



Spotlight on Global Jihad

October 21-27, 2021



Main events of the past week

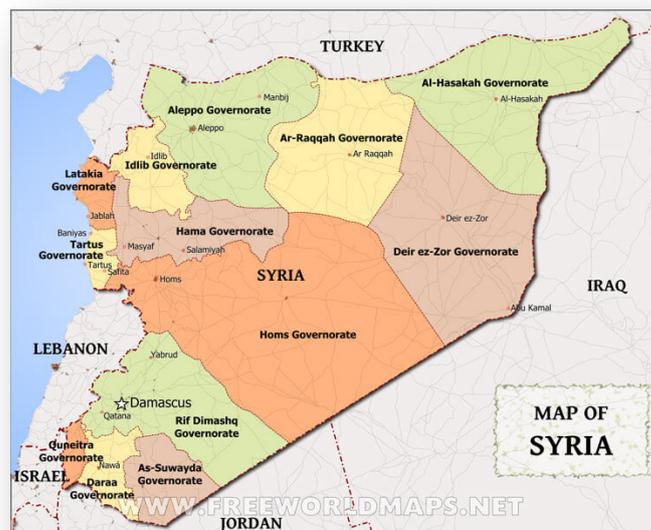
- ▶ **Afghanistan:** ISIS operatives continue to carry out attacks against Taliban forces and Shiite civilians. **The most prominent incident of the week was an attack in Kabul against two minibuses carrying Shiite residents.** Many civilians were killed in the attack. The Taliban government sent hundreds of fighters to eastern Afghanistan to fight against ISIS. The US Department of the Treasury imposed sanctions on a senior operative in ISIS's Khorasan Province who was working to fund the province's terrorist activity.
- ▶ **Syria:** The downtrend in ISIS's activity continues. Russian Air Force planes carried out airstrikes against ISIS targets in the desert region. **In Iraq, ISIS's activity was also limited.**
- ▶ **The Sinai Peninsula:** Three fighters from the Tarabin tribe, which is part of the tribal union supporting the Egyptian army against ISIS, were killed in the explosion of a mine apparently planted by ISIS operatives.
- ▶ **Africa:** **ISIS continued to attack military forces and Christian civilians, mainly in Nigeria, Mozambique and the Congo.** In Niger, at least 25 local militia fighters were reported dead, apparently in an attack by ISIS-affiliated fighters.
- ▶ **The battle for hearts and minds:** with the approach of Christmas and New Year's Day, ISIS-affiliated accounts on TikTok have begun posting **content encouraging ISIS operatives and supporters to carry out terrorist attacks in Western countries.**

Afghanistan

- ▶ This week, ISIS continued its activity in Afghanistan, targeting mainly Taliban members, elements collaborating with them, and Shiite civilians. Following are the main incidents (mostly according to ISIS's claims of responsibility on Telegram):
 - ◆ **On November 22, 2021,** a vehicle carrying a Taliban member and an intelligence operative of the former Afghanistan government was targeted by gunfire in Jalalabad. The two men were killed.

- ◆ **On November 20, 2021**, a Taliban vehicle was targeted by gunfire in Jalalabad. Three Taliban members in the vehicle were killed.
 - ◆ **On November 18, 2021**, a Taliban member was killed in the Logar region, south of Kabul, and his weapon was seized by ISIS.
 - ◆ **On November 18, 2021**, an IED was activated against a Taliban post in Kabul. Seven Taliban members were killed or wounded.
 - ◆ **On November 17, 2021**, IEDs were activated against two minibuses carrying Shiite residents in Kabul. Over 20 people were killed or wounded (Telegram, November 17, 2021). The Taliban government reported one dead and six wounded. Other reports mentioned two dead and four according to another version (Reuters, November 17, 2021); Xinhua, November 17, 2021).
- This week, it was reported that the Taliban government sent hundreds of fighters to eastern Afghanistan to fight against ISIS (Washington Post, November 22, 2021). This is yet another effort by the Taliban to liquidate ISIS's Khorasan Province and stabilize the Taliban regime.
- The US Department of the Treasury imposed sanctions on **Ismatullah Khalozai, a senior operative in ISIS's Khorasan Province** who had a money changing business in Turkey. He has acted as a financial facilitator for the Islamic State's Khorasan Province (US Department of the Treasury website, November 22, 2021).

