



Spotlight on Global Jihad 24-30 August 2017

Main events of the week

► This week Islamic State (ISIS) suffered **two more setbacks**, tagged onto a string of failures:

- ◆ ISIS was forced to agree to a ceasefire with Hezbollah, **under which it evacuated its operatives from the West Qalamoun mountains (the Syria-Lebanon border).**

The evacuated operatives were transported eastward, apparently to the town of Abu Kamal, which is controlled by ISIS. Hassan Nasrallah gave a “victory speech” in which he stressed that **the security threat has been lifted off Lebanon** and that this is an “historic day for Lebanon, for the region, for Hezbollah and for the Syrian Army”.

- ◆ **The city of Tal Afar, west of Mosul, fell within a week into the hands of the Iraqi forces and the “Popular Mobilization” (Shiite militias sponsored by Iran).** This is a **very short length of time**, which we believe was achieved thanks to careful planning, sizable order of battle allocated to the campaign and low morale and impaired combat fitness on the part of ISIS. The Iraqi forces are now completing the mop-up operations to eradicate ISIS in the Tal Afar district. In order to create a continuity of control as far as the Iraq-Syria border.

► While ISIS is enduring increasing pressure in Syria and Iraq, **its supporters worldwide are continuing their efforts to wage attacks.** This week there were two stabbing attacks in **Belgium**, a mass-killing suicide attack at a Shiite mosque in **Afghanistan**, and a stabbing attack in **Dagestan**. The ISIS media have been boasting about the success of the vehicular attack in Barcelona. They are calling **for more attacks against Spain and for an escalation of the attacks against the European countries.**

Russian Involvement in Syria

► The International Military-Technical Forum “Army-2017” convened in Moscow between the 22-27 of August. **Senior military officials spoke about the Russian fight in Syria:**

- ◆ **Alexander Novikov, head of the Russian General Staff's Office for UAV Development**, said at the forum that **The network of UAVs** set up includes small, medium and long range aircraft platforms, **which carried out 14,000 sorties in the course of the battle** (Tass, 25 August 2017).
- ◆ **Igor Korobov, head of intelligence in the Russian Army and deputy Chief of Staff** said that **the terrorist organizations fighting in Syria are using “swarm” tactics**. They carry out surprise bombardments and surprise attacks against Syrian Army units. The attacks are carried out by small but well-trained groups. He added that the use of these combat tactics creates the effect of a sustained attack, applying pressure and demoralizing the opponent, even though the opponent is bigger than them. He said **the terrorist organizations are capable of rapidly changing their combat tactics, to switch from guerilla-style warfare to frontal attacks and vice versa** (Tass, 25 August 2017).
- ◆ Korobov also said that **According to our estimates there are no more than 9,000 ISIS operatives in Syria. They are now concentrated mainly in central Syria and in the eastern regions of Iraq, primarily along the Euphrates River**. According to Korobov, the ISIS leadership **regards Syria to be the launching ground for spreading throughout the Middle East and other regions around the world** (Tass, website of the Russian Defense Ministry, 25 August 2017). According to him, **some 15,000 Al-Nusra Front terrorists are operating in Syria**. As opposed to the ISIS concept, the Al-Nusra Front **is working for regime change in Syria and for the establishment of an Islamic State in Syria** (website of the Russian Ministry of Defense, 25 August 2017).



Igor Korobov, head of intelligence in the Russian Army and deputy Chief of Staff at the Military-Technical Forum “Army 2017”.

◆ **Sergei Sorovkin, commander of the Russian forces in Syria**, said that **Over the last three months the terrorist organizations have lost over 8,000 men and a large quantity of arms**. He added that **over the last three days the Russian Air Force has destroyed 415 terrorist installations in Syria, and has run more than 160 sorties**¹ (Tass, 25 August 2017).

◆ **Chief of the Main Operational Directorate of the Russian General Staff Sergei Rudskoy**, said at the conference that **Since the start of the Russian combat operations in Syria, the Russian Air Force has carried out over 28,000 sorties, and about 90,000 aerial assaults**. Rudskoy stressed that the Russian military operations **have dealt a heavy blow to the control and logistics network of the terrorist organizations in Syria**. Access routes for combatants and for arms movements have been blocked, the economic support for the terrorist organizations through the illicit sales of goods and vital terrorist facilities have been damaged (Tass, 25 August 2017).

