



### Spotlight on Global Jihad (August 25-31, 2016)



## Main events of the week

- ISIS officially announced the death of its spokesman, **Abu Mohammad al-Adnani, in the Aleppo Province** (August 30, 2016). The announcement threatened revenge for his death. In April and May 2016, Abu Mohammad al-Adnani, **considered ISIS's no. 2 man**, was behind ISIS's campaign calling on its supporters in the West to carry out attacks against civilians using various methods. This campaign was the background for the ISIS-inspired attacks carried out in Western countries in recent months. Al-Adnani's death is another blow to ISIS and the latest in a series of successful targeted killings carried out by the US and the coalition over the past year.
- As for **the situation on the ground**, after the takeover of the city of Jarabulus (August 24), **Turkey continued its Euphrates Shield operation in the area west of the Euphrates River**. The purpose of the operation, from a Turkish perspective, is to repel ISIS from the border area, to cause the Kurdish forces to withdraw to the area east of the Euphrates River, and to establish a Turkish sphere of influence. A Turkish force (tanks and Special Forces) and a force made up of rebel organizations (predominantly the Free Syrian Army) continued to cleanse the rural area of Jarabulus, while simultaneously **advancing westward and southward** (amid local clashes with ISIS operatives and SDF combatants). According to senior Turkish officials, **the Turkish force will remain in Syria and will continue to operate for as long as necessary**, until the border region has been cleansed from the presence of ISIS and the Kurdish forces.
- **In Iraq**, the Iraqi security forces completed **their takeover of the city of Qayyarah**, located about 60 km south of Mosul. This is **another blow to ISIS** and an important step in the consolidation of the Iraqi forces in the area **which is planned to serve as the launching point for the campaign against ISIS's stronghold in the city of Mosul**.

## The targeted killing of senior ISIS operative Mohammad al-Adnani

- **According to US military intelligence officials, Abu Mohammad al-Adnani, ISIS's spokesman, who is considered to be ISIS's no. 2 commander, died after being wounded in an airstrike in the city of Al-Bab, north of Aleppo** (ISIS's last significant stronghold in the area west of the Euphrates River). Turkish aircraft were

operating in the area during the airstrike but the identity of the planes that attacked Al-Adnani is still unclear. Al-Adnani was under surveillance by US intelligence agencies, and the US government offered a USD 5 million reward for information leading to his capture (cnbc.com, August 31, 2016).



Abu Mohammad al-Adnani (Al-Bayan News, January 7, 2016)

■ **On August 30, 2016, ISIS's Aleppo Province issued an official announcement on the death of Abu Mohammad al-Adnani.** According to the announcement, Al-Adnani was **killed while taking part in military operations in the Aleppo area.** The announcement warned that the killing of Al-Adnani **would lead to revenge** (Amaq, August 30, 2016).

■ **Taha Subhi Falaha, aka Abu Mohammad al-Adnani al-Shami,** was a senior ISIS operative from Syria. He fought under **Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi** against the US Army in Iraq, was arrested by the Americans and spent 2005-2010 in prison. In early 2013, he was appointed as head of operations and apparently also served on ISIS's Shura Council. Al-Adnani was the one who announced the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate in Syria and Iraq on June 29, 2014. He served as ISIS's spokesman until his death and was **one of ISIS's senior commanders.**

■ In April 2016, ISIS released a German-language video of Abu Mohammad al-Adnani calling on every devout Muslim to "kill the infidels: the Americans, the French and their allies" (Akhbar Dawlat al-Islam, April 16, 2016). In May 2016, Al-Adnani issued an audiotape justifying attacks on civilians. According to him, there is no reason to shirk from harming civilians since there are no innocent civilians in the countries of the Crusaders: "Know that in the land of the Crusaders [...] there is no immunity to blood, and there is no such thing as innocent [...] Know that your harming so-called

civilians is more desirable and beneficial to us because it hurts them more.” **There is no doubt that Al-Adnani’s calls did not fall on deaf ears, and inspired perpetrators of terrorist attacks in Western countries, especially in Western Europe.**



