



# Spotlight on Global Jihad

## May 5-11, 2022



### Main events of the past week

- ▶ **This week, there was a downtrend in ISIS activity around the globe in light of the end of its campaign of vengeance, which began on April 17, 2022, and ended on May 2, 2022.**
- ▶ **The Sinai Peninsula:** An officer and 16 Egyptian soldiers were killed in a terrorist attack aimed at damaging a water pumping facility in northwestern Sinai. ISIS's Sinai Province claimed responsibility for the attack.
- ▶ **Syria:** ISIS continued its attacks against the SDF (Kurdish) forces and the Syrian army.
- ▶ **Iraq:** There was a drop in the number of attacks in the wake of the end of the campaign of vengeance.
- ▶ **Afghanistan:** Operatives of ISIS's Khorasan Province fired rockets at a Tajikistan army headquarters near the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border.
- ▶ **Africa: ISIS has announced a new province, the Mozambique Province. Up to now, its activity in Mozambique was carried out as part of its Central Africa Province.** Several attacks were carried out against the armies of Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and against Christian civilians.
- ▶ Speaking in a video marking the 11th anniversary of Osama bin Laden's death, **Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri** said that since the events of September 11, 2001, the United States has been in a decline and its weakness has made Ukraine easy prey for Russia.
- ▶ A new Al-Qaeda magazine has been issued in Sudan, encouraging readers to join its ranks.

### Summary of ISIS's campaign of vengeance

- ▶ ISIS's Al-Naba weekly published an infographic according to which, during its campaign of vengeance, which began on April 17, 2022, and ended on May 2, 2022, ISIS carried out 245 attacks, in which 726 people were killed and wounded, including 23 officers and commanders. The attacks took various forms: assault and exchange of fire (93); detonation of IEDs (73); targeted killings (32); ambushes (11); blowing up parked car bombs (2); and other



## The desert region (Al-Badia)

► Syrian army positions were attacked near the Syria-Iraq-Jordan tri-border region. There were reportedly eight fatalities on both sides (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, May 8, 2022).

► Three Syrian soldiers were killed and two others were wounded in the explosion of a mine planted by ISIS in the desert region west of Al-Mayadeen (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, May 9, 2022).

## Deir ez-Zor-Al-Mayadeen

► On May 4, 2022, an SDF fighter was killed by gunfire on the Al-Kharafi road, between Deir ez-Zor and Al-Hasakah (Telegram, May 6, 2022). No reference to the incident by the Kurdish forces has been found.

## Al-Raqqah region

► On May 8, 2022, the SDF forces, supported by the US-led Global Coalition against ISIS, detained an ISIS commander and two of his escorts near Al-Raqqah (SDF Press, May 8, 2022; Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, May 8, 2022).



**The three detainees held by the Kurdish forces (SDF Press, May 8, 2022)**

## Southern Syria

► ISIS's Syria Province announced that its operatives had fired at a Syrian soldier in Maes, north of Daraa. He was killed (Telegram, May 9, 2022).

## Al-Hasakah region

► The Kurdish news agency ROJAVA noted that in April 2022, as part of ISIS's campaign of vengeance, there has been a sharp rise (184% compared to March 2022) in the number of attacks carried out by ISIS squads in the region controlled by the Kurds (Al-Hasakah Province and east of the provinces of Deir ez-Zor and Al-Raqqah). According to the news agency, in

April 2022, there were 54 ISIS attacks (32 were reported by ISIS). A total of 52 people were killed and 32 were wounded (ROJAVA, May 9, 2022).

► On May 9, 2022, an IED was activated against an SDF vehicle in the Maysara region, south of Al-Hasakah. One SDF fighter was killed and two others were wounded (Telegram, May 9, 2022).

### Idlib region

► On May 8, 2022, six Syrian opposition operatives were killed and four others were wounded by a guided missile fired at them by the Syrian army in the Al-Ghab Plain, in the southwest of the rebel enclave in Idlib. In response, the rebel forces fired rockets at the Syrian regime forces in the south of the rebel enclave. No casualties have been reported (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, May 8, 2022).