Meetings to Advance Reconciliation in the De-escalation Zones

► On 26 August 2017, **a meeting was held in Daraa, organized by the Russian Center for Syrian Reconciliation in the De-escalation Zones**. Participants included representatives of the Syrian regime, the rebel organizations, dignitaries (including from territories held by the insurgents) and the governors of the Governorates of Daraa, Quneitra and Suwayda, which are included in the de-escalation zones. Various issues were raised during the talks, such as advancement of the reconciliation, securing humanitarian aid, the desired cooperation from the population, and restoring the status-quo ante. **Governor of the Daraa Governorate Khaled Al Hanous** and a representative of the Russian Center for Syrian Reconciliation between the warring sides said the meeting was a success. The meeting also hosted a video conference with senior leaders of the rebel organizations in South Syria (Russia 24, website of the Red Star, Al Watan, 26 August 2017).

¹The Central Organ of the Russian Ministry of Defence, Krasnaya Zvezda, reported that **over the past week the Russian Air Force has destroyed over 1,000 ISIS installations. The Russian airplanes carried out over 360 combat sorties over Syria**. UAVs carried out over 140 reconnaissance flights, during which they marked over 190 terror infrastructures (Tass, 25 August 2017).



The Meeting to Advance Reconciliation held in Darra (website of the Red Star, 26 August 2017).

Main developments in Syria

The campaign to take over Al-Raqqah

► Fierce fighting has continued in **Al-Raqqah without any significant changes on the ground. Nowruz Ahmed**, a senior female Kurdish fighter, said in an interview (Reuters, 28 August 2017):

- ◆ One cannot predict the exact time hostilities will end. However the Kurds/SDF expect the fighting will not last very long **and that it will not go on for more than two months**. She believes **there are about 700 to 1,000 ISIS operatives in Al-Raqqah, primarily in the city center**. SDF forces have encircled ISIS operatives **and have taken control of 60% of the town**.
- ◆ **About 15,000 SDF fighters** are taking part in the campaign to take over Al-Raqqah. **The number of civilians in the city is estimated at about 5,000-10,000, including the families of the ISIS operatives. She believes ISIS will fight to the bitter end**. Many ISIS operatives left in Al-Raqqah **came from outside** and they are being exploited to carry out suicide attacks.
- ◆ SDF forces and their allies **have set up a “civilian council” to manage Al-Raqqah’s affairs after the ISIS defeat**. She added that SDF does not plan to remain in Al-Raqqah after it is liberated, unless they will be asked to do so.
- ◆ **The SDF does not have plans to advance on the Deir ez-Zor district** since all of its resources are dedicated to the fight for Al-Raqqah. She added that demands have been made on the SDF to liberate Deir ez-Zor and these are still under examination.



A built-up area reduced to rubble in one of the neighborhoods in the eastern part of Al-Raqqah (Twitter account [الرققة تدبج بصمت](#) Verified account @Raqqqa_SL, 27).

ISIS Attack on Advancing Syrian Force Along the Euphrates

► ISIS launched an attack this week, **intended to slow the advance of the Syrian force toward Deir ez-Zor along the Euphrates River** (along Road 4). On 24 August 2017 ISIS announced it had **taken over seven villages from the Syrian Army south-east of Al-Raqqah**. Among the villages captured is the village of Ghanim al-A'li **close to road 4, which leads from Al-Raqqah toward Deir ez-Zor** (see map). According to the announcement, **some 27 Syrian soldiers were killed in the ISIS attack**. The ISIS operatives arrived in the area on off-road vehicles, some mounted with machine guns. One of the pictures also shows an ISIS tank (Akhbar Al-Muslimeen, 25 August 2017). It said **the Syrian forces retreated** toward the area south of Al Resafa (Khatwa, 24 August 2017).

