



# Spotlight on Global Jihad

## September 2-13, 2021



### Main events of the past week

► **Afghanistan:** The US and European countries are dealing with the lessons of the departure from Afghanistan and attempting to anticipate the consequences of future events and terrorist threats, after the takeover of the country by the Taliban. **According to the Russian deputy foreign minister**, the terrorist threat from Afghanistan continues and ISIS is still an important factor in the deteriorating situation in the country.

► **During the period in question, with the exception of Iraq, there was a relative decline in ISIS's activity in most of its provinces.**

◆ **Syria: In Idlib**, artillery exchanges continued between the Syrian army and the forces supporting it and the rebel forces. Russian warplanes carried out airstrikes in the region almost daily. **In the desert region** (Al-Badia), Russian planes carried out dozens of attacks in support of the Syrian forces fighting against ISIS.

◆ **Iraq: There has been an increase in the number of attacks. Most of them were carried out against the Iraqi security forces and the forces supporting them. The most notable incident was in the Kirkuk region**, where ISIS operatives carried out a combined attack against a police post. According to Iraqi reports, 14 policemen were killed and six were wounded in the attack. **Another combined attack was carried out in Nineveh Province**, where ISIS operatives attacked four positions of the Popular Mobilization forces and activated an IED against forces that arrived on the scene to provide assistance.

◆ **The Sinai Peninsula:** ISIS operatives carried out several attacks against the Egyptian security forces. Eight civilians were abducted in northwestern Sinai. Four days later, Egyptian army forces managed to free the hostages from the operatives of ISIS's Sinai Province.

◆ **Jordan:** Security sources reported that during March 2021, **Jordanian intelligence forces** had thwarted an attack planned by ISIS operatives in Irbid, in northern Jordan. It should be noted that in July 2021, the Jordanian newspaper Al-Ra'i published a

report, according to which in February 2021, **the Jordanian General Intelligence Directorate (GID)** thwarted plans by an ISIS squad **to carry out a shooting attack against Israeli soldiers on the Jordanian-Israeli border** and **carry out an attack against Jews in Jordan.**

◆ **Africa:** In Nigeria, several attacks were carried out against military forces and against villages inhabited by Christians. ISIS's West Africa Province posted photos, apparently from Borno State, showing its operatives putting up posters in the local language calling on residents not to cooperate with the Nigerian authorities. **In the Democratic Republic of the Congo,** several attacks were carried out, mainly against military forces.

◆ **New Zealand:** A Sri Lankan citizen known to the authorities as being affiliated with ISIS carried out a stabbing attack in a supermarket in Auckland. Five people were wounded in the attack, three of them mortally. The stabber was shot and killed by local police forces.

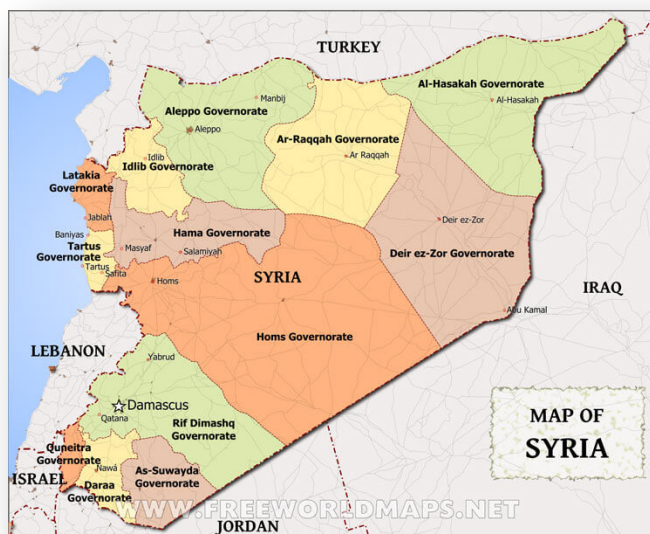
► **The battle for hearts and minds:** The main article in ISIS's Al-Naba' weekly, which appeared on September 2, 2021, deals with the attack on the airport in Afghanistan. According to the author, the Taliban, the Americans and the Afghan government collaborated against ISIS, and the attack ("the biggest attack that the United States has known in the past decade") was carried out in retaliation for this collaboration.

