



Spotlight on Global Jihad

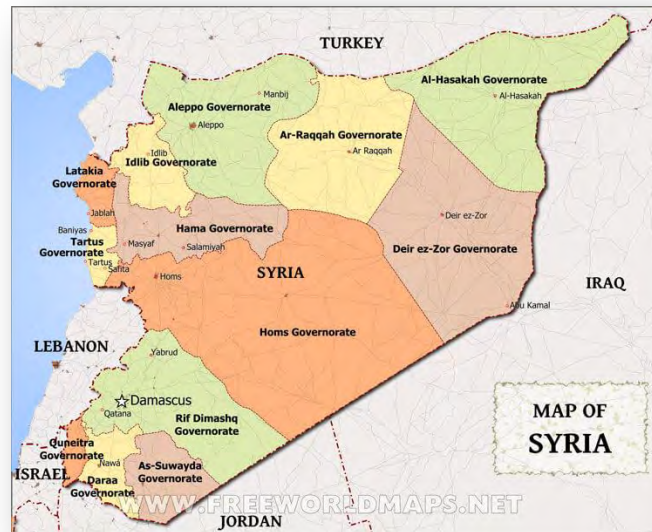
February 24 – March 2, 2022



Main events of the past week

- ▶ **Similar to recent weeks, the epicenter of ISIS activity was in Africa, particularly Nigeria and Mozambique.** ISIS focused its activity on the security forces and Christian residents.
- ▶ **Syria:** ISIS carried out relatively low-intensity activity. The activity focused on the Kurdish SDF forces **in the Deir ez-Zor and Al-Hasakah regions.** **In the desert region,** Russian Air Force planes continued to attack ISIS targets. **In the rebel enclave in the Idlib region,** HTS began to evacuate jihadist immigrants and their families from their homes in its areas of control.
- ▶ **Iraq:** The downtrend in ISIS activity in Iraq continued. Most of the activity was concentrated in the Al-Anbar and Kirkuk provinces.
- ▶ **The Sinai Peninsula:** During the week, ISIS operatives continued to attack the Egyptian army and the Sinai Tribal Union which supports it. The forces sustained several losses.
- ▶ **Afghanistan:** The downtrend in ISIS activity against the Taliban continues.
- ▶ **Lebanese** security forces detained a Palestinian ISIS squad in the Ein al-Hilweh refugee camp. The members of the squad, which was handled by an ISIS operative in Syria, planned to carry out three attacks in the Hezbollah stronghold of south Beirut.
- ▶ **The battle for hearts and minds:** The lead article in Al-Naba' weekly was devoted to those who adhere to the path of ISIS, in spite of the difficulties.

The Syrian arena



Syrian provinces (freeworldmaps.net)

The Idlib region

- ▶ This week as well, exchanges of artillery fire continued, albeit less intensely, between Syrian soldiers and forces supporting the Syrian army, and the rebel organizations in the Idlib enclave.
- ▶ As part of the confrontation between **HTS, the leading rebel organization**, and rival jihadist organizations in the enclave, HTS began to evacuate jihadist immigrants and their families from their homes in its control areas in Idlib. It should be noted that during the past year, HTS operatives detained and expelled dozens of operatives of rival organizations from the Idlib region (Syria-report.com, February 22, 2022).

The desert region (Al-Badia)

- ▶ Due to ISIS's activity and the many incidents in which Syrian soldiers and fighters of militias supporting the Syrian army were killed and wounded, Russian Air Force planes attacked ISIS targets in the desert region (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, February 23, 2022).

Deir ez-Zor-Al-Mayadeen region

- ▶ **On February 28, 2022**, two SDF fighters were targeted by gunfire and killed in the Al-Basira region, about 15 km north of Al-Mayadeen (Telegram, March 1, 2022).
- ▶ **On February 27, 2022**, an SDF post was targeted by gunfire and hand grenades in the Dhiban region, about 3 km east of Al-Mayadeen. Three fighters were killed and another was

wounded (Telegram, March 1, 2022). The day before, an SDF *mukhtar* (head of a neighborhood) was killed in Dhiban (Telegram, February 26, 2022).

► **On February 24, 2022**, an SDF base was targeted by gunfire in Dhiban. A vehicle was put out of commission, and the base sustained damage (Telegram, February 25, 2022).

► **On February 24, 2022**, an SDF vehicle was targeted by gunfire on the Hajin-Bahra road, about 50 km southeast of Al-Mayadeen. Three fighters were killed, including a commander. Several others were wounded (Telegram, February 26, 2022).

