



Spotlight on Global Jihad

November 2 – 8, 2017, 2017



Main events of the week

- ▶ The conquest of the regions controlled by the Islamic State has **reached the last lap**. **Abu Kamal**, ISIS's last stronghold, is currently under combined pressure from the Syrian army, the Shi'ite militias and Hezbollah operatives, and Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) advancing on the city from both sides of the Euphrates. The attack on Abu Kamal is being waged with **intensive Russian air support**. The first forces of the Shi'ite militias and Hezbollah are apparently a few dozen kilometers from Abu Kamal. All the forces, and the countries behind them, **want to be part of the final victory at Abu Kamal, which will mean the end of the Islamic State's existence in Syria**. For that reason **Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC's Qods Force**, made a point of visiting Deir al-Zor and had his picture taken with Shi'ite militia fighters affiliated with Iran, despite being in mourning for the death of his father.
- ▶ The strategically significant events in Syria were overshadowed this week by **potentially explosive local events in the northern Golan Heights**. On November 3, 2017, the rebel forces headed by the Headquarters for the Liberation of al-Sham (originally the al-Qaeda-affiliated al-Nusra Front), initiated **an offensive aimed to open a supply route to besieged rebel operatives in the Beit Jinn enclave**. After several hours of clashes the Syrian army and its affiliated militias halted the attack and **restored the status quo ante**. According to a report, the clashes were renewed on November 6, 2017. During the attack, an operative of the Headquarters for the Liberation of al-Sham detonated **a car bomb in the Druze village of Hader. The explosion killed 16 local inhabitants**, some with relatives living in Israel. In response, **the IDF said in the Israeli media that Israel would prevent the occupation of Hader out of a commitment to the Druze population in Israel**.

At the end of the rebel organizations' attack there was **no change in the situation on the ground**. Therefore **it can be expected that additional attempts will be made by rival forces to take over the territory in the northern Golan Heights in the era after the collapse of the Islamic State**. The rebel forces, especially the Headquarters for the Liberation of al-Sham, are liable to make **another attempt** to open a logistic route to operatives in the Beit Jinn enclave. On the other hand, there are **the Syrian army and the forces supporting it, which**, when they no longer have to fight in eastern Syria, **are liable to try to occupy the rebel enclaves in Beit Jinn and the northern Golan Heights**. In every scenario the **Druze in the village of Hader, who are openly affiliated with the Syrian regime and are not pro-Israel, are likely to find themselves caught in a battle zone between both sides, posing a dilemma for Israel**.

Involvement of the United States and the Coalition Countries

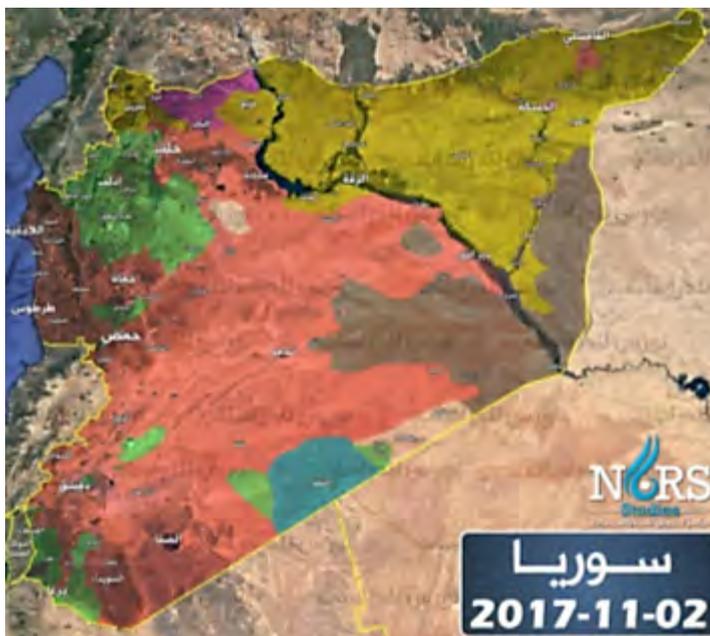
- ▶ **Colonel Ryan Dillon, spokesman for the Combined Joint Task Force** fighting ISIS gave a phone interview to the **Russian Sputnik news agency**. He said ISIS's **first and ineffective use of chemical weapons in Iraq and Syria** had been identified. He said the coalition forces had destroyed the weapons. He also said that in several cases, a number of **anti-tank RPG launchers and mortars had been found containing chemical substances ISIS was trying to turn into chemical weapons**. Stockpiles of chemicals were also found, most of the industrial, which could be used to make weapons.
- ▶ Colonel Dillon added that now that the territories in Syria under ISIS control were smaller, and forces affiliated with Russia and the United States were approaching one another, **the communications between the forces had improved significantly and they coordinated their air and ground operations**. High level talks were also being held. As to the next steps taken by the coalition, **he said its forces [i.e., the SDF] were planning an attack in the region of Abu Kamal, ISIS's last stronghold in Syria** (Sputnik, October 28, 2017).
- ▶ According to the Hezbollah-affiliated **Lebanese daily newspaper Al-Akhbar**, an American envoy in Syria reported that **the United States' operations in Syria were limited exclusively to advising and fighting against ISIS**. He said the United States had **no interest in maintaining a presence in Syria** after the defeat of ISIS, and had made **no such promises to any opposition group** in Syria (al-Akhbar, November 3, 2017).