► During the clashes, an ISIS suicide bomber codenamed **Abu Raji Al-Julani detonated a car bomb at a Syrian Army gathering center** on the outskirts of the village of Ghanim al-A'li. As a result, **58 Syrian soldiers lost their lives** and a number of vehicles were destroyed. ISIS operatives captured weapons and ammunition (Akhbar Al-Muslimeen, 24 August 2017). In one of the pictures the suicide bomber can be seen, a young man in his twenties, leaning on crutches near an off-road vehicle armored with steel plates, which served him in carrying out the attack (Akhbar Al-Muslimeen, 25 August 2017).



Site of the ISIS attack on the Syrian force near Ghanim al-A'li (Google Maps).



Right: ISIS vehicles carrying fighters to the attack against the Syrian force near the village of Ghanim al-A'li. Left: ISIS tank en route to Ghanim al-A'li (Akhbar Al-Muslimeen, 25 August 2017).



Right: ISIS operative firing toward Syrian Army forces (Akhbar Al-Muslimeen, 25 August 2017).
Left: ISIS operative waving the ISIS flag over one of the positions taken from the Syrian Army (Akhbar Al-Muslimeen, 25 August 2017).

ISIS Attack on Positions of the Syrian Army and Shiite Militias at the Al-Wa'er Dam, west of Abu Kamal.

► On 23 August 2017 ISIS fighters attacked **positions of the Syrian Army and Shiite Militias² at Wadi Al-Wa'er**, some 106 km west of the town of Abu Kamal (which is under ISIS control). Some thirty ISIS fighters took part in the attack, arriving in vehicles protected with metal plates (Akhbar Al-Muslimeen, 24 August 2017). Twenty soldiers from the Syrian forces were killed and dozens were injured. In addition five military vehicles were destroyed and a rocket launcher (Amaq Qasioun, 23 August 2017).



Right: Al-Wa'er Dam (Google Maps). Left: ISIS force preparing for an attack against positions of the Syrian Army and Hezbollah in Wadi Al-Wa'er (Akhbar Al-Muslimeen, 24 August 2017).



Right: ISIS fighters firing at Syrian Army and Hezbollah forces in Wadi Al-Wa'er. Left: rocket launcher mounted on a truck (BM-21 Grad) at one of the abandoned positions of the Syrian Army at Wadi Al-Wa'er (Akhbar Al-Muslimeen, 24 August 2017).

²The Shiite fighters, who were together with the Syrian Army belong to the Alfatmioun Division. This is a division consisting of Afghan recruits operated by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. The Syrian Army commended the force's contribution toward the fighting in Syria. It made mention of the substantial contribution of the Revolutionary Guards' armed UAVs, which launch precision guided anti-tank missiles (Syria-Victory, 26 August 2017).



Right: abandoned Syrian Army truck near a position in Wadi Al-Wa'er. Left: abandoned position of the Syrian Army at Wadi Al-Wa'er (Akhbar Al-Muslimeen, 24 August 2017).

Ceasefire Agreement in Battle against ISIS on Western Qalamoun Ridges

The Lebanese Army, the Syrian Army and Hezbollah announced that a ceasefire and been reached with ISIS, due to take effect 27 August 2017. According to the announcement, this is a “comprehensive agreement” supposed to bring the campaign in the western Qalamoun mountains to an end. In the background are the achievements of the Lebanese and Syrian armies and Hezbollah, which forced ISIS to agree to evacuate their fighters from the Syrian-Lebanese border and to transfer them (to the town of Abu-Kamal in Eastern Syria).

► **These are the highlights of the agreement** (Al Manar, Al Mayadeen, Al Nashra, the Hezbollah battle information institution):

- ◆ **The ceasefire agreement will take effect beginning 27 August at 07:00** (local time).
- ◆ The ISIS operatives **will surrender and be transferred to the Deir ez-Zor District.** A convoy, in which the ISIS operatives and their families is supposed to transfer them to the **town of Abu Kamal.**
- ◆ **ISIS will hand over to Hezbollah the bodies of four fighters,** who were killed in the Qalamoun battles, **and the bodies of two fighters** who were killed in battle in the Syrian desert (in the Palmyra area).
- ◆ ISIS will update the Lebanese Army as to the fate of **nine Lebanese soldiers kidnapped** by the organization in 2014.³

³ISIS and the Al-Nusra Front in 2014 took thirty Lebanese soldiers prisoner following fierce fighting around the town of Aarsal. 16 of the kidnapped soldiers were returned in 2015, four were executed by the Al-Nusra Front, a fifth died of his wounds, which left nine prisoners held by ISIS (France 24, 27 August 2017).

