THE MEIR AMIT INTELLIGENCE AND TERRORISM INFORMATION CENTER
AT THE ISRAELI INTELLIGENCE HERITAGE AND COMMEMORATION CENTER

Spotlight on Global Jihad
August 5-11, 2021

Main events of the past week

▸ **Syria: This week, the downtrend in ISIS's activity in the various provinces in Syria continued.** The main incident of the week was an attack in west Damascus, against a bus carrying members of the Syrian Republican Guard. Nineteen of the bus passengers, including officers, were wounded or killed. **The Hurras al-Din Organization** (Al-Qaeda's branch in Syria) claimed responsibility for the IED explosion. The Syrian regime described the incident as a "short circuit" that left the bus driver dead and three passengers wounded.

▸ **Iraq: ISIS's activity continued in the various provinces, albeit on a relatively small scale. Most of this week's activity was concentrated in the Makhmur region** (about 70 km east of Mosul), where ISIS operatives carried out a relatively large number of attacks. A senior commander in the Kurdish forces in Iraq (the Peshmerga) noted that **ISIS had reestablished its presence in the Makhmur region, south Kirkuk, and on the outskirts of the Diyala and Mosul provinces**. It should be noted that these areas, adjacent to the Kurdish region, suffer from a lack of effective governance by the Iraqi central government. **The forces of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS have announced the pullback of one of its units to Kuwait (OTH).** Coalition Spokesman Wayne Marotto noted that despite the pullback of the forces, the role of the Coalition forces to fight ISIS alongside other forces in Iraq had not changed.

▸ **Sinai: This week, ISIS's activity was concentrated in the Rafah region.** In one incident, an Egyptian colonel was killed. In a taped message that was leaked, **Abu Osama al-Masri, former governor of ISIS's Sinai Province**, says that his men are killing Egyptian soldiers because they support Jews and Christians, adding a quote from the Quran to justify his statement.

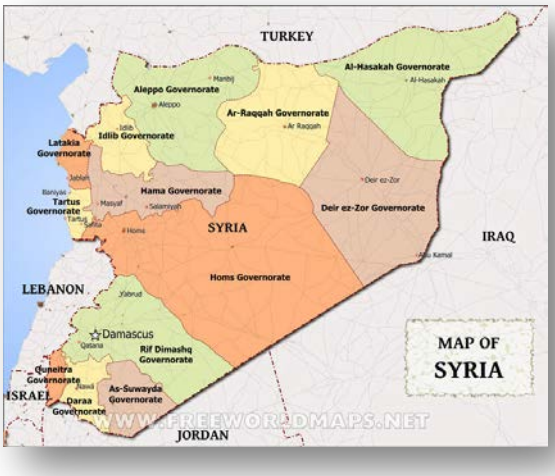
▸ **Africa:** ISIS's activity in Africa continues. **The main event was ISIS's takeover of two villages in the Congo, on the Congo-Uganda border**, after prolonged clashes with the Congolese army. **In Mozambique, joint forces of Rwanda and Mozambique managed to regain control of the port city of Mocímboa da Praia**, which was taken over by ISIS's

Central Africa Province over a year ago. **In Nigeria and Cameroon**, ISIS operatives continued to carry out attacks and clash with army forces.

▸ **Afghanistan:** Taliban forces took control of the city of Kunduz, near the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border, and other regions in the country. At present, it is unclear how this will affect ISIS's activity in the region. **Anyhow, this week, there was a decrease in the scope of ISIS's attacks.**

▸ **The battle for hearts and minds:** This week, the main article in ISIS's Al-Naba' weekly dealt with the **international coalitions against ISIS that are being formed in Mozambique and the Congo**. The author notes that these coalitions will be defeated because they are weak, and he encourages ISIS operatives to continue on the path of jihad.

The Syrian arena



Syrian governorates (freeworldmaps.net)

The Idlib region

▸ Exchanges of artillery fire continued between the Syrian army and the forces supporting it and the rebel forces in the rebel enclave in Idlib. In support of the Syrian army, on August 10, 2021, Russian fighter jets carried out airstrikes in the northwestern region of the enclave (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, August 10, 2021).

Al-Hasakah region

▸ The American forces reportedly transferred 40 ISIS operatives who had been held in the Thanawiya Prison and another prison in south Hasakah, to the US base in Al-Shadadi. The prisoners reportedly included an expert on making IEDs (Syrian News Agency, August 6, 2021). In this context, it has been reported that last month, at least six men were murdered in the Al-Hawl camp, which is close to Al-Hasakah. The camp, which is run by the Kurdish forces,

is used to hold families of ISIS operatives and is occasionally infiltrated by ISIS squads which murder prisoners who wish to leave the organization (www.kurdistan24.net, August 5, 2021).