Main Developments in Syria

Overview

► At the current time, **a division of spheres of influence is being made in Syria, for the era after the collapse of the Islamic State.** According to a map issued by Nors Studies, a Syrian institute for international research, which is consistent with the situation on the ground as we known it, the situation is as follows:

- ◆ **The Syrian army and the forces supporting it control most of the territory** from the Euphrates in the east to Latakia in west and Daraa in the south. The main Syrian cities are under their control.
- ◆ **The rebel organizations**, the most dominant of which is the al-Qaeda-affiliated **Headquarters for the Liberation of al-Sham**, control a large area in the region of **Idlib**. They also control enclaves in the Golan Heights, the region northeast of Damascus and an area near the Syrian-Jordanian border (al-Tanf).
- ◆ **ISIS** controlled the city of Abu Kamal, which is now under a severe Syrian attack. ISIS operatives escaped to the desert west and north of the Euphrates.
- ◆ **The Kurdish forces** control northeastern Syria **east of the Euphrates**, with the exception of a strip of land along the Syrian-Iraqi border, which may still be under ISIS control. SDF forces have a stronghold west of the Euphrates in the region of the city of Manbij, which they took with American support.
- ◆ **The rebel organizations affiliated with the United States** are located in the region of al-Tanf near the Jordanian border. **Their influence on events in Syria is marginal.** They will apparently not be able to survive or preserve a presence in the area.



Deployment of forces in Syria (as of November 2, 2017): gray indicates ISIS; red indicates the Syrian army and the forces supporting it; yellow indicates the Kurdish forces; green indicates a rebel force; blue indicates the rebel organizations supported by the international coalition; white indicates areas uncontrolled by any specific group. Purple (which is not mentioned in the Nors map legend) indicates Turkey and rebel organizations supported by Turkey (Nors Studies, November 2, 2017).

Deir al-Zor region

The Syrian regime announced the completion of the liberation of the city of Deir al-Zor from ISIS (so far the Syrian forces have taken control of about 80% of the cities). The Syrian general command announced that the restoration of security and stability to Deir al-Zor was the last stage in the final elimination of ISIS's presence in Syria (SANA, November 3, 2017). However, even after the announcement **ISIS operatives were still present in several neighborhoods in the city**. The Syrian forces have searched for them and dealt with removing the remains of ISIS from the city.



Right: Syrian army soldiers wave Syrian flags and rifles after taking control of Deir al-Zor. Left: Syrian army soldiers patrol in liberated Deir al-Zor (Butulat al-Jaish al-Suri, November 4, 2017).