◆ ISIS will return to Hezbollah **a soldier who had been taken prisoner in the battles in the Syrian desert** (the Palmyra area).

► On 27 August 2017 **the process of implementing the agreement began. Main developments so far:**

◆ **On 28 August 2017** the evacuation of the ISIS operatives and their families from the Lebanon-Syria border area began. They were moved toward eastern Syria. They were led in a convoy of buses and ambulances accompanied by Syrian Army soldiers. Hezbollah fighters entered the positions abandoned by the ISIS operatives and held a “victory parade” **on mount Halima Qarah in the western Qalamoun mountains**. The Hezbollah fighters were seen saluting and hoisting the Hezbollah, Syrian, and Lebanese flags (Reuters, 28 August 2017).

◆ **On 27 August 2017** the Lebanese Army in Wadi Al Dubb, some seven kilometers south of Aarsal, announced that **the bodies of eight soldiers who were kidnapped by ISIS had been found**. The bodies were transferred to a military hospital for DNA tests (website of the Lebanese Army, 27 August 2017). Earlier, on 27 August 2017 Hezbollah announced it had passed on to the Lebanese authorities information about the location of the bodies of the kidnapped Lebanese security forces personnel (Twitter account Almanarnews English@AlmanarEnglish, 27 August 2017).



Mount Halima Qarah, where Hezbollah held its “victory parade” after displacing the ISIS fighters (Google Maps).



Right: Hezbollah parade on Mount Halima Qarah in the western Qalamoun mountains. The Hezbollah fighters hoisting the Hezbollah, Syrian, and Lebanese flags (Twitter account, مروان حجازي @HijazMarwan,, 28 August 2017). Left: some of the buses, used to transport the ISIS operatives and their families from the Qarah ridges, in the Syrian part of the western Qalamoun mountains (Syrian television, 28 July 2017).

Hassan Nasrallah’s “Victory Speech”

- ▶ On 28 August 2017 Hassan Nasrallah, the Hezbollah leader, gave a **“victory speech” on the achievement in the Qalamoun Mountains. In his speech** he argued with Lebanese leaders and political parties, which had criticized Hezbollah’s involvement in the fighting. Nasrallah elaborated on part of the clauses in the agreement with ISIS, emphasizing that **the main achievement was the clearing of terrorists out of the Qalamoun mountains**, all of whom boarded buses and traveled toward Abu Kamal. He said that **670 individuals evacuated the area, 331 of those were civilians, 26 wounded and 308 armed ISIS operatives with their weapons.**
- ▶ Hassan Nasrallah called the removal of the ISIS operatives from the Lebanese-Syrian border the “second liberation” (the “first liberation” being the removal of Israel from the security zone on 25 May 2000). According to him, the “second liberation”, which began on 28 August 2017, is an **“historic day for Lebanon, the region, Hezbollah, the Lebanese Army and the Syrian Army”**. Nasrallah called on the Lebanese people and the Hezbollah men to celebrate this day. He made it clear that the ISIS operatives had held onto a long mountainous border **and posed a security threat to Lebanon** since they had planned to carry out attacks on its soil. In his words, there are now “no more ISIS operatives or Al-Nusra Front operatives within Lebanese territory” (Al Manar, 28 August 2017).



Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah speaking under the title of the “second liberation” (Al Manar, 29 August 2017)

Yarmouk Basin (southern Golan Heights)

- ▶ **Several factions of the Free Syrian Army** announced on 28 August 2017 that they were **opening a new campaign against the Khalid Bin Walid Army** (affiliated with ISIS) **in the Yarmouk Basin**. In the clashes between the two sides, seven Free Syrian Army fighters were killed (Dimashq al-Aan, the Al-Sham Network, 28 August 2017).
- ▶ On 28 August 2017 **the Khalid Bin Walid Army, which is affiliated with ISIS, announced that its forces had been attacked by the rebel organizations**. According to them, the rebel forces attempted to advance toward the Khalid Bin Walid Army in the towns of Jillen and Adawan (see map). Another announcement, coming from the ISIS Amaq agency, said that the rebel forces suffered 19 dead in the clashes and two of their tanks were hit (Twitter account [@wdnnhb](#), 28 August 2017).

