



Spotlight on Global Jihad

May 19-25, 2022



Main events of the past week

- ▶ **The downtrend in ISIS activity around the globe continued.**
- ▶ **Israel:** Israel Police arrested five Jerusalem residents on suspicion of membership in ISIS.
- ▶ **The Sinai Peninsula:** A relatively calm week after two weeks of intensive fighting between the Egyptian security forces and ISIS in northern Sinai.
- ▶ **Syria:** A large-scale operation by the Syrian army, pro-Iranian militias, and the Russian Air Force against ISIS in the desert region. A suicide bomber blew himself up among a group of Syrian soldiers in Jabal al-Akrad, about 50 km southwest of Idlib, killing two soldiers and wounding several others.
- ▶ **Iraq:** ISIS carried out a small number of attacks this week. The attacks were concentrated in the provinces of Kirkuk and Al-Anbar.
- ▶ **Afghanistan:** An ISIS suicide bomber blew himself up at a memorial service for one of the Taliban leaders in the city of Kabul. According to ISIS, several Taliban members were killed or wounded in the blast. The Taliban administration has imposed a media ban on the incident.
- ▶ **Africa:** Extensive counterterrorism activities by the Nigerian army and the African Coalition against ISIS's West Africa Province and Boko Haram in the northeast of the country. Following this, operatives of Boko Haram and the Al-Qaeda-affiliated Ansaru began moving to central Nigeria. According to an announcement by ISIS's Mozambique Province, its operatives attacked a Christian village in the northeastern province of Cabo Delgado, killing four soldiers.

Israel

- ▶ **Israeli Police arrested five Jerusalem residents suspected of membership in ISIS:** The Jerusalem district's central unit arrested five East Jerusalem residents in their thirties on suspicion of membership in ISIS. The suspects were transferred for questioning and their detention was extended (Israel Police Spokesperson's office, May 22, 2022).

The Sinai Peninsula

► This week, there was relative quiet, after two weeks of intensive fighting of the Egyptian security forces against ISIS in northern Sinai, especially in the village of Muqata'a, in the southern region of the city of Sheikh Zuweid.

ISIS's activity

► According to ISIS's Sinai Province, on May 23, 2022, its operatives activated an IED against a Sinai Tribal Union patrol in the village of Al-Faytat, south of Sheikh Zuweid. A Sinai Tribal Union fighter was killed and several others were wounded (Telegram, May 23, 2022). Local sources confirmed that a Sinai Tribal Union fighter was killed in the fighting against ISIS, without specifying the location and circumstances (Akhbar Sinaa al-Aan Facebook page, May 23, 2022).

► According to the Sinai Province, on May 22, 2022, its operatives activated an IED against a Sinai Tribal Union patrol on the outskirts of the village of Balaa, west of Rafah. One fighter was killed and several others were wounded (Telegram, May 22, 2022). Official sources confirmed that a fighter had been killed in the area while "carrying out his national duty," without specifying the circumstances (Akhbar Sinaa al-Aan Facebook page, May 22, 2022).

► On May 21, 2022, three children were wounded in the explosion of a mine, probably planted by ISIS, south of Al-Arish (Akhbar Sinaa al-Aan Facebook page, May 21, 2022).

Counterterrorism measures

► On May 24, 2022, the Egyptian security forces surrounded the village of Al-Faytat south of Sheikh Zuweid. This village is considered a stronghold of ISIS's Sinai Province. The purpose of the operation was to mop up the village from ISIS operatives and IEDs. The forces blocked traffic to the village and located many IEDs (Sinai Tribal Union's Twitter account, May 24, 2022).



Right: Blocked traffic in the village of Al-Fayat. Left: IEDs found in the village (Sinai Tribal Union's Twitter account, May 24, 2022)

► On May 19, 2022, an Egyptian army force killed an ISIS suicide bomber wearing an explosive belt and carrying hand grenades, an automatic rifle and four magazines in Al-Talul, in Bir al-Abd (northern Sinai). The suicide bomber managed to get close to the force and exchange fire with it before he was killed (Akhbar Sinaa al-Aan Facebook page, May 19, 2022).