Deir ez-Zor and Al-Mayadeen region[1]

- In a Global Coalition counterterrorism operation in Diban, about 3 km east of Al-Mayadeen, Abd al-Razzaq al-Jal'ad, an ISIS operative, was arrested. No details were published on his position in ISIS (www.jesrpress.com, August 5, 2021).

The desert region (Al-Badia)

- This week, ISIS's Al-Naba' weekly reported that on two occasions, ISIS operatives activated IEDs and destroyed two trucks in the Homs desert region. In the first incident, in the Sukhnah Desert on July 25, 2021, six soldiers were wounded. In the second incident, on July 29, 2021, an IED was activated against a Syrian army convoy.

The report in Al-Naba' weekly: Right: The truck which was hit first. Left: The second one (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, August 5, 2021)

- **On August 7, 2021, two attacks were carried out** against Syrian army troops and the forces supporting them. For the time being, ISIS has not claimed responsibility:
  - An IED exploded near a Syrian army roadblock in the Sukhnah Desert, about 120 km southwest of Deir ez-Zor. No casualties were reported (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, August 7, 2021).
  - One of the fighters of the forces supporting the Syrian army was killed by gunfire on the Palmyra-Deir ez-Zor highway (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, August 7, 2021).

Damascus

- On August 4, 2021, an explosion occurred on a military bus at the entrance to the quarters of the Republican Guard forces in west Damascus. According to sources in the Syrian

[1] According to ISIS's claims of responsibility posted on Telegram

opposition, 19 of the passengers on board the bus, including officers, were killed or wounded. The Syrian regime attempted to suppress the information and presented the incident as a "short circuit" which left the bus driver dead and three passengers wounded (SANA, August 4, 2021; Orient News, August 4, 2021).

- **The Guardians of Religion Organization (Hurras al-Din), the Al-Qaeda branch in Syria,** claimed responsibility for blowing up the bus (Enab Baladi, August 6, 2021). According to the organization's statement, they attacked a bus carrying Republican Guard officers. The attack was carried out in response to Syrian regime attacks against the organization in the Daraa region. In the statement, jihad fighters in Syria were called on "to return to the original path of jihad" as the only way to confront the Syrian regime (Telegram, August 4, 2021). It should be noted that the organization does not usually claim responsibility for carrying out its attacks. The organization's last claim of responsibility was issued in January 2021, when it was operating in the Al-Raqqah region.

Right: The bus going up in flames (Ninar FM, August 4, 2021). Left: The bus which was attacked (SANA, August 4, 2021)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

بيان 26

غزوة العسرة الثانية

بفضل الله وتوفيقه.. قامت سرية لإخوانكم في تنظيم حراس الدين بتفجير حافلة تقل ضباط للحرس الجمهوري في مدينة دمشق ضمن سلسلة غزوة العسرة وثأرًا ونصرة لإخواننا في درعا..

وإننا ندعو جميع المجاهدين على أرض الشام إلى العودة إلى خط الجهاد الأصيل، فلا حل مع هذا النظام إلا القتل والقتال في سبيل الله بعيدا عن المؤامرات الدولية

مؤسسة قلم الحياة للإنتاج الإعلامي

ذو الحجة 1442

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The claim of responsibility by the Hurras al-Din Organization (Telegram, August 4, 2021)

The Iraqi arena

Provinces of Iraq (Wikipedia)

The pullback of the American forces from Iraq

- **The Global Coalition has announced that in light of the decline in the need for the OTH forces** (rapid response infantry force deployed by helicopter), the forces have left Iraq and returned to their home base in Kuwait (Al-Sumaria, August 7, 2021). **Coalition Spokesman Wayne Marotto** noted that despite the pullback of the forces to Kuwait, **the role of international coalition forces to fight ISIS alongside other forces in Iraq had not changed** (Al-Arabiya, August 9, 2021).
- **Iraqi military sources** reported that the Iraqi-American Commission will soon begin work to formulate a plan for the pullback of troops from Iraq, as was agreed in the final round of the strategic dialogue. According to the agreement, a joint committee will be in charge of implementing the agreement, including the formulation of the plan for the pullback of the forces in several phases, with the goal of withdrawing the forces from Iraq **by the end of 2021**. **A military source at the Special Operations Headquarters** is expecting the arrival of US military personnel in Iraq in the near future. **Operations Headquarters Spokesman Tahsin al-Khafaji** said that there were no army camps or sites in Iraq belonging exclusively to the foreign forces and that the forces were stationed at joint Iraqi bases. He noted that Global Coalition forces recently sent $60 million worth of equipment to the Iraqi army and counterterrorism forces and to the Kurdish Peshmerga forces (Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, August 7, 2021).