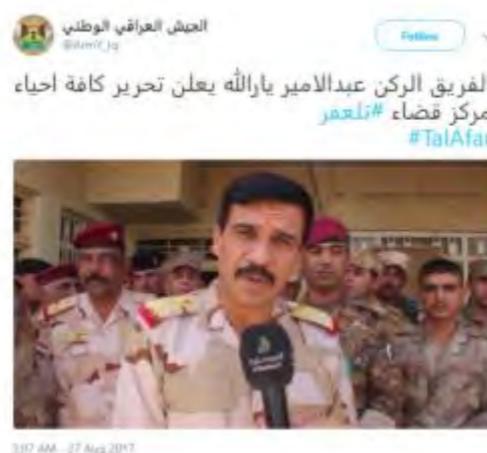


The towns of Jillen (1) and Adawan (2), in the area controlled by the Khalid Bin Walid Army in the Yarmouk Basin (Google Maps).

Main developments in Iraq

Iraqi Announcement that the Reconquest of Tal Afar Has been Completed

On 27 August 2017 **lieutenant general Abdel Amir Yarallah, head of the campaign for Tal Afar, announced the complete liberation of the town and the district.** In his announcement Yarallah noted that only the villages in the sub-district of Tal Afar by the name of **Al-A'yadiya**, SOME 90 km north of Tal Afar, **have not yet been liberated** (Al Sumaria, 27 August 2017). ISIS operatives have congregated in the Al Aiacha area, Iraqis and foreigners. The Iraqi forces and the Shiite militias **are involved in clashes with them. The town of Tal Afar was liberated from ISIS within a brief period of just one week.** This was apparently thanks to careful planning and participation of large forces in the attack, much larger than would have been necessary for a town of this size. It is also possible that **a string of territorial losses for ISIS and the attrition of their forces have demoralized their operatives,** who in contrast to Mosul and Al-Raqqah **showed no resiliency against the attackers.**



Right: Staff Lieutenant General Abed Al Amir Yarallah announces the full liberation of all of the Tal Afar neighborhoods (Twitter account @Army_Iq, 27 August 2017). Left: an Iraqi Federal Police fighter and soldiers of the Iraqi army celebrating the conquest of the town from Iraqi army (Twitter account Dr_Bahar@dr_sarabsarab, 28 August 2017).

► The Iraqi media covering the battle for Tal Afar **emphasized the role of the Shiite militias in the fighting (“Al Hashd Al Shaabi”, Popular Mobilization) operated by Iran.** A report on 27 August 2017 said that **Faleh Al Fyyad**, head of the “Popular Mobilization” staff, announced that **ISIS has been defeated in Tal Afar and that the Popular Mobilization**

played a major role in this campaign. This was said while he was in the headquarters of the campaign, called “[we] are arriving, Tal Afar” (website of the Popular Mobilization, al-hashd, 20 August 2017). According to the “Popular Mobilization” website, **16 divisions of the “Popular Mobilization” took part in the battle for Tal Afar.**



Faleh Al Fayyad, head of the “Popular Mobilization” staff (website of the Popular Mobilization, al-hashd, 20 August 2017).

► On 29 August 2017 the general command of the Peshmerga forces (the Iraqi Kurdistan forces) announced that **their fighters had killed 130 ISIS operatives in the area north of Tal Afar.** These operatives fled the Tal Afar district after the fall of the city and were trying to reach Syria. The clashes between the Peshmerga and ISIS lasted three days (Al Sumaria, 29 August 2017).

Further fighting in other areas of Iraq

- Attacks have been continuing against targets affiliated to the Iraqi regime:
 - ◆ **On 28 August 2017** Iraqi police informed that one man was killed and five injured in an explosive device attack **in the Al Yousufiyah area,** about 18 km south of Baghdad (Al Sumaria, 28 August 2017).
 - ◆ **On 28 August 2017** it was reported that **an Iraqi official in the Ministry of Justice was assassinated** in an armed attack in western Baghdad (Al Sumaria, 28 August 2017).
 - ◆ **On 28 August 2017** the Iraqi Minister of the Interior said that four people were killed and eight were wounded. Among the dead were **two Iraqi security personnel.** The attack used a **care bomb, which exploded in the market in Alwah Jamilah in Sadr City,** the Shiite neighborhood in northeastern Baghdad (Al Sumaria, 28 August 2017).