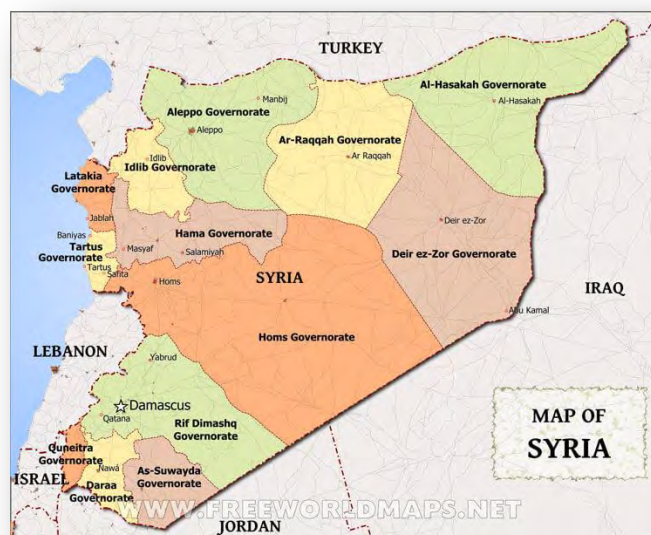
The body of the suicide bomber in Al-Talul, in northern Sinai (Sinai Tribal Union's Twitter account, May 19, 2022)

► The Egyptian army and Sinai Tribal Union fighters carried out searches in the village of Muqata'a, in the southern region of Sheikh Zuweid, and found equipment which was used by ISIS, including computers, electronic equipment, IEDs, a helmet, and a battery (Akhbar Sinaa al-Aan Facebook page, May 21, 2022).



ISIS equipment found in Muqata'a: computers, electronic equipment and IEDs (Akhbar Sinaa al-Aan Facebook page, May 21, 2022)

The Syrian arena



Map of the Syrian provinces (freeworldmaps.net)

The Idlib region

- ▶ A suicide bomber from one of the jihadi organizations operating in Syria (the organization's name was not mentioned) infiltrated Jabal al-Akrad (about 50 km southwest of Idlib) and blew himself up with his explosive belt among a group of Syrian soldiers. Two soldiers were killed and several others were wounded (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, May 20, 2022).
- ▶ HTS, the main organization in the rebel enclave in Idlib, detained a senior operative (emir) in the Ansar al-Islam jihadi organization, as part of the tension between HTS and other jihadi organizations operating in the enclave (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, May 24, 2022).

The desert region (Al-Badia)

► Contact was lost with an officer, a non-commissioned officer, and several Syrian soldiers who, on May 23, 2022, were part of an operation against ISIS squads in the Palmyra desert region. They have been declared missing in action and the Syrian army is trying to locate them (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, May 23, 2022).

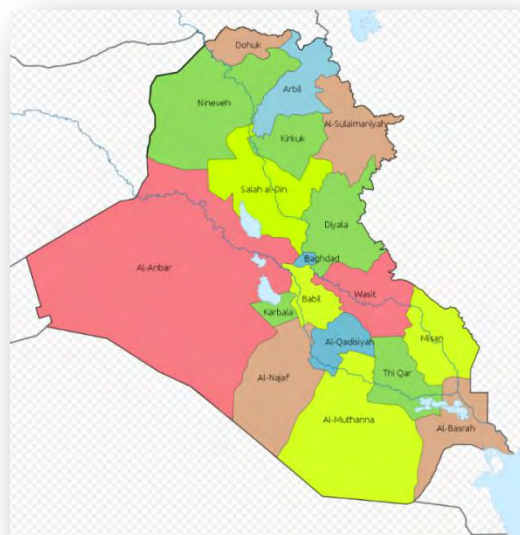
► The Syrian army and the pro-Iranian militias supporting it, with Russian air support, launched a large-scale operation against ISIS in the Syrian Desert. According to local sources, Wagner forces, which are mercenaries affiliated with the Russian government, are also taking part in the operation. The forces, consisting of 8,000 fighters, prepared for the operation during the last month. This is the first large-scale operation in the area in the past three years (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, May 20, 2022; Al-Araby al-Jadeed, May 21, 2022).

► ISIS operatives ambushed a group of Syrian soldiers in Wadi al-Zakara, in the rural area of Palmyra. Two soldiers were killed (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, May 20, 2022).

Al-Hasakah region

► According to ISIS's Syria Province, on May 21, 2022, its operatives attacked an SDF checkpoint in the Yarabiya region, northeast of Al-Hasakah, killing one SDF fighter (Telegram, May 21, 2022). No reference to the incident by the SDF forces has been found.