- ▶ **After taking control of Deir al-Zor the Syrians, with Russian support, began clearing the city of ISIS operatives.** A Syrian combat engineering unit combed the neighborhoods and city squares to neutralize mines, IEDs and car bombs left behind by ISIS operatives (Syrian News Agency, November 5, 2017). The Russian coordination center reported that **Russian officers had searched extensive regions of the city and its suburbs and removed 275 IEDs** (TASS, November 2, 2017). According to reports, large quantities of weapons, tanks, car bombs, and workshops for the manufacture of weapons had been found. It was also reported that throughout the city **chemical substances were found which could be activated during fighting** (Syrian TV and the Syrian News Agency, November 5, 2017).
- ▶ According to reports, during the fighting in Deir al-Zor **ISIS suffered heavy losses, including commanders and foreign fighters.** It also lost weapons, equipment and storehouses of weapons and ammunition. ISIS planted thousands of mines and IEDs in streets and houses in Deir al-Zor to delay the advance of the Syrian army forces (SANA, November 3, 2017).



Some of ISIS's many weapons seized by the Syrian army in Deir al-Zor (Syrian TV, November 5, 2017).



ISIS tanks and car bombs seized by the Syrian army in Deir al-Zor (Syrian TV, November 5, 2017).

Advance of Sunni forces towards Abu Kamal

Three forces are currently advancing towards the city of Abu Kamal, the Islamic State's last stronghold in Syria: the Syrian army, with intensive Russian air support, is advancing along the western side of the Euphrates and is now between al-Mayadeen and Abu Kamal: **SDF forces, supported by the United States**, are advancing towards Abu Kamal on the eastern side of the Euphrates; **Hezbollah and the Shi'ite militias** (belonging to the Afghan Fatemiyoun Brigade and the al-Baqir Brigade established in Syria) are advancing towards Abu Kamal from the southeast, from the region of the T2 oil field. According to an Iranian report and a website affiliated with the Syrian regime, the forces have seized a strip of land from ISIS along the Syrian-Iraqi border, and are currently **about 30 kilometers from the southern suburbs of Abu Kamal** (Tasnim and the Murasiloun website, November 5, 2017).



Right: Rocket launched at ISIS target from a mobile rocket launcher mounted on a Syrian vehicle during clashes near the Syrian-Iraqi border. Left: Syrian army tank attacks an ISIS target near the Syrian-Iraqi border (from a video produced by the Syrian institute for combat information, posted to the Murasiloun website, November 4, 2017).



Two armored vehicles flying the Hezbollah flag east of the T2 oil field near the Syrian-Iraqi border (from a video produced by the Syrian institute for combat information, posted to the Murasiloun website, November 4, 2017).

► The Syrian media affiliated with the Bashar Assad regime published pictures of **Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC's Qods Force**, during a visit to **Deir al-Zor** at the end of last week. According to reports, he met with operatives of the al-Baqir Brigade, a Shi'ite militia backed by Iran (Arabi 21, November 5, 2017). His visit **illustrated Iran's desire to be a key factor in designing the situation along the Syrian-Iraqi border** after the fall of Abu Kamal and the collapse of the Islamic State.



Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC's Qods Force, visits al-Baqir Brigade operatives in Deir al-Zor (Arabi 21, November 5; vedeng, November 6, 2017).

► **The al-Baqir Brigade is a Shi'ite militia that supports the Assad regime and is backed by Iran.** It was established in 2014 and is composed of about 200 Syrians from the Aleppo district (enabbaladi.net, October 31, 2016). According to reports, the militia was established **with the involvement of Qasem Soleimani**, commander of the Qods Force, to fight in the campaign for Aleppo. **Its operatives were trained by Iranian IRGC officers.** The commander of the militia is **Haj Khaled, aka Abu Hussein**. Haj Khaled was photographed in 2016 with Qasem Soleimani (rojavanews, July 31, 2016). During a visit to Syria in July 2017, Qasem

Soleimani visited the area south of Deir al-Zor, where he met with Haj Khaled and al-Baqir Brigade operatives (syrianpc.com, July 8 2017).



Right: Haj Khaled (left), commander of the al-Baqir Brigade, and Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC's Qods Force (rojavanews, July 31, 2016). Left: Qasem Soleimani visits the southern part of the Deir al-Zor region in July 2017, meeting with Haj Khaled (syrianpc.com, July 8 2017).