**Call to kill the “infidels” - the Americans, the French and their allies - by every possible means. A photo of ISIS spokesman Abu Mohammad al-Adnani appears on the left (Akhbar Dawlat al-Khilafah, April 16, 2016).**

**Al-Adnani’s death is another blow to ISIS, whose senior command is shrinking.** In recent months, the effectiveness of airstrikes by the US and its allies has increased. In the ITIC’s assessment, this is partly due to a significant improvement in the quality of intelligence. This is reflected, inter alia, in an increase in the number of targeted killings of ISIS operatives, including top and middle levels, in Syria and Iraq.

## 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**, the airstrikes were concentrated in the areas of Manbij, Al-Raqqah, and Deir al-Zor. **In Iraq**, the airstrikes were concentrated mainly in the areas of Ramadi, Erbil and Mosul. On August 25, 2016, coalition aircraft carried out an extensive airstrike against an ISIS car bomb workshop south of Mosul. **In Libya**, US airstrikes against ISIS targets in the city of Sirte continued, as support for the forces of the Government of National Accord fighting in the city (US Department of Defense website).

## US-Russian dialogue

■ **US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov** met in Geneva in an attempt to reach an agreement **with regard to coordination of**

**airstrikes in Syria.** The meeting ended without results. The two men reportedly agreed on a number of controversial issues, but some of the issues still remained unresolved. According to them, technical teams of experts remained in Geneva to work on the details of the controversial issues (ibtimes.co.uk, August 27, 2016). **Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov** said that at the meeting, the US gave Russia a list of rebel organizations that had joined the US-brokered ceasefire, and that this was the first time that the US had done so (RT, August 26, 2016).

## Main developments in Syria



Map of Syria (www.nationsonline.org)

## Fighting continues in the area of Jarabulus

■ On August 24, 2016, the city of Jarabulus, near the Turkish border, was captured by Syrian rebel organizations and a Turkish Army force (tanks and Special Forces). The aim of the Turkish operation, called Euphrates Shield, is to repel ISIS from the border area and prevent further achievements by the Kurdish forces in the area west of the Euphrates River. ISIS operatives in Jarabulus withdrew from the city without significant resistance. The Turkish attacks in and around Jarabulus were aimed not only at ISIS but also against the Kurdish forces in the SDF<sup>1</sup>. The fighting in the rural area west and south of Jarabulus continues.



Right: Self-propelled artillery forces of the Turkish Army attacking ISIS positions in the city of Jarabulus (Twitter account of the Anatolia News Agency, August 23, 2016). Left: Free Syrian Army forces in the city of Jarabulus (Twitter account of the Anatolia News Agency, August 24, 2016).

■ After the takeover of the city of Jarabulus, Turkey continued its Euphrates Shield operation. Turkish forces (tanks and Special Forces) and a force made up of rebel organizations (predominantly the Free Syrian Army) continued to cleanse the environs of Jarabulus. At the same time, the attacking forces advanced westward (towards the city of A'zaz, north of Aleppo) and southward. They took over several villages in local clashes with SDF fighters and ISIS operatives. According to an announcement by the General Staff of the Turkish Army, ten more villages near the city of Jarabulus have been cleansed from the presence of militants (Al-Nashra, August 29, 2016). According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), several dozen civilians were killed in the Turkish attacks (SOHR, August 28, 2016).

<sup>1</sup> For details of the initial moves of the Turkish operation, see the ITIC's Information Bulletin from August 25, 2016: "The Campaign West of the Euphrates: Analysis of Turkish Army and Rebel Organizations' Capture of Jarabulus."