Mosul Rehabilitation

- The Combat Engineers section of the Iraqi army **has continued its work on erecting a pontoon bridge over the Tigris river, to connect East Mosul with its west side.** The

bridge will enable military as well as civilian vehicles to cross the river. It has been set up near the Al Hariya bridge, which was demolished by the ISIS operatives (website of the Iraqi Department of Defense, 27 August 2017).



The works of the Combat Engineering Administration of the Iraqi army on erecting an iron pontoon bridge to connect East Mosul with its west side (website of the Iraqi Department of Defense, 27 August 2017).

► The Iraqi government is about to begin rolling out a **resettlement plan for 690,000 of Mosul's residents**. These are residents who **fled the city due to the fighting** (Al Aan, 27 August 2017). According to **Lize Grande**, UN humanitarian coordinator for Iraq, **one of the main water pumping stations in Mosul has begun operating again after a quick rebuilding which lasted two and a half months**. The station, which was damaged during the fighting, **delivers clean water to about one-third of the city residents**. However many residents still get their drinking water from bottles or from the aid agencies, which transport water to the city from wells (Rudaw ,22 August 2017, a website operating in Irbil and which is associated with the Kurds).



Right: drinking water flowing from the rebuilt pumping station. Left: pumps and pipes in the rebuilt pumping station (Rudawwebsite, 22 August 2017).

ISIS Claims of Responsibility for Attacks in Other Countries

Stabbing attack in Belgium

► On 25 August 2017 a man wielding a knife and shouting Allahu Akbar attacked a patrol consisting of three Belgian soldiers.⁴ **The attack occurred on the Boulevard Emile Jacqmain in central Brussels.** The attacker was shot by one of the soldiers, He died of his wounds on the way to the hospital. Two of the soldiers were lightly wounded. The attacker's name is as yet unknown. **He is of Somalian origin.** He arrived in Belgium in 2004, He got his Belgian citizenship in 2015. In February 2017 he was convicted on an assault charge.

► **ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack.** ISIS announced on 26 August 2017 that “The perpetrator of the stabbing attack in Brussels is a **soldier of the Islamic State.** He carried out the attack in response to calls to attack the International Coalition states” (Twitter account of Pieter Nanninga@pieternanninga, 26 August 2017). The wording of this announcement is typical of ISIS-inspired attacks.⁵



**Scene of the stabbing attack in Brussels
(Twitter page of Thomas da Silva Rosa, 25 August 2017).**

⁴According to one version this is a machete or a knife used in Islamic (Halal) slaughter.

⁵In this context, see ITIC's publication from 15 August 2017: Analysis of ISIS's Claims of Responsibility for Terrorist Attacks Carried Out Abroad.

Suicide Attack in Shiite Mosque in Afghanistan

► On 25 August 2017 ISIS announced that over sixty people were killed ⁶and forty injured **in a combination shooting and suicide attack**. The attack was carried out by two operatives in the Imam Zaman Shiite mosque **in Kabul, Afghanistan**. The attackers, **Abu Zeid Al Horasani and Abu Jund Allah the Uzbek**, shot at worshippers with submachine guns and then detonated the suicide belts they were carrying (Akhbar Al-Muslimeen, 25 August 2017).



Shiite mosque Imam Zaman in Kabul, scene of an ISIS suicide attack
(Afghanistan Times, 27 August 2017)

Stabbing attack in Dagestan

► A policeman from the Dagestan police was reported killed and another injured on 28 August 2017 **in a stabbing attack carried out by two terrorists**. The attack occurred in the city of **Kaspiysk**, 12 km southeast of Makhachkala, the Dagestani capital. The two young terrorists were shot and killed by a third policeman (eNCA, 28 August 2017).