## The Iraqi arena



Provinces of Iraq (Wikipedia)

### Attacks by province

► **This week, there has been a decrease in the number of attacks following the end of ISIS's campaign of vengeance.**

### Diyala Province

► On May 5, 2022, an Iraqi army post was targeted by machine gun fire in the Jalula region, about 75 km northeast of Baqubah. One soldier was killed and three others were wounded (Telegram, May 6, 2022). An Iraqi military source confirmed the incident, saying that ISIS

operatives ambushed the soldiers, one soldier was killed, two others were wounded, and the attackers managed to flee (Shafaq, May 6, 2022).

► On May 4, 2022, four mortar shells were fired at an Iraqi army company headquarters in the village of Albu Hawad, on the outskirts of the Al-Azim region, about 60 km north of Baqubah. According to ISIS, definite hits were identified (Telegram, May 4, 2022). No reference to the incident by any official Iraqi source has been found.

### **Salah al-Din Province**

► ISIS's Iraq Province announced that on May 6, 2022, its operatives had fired a rocket at an Iraqi army base in Aboud, west of Tuz Khormato, about 100 km northeast of Samarra. The site sustained material damage (Telegram, May 7, 2022). No reference to the incident by any official Iraqi source has been found.

► On May 4, 2022, an Iraqi army post was targeted by machine gun fire west of Baiji. Several soldiers were wounded. A vehicle arriving on the scene to provide assistance was targeted by gunfire and put out of commission (Telegram, May 4, 2022). No reference to the incident by any official Iraqi source has been found.

### **Erbil Province**

► On the night of May 5, 2022, a checkpoint of the Kurdish Peshmerga forces was attacked in the southern Erbil Province. The checkpoint force returned fire and the ISIS operatives fled the scene. One Peshmerga fighter was wounded (Kurdistan 24, May 6, 2022).

## **Counterterrorism measures in Iraq**

### **Baghdad Province**

► The Iraqi army reported that three medium-echelon ISIS commanders wanted by the authorities had been detained in Baghdad (Khaliyat al-'lam al-Amni Facebook page, May 8, 2022).

### **Nineveh Province**

► On May 7, 2022, Iraqi Air Force planes attacked a vehicle of ISIS operatives in the Al-Khadr region, about 100 km southwest of Mosul. Several ISIS operatives were killed (Al-Sumaria, May 7, 2022).

## Sinai Peninsula

► An officer and 16 soldiers were killed and five others were wounded in a terrorist attack carried out, according to the Egyptian army spokesman, by Salafist-jihadi operatives (“Takfiri elements”). The aim of the attack was to damage a water pumping facility east of the Suez Canal, in northwestern Sinai. According to the army spokesman, the attack against the water facility was thwarted (Al-Arabiya, May 7, 2022). **ISIS’s Sinai Province claimed responsibility for the attack.** According to its statement, its operatives attacked an Egyptian army post west of Bir al-Abd and killed 17 soldiers. In addition, they took control of the post, seized equipment and weapons, and set the post on fire. According to ISIS, the operatives returned to their base unscathed. At the end of its statement, ISIS noted that “those who abandon Islam must know that this is partial revenge for [the regime’s attitude towards] the Muslim female prisoners [held] in Rafah and that jihad’s wheels in Sinai will continue to turn, Allah willing” (Telegram, May 8, 2022). According to another statement, released by ISIS’s Amaq News Agency, the Egyptian soldiers virtually did not resist (Telegram, May 8, 2022).



**Right: ISIS operatives getting ready for the attack. Left: One of the buildings being blown up (Telegram, May 10, 2022)**



**Right: The facility going up in flames. Left: Weapons seized by ISIS (Telegram, May 10, 2022)**

► **It should be noted that this was the largest attack in Sinai since July 2020<sup>2</sup>.** In addition, this is the first attempt to attack a water facility of tremendous importance for the residents of the region. So far, there have been recurrent attacks against the natural gas infrastructure in the Sinai Peninsula, which usually did not cause significant damage and allowed for a quick return to normal. The attack also raises the concern that ISIS in the Sinai Peninsula is trying to expand its region of activity beyond the boundaries where it usually operates (Rafah, Sheikh Zuweid, and Bir al-Abd) and get closer to the Suez Canal and even to the heart of Egypt.