► **Al-Qaeda:** On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, Al-Qaeda's media arm released a video entitled "Jerusalem will not be Jewish – Arab Zionists from Faisal to Bin Zayed." The video shows Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, expressing his objection to any settlement with Israel and noting that according to the Quran, Muslims are forbidden to make an alliance with the Jews. According to him, the most important weapon of the Palestinians is the Islamic consciousness and as long as Israel controls Jerusalem and its environs it will continue to pay the price. Al-Zawahiri mentions an attack carried out by Al-Qaeda-affiliated operatives in January 2021 and the US pullback from Afghanistan, in order to refute allegations that he is not among the living.

## Afghanistan

- ▶ The Taliban appointed **Saraj al-Din Haqqani as the interior minister of its newly formed government**. Haqqani is wanted by the United States due to his involvement in attacks against American citizens. Another minister in the new Taliban government, **Khalil Haqqani** (a relative of the interior minister), is also wanted by the United States (BBC, September 8, 2021; @Charles\_Lister Twitter account, September 7, 2021).
- ▶ The foreign ministers of the European Union convened on September 2-3, 2021, to discuss the situation in Afghanistan and the lessons of the pullback from the country. **At the convention, they stressed that the future of Afghanistan would have a direct impact on regional and international security**, and therefore they should communicate with the new government without formally recognizing it (Al-Jazeera, September 2, 2021). According to the EU foreign minister, the EU should invest more in security and strategy and in its military and defensive capabilities. He noted that there had been calls in the EU for the establishment of a European defense force (NYT, September 1, 2021).
- ▶ Britain mounted an investigation into its policy in Afghanistan. The investigation will scrutinize Britain's role in the evacuation of the forces and the planning of the response to the Taliban takeover and the extensive consequences of the events on British foreign policy, including Britain-US relations (Sky News in Arabic, September 3, 2021).
- ▶ **According to Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov**, the terrorist threat from Afghanistan continues and ISIS still constitutes an important factor in the escalation of the situation in the country. He estimates that under the current circumstances, it is unlikely that ISIS will lay down its arms or relinquish the idea of establishing an Islamic caliphate (Sputnik, September 1, 2021).

## The Syrian arena



Syrian governorates (freeworldmaps.net)

### The Idlib region

► This week, there was a decrease in the exchanges of artillery fire between the Syrian army and the forces supporting it, and the rebel forces in the rebel enclave in Idlib. Russian fighter jets carried out airstrikes almost daily against the rebel organizations in the southern part of the region (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, September 1-11, 2021).

### The desert region (Al-Badia)

#### ISIS's attacks

► **On September 7, 2021**, six militia fighters were killed and eight others were wounded in an exchange of fire between a force of the Syrian army and the forces supporting it and ISIS operatives in the Al-Sukhnah Desert (about 120 km southwest of Deir ez-Zor) (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, September 7, 2021).

► **On September 4, 2021**, ISIS operatives attacked Syrian army positions in the Jabal al-Bishri region, about 50 km west of Deir ez-Zor (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, September 4, 2020). No casualties were reported. That same day, ISIS operatives attacked positions of the Syrian army and the forces supporting it in the desert regions of Deir ez-Zor, Al-Raqqah, Sukhnah and Ithriya (about 100 km northeast of Hama). At least eight Syrian soldiers and fighters of the forces supporting them were killed and several others were wounded (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, September 4, 2021).

► In response to ISIS's activity in the region and in support of the ground forces, Russian fighter jets carried out dozens of airstrikes against ISIS targets. Nine ISIS operatives were reportedly killed in an airstrike carried out on September 2, 2021. On September 9, 2021, it was reported that a Russian soldier was killed in the explosion of an IED, apparently belonging to ISIS. In response, Russian fighter jets carried out over 60 airstrikes against ISIS targets in the desert region. On September 11, 2021, a total of 75 airstrikes were reportedly carried out against ISIS targets (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, September 1-11, 2021).