Al-Hasakah region

► **On February 26, 2022**, an IED was activated against an SDF vehicle in the Markada region, about 90 km south of Al-Hasakah. The three passengers on board were wounded (Telegram, February 28, 2022).

Counterterrorism activity

► The SDF forces detained **Abdel Karim Abdullah, an ISIS operative from Iraq**. He was detained while on his way to receive medical treatment in Turkey. In his interrogation, he said that since 2019 (when ISIS lost control of its territories in Syria and Iraq), Turkey has been the only place where ISIS operatives can receive medical treatment (ANHA, February 23, 2022).



ISIS operative detained by the SDF forces (ANHA, February 23, 2022)

The Iraqi arena



Provinces of Iraq (Wikipedia)

Attacks by province

Kirkuk Province

- On March 1, 2022, an Iraqi police patrol was targeted by gunfire in the Daquq region, in south Kirkuk. Two vehicles were damaged (Telegram, March 1, 2022).
- On February 24, 2022, an IED was activated against an Iraqi police foot patrol in the area. Several policemen were wounded.

Al-Anbar Province

- On February 24, 2022, an Iraqi army vehicle was targeted by gunfire about 20 km east of Al-Rutba, in western Iraq. Several soldiers were killed and wounded, and the vehicle was damaged.



Right: ISIS operatives shooting at the vehicle. Left: An ISIS operative in the area where the vehicle was attacked (Telegram, February 24, 2022)

¹ Mostly according to ISIS's claims of responsibility posted on Telegram

Counterterrorism activity

Al-Anbar Province

► On March 1, 2022, the Iraqi security forces operating in Shirqat, in the northern Al-Anbar Province, detained ISIS's operative in charge of finances of the Dijla (Tigris) region and his deputy (Khaliyat al-I'lam al-Amni Facebook page, March 1, 2022).

► The Iraqi Air Force carried out an airstrike, killing three ISIS operatives (Khaliyat al-I'lam al-Amni Facebook page, March 1, 2022). The exact location was not mentioned. Several days before, the Iraqi security forces located IEDs and tripwires for the activation of IEDs, apparently belonging to ISIS, in the vicinity of Hit (Khaliyat al-I'lam al-Amni Twitter account, February 27, 2022).



IEDs and tripwires that were found (Khaliyat al-I'lam al-Amni Twitter account, February 27, 2022)

► The Iraqi Air Force killed three ISIS operatives in the desert region, in the northwestern part of the province (Khaliyat al-I'lam al-Amni Facebook page, March 1, 2022).

Kirkuk Province

► The Iraqi Air Force attacked ISIS targets in the province, killing an ISIS commander who was the emir of the al-Dabs region (northwest of Kirkuk) and four other operatives (Al-Hurra, February 23, 2022).

Sinai Peninsula

► According to reports, there was an exchange of fire and an airstrike in al-Mahdiya al-Ajra in Rafah (Shahed Sinaa al-Rasmia Facebook page, March 1, 2022).

ISIS's activity

► On March 1, 2022, two fighters of the Sinai Tribal Union (which supports the Egyptian army) were killed and three others were wounded in the explosion of an IED activated by ISIS's Sinai

Province against two cars in which they were traveling southwest of Rafah (Shahed Sinaa al-Rasmia Facebook page, March 1, 2022).

► **On February 28, 2022**, an Egyptian soldier was killed in an attack by operatives of ISIS's Sinai Province (Shahed Sinaa al-Rasmia Facebook page, February 28, 2022). The exact location of the attack was not mentioned.

► **On February 26, 2022**, two armed men, apparently ISIS operatives who infiltrated Sheikh Zuweid in northern Sinai, killed a 32-year-old man (Shahed Sinaa al-Rasmia Facebook page, February 26, 2022).

► **On February 25, 2022**, a Sinai Tribal Union fighter was killed and another was wounded in an exchange of fire with armed men, apparently ISIS operatives, in the Bal'ah region, near Rafah (Shahed Sinaa al-Rasmia Facebook page, February 25, 2022).