The Syrian arena



Syrian governorates (freeworldmaps.net)

The Idlib region

► Exchanges of artillery fire continued this week between the Syrian army and the rebel forces in the rebel enclave in Idlib (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, November 18-20, 2021). Two Syrian soldiers were killed by rebel sniper fire at Syrian army positions (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, November 20, 2021).

Deir ez-Zor and Al-Mayadeen region¹

► ISIS's Al-Naba' weekly reported that about a week ago, ISIS had carried out a series of attacks against SDF headquarters and roadblocks in various regions in the Deir ez-Zor Province. According to the report, at least eight SDF members were killed and several others were wounded (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, November 18, 2021).

► On November 22, 2021, ISIS operatives attacked an SDF vehicle in the Darnaj region, about 15 km southeast of Al-Mayadeen. One fighter was killed and two others were wounded (Telegram, November 22, 2021).

The desert region (Al-Badia)

► ISIS claimed responsibility for ambushing operatives of **Ussud al-Sharqiya**, a local militia of the Al-Shueitat tribe supporting the Syrian army. The attack took place about 30 km northwest of Deir ez-Zor. According to ISIS's claim of responsibility, the attack began with the activation of IEDs planted there, and then continued with gunfire. According to ISIS, at least seven militia fighters, including the force commander, were killed (Telegram, November 17, 2021).



The scene of the attack, which was documented by ISIS (Telegram, November 17, 2021)

► During the week, Russian fighter jets carried out several dozen airstrikes against ISIS targets in the desert region (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, no 18-19, 2021).

¹ Based on ISIS's claims of responsibility posted on Telegram

Al-Hasakah region

► ISIS operatives broke into the house of an SDF “spy” in the Al-Hawl area, near Al-Hasakah, and killed him (Telegram, November 17, 2021).

The Iraqi arena



Provinces of Iraq (Wikipedia)

Attacks by province²

Diyala Province

- **On November 22, 2021**, an Iraqi army position was attacked in the Bahraz region, south of Baqubah. One soldier was killed and three others were wounded.
- **On November 20, 2021**, an Iraqi army position was targeted by gunfire north of Al-Azim, about 60 km north of Baqubah. Two soldiers were wounded.
- **On November 17, 2021**, an Iraqi army position was targeted by gunfire and hand grenades in the Jalula region, about 75 km northeast of Baqubah. One soldier was killed and two others were wounded. An IED was activated against a patrol vehicle that arrived on the scene. The passengers on board were wounded.

Counterterrorism measures in Iraq

Diyala Province

- Five ISIS operatives were killed in an Iraqi Air Force airstrike (Iraqi Defense Ministry, November 20, 2021).

Al-Anbar Province

² Mostly according to ISIS’s claims of responsibility posted on Telegram

► The Popular Mobilization forces announced the launching of a campaign against ISIS in the eastern part of the province (Sada al-Balad, November 20, 2021).

Sinai Peninsula

► Three fighters of the Tarabin tribe, which is part of the tribal union supporting the Egyptian army against ISIS, were killed in the explosion of a mine apparently planted by ISIS south of Rafah (Shahed Sinaa al-Rasmia Facebook page, November 21, 2021).

