Nusra Front intends to sever its ties with Al-Qaeda

■ According to Syrian media reports, Al-Nusra Front sources claim that its **Shura Council intends to announce the severing of its ties with Al-Qaeda**. It was also reported that this has led to internal disputes within the Al-Nusra Front (Al-Durar al-Shamiya, July 24, 2016). At the same time, according to a number of Twitter accounts, the Al-Nusra Front has changed its name to **Jabhat Fatah al-Sham (the Occupation (or Victory) Front of al-Sham)** and has announced that it had severed its ties with Al-Qaeda (Al-Durar al-Shamiya, July 23, 2016; Al-Ahed, July 23, 2016).

At this stage, no official statement has been issued by the Al-Nusra Front, Al-Qaeda's branch in Syria, stating that it has changed its name and severed its ties with Al-Qaeda. The background for these reports about such an intention might be **the Al-Nusra Front's desire to dissociate itself from Al-Qaeda's terrorist image.** This is in view of the upcoming agreement between Russia and the **United States** which pertains, inter alia, **to joint fighting against ISIS and the Al-Nusra Front** (as detailed above). The US and the Western coalition countries are concentrating their airstrikes against ISIS, while Russia is also attacking the Al-Nusra Front and additional rebel organizations.

The global jihad in other countries

Libya

The Sirte campaign

■ Fighting continues between the forces of the Government of National Accord and ISIS operatives in a number of neighborhoods in the city of Sirte. ISIS, on its part, is employing tactics of sniper fire, driving booby-trapped vehicles towards the attacking forces and carrying out suicide bombing attacks. At this stage, downtown Sirte and the various neighborhoods in the city have not yet been cleansed.



Photos released by ISIS documenting the fighting in Sirte (addpost.it, July 24, 2016)



ISIS explosives laboratory seized in the Al-Dular neighborhood in downtown Sirte, which has been taken over by the forces of the Government of National Accord (Facebook page of the information center of the campaign over Sirte, July 24, 2016)

Statement by senior US Army officer

■ Speaking at a press conference on the occasion of the change in command of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM), **Joseph Dunford, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff**, said that there was no doubt that ISIS's branch in Libya was very weak compared to several months ago. **According to him, there are now only a few hundred ISIS operatives in the city of Sirte** (US Department of Defense website, July 18, 2016). On the other hand, the director of the information office of the Government of National Accord forces fighting against ISIS in the Sirte region stated that contrary to the intelligence assessments that there were around 200-300 ISIS operatives in Sirte, the large number of fatalities among ISIS operatives and intensity of their resistance **indicated that their actual number was much higher** (CNN in Arabic, July 23, 2016).

Interception of a French helicopter

■ According to the French Defense Ministry, **three French Army personnel were killed in Libya while carrying out their mission**. According to later reports, the dead were **Special Forces soldiers** who were in a helicopter that was shot down, along with their Libyan counterparts (AFP, July 20, 2016). A network calling itself the Defense Battalions of Benghazi claimed responsibility for shooting down the French helicopter **near the town of Maqrun, west of Benghazi**. According to the announcement, the helicopter was shot down by a shoulder missile (Twitter account of the Defense Battalions of Benghazi). **The Defense Battalions of Benghazi** is an

Islamist network affiliated with the Shura Council of the Revolutionaries of Benghazi and with Ansar al-Sharia (two jihadi groups that are fighting against Khalifa Haftar's forces in Benghazi).

Although the French Defense Ministry did not go into detail about the circumstances of the incident, it effectively confirmed that **France has a military presence in Libya**. Following the French announcement, the spokesman for the forces loyal to the Government of National Accord stressed that **foreign aircraft were not participating in airstrikes against ISIS in Sirte**. The Foreign Minister of the Government of National Accord also said that there were foreign advisors in Libya but not foreign forces (Al-Wasat Portal, July 21, 2016; The Washington Post, July 20, 2016). According to the spokesman for Haftar's forces, the French military personnel were collecting intelligence about Boko Haram operatives in the region. He stressed that the French forces were not fighting alongside the Haftar's forces but said that at the request of France, French Army personnel occasionally come to Libya to carry out reconnaissance missions (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, July 22, 2016; Reuters, July 20, 2016).

Suicide bombing attack in the capital of Afghanistan

■ **At least six people were killed and more than 230 others were wounded in a double suicide bombing attack carried out in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan.** Two terrorists detonated powerful IEDs in a crowd of **Hazaras, members of a Farsi-speaking Shiite minority in Afghanistan**, at a demonstration in a square in Kabul. According to the Afghan government, warnings about the attack had been received and the organizers of the demonstration had been warned. **ISIS's Khorasan Province claimed responsibility for the terrorist attack.** According to the statement, the terrorist attack was carried out by two operatives codenamed **Najibullah al-Khorasani** and **Talha al-Khorasani**.