Russian support

- ▶ The Russian ministry of defense reported that in preparation for the ground offensive in Abu Kamal, long-range aircraft and Russian naval forces deployed in the Mediterranean Sea carried out **a massive attack on ISIS targets lasting three days**. According to the ministry of defense at least six strategic bombers (Tu-22M3s) and two stealth submarines (Kolpino and Veliky Novgorod) attacked ISIS targets near Abu Kamal. They carried out 18 attacks and launched nine cruise missiles from submarines in the Mediterranean Sea at a distance of more than 650 kilometers. Russian planes that took off from the Hmeimim Air Base in Syria provided air cover for the bombers. After the attacks the bombers returned to their base in Russia. The targets hit were ISIS strongholds, weapons and ammunition storehouses, groups of operatives and important command centers (website of the Russian ministry of defense, November 3 and 4, 2017).
- ▶ On November 4, 2017, **Tu-22M3 strategic bombers again attacked ISIS targets** from their base in Russia, hitting ISIS weapons and ammunition storehouses and command centers in **Abu Kamal** (flying through Iraqi and Iranian airspace). Russian planes from the Hmeimim Air Base provided cover for the bombers. After the attack the aircraft returned to their respective bases (website of the Russian ministry of defense, November 3 and 4, 2017).



Right: One of the Tu-22M3s drops bombs. Left: Cruise missiles launched from Russian submarines in the Mediterranean Sea (website of the Russian ministry of defense, November 3, 2017).

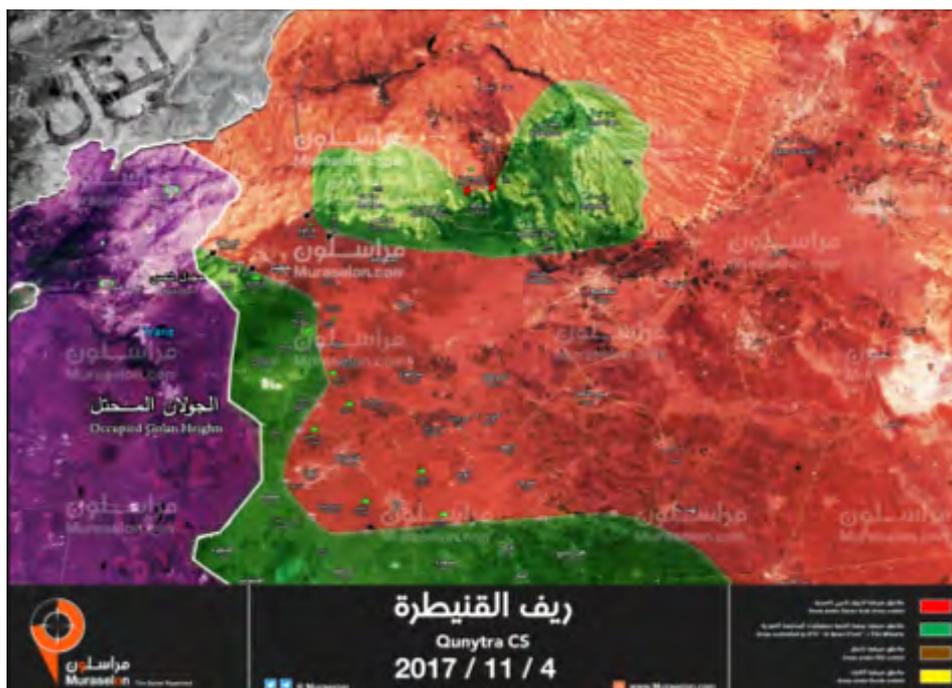
ISIS's response

► In combat, ISIS operatives **did not show systematic organized resistance to the Syrian forces in and around Deir al-Zor**. On November 4, 2017 it was reported that more than 100 people had been killed and many more wounded when an ISIS car bomb blew up. The attack took place at a location for deportees from Deir al-Zor, located on the eastern side of the Euphrates (al-Mayadeen, November 5, 2017).



The scene of the car bomb explosion at the location for Deir al-Zor deportees (Syrian TV, November 5, 2017).

Fighting in the northern Golan Heights



Map of the forces fighting in the area north of Latakia (updated to November 4, 2017): red indicates the Syrian army and local militias supporting it; green indicates the rebel forces, dominated by the Headquarters for the Liberation of al-Sham; purple indicates the Israeli Golan Heights (Murasiloun, a website affiliated with supporters the Syrian regime, November 4,2017).