### **Study on ISIS's activity in the Al-Badia region**

► The Middle East Institute (MEI), a research institute in Washington, D.C., published an article on **ISIS's activity in the desert region (Al-Badia) in 2020**. According to the article, ISIS's activity taking place in the region against Syrian regime forces is higher in scope than reported by ISIS's propaganda machine. According to MEI data, ISIS's propaganda network reports only about a quarter of the attacks carried out by ISIS in the region. The institute estimates that the discrepancy in reporting may stem from a number of reasons, including communications problems preventing the transfer of information to ISIS's central media apparatus; ISIS's cells carrying out the activity against the Syrian forces are not in regular contact with ISIS's central leadership; it is also possible that there are other elements in the region operating against the regime forces, which are not related to ISIS, some of them criminal.<sup>1</sup>

### **Al-Raqqah region**

► **On September 4, 2021**, a Republican Guard fighter was killed in the explosion of a mine planted by ISIS in southwest Al-Raqqah (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, September 4, 2021).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mei.edu/publications/islamic-state-under-reporting-central-syria-misdirection-misinformation-or>

## The Iraqi arena



Provinces of Iraq (Wikipedia)

### Attacks by province<sup>2</sup>

#### Kirkuk Province

► ISIS operatives attacked an Iraqi police post in the Rashad region, about 40 km southwest of Kirkuk. **Eight policemen were killed.** An IED was activated against a rescue force arriving on the scene. There was also an exchange of fire with the rescue force. **Three members of the force were killed.** ISIS operatives retreated while Iraqi aircraft were trying to hit them. ISIS reported that it had killed 13 policemen (Telegram, September 6, 2021). Several days after the attack, ISIS's Al-Naba' weekly published more details about the incident. According to Al-Naba', four different groups operated on the ground: two groups blocked supply routes to the area, a third group attacked the police post, and a fourth group ambushed those who fled the scene (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, September 9, 2021). An Iraqi police officer reported that **14 policemen were killed in the attack and six others were wounded.** He noted that the attackers used IEDs and light and medium weapons. An Iraqi security source added that the attack had begun shortly before midnight and lasted for several hours (Sky News, September 5, 2021).

► **On September 2, 2021,** an Iraqi police post was attacked in southwest Daquq, south of Kirkuk. No casualties were reported. The post was probably empty.

<sup>2</sup> Mostly according to ISIS's claims of responsibility posted on Telegram

► **On September 1, 2021**, an IED was activated against a Tribal Mobilization vehicle in the Sarkaran region, about 50 km northwest of Kirkuk. The vehicle was put out of commission and the passengers on board were wounded. That same day, an Iraqi army convoy was targeted by gunfire. A *foj* commander and some of his escorts were wounded (a *foj* is a military unit whose size is between a battalion and a brigade). Five vehicles were put out of commission.

► **On August 30, 2021**, Tribal Mobilization fighters were attacked in a village in the Daquq region. After the attack, ISIS operatives took over the village, set fire to the house of a Tribal Mobilization fighter and caused heavy damage to houses and property.



**ISIS operatives setting fire to a vehicle and a house belonging to Tribal Mobilization fighters (Telegram, August 31, 2021)**

## Al-Anbar Province

► **On September 10, 2021**, a Tribal Mobilization camp was attacked in the Ameriyyat al-Falluja region, about 40 km southwest of Baghdad. Three fighters were wounded.

► **On September 3, 2021**, an IED was activated against an Iraqi army vehicle east of Al-Rutba, in western Iraq. The passengers on board were killed or wounded.

► **On August 30, 2021**, an Iraqi Border Police patrol was attacked near the Al-Walid border crossing between Iraq and Syria. First, an IED was activated against the patrol vehicle and then there was gunfire from light and medium weapons. Two Border Police soldiers were killed and the vehicle went up in flames.



**Right: The patrol vehicle on fire. Left: Three rifles seized by ISIS operatives (Telegram, September 1, 2021)**

► **On August 30, 2021**, an Iraqi government intelligence operative was abducted near the Al-Walid border crossing. He was interrogated by ISIS and then executed.

### Diyala Province

► **On September 10, 2021**, an Iraqi army and Tribal Mobilization camp was targeted by gunfire east of Miqdadiya, about 40 km northeast of Baqubah. A soldier and Tribal Mobilization fighter were wounded.

► **On September 9, 2021**, an IED was activated against a vehicle carrying two Shiite civilians west of Baqubah. They were killed.

► **On September 7, 2021**, a thermal camera positioned by the Iraqi army in east Jalula, about 75 km northeast of Baqubah, was targeted by gunfire. An IED was activated against a military vehicle arriving on the scene. Four of the passengers on board were wounded. Another soldier who was there was shot dead.

► **On September 6, 2021**, an IED was activated against an Iraqi army vehicle in the Qara Tapa region, about 75 km north of Baqubah. At least one person was wounded.