**Scene of the double suicide bombing attack carried out by ISIS in Kabul, capital of Afghanistan
(Haqq, July 23, 2016)**

The number of ISIS operatives in Afghanistan is estimated at 2,000-3,000. They are concentrated in remote areas in the eastern provinces of the country, where power struggles take place between them and the Taliban. Carrying out a multi-casualty suicide bombing attack in the capital Kabul **constitutes escalation of ISIS's activity in Afghanistan.**

Cameroon

■ **ISIS's West Africa Province (based on the Boko Haram terrorist organization)** reported an attack that it had carried out against Cameroon Army positions. According to the report, 17 soldiers were killed in the attack and weapons were seized. The attack took place in the village of Tan Bawri, in the Fotokol region in the north of the country, near the Cameroon-Nigeria border (Haqq, July 22, 2016).

Malaysia

■ According to a Malaysian police official, police prevented a terrorist attack planned to be carried out with IEDs in the Klang Valley, where the capital Kuala Lumpur is located. Police arrested 14 suspects, **12 of whom were ISIS operatives**, and found IEDs (New Sunday Times, July 24, 2016).

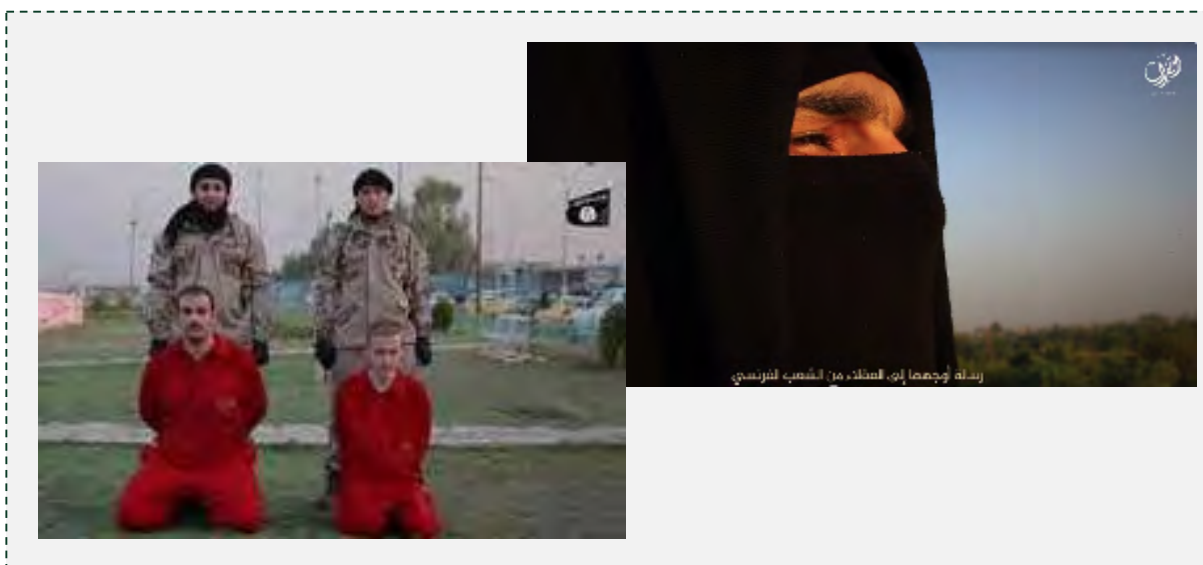
The battle for hearts and minds

ISIS is threatening to carry out more attacks in France

■ ISIS's Euphrates Province in Iraq **released a video showing a French-speaking operative** against a background of photos of airstrikes carried out by the coalition

against ISIS. The masked operative addresses the French people, saying: “You are undoubtedly terrified and you are wondering about the killings happening in your country – the operation at the Bataclan Theater, another attack, and the promise of an attack at the Euro 2016 games. The blow landed on you not in the stadium [at the Euro games], but on your national holiday [...] **and made you feel what the Muslims feel every day in Syria and elsewhere.**” The speaker then addresses the Muslims, saying: “**My brothers, avenge the blood of the Muslims and kill the “Crusaders” mercilessly and by every means**” (Haqq, July 20, 2016).

■ On the same day, ISIS’s Nineveh Province in Iraq released **another video showing two French speakers threatening to carry out additional attacks in France.** They say that the attacks are a punishment for the French people for remaining silent in the face of the killing of Muslims by its pilots who are attacking in Syria and Iraq. One of the speakers addresses French President François Hollande and threatens that if the French government continues its **attacks against ISIS, then ISIS will intensify its attacks in France.** The video ends with the two men beheading two “Iraqi spies” (Haqq, July 20, 2016).



Right: French-speaking ISIS operative in the first video calling to avenge the blood of Muslims killed in Syria and elsewhere. Left: Two French ISIS operatives threatening that ISIS would intensify its attacks on France, before executing two “Iraqi spies” (Haqq, July 20, 2016)