On November 3, 2017, the rebel organizations led by **the Headquarters for the Liberation of al-Sham** (the former al-Nusra Front) began a **ground offensive** called "**Breaking the shackles of [Mt.] Hermon.**" The rebel organizations view it as an attempt to break the siege on the rebel-held Beit Jinn enclave and open a supply route for the operatives there (Khutwa, November 3; Murasiloun, November 4, 2017). As part of the offensive, the rebels attacked the area northwest of the Druze village of Hader, which supports the Assad regime (see map). After several hours of clashes **forces affiliated the Syrian regime halted the attack** and **retook control of the posts** which had fallen into rebel hands. On November 6, 2017, it was reported that **clashes had recommenced**.

Rebel organizations' announcement about the offensive and its objectives

- On November 3, 2017, the operations room of Jebel al-Sheikh (Mt. Hermon) and a group called the "Army of Muhammad"¹ published an announcement about the attack and its

¹ Possibly the Headquarters for the Liberation of al-Sham, which does not want to appear under its real name, which affiliates it with al-Qaeda, and therefore chose the name "Army of Muhammad."

objectives. According to the announcement, the objective was to ameliorate the situation of their fighters in Beit Jinn, expel the "occupation" (i.e., the Syrian army and its supporters), lift the siege and release detainees. The announcement called on the **villagers living near Beit Jinn, especially the residents of Hader**, to oppose the Syrian regime and take their sons out of the ranks of the militias collaborating with the Syrian regime "in its aggression against the weak." According to the announcement, the rebel organizations had no intention of harming the residents of Hader or their property (a lie, since the car bomb exploded in Hader killed 16 people).

The attack

► On November 3, 2017, the rebel organizations, led by the Headquarters for the Liberation of al-Sham, **attacked a number of posts manned by the Syrian army and the militias supporting it**, several kilometers northwest of Hader. The Syrian forces repulsed the attack and counterattacked, **killing dozens of Headquarters for the Liberation of al-Sham operatives**. One of them was Sa'il Hassan al-Ait, who had commanded the attack (the Murasiloun website and Dimashq al-A'an, November 4, 2017). After several hours of clashes the forces supporting the Syrian army repulsed the rebel organization fighters, who retreated to the posts they had held before the attack (Dimashq al-A'an, November 3, 2017).



The attack of the rebel organizations (green) on the village of Hader and the territories controlled by the Syrian militias supporting them (red) (the Murasiloun website, November 4, 2017).

► On November 6, 2017 **it was reported that clashes had been renewed** between the Syrian army and the rebel organizations along several roads in the region of Hader. According

to reports the Syrian army fired artillery at the combat zone (Syrian Human Rights Observatory, November 6, 2017).

Car bomb explodes in Beit Jinn

► During the attack an **operative of the Headquarters for the Liberation of al-Sham detonated a car bomb in the Druze village of Hader, killing 16 people**. The operative was Abu **Abd al-Rahman al-Ansari**, 17, from Beit Jinn. In response **the IDF said in a statement it was committed to the Druze population and would prevent the occupation of the village** (Haaretz, November 3, 2017).



Right: The detonation of a car bomb by the Headquarters for the Liberation of al-Sham in the Druze village of Hader (Twitter account of J.Alashkar@j_alashkar, November 3, 2017). Left: Abu Abd al-Rahman al-Ansari, Headquarters for the Liberation of al-Sham operative, who detonated the car bomb in the village of Hader (Twitter account of Rose@alroser96, November 4, 2017)



The coffins of the 16 victims of the car bomb in the Druze village of Hader (Twitter account of lamloma@lamloma3, November 5, 2017)

Syrian army and rebel force losses and a demonstration held in Hader to support the Syrian regime

- The Syrian media reported that **at least 20 Syrian army soldiers and 11 rebel organization fighters had been killed**, three of them officers (Syrian Human Rights Observatory, November 6, 2017). According to a different report, **15 residents of Hader had been killed** during the counterattack of the Syrian forces against the terrorist organizations (YouTube, based on an announcement of the Arab Union Party, November 3, 2017).
- On November 3, 2017, a video was issued showing Druze demonstrating in support of the Syrian regime in the village of Hader. The marchers shouted slogans praising Bashar Assad, such as "With our souls and blood we will redeem you, oh Bashar" (YouTube SABEELable, November 3, 2017).