► **On September 5, 2021**, an IED was activated against a police patrol car in the Abarah region, in south Baqubah. One policeman was killed and two others were wounded. The day before, the home of a Shiite resident was targeted by gunfire. Two Shiite civilians were wounded and the house was damaged.

### Nineveh Province

► **On September 10, 2021**, four positions of the Tribal Mobilization forces were attacked in Al-Khattab, east of Al-Qayyarah, about 60 km south of Mosul. ISIS operatives surrounded the area for about an hour and cut off the roads leading there. Two fighters were killed and four others were wounded. An IED was activated against a force of the Tribal Mobilization, the



Iraqi police and the counterterrorism unit arriving on the scene. One of the force members was killed and several others were wounded, one of them a counterterrorism unit major.

► **On September 4, 2021**, an Iraqi army convoy was attacked in the Qaraj region, about 70 km southeast of Mosul. Three soldiers, including an officer, were killed, and several others were wounded.

► **On August 31, 2021**, an Iraqi army position was targeted by gunfire and rockets about 40 km east of Mosul. Several soldiers were killed or wounded.

## **Babel Province**

► **On September 11, 2021**, an IED was activated against an Iraqi police patrol vehicle north of Karbala. Several soldiers were wounded. Another IED was activated against a rescue force arriving on the scene. Three soldiers were killed or wounded.

► **On September 11, 2021**, an IED was activated against a Shiite civilian north of Karbala. He was wounded and his tractor was put out of commission.

► **On September 5, 2021**, an IED was activated against the vehicle of the Popular Mobilization operations deputy commander of the Al-Jazeera region (the desert region of northwestern Iraq). The commander was killed and three of his escorts were wounded.

## **Salah al-Din Province**

► **On September 7, 2021**, an Iraqi army headquarters was targeted by gunfire west of Tuz Khormato, about 100 km northeast of Samarra. One soldier was wounded. Two days before, an Iraqi army camp in the area was targeted by gunfire. Two soldiers were killed and the camp was damaged.

## **Counterterrorism measures in Iraq**

### **Kirkuk Province**

► As part of an operation of the Iraqi counterterrorism unit against ISIS terrorism, eight ISIS operatives were detained in various regions in the province (military information unit, September 8, 2021).

### **Diyala Province**

► The Iraqi army announced that large Iraqi army forces had secured the Hawi al-Azim region, about 60 km north of Baqubah (between the Diyala Province and the Salah al-Din Province), where there were ISIS guesthouses used as a point of departure for ISIS attacks (Iraqi Defense Ministry, September 2, 2021).



Some of the forces operating in the Hawi al-Azim region  
(Iraqi Defense Ministry, September 2, 2021)

## Al-Anbar Province

► Popular Mobilization forces launched an operation to locate ISIS cells in the western region of the Province (Popular Mobilization Facebook page, September 9, 2021).

## The Sinai Peninsula

### ISIS's attacks

- An IED was activated against an Egyptian army vehicle between Balaa and Abu Shanar, west of Rafah. The passengers were wounded (Telegram, September 12, 2021).
- An IED was activated against an Egyptian army vehicle south of Sheikh Zuweid (Sultan al-Hakim Telegram account, September 7, 2021). Apparently, the attack was carried out by ISIS's Sinai Province. That same day, an Egyptian policeman serving in northern Sinai was reportedly killed. Possibly, he was killed in the abovementioned incident or in another one (Sawt Kafr al-Sheikh Makhluaf Facebook page, September 7, 2021).
- ISIS operatives abducted eight civilians and wounded three others. Four days later, Egyptian army forces reportedly freed the eight abducted people from the operatives of ISIS's Sinai Province (Al-Araby al-Jadeed, September 3, 2021; Akhbar Sinaa al-Aan Facebook page, September 5, 2021).

## Summary of ISIS's activity in the various provinces

### Summary of ISIS's weekly activity

► According to data from an infographic published by ISIS, summing up its activity around the world in the period between August 25 and August 31, 2021, **ISIS carried out 45 attacks** in the various provinces in Asia and Africa, compared to 29 attacks in the previous week. **The**

**largest number of attacks was carried out in Iraq** (27). Attacks carried out in ISIS's other provinces: West Africa (8); Central Africa (4); Khorasan, i.e., Afghanistan (2); Sinai (2); Somalia (1); Syria (1).