► A fighter of the Sinai Tribal Union, which supports the Egyptian army, was killed on May 9, 2022, during an operation against ISIS in the region of Rafah and Sheikh Zuweid (@Sinaifhr Twitter account, May 9, 2022). In another incident, a soldier was killed while fighting against terrorists. However, the circumstances of his death were not specified (@Shohada2Masr Twitter account, May 9, 2022).

► ISIS's Sinai Province announced that on May 1, 2022, its operatives ambushed a Sinai Tribal Union patrol in the Al-Habraa region, west of Al-Barth, south of Rafah. At first, they activated an IED against the patrol and then exchanged fire with it. Six of the patrol fighters were killed or wounded (Telegram, May 4, 2022).

► ISIS's Sinai Province announced that on May 10, 2022, its operatives had activated an IED against a Sinai Tribal Union patrol near Balaa, west of Rafah. One fighter was killed and several others were wounded. On May 9, 2022, an IED was activated against a Sinai Tribal Union patrol south of Rafah. One fighter was killed and several others were wounded (Telegram, May 10, 2022).

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

► An infographic published by ISIS summing up its activity around the world between April 28, 2022, and May 4, 2022, indicates that ISIS carried out 80 attacks in its various provinces around the globe (compared to 128 in the previous week). The largest number of attacks was carried out in the Iraq Province (37). Attacks carried out in the other provinces: West Africa (16); Khorasan, i.e., Afghanistan (10); Syria (7); Sinai (3); Pakistan (2); Central Africa (2);

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<sup>2</sup> As for the attack against the Egyptian army camp near the village of Rabi'a, west of Bir al-Abd, see the ITIC's Information Bulletin from August 2, 2020, "An ISIS large-scale attack in the northern Sinai Peninsula demonstrates well the improvement in its operational capabilities and the weakness of the Egyptian security forces"



## ISIS activity in Africa<sup>3</sup>

### Nigeria

► Nine Christian residents of Kautikari, in Borno State, in northeastern Nigeria, were murdered by operatives of ISIS's West Africa Province who attacked the village on May 3, 2022 (theparadise.ng, May 4, 2022; vanguardngr.com, May 4, 2022). ISIS claimed responsibility for the incident, noting that 10 "Christian infidels" were killed in the incident and that its operatives set fire to several homes in the village and to property belonging to village residents (Telegram, May 6, 2022).

► At least six ISIS operatives were killed on May 5, 2022, by an IED and a mine that they were attempting to plant with the intention of attacking the Nigerian security forces in the northeastern part of Borno State, in northeastern Nigeria (vanguardngr.com, May 7, 2022).

► On May 4, 2022, ISIS operatives broke into the home of the commander of a militia loyal to the Nigerian army and shot and killed him. The attack was carried out in Damasak, on the Nigerian-Niger border, in northeastern Nigeria. They seized several rifles (Telegram, May 5, 2022). No reference to the incident by the Nigerian government was found.

► On May 3, 2022, a Nigerian army post was targeted by machine gun fire in Kawade, in northeastern Nigeria. The soldiers manning the post fled the scene. ISIS operatives took over the post, set it on fire, and seized its contents (Telegram, May 5, 2022). No reference to the incident by the Nigerian government has been found.

### Democratic Republic of the Congo

► Several attacks were carried out against Congolese army forces and Christian residents in the Beni region, about 50 km west of the Congo-Uganda border. A number of soldiers and several Christians were killed, and several others were wounded<sup>4</sup>.

### Mozambique

► **On May 9, 2022, ISIS announced a new province, the Mozambique Province. Up to now, ISIS's activity in Mozambique has been carried out as part of the Central Africa Province** (which operated in Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of the Congo). In the ITIC's assessment, this is a move whose main purpose is propaganda as part of ISIS's efforts to create the impression that its activity is expanding. In practice, its activity was carried out

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

<sup>4</sup>See details in the appendix.

separately in Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo as part of the Central Africa Province.