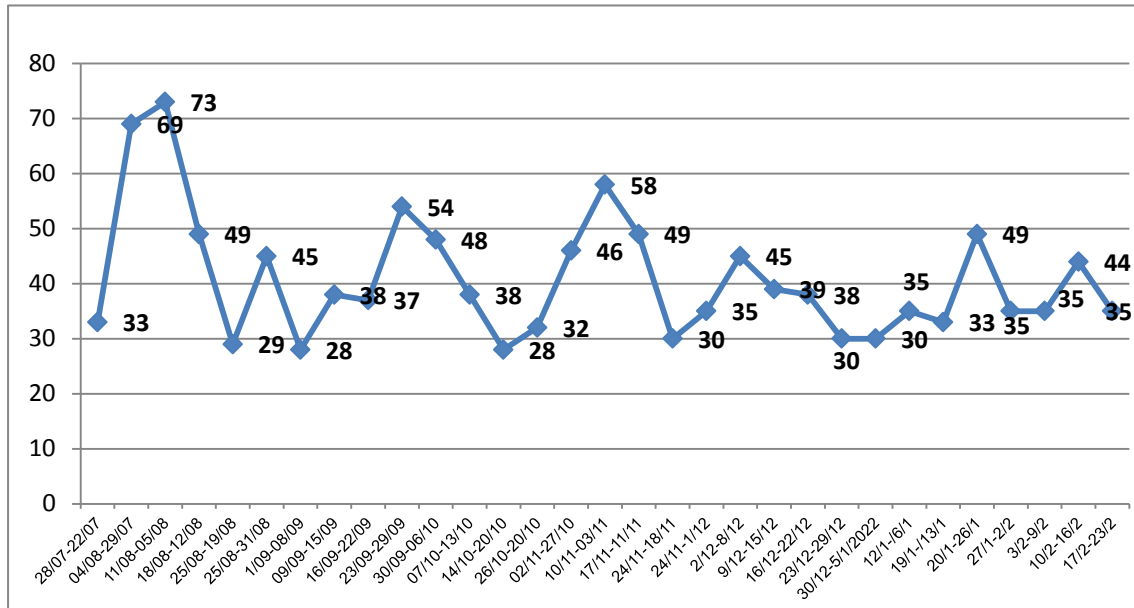
Summary of ISIS's activity in the various provinces

► An infographic published by ISIS summing up its activity around the world in the period between February 17 and February 23, 2022, indicates that in this period, **ISIS carried out 35 attacks in its various provinces in Asia and Africa**, compared to 44 last week. **The largest number of attacks was carried out by ISIS's West Africa Province (22)**. Attacks carried out in the other provinces: Central Africa (6); Khorasan (i.e., Afghanistan) (3); Iraqi (2); Syria (2). **A total of 108 people were killed or wounded in the attacks**, compared to 105 in the previous week. **The largest number of casualties was in the West Africa Province (71)**. The other casualties were in the following provinces: Central Africa (20); Khorasan (11); Syria (5); and Iraq (1) (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, February 24, 2022).



Summary of ISIS's attacks (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, February 24, 2022)

ISIS attacks in recent months (according to ISIS data)



ISIS activity in Africa²

Nigeria

► Due to the considerable activity of ISIS’s West Africa Province, mainly in northeast Nigeria, Al-Naba’ weekly published an infographic summing up the activity of the province between February 16 and February 21, 2022. According to the infographic, **during the six days in question, the province carried out 22 terrorist attacks, killing and wounding 81 people.** The attacks took the following forms: activation of IEDs (11); shooting (5); ambushes (2); other types (4). In these attacks, six vehicles were destroyed and a roadblock was set on fire (Al-Naba’, Telegram, February 24, 2022).



Summary of attacks by ISIS’s West Africa Province (Al-Naba’, Telegram, February 24, 2022)

²Mainly according to ISIS's claims of responsibility posted on Telegram

Attacks

► **On February 28, 2022**, a Nigerian army convoy was ambushed and targeted by IEDs and rocket fire between Gwoza and Polaka in northeastern Nigeria. About 15 soldiers were wounded. A similar attack was carried out that same day against a Nigerian army patrol near Malam Fatori, in the Nigeria-Niger border area in northeastern Nigeria. A total of 13 soldiers were killed or wounded. An IED was activated against an aid force that arrived on the scene. Three more soldiers were killed.

► **On February 26, 2022**, a Nigerian army convoy was targeted by gunfire near Malam Maja, in northeastern Nigeria. About 15 soldiers were killed or wounded in the attack.

► **On February 25, 2022**, militia fighters were targeted by gunfire in the Christian village of Kautikari in Borno State, in northeastern Nigeria. Four fighters were killed and the village church was set on fire.