Summary of ISIS's activity in the various provinces

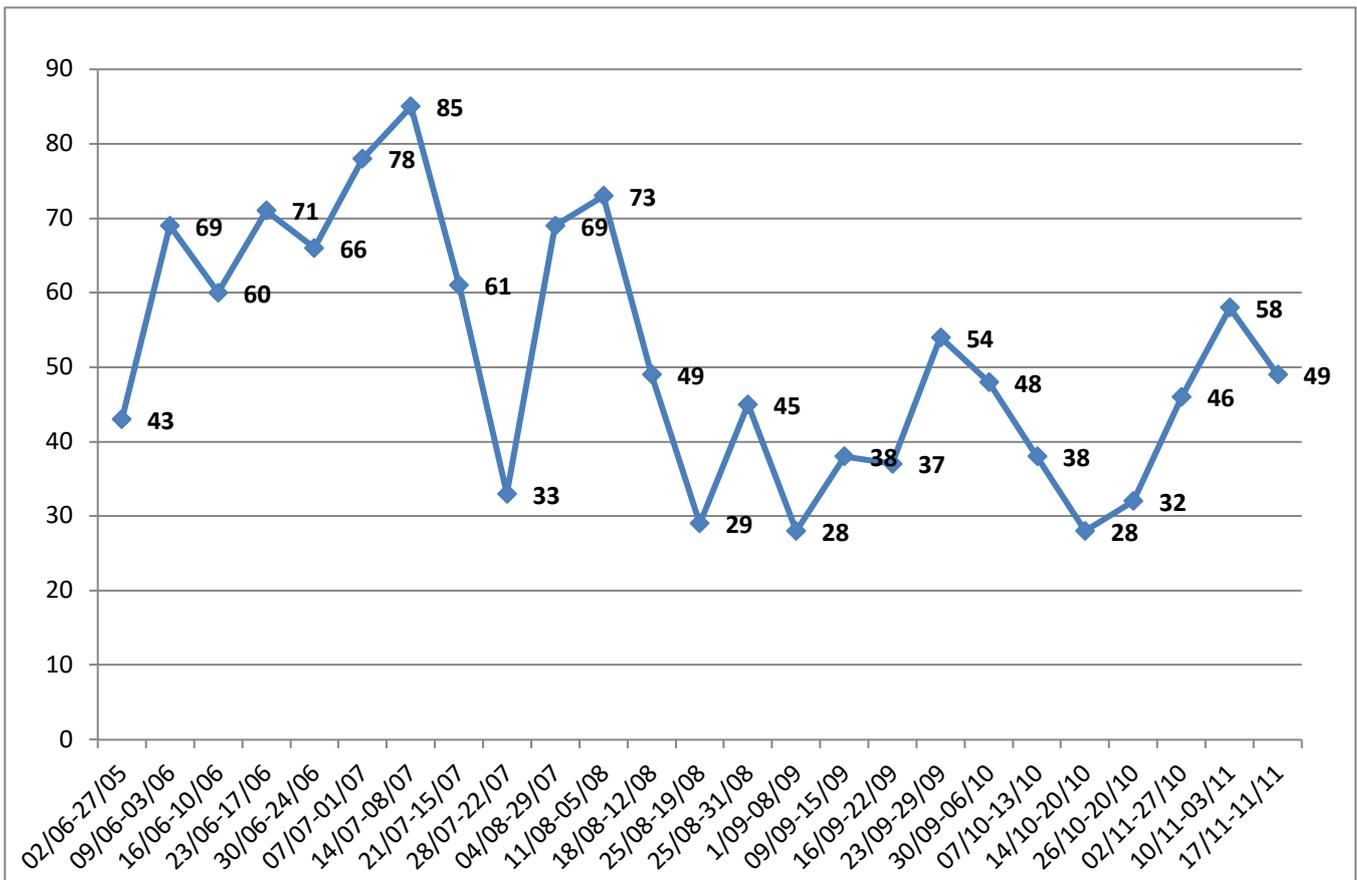
Weekly summary of ISIS's activity

► An infographic published by ISIS summing up its activity around the world **in the period between November 11 and November 17, 2021**, indicates that in this period, **ISIS carried out 49 attacks** in its various provinces in Asia and Africa, compared to 58 in the previous week. **The largest number of attacks was carried out by ISIS's Central Africa Province (17)**. Attacks carried out in the other provinces: Iraq (10); Khorasan (i.e., Afghanistan) (9); Syria (8); West Africa (5). **A total of 206 people were killed and wounded in the attacks**, compared to 66 in the previous week. The largest number of casualties was in the Central Africa Province (78). The other casualties were in the following provinces: Khorasan (51); West Africa (30); Iraq (26); and Syria (21) (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, November 18, 2021).