Druze demonstration in the village of Hader in support of the Syrian regime (YouTube SABEELable, November 3, 2017).

Main Developments in Iraq

Al-Anbar province

Lieutenant General Abd al-Amir Rashid Yar Allah, operations commander for the liberation of western al-Anbar, announced that **Iraqi forces had retaken control of the oil center of al-Qa'im**. The military information unit of the Popular Mobilization Forces (the Iranian-backed Shi'ite militias) announced that ISIS operatives, among them foreign fighters and their families, had fled to the city of Abu Kamal on the Syrian side of the Syrian-Iraqi border

(al-Jazeera, November 4, 2017). The region of al-Qa'im had been under ISIS control for more than three years.

► The Iraqi army announced that its forces had also taken control of the Husybah border crossing, northwest of al-Qa'im (Twitter account of IRAQI NATIONAL ARMY@Defense_Iraq, November 3, 2017). In addition, after the conquest of al-Qa'im the Iraqi army turned to the conquest of Ra'wa, which lies to the west of al-Qa'im, to **complete the conquest of ISIS strongholds in the region** (al-Sharq al-Awsat, November 6, 2017).



The Husybah border crossing (center), taken by the Iraqi army (Google Maps)



Iraqi army announcement of the takeover of the Husybah border crossing (Twitter account of IRAQI NATIONAL ARMY@Defense_Iraq, November 3, 2017).

ISIS's activity in Iraq

► ISIS operatives carried out terrorist and guerilla attacks in various locations in Iraq where there are still operational ISIS networks. Apparently after the collapse of the Islamic State there has been a decrease in the intensity of attacks:

- ◆ **Diyala province:** A squad of several ISIS operatives attacked Iraqi army and Shi'ite militia posts at the customs check point at al-Safra, northeast of Baghdad. ISIS claimed that more than nine Iraqi fighters had been killed in the clashes. ISIS operatives also detonated an IED in an attack on a column of Iraqi army vehicles (Haq, November 5, 2017).



Al-Safra customs check point, north of Baqubah, the capital of Diyala province, attacked by ISIS operatives (al-Sumaria News, November 4, 2017).

- ◆ On November 4, 2017, ISIS announced that two operatives of the Popular Mobilization (the Iranian-backed Shi'ite militias) had been killed when an ISIS IED exploded in **the city of al-Miqdadiyah, northeast of Baghdad** (Haq, November 5, 2017).
- ◆ **Baghdad province:** Five civilians were injured when an IED exploded in the Hur Rajab region **south of Baghdad** (al-Sumaria News, November 4, 2017).

Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula

Attack on Egyptian security forces prevented

- ▶ The Egyptian army announced its forces had prevented an attack by terrorist operatives at an Egyptian security forces' roadblock in the northern Sinai Peninsula. Six terrorist operatives were killed and five wounded. The Egyptian air force supported the ground forces and destroyed vehicles and two structures where operatives were hiding (Twitter account of the spokesman of the Egyptian army, November 2, 2017).



Pictures from a video issued by the spokesman for the Egyptian army documenting activities of the Egyptian forces against ISIS (al-Masri al-Youm, November 2, 2017).

ISIS's Activity in Other Countries

ISIS-inspired vehicular attack in New York (update)²

- ▶ **On November 2, 2017, ISIS issued a claim of responsibility for the vehicular attack carried out in New York.** The claim was **different from previous claims of responsibility**, in that it was published after a relatively long period of time, **more than two days after the attack**. That was despite the fact that from ISIS's point of view the attack was successful and could be very useful for propaganda purposes (in the past ISIS has been quick to claim responsibility for attacks, including those which could not be proved as having been carried

² Update of the initial report on the vehicular attack in New York which appeared in Spotlight on the Global Jihad, October 26 – November 1, 2017.

out by its operatives). In addition, the claim of responsibility was issued as an article in the organization's weekly magazine al-Naba', and not as a formal announcement in the format customarily used by Amaq, ISIS's news agency.³

► According to the claim of responsibility, the ISIS operative attacked a number of "Crusaders" in New York near the memorial to the Twin Towers. The article quotes media reports stating that eight people were killed and 12 wounded. It also claims that the attack sowed panic in the United States and led to tightening security checks on immigrants entering the country. This attack and others, ISIS said, were **the response of ISIS operatives in the United States and Europe to the call to attack citizens of countries belonging to the international coalition against ISIS** (al-Nabā', November 2, 2017).