ISIS operatives in Kautikari (Telegram, February 27, 2022)

► **On February 23, 2022**, a Nigerian army checkpoint was targeted by gunfire in Bandomum, in northeastern Nigeria. One soldier was killed and several others were wounded. ISIS operatives set fire to an armored vehicle and an ATV and seized two RPG launchers, two rifles and ammunition.

► **On February 21, 2022**, an IED was activated against a Nigerian army convoy in Goguri, in northeastern Nigeria. An armored vehicle was destroyed and the passengers on board were killed or wounded.

► **On February 21, 2022**, an IED was activated against a Nigerian army convoy on the Maiduguri-Damboia highway in northeastern Nigeria. An armored vehicle was destroyed and the passengers on board were killed or wounded.

► **On February 21, 2022**, an IED was activated against a Nigerian army convoy in Jiri, in northeastern Nigeria. One vehicle was destroyed and the passengers on board were killed or wounded.

► **On February 21, 2022**, an IED was activated against several Nigerian soldiers in Malam Fatori. Three soldiers were killed.

► **On February 19, 2022**, an IED was activated against a Nigerian army convoy between Dikwa and Mafa, in northeastern Nigeria. One vehicle was destroyed and the passengers on board were killed or wounded.

Activity by the Nigerian security forces

► Against the backdrop of increased terrorist activity in northeastern Nigeria, over the past two weeks the Nigerian security forces have been operating in cooperation with regional forces against terrorist elements in the region. According to the security forces, in an operation carried out between February 10 and February 24, 2022, six terrorist operatives were killed, including a commander in ISIS's West Africa Province codenamed Muhammad Yusuf, along with several fighters. A total of 26 operatives were detained. In the operation, 20 people who had been abducted were released, and four vehicles equipped with machine guns were confiscated. In addition, 466 operatives of Boko Haram and ISIS's West Africa Province surrendered to the authorities along with their families. The operatives included 120 men, who surrendered to the authorities together with 137 women and 209 children (www.premiumtimesng.com, February 26, 2022).

Democratic Republic of the Congo

► At least 20 residents of the village of Kikura, near the Congo-Uganda border, were reportedly killed by armed men on February 28, 2022. The residents attribute the incident to operatives of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), which is affiliated with ISIS's Central Africa Province (Reuters, February 28, 2022).

► **On February 27, 2022**, a Congolese army camp was targeted by gunfire in Kadibu, in the Ituri region, about 50 km west of the Congo-Uganda border. The soldiers fled and ISIS operatives seized a rocket launcher and ammunition. They set fire to the camp and to several homes of Christian residents.



Right: ISIS operatives in Kadibu. Left: ISIS operatives setting fire to a Congolese army base in the village (Telegram, March 1, 2022)

► According to Al-Naba', on February 6-10, 2022, ISIS operatives attacked three Christian villages in the Beni region, about 50 km west of the Congo-Uganda border, and in the Ituri region, about 150 km north of Beni. At least 13 Christians were killed in the attacks. In addition, about 24 homes, commercial buildings and property were set on fire (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, February 24, 2022).

Cameroon

► On the night of February 24-25, 2022, armed men broke into the Doctors Without Borders (MSF) base in Fotokol, on the Nigeria-Chad border, and abducted five humanitarian aid workers. The identity of the abductors is unknown, but it should be noted that the five aid workers were abducted in an area where Boko Haram and ISIS's West Africa Province operate (AP, February 25, 2022).