The infographic summing up ISIS's activity (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, November 18, 2021)

ISIS attacks in recent months (according to ISIS data)



Africa³

Nigeria

- **On November 21, 2021**, a Nigerian army foot patrol was attacked on the Mainok – Jakana highway in Borno State, in the northeast of the country. Two soldiers were killed and several others were wounded.
- **On November 20, 2021**, a Nigerian army camp was attacked in Marte, about 40 km west of the Nigeria-Cameroon border, in the northeast of the country. Four soldiers and two fighters of militias loyal to the army were killed in the exchange of fire. ISIS operatives set fire to two tanks and seized vehicles.
- **On November 19, 2021**, mortar shells and rockets were fired at a Nigerian army base in Damboa, about 80 km southwest of Maiduguri, in northeastern Nigeria. Several soldiers were killed or wounded, and the base sustained material damage.

³Mainly according to ISIS's claims of responsibility posted on Telegram

► **On November 18, 2021**, an IED was activated against a Nigerian army bulldozer in Bama, about 70 km southeast of Maiduguri. The bulldozer was destroyed (Telegram, November 20, 2021). No casualties were reported.

Infographic summing up the activity of ISIS's Central Africa Province in recent months

► Al-Naba' weekly published an infographic summing up the activity of the Central Africa Province between August 9 and November 6, 2021. According to the infographic, **during the period in question, operatives of the Central Africa Province carried out 70 attacks** (39 in the Congo, 27 in Mozambique, and 4 in Uganda). **A total of 269 people were killed or wounded in the attacks.** The attacks included 49 shootings, 12 ambushes, 5 attacks in which IEDs were activated, 2 suicide bombings and 2 targeted killings (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, November 18, 2021).



Infographic detailing ISIS's activity in Africa (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, November 18, 2021)

The Democratic Republic of the Congo

► **On November 21, 2021**, a Congolese army post was targeted by gunfire in Kakuka, about 50 km west of the Congo-Uganda border. The soldiers fled and were then ambushed. One soldier was killed and a few others were wounded. ISIS operatives set the post on fire.

► **On November 16, 2021**, a Congolese army camp was attacked in the Rwenzori region in eastern Congo, not far from the border with Uganda. The camp soldiers fled in the exchange of fire.

Mozambique

► **On November 19, 2021**, an attack was carried out against a village in the Nangade region, about 10 km from the Mozambique-Tanzania border. Mozambican soldiers at the scene fled, and ISIS operatives set fire to eight homes of Christian residents.

► **On November 16, 2021**, an attack was carried out against Nambongali, in the Mueda region, about 90 km southwest of Mocímboa da Praia, in northwestern Mozambique. During the attack, three suspected collaborators with the Mozambican army were abducted. All three were executed.

Uganda

► **On November 19, 2021**, Uganda's security forces shot and killed Sheikh Muhammad Abas Kirevu, a cleric who had recruited operatives for the ADF, ISIS's branch in Uganda and the Congo. The shooting took place near the capital Kampala (BBC, November 20, 2021).

► **On November 18, 2021**, fighters from Uganda's counterterrorism unit killed four people who had been involved in ISIS's activity in the west of the country. A total of 21 people suspected of involvement with ISIS were arrested (www.rfi.fr, November 20, 2021).