Summary of ISIS's activity in Iraq

▸ **ISIS's Al-Naba' weekly published an infographic summing up ISIS's activity in Iraq** in the period between July 29 and August 4, 2021. According to the infographic, during that time, **ISIS killed and wounded 80 people** in Iraq: 19 were Shiites and the rest (61) were Sunnis who had "deviated from Islam" (possibly referring to the Tribal Mobilization fighters). During that time, **ISIS carried out 46 attacks** in the following forms: 22 detonations of IEDs; 11 gunfire attacks and exchanges of fire; 3 targeted killings; and 5 other attacks. The breakdown of the attacks by province: 11 in the Diyala Province; 11 in the Kirkuk Province; 8 in the Salah al-Din Province; 8 in ISIS's North Baghdad Province (the southern Salah al-Din Province); 4 in the Al-Anbar Province; and 4 in the Tigris Province, northwest of the Kirkuk Province. According to the report, in the period in question, ISIS destroyed 23 high-voltage pylons as part of its "economic war" against the Iraqi government (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, August 5, 2021).

The infographic summing up ISIS's activity in Iraq (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, August 5, 2021)

Attacks by province[2]

Kirkuk Province

▸ **On August 6, 2021**, an Iraqi army camp was targeted by gunfire in Daquq, south of Kirkuk. One soldier was killed.

[2] According to ISIS's claims of responsibility posted on Telegram

Al-Anbar Province (western Iraq)

▸ **On August 5, 2021**, a Tribal Mobilization convoy was targeted by gunfire south of Al-Rutba. Two vehicles were put out of commission.

Salah al-Din Province

▸ **On August 8, 2021**, an Iraqi army camp was attacked in Zanjali, west of Tuz Khormato, about 100 km northeast of Samarra. One soldier was killed and another was wounded. The camp was damaged.

Iraqi army camp being targeted by gunfire in Zanjali (Telegram, August 9, 2021)

▸ **On August 7, 2021**, Iraqi soldiers were targeted by gunfire in the Mashahida region, about 20 km north of Baghdad. Two soldiers were killed and another was wounded.

Diyala Province

▸ **On August 8, 2021**, an IED was activated against an Iraqi army vehicle south of Qarah Tapa, about 75 km north of Baqubah. The passengers on board were wounded.

▸ **On August 8, 2021**, an Iraqi police post in southern Baqubah was targeted by gunfire. One policeman was killed and another was wounded.

▸ **On August 6, 2021**, Iraqi army camps were attacked on the outskirts of the Al-Azim region. One of the camps sustained damage. No casualties were mentioned. The camps were probably empty.

Erbil Province

▸ **Incidents this week were centered in the Makhmur region, about 70 km east of Mosul.** Most of the attacks targeted Tribal Mobilization forces. A senior commander in the Kurdish forces in Iraq (Peshmerga) noted that ISIS had increased its presence in the Makhmur region, south Kirkuk, and on the outskirts of the provinces of Diyala and Mosul, which are adjacent to the Kurdish region and suffer from a lack of effective governance by the Iraqi central

government (alqirtas, August 7, 2021). **Following are details of the incidents in the region, mostly according to ISIS's statements (Telegram)**:

- **On August 8, 2021**, a Tribal Mobilization camp in western Makhmur was targeted by gunfire. One fighter was killed and three others were wounded.
- **On August 8, 2021**, Tribal Mobilization fighters in southwestern Makhmur were targeted by gunfire. One fighter was killed and three others were wounded. That same day, a Tribal Mobilization fighter was abducted in the area and was subsequently executed.
- **On August 7, 2021**, mortar shells were fired at Tribal Mobilization positions south of Makhmur. No hits or casualties were reported.
- **On August 7, 2021**, ISIS operatives set up a roadblock on the Makhmur-Erbil highway, abducting about 10 people. Five of them managed to escape (Al-Sharqiya, August 7, 2021; www.eremnews.com, August 7, 2021).
- **On August 4, 2021**, mortar shells were fired at Tribal Mobilization positions southwest of the Makhmur region. According to ISIS, definite hits were detected.
- **On August 2, 2021**, an Iraqi army camp south of Makhmur was targeted by gunfire. One soldier was wounded. Another force arriving on the scene was targeted by gunfire. The vehicles sustained damage.