►The announcement came as part of the Mozambique Province's claim of responsibility for its first attack. According to the claim of responsibility, its operatives fired machine guns at a Mozambican army post in Kitrago, in the Macomia region of the Cabo Delgado Province in northeastern Mozambique. Three soldiers were killed, several others were wounded and the rest fled the scene. The post was set on fire and its contents were seized (Telegram, May 9, 2022). No reference to the incident by the Mozambican government has been found.

## **Burkina Faso**

►Seven soldiers and four civilian volunteers were ambushed and killed on May 5, 2022, in two separate attacks in northern Burkina Faso, in Solle and Ouanobe. It is believed that elements affiliated with Al-Qaeda or ISIS carried out the attacks (Al-Jazeera, May 6, 2022).

## **Morocco**

►An ISIS operative planning to carry out terrorist activity was arrested by the Moroccan authorities on May 6, 2022. The arrest was made with the help of the FBI (AFP, May 6, 2022).

## **Italy**

►Pope Francis has reportedly approved a million-euro payment to terrorists affiliated with Al-Qaeda in exchange for the release of a nun abducted by them (www.americamagazine.org, May 5, 2022).

## **The United States**

►The US Department of the Treasury has imposed sanctions on five ISIS operatives who formed a terror-financing network for ISIS. According to the Department of the Treasury, the network raised funds in Turkey and Indonesia for ISIS activity in Syria and allocated part of the funds for smuggling children of ISIS operatives outside the detention camps in Syria (US Department of the Treasury website, May 9, 2022)<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0772>

## ISIS activity in Asia<sup>6</sup>

### Afghanistan

► **General Mark A. Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the United States**, told the Senate that ISIS, along with other terrorist groups, was attempting to reorganize in Afghanistan, posing a threat to the United States (NDTV, May 6, 2022).

► On May 8, 2022, a Taliban post was attacked in the Muhmand Dara region, in the Nangarhar Province, near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Three Taliban members were killed (Telegram, May 9, 2022). No reference to the incident by the Taliban administration has been found.

► On May 7, 2022, an IED was activated against a Taliban governor's vehicle in the Khiwa area, in the Achin region, near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. The governor and some of his escorts were wounded (Telegram, May 7, 2022). No response from the Taliban administration to the incident has been found. An IED was activated against two Taliban members in Dikul, in the Suki region of the Kunar Province, near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Two Taliban members were wounded (Telegram, May 8, 2022). No response from the Taliban administration to the incident has been found.

### Tajikistan

► On May 7, 2022, nine rockets were fired at a Tajikistan army headquarters in the Khawajah Ghar area, in the Takhar region, near the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border (Telegram, May 7, 2022). Official sources in Tajikistan confirmed the information (Sputnik, May 8, 2022). It should be noted that on April 18, 2022, 10 rockets were fired at Uzbek army positions in the Termez region, in the south of the country, and near the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan border. This is further evidence of ISIS's attempt to use Afghanistan as a base for attacking its neighbors to the north.

### India

► Indian law enforcement agencies have uncovered an international network that helps finance terrorism and engages in money laundering and arms smuggling, operating under the name D-Company, which has many branches in India. The company is accused of being affiliated with the following terrorist organizations: Al-Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Jaysh Muhammad (www.republicworld.com, May 9, 2022).

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<sup>6</sup>Mainly according to ISIS's claims of responsibility posted on Telegram

## The Philippines

► A senior Philippine police official announced that on May 3, 2022, security forces arrested an ISIS recruiter and arms supplier in the Zamboanga Sibugay Province on the island of Mindanao in the southern Philippines. The detainee, 32-year-old Abdul Salikala, is a member of the gang against which an arrest warrant was issued as long ago as 2011 (Philippine News Agency, May 4, 2022). This case, like similar cases, once again illustrates the link between terrorism and crime.