Somalia

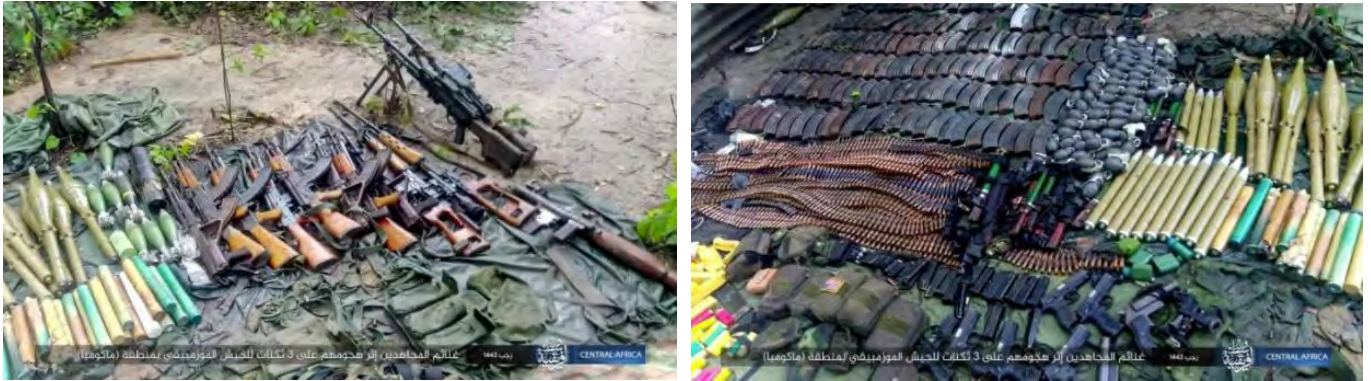
► **On February 24, 2022**, an IED was activated against a Somali army vehicle in Mogadishu. The vehicle was damaged and the passengers on board were wounded. Two days earlier, a Somali policeman was killed in Mogadishu.

Mozambique

► According to Al-Naba', ISIS has recently intensified its attacks against Mozambican army forces and the Christian population in the Macomia region of Cabo Delgado Province, in northeastern Mozambique. According to ISIS, the Mozambican army has failed in its mission to protect the Christian population in the region. The article notes that on February 23, 2022, three attacks were carried out against army camps and several Christian villages in Macomia. The following is a list of the incidents (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, February 24, 2022):

- ◆ An army camp in Kanat was targeted by gunfire. One soldier was killed. The other soldiers fled. ISIS operatives set fire to the camp and houses in the village.

- ◆ An army camp in Chai was attacked. Several soldiers were killed or wounded and the others fled. ISIS operatives set fire to the camp and houses in the village.
- ◆ An army camp in Baltamandi was attacked. Several soldiers were killed or wounded and the rest fled. ISIS operatives set fire to the camp and houses in the village.



Weapons seized by ISIS operatives (Telegram, February 27, 2022)

Asia

Afghanistan

- On February 27, 2022, a Taliban member was targeted by gunfire in the Jahartak region of the Kunduz Province. He was killed and his weapon was seized (Telegram, February 27, 2022).
- On February 23, 2022, a camp of the Taliban forces was targeted by gunfire in the Suki region, in the Kunar Province. The camp sustained damage (Telegram, February 25, 2022).

The Maldives

- In a joint operation by the FBI and authorities from two EU countries on January 6, 2022, local security forces detained **Mohamed Zahir** on suspicion of being a senior local ISIS operative. At the time he was detained, he was in possession of electronic devices suspected of being used to disseminate ISIS propaganda. He has reportedly been active since 2015 and had called for terrorist acts on European soil (edition.mv, February 23, 2022).

Yemen

- Four ISIS operatives were detained in Taizz, in southwestern Yemen. The four reportedly planned to carry out an attack in the city (bawabatii.net, February 23, 2022).

Lebanon

- Lebanese security forces detained a squad of Palestinian ISIS operatives in the Ein al-Hilweh refugee camp. The members of the squad were handled by an ISIS operative in Syria and they planned to carry out three simultaneous attacks in the southern neighborhood of Beirut (Al-Dahiya al-Janubiya), a Hezbollah stronghold. The squad members had recruited young

people in the refugee camp to carry out the attacks. Weapons, ammunition and explosive belts were found in their possession (Huna Lubnan, February 23, 2022).



Right: Some of the weapons that were seized. Left: The explosive belts (Huna Lubnan, February 23, 2022)

Europe Russia

► Russian security forces thwarted a terrorist attack that was supposed to be carried out in the Kaluga region, about 150 km southwest of Moscow. The attack was supposed to be carried out by an ISIS operative from one of the Central Asian countries. During the counterterrorism operation, the security forces found materials for assembling IEDs, ammunition and a mobile phone containing correspondence with jihadists (Russia al-Youm, February 27, 2022).

The battle for hearts and minds

► The lead article in Al-Naba' weekly was entitled "We Continue, we do not Deviate [from the path]". The article praises ISIS's operatives who, despite the difficulties, continue to adhere to their faith and to jihad. The author notes that ISIS's loyal operatives are well aware that despite the difficulties, any deviation from the path of faith will lead to defeat, and therefore they have been steadfast for many years and do not deviate from the path. The author notes that the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, behaved the same way, basing his statements on verses from the Quran (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, February 24, 2022).