Nineveh Province

- **On August 7, 2021**, a rocket was fired at a Popular Mobilization headquarters in the Khadr region, about 100 km southwest of Mosul. No details were given on casualties or damage.

Counterterrorism activity in Iraq

- The Joint Operations Command (JOC) announced the approval of a new method of protecting high-voltage pylons in Iraq. According to the announcement, the JOC developed a plan that would prevent the access of terrorist operatives to the pylons. According to the Electricity Ministry, intelligence efforts and coordination with the Interior Ministry and Defense Ministry will be increased to protect high-voltage pylons (Iraqi News Agency, August 6, 2021).

Salah al-Din Province

- **On August 5, 2021**, the Iraqi security forces arrested a senior commander in ISIS's North Baghdad Province who had been responsible, among other things, for deploying suicide

bombers. They found large quantities of weapons in his possession (Twitter account of Iraqi Military Spokesman Yahya Rasool, August 5, 2021).

Arrested ISIS commander and the weapons seized along with him (Twitter account of Iraqi Military Spokesman Yahya Rasool, August 5, 2021)

Diyala Province

- The Iraqi army destroyed an ISIS guesthouse and vehicle in the Al-Azim region, about 60 km north of Baqubah. All passengers on board the vehicle were killed (Twitter account of Iraqi Military Spokesman Yahya Rasool, August 6, 2021).

Al-Anbar Province

- The Iraqi government counterterrorism unit arrested five ISIS operatives in various areas throughout the province (Twitter account of Iraqi Military Spokesman Yahya Rasool, August 7, 2021).

Kirkuk Province

- The Iraqi security forces neutralized an IED planted by ISIS near a high-voltage pylon in the Khawija region, about 50 km southwest of the city of Kirkuk (Al-Sharqiya, August 7, 2021).

The Sinai Peninsula

Statement by ISIS's former Sinai governor

- In a taped statement which was leaked, **former governor of ISIS's Sinai Province Abu Osama al-Masri** is heard saying that his men are killing the Egyptian soldiers because they support the Jews and Christians. He adds a quote from the Quran in support of the above. According to him, the Egyptian soldiers were the first to support the Jews in the siege on the Gaza Strip and prevented the jihad fighters from killing them. He accuses the Egyptian soldiers of fighting against everything that pertains to Islam and refers to them as infidels.

According to him, those soldiers destroyed mosques and set fire to them, attacked Muslims and tortured them (Shahed Sinaa, August 4, 2021).

- **On August 9, 2021**, an IED was activated south of Rafah against an Egyptian army vehicle escorting a foot patrol while the soldiers were engaged in setting up military checkpoints around the New Rafah region. **Mohammad Abd Motagalli, an Egyptian army colonel, was killed**. Several soldiers were wounded. A bulldozer was put out of commission (Telegram, August 9, 2021).

The Egyptian officer who was killed (Telegram, August 9, 2021)

- **On August 6, 2021**, an Egyptian soldier was targeted by gunfire west of the New Rafah region. He was wounded (Telegram, August 7, 2021).

Summary of ISIS's activity in the various provinces

- Data from an infographic published by ISIS, summing up its activity around the world, shows that this week **there has been a significant increase in the number of attacks carried out by ISIS operatives in the various provinces**. According to ISIS's data, in the period between July 29 and August 4, 2021, **ISIS carried out 69 attacks in the various provinces in Asia and Africa**, compared to 33 attacks in the previous week. **The largest number of attacks was carried out in Iraq** (41). Attacks carried out in ISIS's other provinces: West Africa (9); Khorasan, i.e., Afghanistan (7); Central Africa (6); Sinai (4); Syria (2) (ISIS's Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, August 5, 2021).
- A total of **193 people were killed or wounded in the attacks**, compared to 88 in the previous week. The largest number of casualties was in the Iraq Province (80). The other casualties were in the following provinces: Central Africa (42); West Africa (32); Khorasan, i.e. Afghanistan (21); Sinai (10); Syria (8) (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, August 5, 2021).