► According to the infographic, **461 people were killed or wounded in the attacks**, compared to 64 in the previous week. **The largest number of casualties was in the Khorasan Province, i.e. Afghanistan** (350). The other casualties were in the following provinces: West Africa (63); Iraq (31); Central Africa (9); Libya (5); Somalia (2); Syria (1) (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, September 2, 2021).

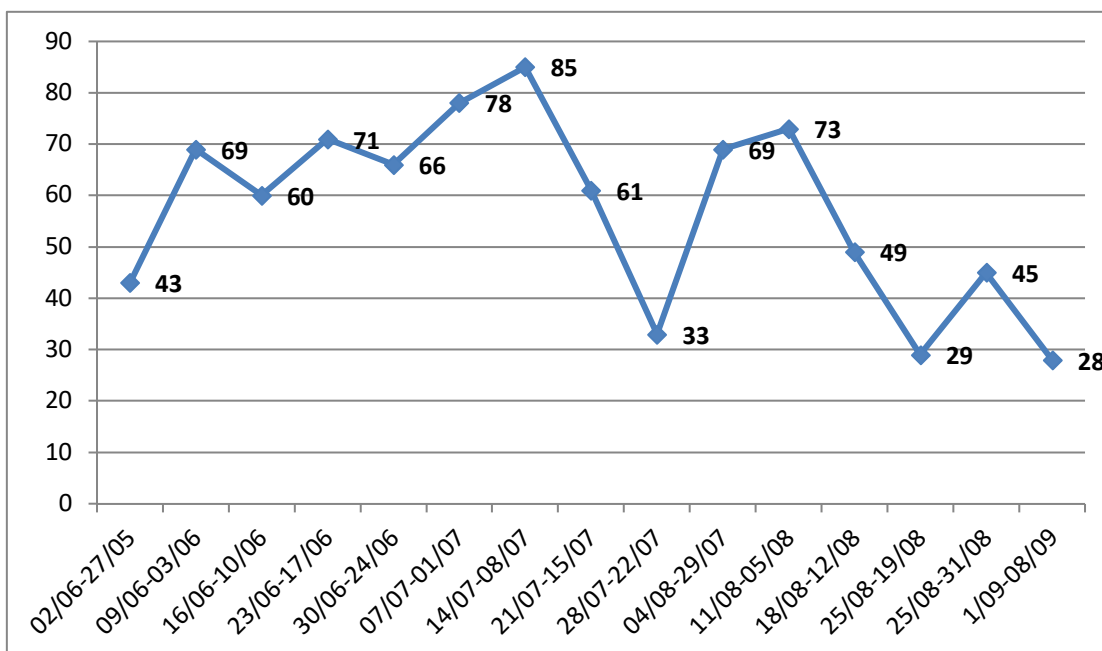
► The infographic reveals that there has been an increase in ISIS's activity, mainly in Iraq. The large number of casualties stems mainly from the attack carried out by ISIS in the Kabul airport in Afghanistan.



#### The infographic in the Al-Naba' weekly (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, September 2, 2021)

► Data from an infographic published by ISIS, summing up its activity around the world in the period between September 1 and September 8, 2021, shows that there was a decrease in the number of attacks. **ISIS carried out 28 attacks in the various provinces in Asia and Africa**, compared to 45 attacks in the previous week. **The largest number of attacks was carried out in Iraq** (24). Attacks carried out in ISIS's other provinces: West Africa (2); Central Africa (1); Somalia (1) (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, September 9, 2021).

► According to the infographic, a total of **125 people were killed or wounded in the attacks**. **The largest number of casualties was in the Iraq Province** (59). The other casualties were in the following provinces: West Africa (53); Central Africa (10); Somalia (3) (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, September 9, 2021).



ISIS's attacks in recent months (according to ISIS data)

## Africa

### Nigeria<sup>3</sup>

► **On September 11, 2021**, rockets were fired at a Nigerian military base in Malam Fatori, in the Nigeria-Niger border area in northeastern Nigeria. According to ISIS, the base was definitely hit. **On August 30, 2021**, a similar attack was carried out against the base. According to ISIS, the base was definitely hit.

► **On September 7, 2021**, a joint patrol of the armies of Nigeria and Niger was targeted by gunfire in northern Borno State, on the Nigeria-Niger border. The soldiers were wounded but managed to flee.

► **On September 1, 2021**, Nigerian soldiers were targeted by gunfire in Mirari, in Borno State. One soldier was killed and several others were wounded. ISIS operatives set fire to a Nigerian army APC and two bulldozers.