## The battle for hearts and minds

### Video of Al-Qaeda's leader commemorating the 11th anniversary of Osama bin Laden's death

► Speaking in a video released on May 6, 2022, to mark the 11th anniversary of the death of Al-Qaeda's former leader Osama bin Laden, Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri says that since the events of September 11, 2001, the United States has been in a decline, in the wake of its vast expenses as a result of the war that it waged in Iraq and Afghanistan, and recently due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He adds that the weakness of the United States has made Ukraine easy prey for Russia. This is an attempt by Al-Zawahiri to glorify Bin Laden's life's work and his struggle against the West. In addition, Al-Zawahiri calls for Islamic unity (ABC NEWS, May 7, 2022).

### New Al-Qaeda magazine in Sudan

► Ansar al-Muslimin fi Bilad al-Sudan (i.e., Muslim supporters in Sudan), Al-Qaeda's branch in Sudan, has begun publishing a new English-language magazine called Sawt al-Qarra al-Samraa (i.e., The Voice of the Black Continent). The magazine's maiden issue is devoted mainly to an attempt to recruit supporters and operatives for the organization, while criticizing rival organizations, chiefly Boko Haram (Telegram, May 3, 2022).



Cover of the first issue (Telegram, May 3, 2022)

## Appendix

### Iraq

#### The Salah al-Din Province

- ▶ **On May 6, 2022**, RPG rockets were fired at Iraqi Army bases in Aboud, west of Tuz Khormato, about 100 km northeast of Samarra. The site suffered material damage (Telegram, May 7, 2022).
- ▶ **On Me 4, 2022**, an Iraqi army post was targeted by gunfire west of Baiji. Several soldiers were wounded. A vehicle arriving on the scene to provide assistance was attacked and put out of commission (Telegram, May 4, 2022).
- ▶ **On May 3, 2022**, four mortar shells were fired at an Iraqi army base near Al-Kawamat, west of Tuz Khormato (Telegram, May 4, 2022). No damage or casualties were reported.

#### The Diyala Province

- ▶ **On May 5, 2022**, an Iraqi army post was targeted by gunfire in the Jalula region, about 75 km northeast of Baqubah. One soldier was killed and three others were wounded (Telegram, May 6, 2022).
- ▶ **On May 4, 2022**, four mortar shells were fired at an Iraqi army company headquarters in the village of Albu Hawad, on the outskirts of the Al-Azim region 60 km north of Baqubah. According to ISIS, definite hits were identified (Telegram, May 4, 2022).
- ▶ **On May 3, 2022**, an Iraqi army post was targeted by gunfire near Al-Miqdadiya, about 40 km northeast of Baqubah. One soldier was killed and another was wounded. Two vehicles were put out of commission and a thermal camera and two electricity transformers were destroyed (Telegram, May 4, 2022).

## The Al-Anbar Province

► **On May 4, 2022**, a Tribal Mobilization vehicle was ambushed and targeted by gunfire on the Baiji-Haditha highway. The vehicle was damaged (Telegram, May 4, 2022).

## The Democratic Republic of the Congo

► **On May 7, 2022**, "Christian infidels" were targeted by gunfire on the Bolonjo-Cassindi highway, in the Beni region, about 50 km west of the Congo-Uganda border. One Christian was killed and several others were wounded. Three motorcycles belonging to the casualties were set on fire (Telegram, May 7, 2022).

► **On May 7, 2022**, a Congolese army patrol was targeted by gunfire on the Kikinji-Kombo road, in the Beni region. Several soldiers were wounded (Telegram, May 7, 2022).

► **On May 6, 2022**, a Congolese army camp was targeted by machine gun fire in the village of Lomi, in the Beni region. The soldiers fled the camp and the attackers looted the camp and set it on fire (Telegram, May 7, 2022).

► **On May 6, 2022**, in an exchange of fire with a Congolese army patrol force in Kikinji, in the Beni region, three soldiers were killed and several others were wounded. Weapons and ammunition were seized (Telegram, May 7, 2022).

► **On May 6, 2022**, in an exchange of fire with a Ugandan army patrol force in the Rwenzori region, near the Congo-Uganda border, an officer and a soldier were killed and several others were wounded (Telegram, May 6, 2022).