## Turkish and US statements on the operation in Syria

■ Following are additional comments by **Turkey and the United States** regarding the operation in Syria (for a summary of the initial comments, see the ITIC's Information Bulletin from August 25, 2016):

- **Turkey:**

- ✓ **Turkish President Tayyip Erdoğan** said that Turkey would fight resolutely against ISIS and the Kurdish forces in Syria. According to him, **the Turkish operation in northern Syria will continue until terrorism has been eradicated** (AFP; Anatolia News Agency, August 28, 2016).

- ✓ According to **Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim**, **the Turkish forces will remain in Syria for as long as necessary** to cleanse the border area from ISIS operatives and “other elements”, i.e., the Kurds (Al-Arabiya; Anatolia News Agency, August 26, 2016).

- ✓ According to the **Turkish defense minister**, Turkey's goal is to cleanse Jarabulus from the presence of ISIS and prevent the Kurdish forces from creating contiguity on both banks of the Euphrates River. He said that Turkey had not informed Syria about the operation, **but claimed that the US and Russia had been informed**. According to him, Turkey did not ask the US for help in the fighting, but the US provided it with air support (Sky News, August 25, 2016).

- ✓ According to an announcement by the **Turkish Foreign Ministry**, Turkey is waiting for a US guarantee that no Kurdish organization will remain west of the Euphrates River. According to the announcement, the US response to the Euphrates Shield operation in Syria is unacceptable (Conflict News, August 30, 2016).

- **The United States**

- ✓ According to **Pentagon Spokesman Peter Cook**, the US is monitoring the clashes south of Jarabulus, where there is no longer an ISIS presence. These clashes are between a number of opposition groups [supported by Turkey] and units affiliated with the SDF. **According to him, the current situation is unacceptable to the United States**, which calls on all the

armed parties to stop the clashes using every possible means (New York Times, August 28, 2016).

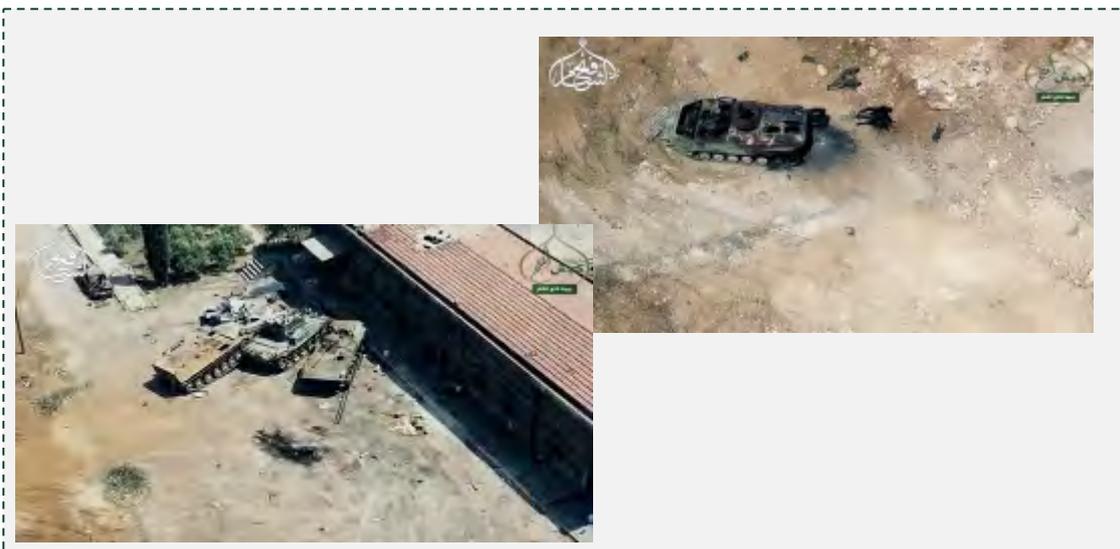
✓ **US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter** called on Turkey to refrain from harming the SDF forces. According to Carter, the **Kurdish forces** (YPG), which are part of the SDF, **have begun to withdraw eastward of the Euphrates River (military.com, August 29, 2016)**. According to an anonymous US source, **on August 29, 2016, all the YPG forces in northern Syria crossed to the eastern side of the Euphrates River (AFP, August 29, 2016)**. **The ITIC cannot verify that the SDF and Kurdish forces have indeed evacuated their men from the area west of the Euphrates River.**

✓ **According to Brett H. McGurk, Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL**, the fighting by Turkish forces in areas of Syria where ISIS operatives were not located was **unacceptable and a source of deep concern**. McGurk made it clear that the United States aimed to concentrate all its efforts on fighting ISIS (NBCNews, August 29, 2016).