► **On August 30, 2021**, an attack was carried out against a Christian village in Borno State. A church, a school, a residential building and vehicles in the village were set on fire.

### ISIS's conduct with the local residents

► ISIS's West Africa Province posted photos documenting its operatives putting up posters in public places (apparently in northeastern Nigeria, ISIS's stronghold in the country). The

<sup>3</sup>Mainly according to ISIS's claims of responsibility posted on Telegram.

posters, which were translated into the local language (along with quotes from the Quran in Arabic), asked the residents not to cooperate with the Nigerian authorities (Telegram, September 1, 2021; Telegram, Al-Naba' weekly, September 2, 2021).



**Residents looking at a poster put up by ISIS calling on them not to cooperate with the local authorities. Left: The wording of the poster (Telegram, September 1, 2021)**

## Democratic Republic of the Congo

- **On September 10, 2021**, an attack was carried out on a Christian village in the Beni region, about 50 km west of the Congo-Uganda border. ISIS operatives exchanged fire with an army force stationed in the village. Later, ISIS operatives attacked a gathering of Christians, killing at least nine of them. After setting fire to several houses in the village, they fled.
- **On September 10, 2021**, a Congolese army camp was targeted by gunfire in the Ituri region, about 50 km west of the Congo-Uganda border. Four soldiers were killed.
- **On September 4, 2021**, IEDs were activated against a Congolese army patrol in the Beni region. At least 10 soldiers were killed.
- **On September 1, 2021**, a convoy of Christian residents was ambushed in the Ituri region. During the attack there was an exchange of fire and several vehicles were set on fire. No casualties were reported.

## Somalia

- An IED was activated against a Somali army vehicle carrying soldiers in Mogadishu. Three soldiers were wounded.

## Libya

### Counterterrorism activity

► Libyan security forces detained two ISIS operatives:

- ◆ **On September 7, 2021**, senior ISIS official Embarak al-Khazimi was detained in Bani Walid, in northern Libya, about 140 km southeast of Tripoli (Ain Libya, September 7, 2021).
- ◆ **On September 3, 2021, ISIS operative Ajili Ali Al-Ajili al-Hasnawi** was detained in southwestern Libya. Weapons and ammunition were found in his possession (Al-Wassat, September 7, 2021).

## Asia

### Counterterrorism in Jordan

► According to security sources, during March 2021, Jordanian intelligence forces thwarted an attack planned by ISIS operatives in Irbid, in northern Jordan. The attack was thwarted when security forces detained the three operatives who were planning to carry it out (Sky News, September 6, 2021).

► It should be noted that in July 2021, the Jordanian newspaper Al-Ra'i published a report, according to which in February 2021, **the Jordanian General Intelligence Directorate (GID)** thwarted plans by an ISIS squad numbering four operatives **to carry out a shooting attack against Israeli soldiers on the Jordanian-Israeli border**. The squad members also planned **to carry out an attack against Jews in Jordan**.

## Turkey

► Acting on intelligence, Turkish security forces in Ankara detained 13 individuals suspected of being affiliated with ISIS. The forces are searching for two more operatives about whom information has been obtained (Anatolia News Agency, September 9, 2021).

## India

► Officials in India claim that according to information in their possession, Pakistan's intelligence service, ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) **is transferring operatives of ISIS's Khorasan Province from Afghanistan to the Kashmir region** in order to carry out attacks against India. According to recent reports, 25 Indian Muslims from Kerala in southern India traveled to Afghanistan to fight in the ranks of ISIS's Khorasan Province (www.timesnownews.com, September 9, 2021).

## The Philippines

► Two soldiers were ambushed on Basilan Island, in the southern Philippines. The soldiers, targeted by machine gun fire, were killed.

## New Zealand

► A stabbing attack was carried out in a supermarket in the city of Auckland. Five people were wounded in the attack, three of them mortally. The perpetrator, an ISIS-affiliated Sri Lankan citizen, was shot dead by police. He was 32-year-old **Ahamed Aathil Samsudeen**, who was known to the security forces as an ISIS supporter. He arrived in New Zealand about a decade ago and remained there on a student visa (Reuters, September 3, 2021; Los Angeles Times, September 9, 2021).