The infographic detailing ISIS's activity
(Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, August 5, 2021)

Africa

▸ **Most of the activity this week was in the Congo, where ISIS operatives took control of two villages in the Ituri region**, on the Congo-Uganda border, after heavy and prolonged clashes with the Congolese army. **In Mozambique, joint forces of Rwanda and Mozambique managed to regain control of the port city of Mocímboa da Praia**, which was taken over by ISIS's Central Africa Province over a year ago. **In Nigeria and Cameroon**, ISIS operatives continued to clash with army forces and carry out attacks against them.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

ISIS operatives take over two villages

▸ After several days of heavy fighting with the Congolese army, ISIS operatives managed to take control of **Mavivi** and **Malibungo** (?), two villages in the Ituri region, about 50 km west of the Congo-Uganda border. The clashes began on August 4, 2021, after ISIS operatives mounted a surprise attack against a new base established by the Congolese army on the outskirts of Mavivi with the objective of concentrating forces to carry out a widespread attack against ISIS in the region. On the first day of the clashes, at least 18 soldiers were killed and three others were taken prisoner. According to ISIS, on August 8, 2021, while combing the area, they located a soldier who had fled the base. ISIS operatives killed him. After locating the soldier, ISIS operatives concluded that the rest of the soldiers had fled from the base that was attacked to the forests, but since they were unfamiliar with the area, many of them died of starvation and exhaustion (Telegram, August 9, 2021).

ISIS operatives during the fighting against the Congolese army (Telegram, August 5, 2021)

Right: Three captured Congolese soldiers (Telegram, August 5, 2021). Left: ISIS operative talking with residents of the village of Mavivi (Telegram, August 9, 2021).

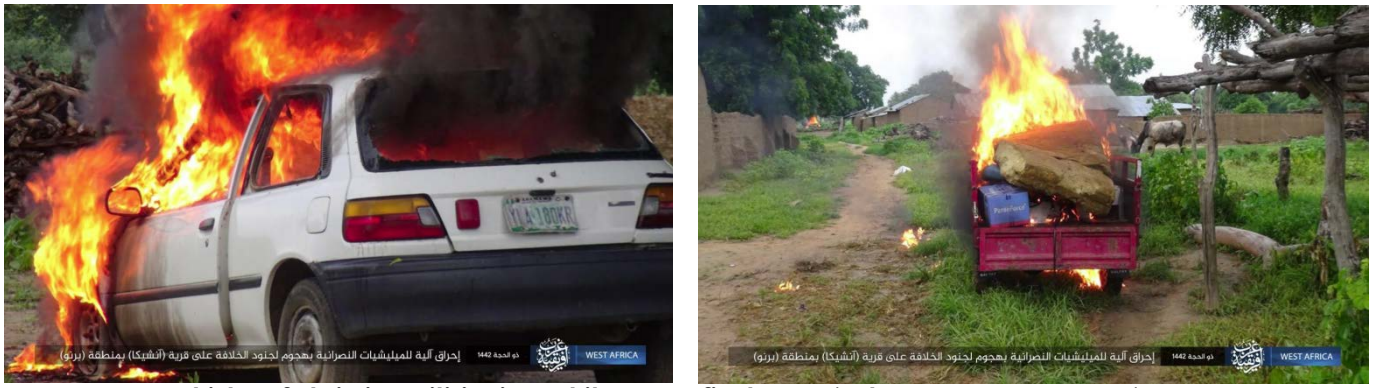
▸ **On August 2, 2021**, an attack was carried out against a Christian village in the Ituri region. A Congolese army force attempting to rescue the residents exchanged fire with ISIS operatives. The ISIS operatives caused the force soldiers to flee and killed 17 villagers (Telegram, August 4, 2021).

ISIS operatives in the village (Telegram, August 4, 2021)

Nigeria

▸ **On August 7, 2021**, operatives of militias loyal to the Nigerian army were targeted by gunfire in Damboa, about 80 km southwest of Maiduguri, in northeastern Nigeria. A militia fighter was killed and a vehicle was set on fire. ISIS operatives also set fire to several buildings in the town used by the militia forces (Telegram, August 8, 2021).

▸ **On August 6, 2021**, Christian militias were targeted by gunfire in Anshika, in northeastern Nigeria. A militia fighter was killed and two vehicles were set on fire. ISIS operatives set fire to several buildings in the village used by the militias (Telegram, August 7, 2021).



Vehicles of Christian militias in Anshika set on fire by ISIS (Telegram, August 9, 2021)

▸ **On August 2, 2021**, a Nigerian army camp was attacked in Gubio, about 80 km northwest of Maiduguri. Eight soldiers were killed and several others were wounded in the exchange of fire. ISIS operatives took over the camp temporarily. The camp sustained damage (Telegram, August 4, 2021).