## The Aleppo campaign

■ **This week as well, the rebel organizations managed to maintain their logistical corridor south of Aleppo, used to maintain contact with the rebel organizations east of the city.** This week, the clashes continued to focus on the area of the Syrian Air Force's Technical School in **the Al-Ramousah neighborhood in southern Aleppo**. Russian planes attacked the school area (Halab al-Youm, August 26, 2016).

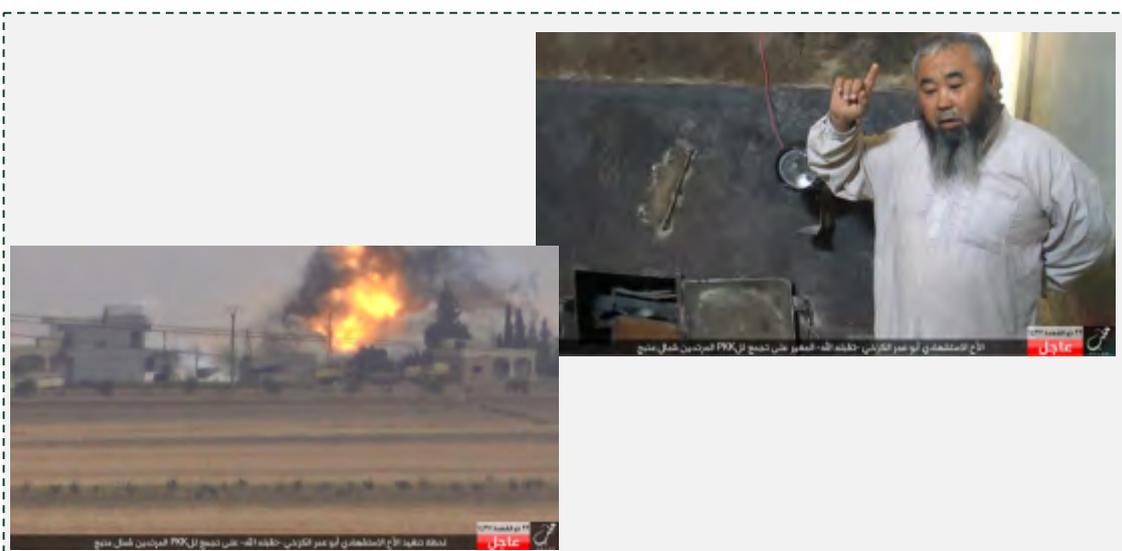
■ On August 27, 2016, the Fateh al-Sham Front (formerly the Al-Nusra Front) announced that its operatives had halted an attempt by the Syrian Army and the forces that support it to advance toward the Al-Ramousah neighborhood (Twitter, August 27, 2016).



Right: Syrian Army APC in the area of the Syrian Air Force's Technical School in the Al-Ramousah neighborhood. Left: Syrian Army APCs that were hit in the area of the Syrian Air Force's Technical School (Twitter account of the Fateh al-Sham Front, August 27, 2016).