## Europe

### Britain

► **Ken McCallum, head of the MI5 intelligence agency**, noted that in the past four years, 31 terrorist attacks in their advanced planning stages were thwarted in Britain. Most of those planning the attacks were radical Islamic elements. However, some of the attacks that were thwarted were planned by radical right-wing activists. McCallum stressed that six attacks were thwarted during the spread of COVID-19, about a year and a half ago. According to him, **the terrorist threat to Britain is real and ongoing, and the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan could strengthen the terrorist elements in Britain, leading to an increase in the activity of extremists on British soil** (BBC, September 11, 2021).

## The battle for hearts and minds

► The main article in ISIS's Al-Naba' weekly, which appeared on September 2, 2021, was entitled The Campaign for the Oneness of Allah in Kabul. The subject of the article is the attack carried out by ISIS operatives near Kabul Airport. The author criticizes the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, noting that they are hostile to ISIS, which is the only one that adheres to the principle of the Oneness of Allah. Following are the main points made in the article (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, September 2, 2021):

- ◆ This is the largest terrorist attack that the United States has known in the past decade, and the American people suffered a severe shock. As a result of the attack, the desire of the United States to withdrawal from Afghanistan in a peaceful and orderly

fashion became a painful and humiliating blow for it. In addition, the attack also proved to the Americans that their claim of having eliminated ISIS's Khorasan Province about two years ago is incorrect.

◆ The attack dispelled the illusion that peace could be established between Afghanistan and the United States, and also opened a new phase in the jihadi campaign against the infidels. The Taliban, the Americans and the Afghan government collaborated against ISIS, and the attack was carried out in retaliation for their collaboration.

◆ Al-Qaeda was criticized for its hostility to ISIS. Al-Qaeda and the Taliban must return from their path and adhere to the jihad against the infidels, led by the United States.

◆ The attack proves the eternity of jihad and that the American withdrawal is another step in the war between the United States and Islam, in which it is using the Taliban as its executive arm in Afghanistan, while the Taliban presents itself as the liberator of the country. In the next stage, the division between ISIS and the national elements in Afghanistan will intensify, and this is not surprising, since this is a campaign for the Oneness of Allah.



Article in ISIS's Al-Naba' weekly: US President Joe Biden with flames in the background (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, September 2, 2021)

### Al-Qaeda video marking the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks

► The Al-Sahab Foundation, Al-Qaeda's media arm, has released a video marking the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. **Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri appears in the video.**

The hour-long video is entitled "Jerusalem will not be Jewish – Arab Zionists from Faisal bin Zayed." Al-Zawahiri expresses his opposition to any settlement with Israel and notes that



according to the Quran, Muslims are forbidden to make an alliance with the Jews. According to him, the most important weapon of the Palestinians is the Islamic consciousness and as long as Israel controls Jerusalem and its environs it will continue to pay the price. He says that the fighting against Israel must be transferred to Israeli territory, since in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank Israel is the one who determines when and where the Palestinians are attacked. The jihad fighters are the ones who should determine when and where Israel is attacked.



**Al-Zawahiri in the video (Telegram, September 11, 2021)**

► Al-Zawahiri is talking about the importance of jihad around the globe. According to him, the Muslims should be united and fight a jihad war in many arenas, **since Palestine is like Kashmir, Grozny and Idlib**. Members of the Islamic Nation must take up arms and attack their enemies everywhere. Jihad must be cultural, religious, military and political, and must be directed against the “Crusader” enemy (i.e., the West).

► Throughout his speech, Al-Zawahiri **mentions various attacks carried out by Al-Qaeda, in order to express its continuity since 2001**. He also praises Al-Qaeda’s fallen over the years. The most recent incident that Al-Zawahiri mentions is the car bomb attack carried out in Syria in January 2021 by Hurras al-Din, Al-Qaeda's branch in Syria, against a Russian base. The mention of the attack **is also designed to refute reports that Al-Zawahiri is not among the living**. Al-Zawahiri **also mentions the US pullback from Afghanistan, without mentioning the Taliban takeover of the country**, which could indicate that the video was produced recently.

► The video also includes statements by **AQIM leader Sheikh Abu Ubaidah Youssef al-Annabi**. He notes that **the Palestinians must liberate Palestine by overthrowing their treacherous rulers** (i.e., the Mahmoud Abbas administration in the West Bank and the Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip). Any settlement that may be reached through those

rulers is a betrayal of Islam, since it will lead to occupation rather than liberation. According to Al-Annabi, the Palestinians must decide this unequivocally and trust in Allah and their own ability to liberate Palestine.