Right: ISIS claim of responsibility for the vehicular attack in New York (Haq and a file-sharing website, November 4, 2017). Left: The usual format for ISIS claims of responsibility. For example, the claim of responsibility for the ISIS attack on the Berlin Christmas market, 2016 (Haq, December 20, 2016).

► The **indictment handed down against Sayfullo Habibullaevic Saipov**, the terrorist operative who carried out the vehicular attack in New York, provided additional information about how the attack was carried out (ITIC emphasis throughout) (New York Times, November 1, 2017).

- ◆ According to the indictment, **Sayfullo Saipov began planning the attack a year ago**. Two months ago **he decided to use a rented truck to cause as many victims as possible**. He rented the car on October 22, 2017, to practice driving it around New York.

³ For further information see the August 15, 2017 bulletin, "Analysis of ISIS's Claims of Responsibility for Terrorist Attacks Carried Out Abroad."

He decided to attack on October 31, Halloween, **because he believed there would be more civilians on the street because of the holiday.**

- ◆ **One of the phones recovered from the floor of the truck was found to contain more than 90 videos which appeared to be ISIS-related propaganda.** There were pictures of executions and instructions for making improvised explosive devices. **Saipov was inspired to carry out the attack** by the videos he watched on his cell phone. **He was especially inspired by a video of ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who asked Muslims in America what they were doing to respond to the killing of Muslims in Iraq.**

- ◆ **A bag was found in the truck containing knives,** but Saipov could not reach it before he exited the vehicle (the knives may have indicated he was planning a combined attack as, according to the indictment, advocated in an article in the ISIS publication Rumiya, issue #3, November 16, 2016. Combined attacks are a modus operandi familiar from past attacks).

- ◆ **Saipov initially planned to hang an ISIS flag on the truck but did not want to call attention to himself. During the interview with law enforcement he requested to display ISIS's flag in his hospital room and stated he felt good about what he had done.**

- ▶ The FBI announced the arrest of **Mukhammadzoi Kadiron**, a citizen of Uzbekistan, who was a friend of Sayfullo Saipov and suspected of being involved in the attack.

Attack on Yemeni security forces in Aden

- ▶ On November 5, 2017, ISIS announced that **69 operatives of the Yemeni security forces had been killed in a combined ISIS attack in Aden.** During the morning **ISIS operatives attacked the criminal investigations administration building of the Yemen ministry of the interior.** An ISIS suicide **bomber drove a car bomb through the main gate during the morning parade** and blew it up, killing 29 people.

- ▶ Three other terrorist operatives then broke into the building and killed 21 officers and administration employees. The Yemeni security forces sent reinforcements to the scene. In the ensuing clash one of the ISIS terrorists detonated an explosive belt and caused the death and wounding of more than 30 Yemeni security force operatives. **The clash lasted for about 11 hours** (Twitter account of Shk39@شك39, November 5, 2017).



The explosion of the ISIS car bomb in the criminal investigations building of the Yemeni ministry of the interior (Twitter account of Shk39@هلا , November 5, 2017).

The Battle for Hearts and Minds

ISIS issues infograph summarizing its activity in Syria in the Hijra year 1438

► ISIS's weekly magazine al-Naba' published an infograph summarizing the organization's activities between October 2, 2016 and September 20 2017 (Haq and a file-sharing website, November 4, 2017). According to the infograph, during the year ISIS carried out 311 suicide bombing attacks and destroyed 831 vehicles. ISIS attacks allegedly caused 11,182 casualties to the Syrian army forces, the SDF forces and the rebel forces. The announcement gave the numbers of killed and wounded in the various Syrian provinces.

The announcement clearly shows the growing gap between ISIS propaganda and reality.

At a time when ISIS boasts about its achievements against the Syrian army and the SDF, severe blows were inflicted on the organization, and **the Islamic State it established has almost completely collapsed.**