## Guerrilla warfare in and around the city of Manbij

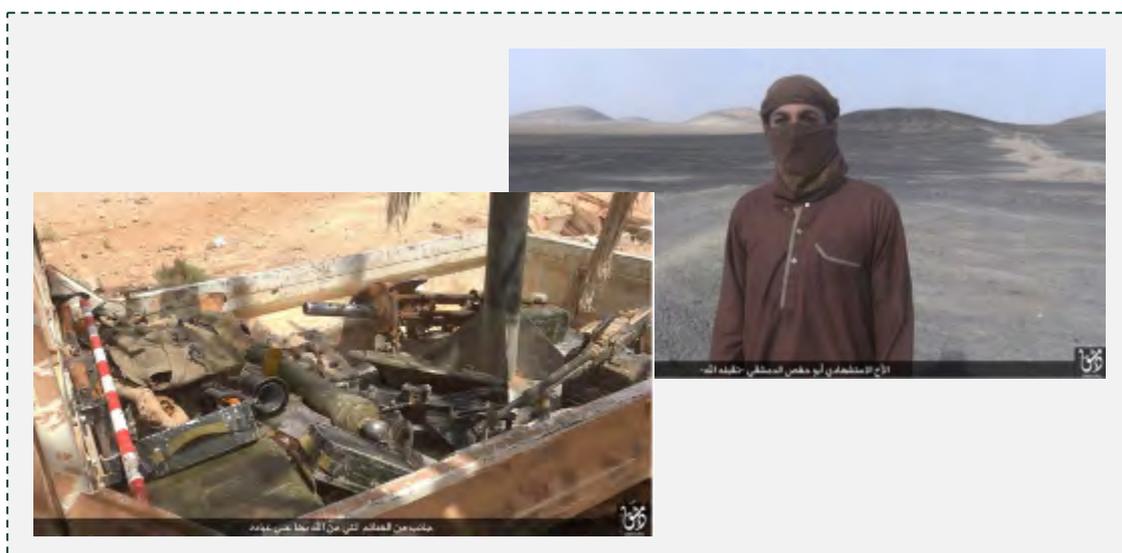
■ Even after the takeover of Manbij by the SDF forces, ISIS operatives continue to conduct guerrilla warfare in the surrounding rural area. According to ISIS, after clashes with the rebel forces, its operatives took control of several villages south of Manbij (Halab al-Youm, August 29, 2016). On August 25, 2016, a suicide bomber blew himself up in a truck bomb in a staging zone of the Kurdish forces north of Manbij. A total of 20 Kurdish fighters were killed and wounded in the attack. ISIS's Aleppo Province claimed responsibility for the attack (Haqq, August 28, 2016).



Right: Suicide bomber codenamed Abu Omar the Kazakh, who detonated a truck bomb in a staging zone of the Kurdish forces north of Manbij. Left: The truck bomb explosion (Haqq, August 28, 2016)

## Southern Syria

■ In southern Syria, there were clashes between the (ISIS-affiliated) **Al-Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade** and the **Fateh al-Sham Front**. The clashes took place around the town of Ein Dhikr, and in the area of the Saham al-Jawlan Dam, west of Daraa (SOHR, August 28 and 30, 2016). On August 25, 2016, ISIS-affiliated media channels published photos showing an ISIS operative carrying out a suicide bombing attack with a truck bomb at the headquarters of the rebel forces near the Syrian-Jordanian border (Haqq, August 25, 2016).



Right: ISIS suicide bomber codenamed Abu Hafs al-Dimashqi (i.e., the Damascene), who detonated a truck bomb against the headquarters of the rebel organizations near the Jordanian-Syrian border. Left: Weapons of the rebels that fell into the hands of ISIS (Haqq, August 25, 2016).

## Main developments in Iraq



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

### ISIS's terrorist activities and guerilla warfare continue

■ ISIS continues its intensive terrorism and guerrilla warfare against the Shiites, the Iraqi security forces, the Iraqi government, and residents perceived as opponents of ISIS in the various provinces of Iraq:

- **August 29, 2016** - A suicide bomber blew himself up with an explosive belt at a wedding in the **town of Ein al-Tamr** in the northern Karbala Province (the Shiite stronghold in Iraq). Four other terrorists fired light weapons and threw grenades. The attackers were killed by the Iraqi security forces. **A hundred people were killed in the attack and scores of others were wounded** (Iraqi News Agency, August 29, 2016). ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack (Amaq, August 29, 2016).