Cameroon

▸ **On August 8, 2021**, a Cameroonian army camp was attacked in Sagami, in the Fotokol region, on the Cameroon-Nigeria border. Six soldiers were killed and six others were wounded in the exchange of fire. ISIS operatives set fire to two vehicles and seized weapons and ammunition (Telegram, August 9, 2021).

▸ **On August 3, 2021**, fighters of militias supporting the Cameroonian army were targeted by gunfire in the Maroua region, in northern Cameroon, about 80 km from the Cameroon-Nigeria border. One militia fighter was killed and another was wounded (Telegram, August 5, 2021).

Burkina Faso

▸ In a number of attacks carried out by armed operatives in northern Burkina Faso on the Niger border, 30 residents, military personnel and local militia fighters were killed. It is believed that the attacks were carried out by organizations affiliated with Al-Qaeda or ISIS (Reuters, August 5, 2021).

Mali

▸ Several villages in the Mali-Burkina Faso-Niger tri-border area in northern Mali were targeted by gunfire. More than 50 villagers were killed and many others were wounded. So far, no group has claimed responsibility for the attacks. It is believed that ISIS-affiliated

operatives carried out the massacre in retaliation for the arrest of several jihadi leaders by local authorities a week earlier (AP; Al-Jazeera, August 9, 2021).

Mozambique

- **Joint forces of Rwanda and Mozambique managed to regain control of the port city of Mocímboa da Praia** in northeastern Mozambique. This took place about a year after the city was taken over by operatives of ISIS's Central Africa Province (actually Jama'at Ansar al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah, a local organization that has pledged allegiance to ISIS) (www.africanews.com, August 9, 2021).

Asia

Afghanistan

- Taliban forces took control of the city of Kunduz, near the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border, as well as other areas of the country. At present, it is unclear how this will affect ISIS's activity in the region. This week there has been a decrease in ISIS's terrorist activity. Most of the attacks were carried out in Jalalabad, targeting Afghan security personnel. Following are details of attacks, according to ISIS's claims of responsibility (Telegram):
  - **On August 9, 2021**, a former Afghan army officer was targeted by gunfire in Jalalabad. He was killed and ISIS operatives seized his car.
  - **On August 8, 2021**, a Taliban operative was targeted by gunfire in Jalalabad (Telegram, August 9, 2021). On the same day, a police officer was targeted by gunfire. He was killed.
  - **On August 4, 2021**, an IED was activated against a police car in Kunduz, near the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border. Three policemen were wounded (Telegram, 5 August 2021).

The battle for hearts and minds

- This week's main article of ISIS's Al-Naba' weekly was entitled: "But doomsday is guaranteed for them!" The topic of the article was the international coalitions being formed to fight against ISIS in Mozambique and the Congo. The article encourages ISIS operatives to continue on the path of jihad, emphasizing that defeat will be the lot of these coalitions. **The author also calls on ISIS operatives in Central Africa to remember that the fighting does not end in this world and will continue until the end of time** (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, August 5, 2021).

- According to the author, any collaboration of Central African countries against ISIS, under the auspices of the Christian ("Crusader") West, will suffer a defeat orchestrated by Allah. Later in the article, the author refers to each and every country.

  - **Mozambique:** The formation of a coalition against ISIS led by officers from Portugal and the United States and incorporating forces from Rwanda, Botswana, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Angola and other countries is doomed to failure. The reason is that these countries are divided and in conflict with each other and are unable to reach any mutual agreement. The international media, which refers to the fighting in Mozambique as a "war over gas," is attempting to defame ISIS, **but ISIS is fighting within a broad and comprehensive framework of jihad against the infidels wherever they are, as Allah has ordered his believers**.

  - **The Congo:** In its fight against ISIS, it is assisted by forces from other African countries (Uganda, Kenya and Somalia). ISIS is attacking and will continue its attacks against military patrols and against Christian villagers and merchants. At the same time, ISIS is waging an economic war with the aim of wearing down the Christians who, according to the author, have been stealing Muslim resources for decades. In the case of the Congo as well, ISIS is facing a campaign of defamation and deliberate deception on the part of the global and local media. **However, ISIS operatives operate within the framework of comprehensive jihad against the infidels, and therefore this coalition is also doomed to collapse.**

النبأ
الافتتاحية ٣
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
بـل الساعة موعدهم!

Article about the coalitions in Central Africa (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, August 5, 2021)