► On 28 August 2017 ISIS posted (similar) notices in **Arabic and Russian**. The posts said: “A security source informed the Aamaq agency: the perpetrators of the stabbing (in the original: attack using knives) against policemen from the Dagestan police in the Kaspiysk area are soldiers of the Islamic State” (Twitter account [@wdnnhb](#), 28 August 2017).

⁶ According to the Ministry of Public Health in Kabul, 28 people were killed and over 50 injured; according to the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, 40 people were killed and over 90 injured (Afghanistan Times, 27 August 2017).

The Battle for Hearts and Minds

► ISIS' media channels have praised the vehicular attack in Barcelona **and threatened Spain, and European countries in general:**

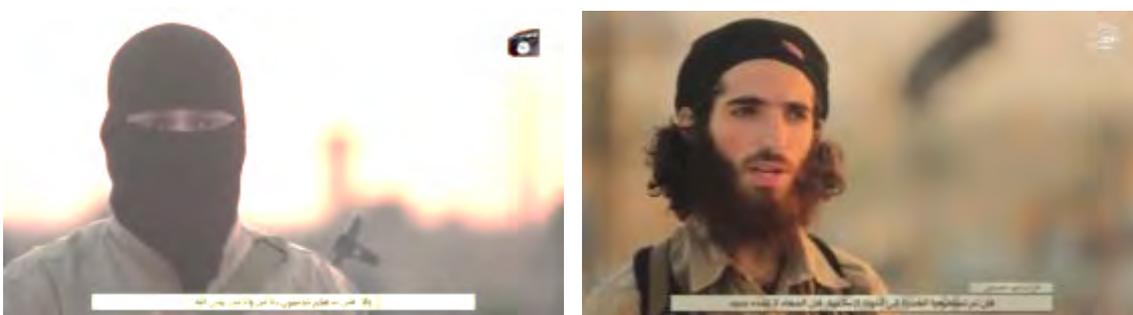
◆ **The ISIS weekly Al Naba' threatened European countries: The European countries will pay a heavy price for their war against Muslims.** Spain has experienced this in the past but it appears it has not learned its lesson. The soldiers of the Islamic State **have struck at the tourism sector in Spain, which is a sizable part of its economy.** The European countries are paying a heavy price for the attacks against them: military alert, tightened security, drop in tourism and trade revenues and a state of fear and intimidation. **The attacks against Spain and the rest of the infidel countries will continue** as long as they are at war with the Islamic State. **The hope is that the soldiers of the Islamic State will escalate their attacks in the near future. The Christian governments ("the Crusaders") should prepare themselves for more financial losses and for more expenses and loss of life** (Al Naba', 94th issue, 24 August 2017).

◆ **Akhbar Al-Muslimeen** (28 August 2017), **a website associated with ISIS**, posted a clip originating from the ISIS information bureau in the Al Khayr Province (Deir ez-Zor). **The clip was entitled: "The first rain, the raid on Barcelona"**. The clip sounds the voice of former ISIS spokesman **Abu Mohammad Al-Adnani calling for attacks against the west, prioritizing civilians**, since "in the infidel lands" nobody is innocent and nobody is immune.

◆ **Two Spanish-speaking operatives appeared in the clip:**

- **Abu Al-Lieth of Cordoba**, a fluent Spanish speaker, **called on Muslims to wage jihad wherever they live, if they are unable to migrate to the Islamic State.** At the end of the clip he calls on Spain ("the Spanish crusaders") and says **"We will avenge the death of our martyrs** and the crimes you are committing are against the Muslims in the Islamic State" (Akhbar Al-Muslimeen, 28 August 2017).
- **Abu Salman the Andalusian**, who speak Spanish with a heavy Arabic accent, was heard saying: "We pray to Allah to receive our brothers who carried out the raid on Barcelona. **Our war against you continues, remain crusaders, until**

judgement day". Further on in the clip he says: "give up your fight and abandon the International Coalition, **or else we will not enable you, God willing, to dream of peace and security**".



Right: ISIS operatives codenamed Abu Al-Leith of Cordoba calling for jihad by whoever is unable to migrate to the Islamic State. Left: ISIS operatives codenamed Abu Salman Al Andalusi calling on Spaniards to abandon the International Coalition, or else they will not live in peace and security (Akhbar Al-Muslimeen, 23 August 2017).