The deadly attack carried out by ISIS at a wedding in the town of Ein al-Tamr (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, August 29, 2016)

- **August 30, 2016** - A number of IEDs were detonated in several neighborhoods in Baghdad, including the Shiite **Madinat al-Sadr neighborhood**. The explosions killed 16 people and wounded dozens of others (Al-Nashra; The Voice of Lebanon; Al-Mayadeen, August 30, 2016).
- **August 28, 2016** - Eleven Iraqi Army soldiers were killed and 16 others were wounded in a **suicide bombing attack in the Al-Anbar Province** (Al-Jazeera, August 29, 2016).
- **August 28, 2016** - Six Iraqi civilians were executed by ISIS operatives in **the city of Mosul**. They had been charged with providing information to the Iraqi forces and collaborating with them. The six were bound, put into truck tires, and burned alive. Since ISIS took over Mosul (June 2014), thousands of people have been executed on various pretexts, the most prominent of which is collaboration with the Iraqi security forces and government (Al-Sumaria, August 28, 2016).
- **August 25, 2016** - Eighteen members of the Iraqi police and Shiite militias were reportedly killed in two suicide bombing attacks in **northeastern Ramadi** (Dimashq al-Aan, August 25, 2016).
- **August 25, 2016** - Two civilians were killed and six others were wounded in an IED explosion in the **Al-Nu'ayra area southeast of Baghdad** (Al-Ahed, August 25, 2016).
- **August 25, 2016** - According to reports by ISIS, two of its suicide bombers planted three IEDs at a **headquarters of the Kurdish forces (Peshmerga) southeast of Makhmur** (about 75 km southeast of Mosul). They detonated the

IEDs, opened fire and detonated their explosive belts. Many Kurdish fighters were killed and wounded (Haqq, August 26, 2016).

## The takeover of the city of Qayyarah

■ According to an announcement by the headquarters of the Iraqi ground forces, **the Iraqi security forces have taken control of the city of Qayyarah**, located about 60 km south of Mosul (Al-Nashra, August 25, 2016). Engineering forces are still working on neutralizing mines and IEDs planted around the city by ISIS operatives (Al-Jazeera, August 25, 2016). During the clashes in Qayyarah, the Iraqi counter-terror apparatus reportedly killed 250 ISIS operatives, including senior commanders, one of whom was a senior military operative codenamed Abu al-Fatuh the Chechen (Akhbar al-Aan, August 24, 2016).



Right: Iraqi flag hoisted in Qayyarah by the Iraqi forces that took it over from ISIS (Al-Sumaria TV, August 25, 2016). Left: The Iraqi Army in Qayyarah (YouTube account of the Iraqi Defense Ministry, August 27, 2016).



Right: Iraqi Army soldiers in Qayyarah. Left: Residents of Qayyarah welcoming the Iraqi Army soldiers (YouTube account of the Iraqi Defense Ministry, August 27, 2016)

■ ISIS, as usual, responded to the takeover of the city of Qayyarah by increasing its guerrilla operations in and around the city. According to a report by ISIS, six suicide bombers detonated six car bombs on August 26, 2016, in staging zones of the Iraqi Army in and around Qayyarah. Scores of Iraqi Army soldiers were killed and wounded in these terrorist attacks. **On August 27, 2016, three suicide bombers detonated car bombs in Iraqi Army staging zones near Qayyarah. Dozens of Iraqi soldiers were killed and wounded** (Haqq, August 28, 2016).