Niger

► At least 25 local militia fighters were killed in Bakorat, in western Niger, not far from the border with Mali, in an attack carried out by fighters on motorcycles. The identity of the fighters is unknown. However, they are believed to have been ISIS operatives. A similar attack was carried out in the region in March 2021, claiming the lives of 137 people. At the time, official sources in Niger attributed the attack to ISIS in the Sahara (www.euronews.com, November 20, 2021).

Asia

Pakistan

► **On November 22, 2021**, ISIS's Khorasan Province reported that ISIS operatives had killed a Pakistani intelligence agent in the Bajaur region, on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border (Telegram, November 23, 2021). The province also reported the killing of a Shiite civilian in Rawalpindi, in the southern suburb of Islamabad, in northern Pakistan (Telegram, November 23, 2021).

Europe

Germany

► A German court convicted a Syrian citizen and ISIS supporter of planning a mass-casualty attack in Germany and financing terrorism. He was arrested back in June 2019, after making preparations for carrying out an attack on German soil. His name was given as Abdullah A. (AP, November 16, 2021).

Hungary

► A Hungarian court convicted a 22-year-old Hungarian citizen of intent to carry out an attack on behalf of ISIS. The citizen reportedly converted to Islam in June 2020 in a mosque in Budapest and pledged allegiance to ISIS in the summer of 2021 (The Jerusalem Post, November 17, 2021).

The United States

► Ali Saleh, a 28-year-old US citizen living in New York, was sentenced to 38 years in prison after pledging allegiance to ISIS and attempting to provide ISIS with material support and recruit supporters through the Internet. He was arrested after reserving a plane ticket to Turkey, from where he intended to travel to Syria and fight in the ranks of ISIS. After being arrested, he stabbed a jailer (US Department of Justice website, November 17, 2021).

The battle for hearts and minds

Calls for terrorist attacks in the West with the approach of Christmas and New Year's Day

► With the approach of Christmas and New Year's Day, ISIS-affiliated accounts on TikTok have posted messages encouraging young Muslims to carry out attacks in Western countries. The British newspaper The Sun, which monitored the social network, discovered dozens of such accounts, calling for terrorist attacks against Christians and including ISIS propaganda and incitement (The Sun, November 20, 2021). It should be noted that every year, with the approach of Christmas and New Year's Day, ISIS and those affiliated with it call for terrorist attacks in Western countries.

Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri calls on the Taliban not to join the UN

► Al-Qaeda's Al-Sahab media foundation released a video of the speech by its **leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri**. In the 38-minute video, entitled "Advice to the United [Islamic] Nation on the

Truth Concerning the United Nations," Al-Zawahiri accuses the UN of being an anti-Muslim organization whose principles run counter to Islamic law (Sharia). He emphasizes that **joining the UN means waiving the implementation of Sharia and recognizing the State of Israel** (Telegram, November 23, 2021). Although the name of the Taliban Movement was not mentioned in the video, it appears to be directed at the movement, which has been seeking international recognition since its takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021. The video may also be an indication of Al-Qaeda's fear of the Taliban's rapprochement with the international community.

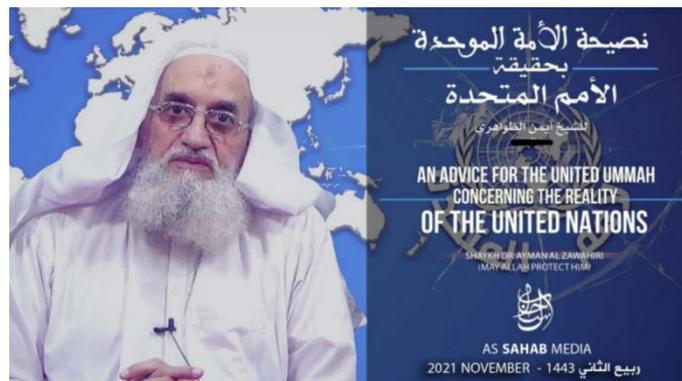


Photo of Al-Zawahiri, as it appears in the video (Telegram, November 23, 2021)