Two suicide bombers who detonated car bombs against a gathering of Iraqi Army forces near Qayyarah. Right: Terrorist codenamed Abu Najm al-Iraqi (i.e., the Iraqi). Left: Terrorist codenamed Abu Omar al-Iraqi (Haqq, August 28, 2016)

The takeover of the city of Qayyarah by the Iraqi security forces, the cleansing of the city and its environs from the presence of ISIS and the reconditioning of the airport to the west of the city - **all these constitute an important step in the entrenchment of the Iraqi Army in the region which is expected to serve as the launching point for a future operation against the ISIS's stronghold in Mosul.** Iraqi Defense Ministry announced that **the takeover of Qayyarah represented the crossing of ISIS's first and important line of defense for the city of Mosul, and harmed an important source of financing for ISIS<sup>2</sup>** (Iraqi Defense Ministry, August 27, 2016). The loss of Qayyarah is **another in a series of failures** that ISIS has suffered in Iraq and Syria over the past year.

## The Sinai Peninsula

- The Egyptian security forces, with air support, continued their counterterrorism and preventive activities against ISIS infrastructure in the Sinai Peninsula. They reportedly killed and arrested ISIS operatives, confiscated weapons, and neutralized IEDs and explosive belts.
- **Two Egyptian Army officers were killed on their way home to Al-Arish** after ISIS operatives followed them and shot at them (Al-Bawaba, August 23, 2016). ISIS claimed responsibility for killing the two men (Amaq News Agency, August 24, 2016). ISIS operatives also documented **the execution of Ahmed Salama Hamdan Salama, an employee of the Egyptian Interior Ministry in Al-Arish** (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, August 26, 2015).

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<sup>2</sup> Northwest of the city of Qayyarah there is a large oil field. Southwest of the city, there is an oil refinery, built in 1956, with huge oil storage tanks (Wikipedia).



Right: The execution of the Egyptian Interior Ministry employee. Left: The ID of the employee who was executed (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, August 26, 2016)

## The global jihad in other countries

### Libya

#### The campaign for the liberation of the city of Sirte

■ During the week, the attempt to complete the takeover of the city of Sirte from ISIS continued, with US air support. According to a spokesman for the Libyan government forces, the forces entered ISIS's strongholds in Neighborhood No. 1 and Neighborhood No. 3, which are located in the heart of the area still controlled by ISIS. On August 29, 2016, the spokesman said that Neighborhood No. 1 had been completely liberated and that only one area in the city remained under ISIS's control (i.e., Neighborhood No. 3). According to the spokesman for the Government of National Accord, ISIS operatives planted many mines in these neighborhoods and detonated 12 car bombs in the area of the fighting.

### Yemen

■ Over 60 people, most of them soldiers, were killed in a car bomb attack at a military training camp located in northern Aden, and around 30 others were wounded (Al-Arabiya, August 29, 2016). ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack (Amaq, August 29, 2016). Aden, the main city of the Yemeni government, has recently become a target of choice for terrorist attacks by ISIS and Al-Qaeda.

## The battle for hearts and minds

### Sons of ISIS operatives execute Kurdish prisoners

■ ISIS-affiliated media channels issued a video from the city of Al-Raqqah showing children in uniform shooting dead five Kurdish fighters who had been taken prisoner. The children are the sons of ISIS operatives of various nationalities (Haqq, August 26, 2016). One of the children (Abu al-Baraa al-Tunisi) addresses the Kurds, saying that the US, France, Britain, and Germany will not be able to help them (file-sharing website, August 26, 2016).



Children of ISIS operatives executing Kurdish fighters in Al-Raqqah (Haqq, August 26, 2016).

■ Another child who appears in the video has been identified as JoJo, 12, a Briton. He is seen in the video shooting the Kurdish victim and shouting “Allahu Akbar.” Three years ago, JoJo’s mother, Sally Jones, 47, reportedly converted to Islam. She took her son to Syria and traveled with him to ISIS’s stronghold in Al-Raqqah. In Al-Raqqah, she married a young man from Pakistan, who was killed in a US airstrike a year ago. The boy’s father, whose relationship with Sally Jones is over, calls for the return of his son to Britain, where he would be taken care of and rescued (article by Smadar Perry, Israeli daily Yedioth Ahronoth, August 30, 2016).