The Iraqi arena



Provinces of Iraq (Wikipedia)

ISIS attacks by province¹

► **This week, ISIS's attacks in Iraq were relatively few in number. On the other hand, ISIS's "economic war" in the Kirkuk Province was stepped up.**

Kirkuk Province

► **Economic attacks:** On May 20, 2022, ISIS operatives set fire to wheat owned by a mukhtar (village leader) and Tribal Mobilization fighters in the Daquq region (Telegram, May 21, 2022). Three days later, on May 23, 2022, ISIS operatives fired at village farmers in the Taza region, about 10 km south of Kirkuk, whose residents are Turkmen Shiites. Six farmers were killed and the wheat field and the agricultural equipment were set on fire (Al-Sumaria, May 23, 2022). In addition, ISIS's Iraq Province announced that its operatives had set fire to wheat belonging to Shiite civilians and the Tribal Mobilization in the Daquq region, in south Kirkuk. ISIS also announced that on the same day, its operatives had killed five Shiite farmers in their fields in a village in the Rashad region, about 40 km southwest of Kirkuk, and set fire to five machines used by them (Telegram, May 23, 2022). **Apparently, this is an ISIS attempt to step up the economic war against the Iraqi government,** especially in light of the wheat crisis and the rising prices around the globe.

Al-Anbar Province

► On May 23, 2022, ISIS operatives attacked an Iraqi army post near the Trebil border crossing, near the Iraq-Jordan border. A vehicle was destroyed and several soldiers were wounded (Telegram, May 23, 2022).

► On May 20, 2022, ISIS operatives attacked an Iraqi army post in the Arar region, near the border between Iraq and Saudi Arabia. One soldier was killed (Telegram, May 20, 2022).

Counterterrorism measures in Iraq

Salah al-Din Province

► Three ISIS operatives were killed in an Iraqi airstrike north of Lake Tharthar, in the southwestern Salah al-Din Province. An Iraqi army force arriving on the scene exchanged fire with two ISIS operatives wearing explosive belts and killed them (Al-Sumaria, May 22, 2022).

¹ According to ISIS claims of responsibility and the Iraqi media

Nineveh Province

► The Iraqi army found two ISIS tunnels in the Adaya Mountains, about 40 km southeast of Mosul. Inside the tunnels, the soldiers found three jerrycans of 20 liters each filled with C4 plastic explosives, three mortars, two IEDs, and three hand grenades (Baghdad al-Youm, May 22, 2022).

Summary of ISIS's activity in the various provinces

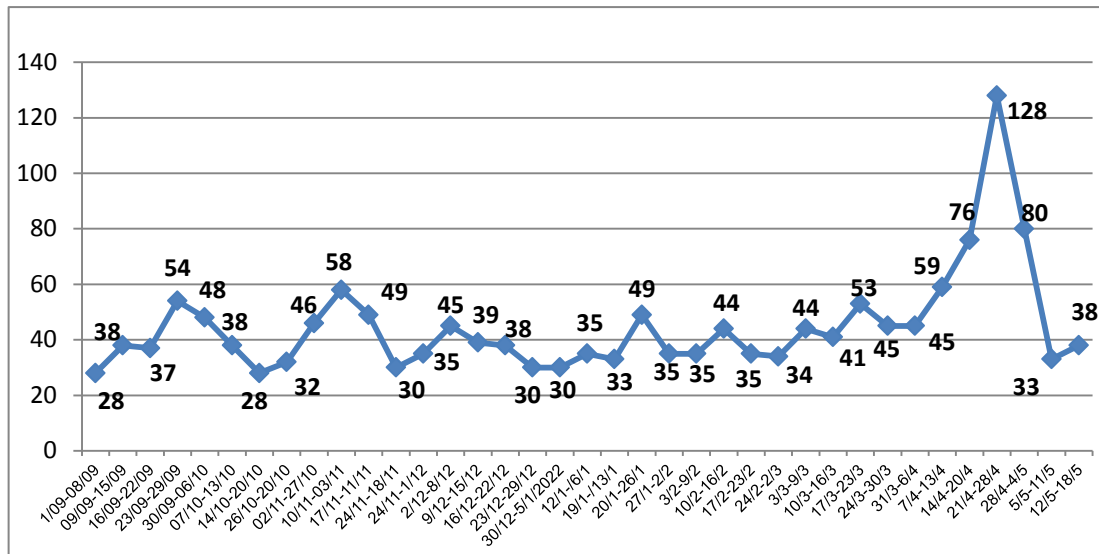
► An infographic published by ISIS summing up its activity around the world in the period between May 12 and May 18, 2022, indicates that the organization carried out 38 attacks in ISIS's various provinces around the globe (compared to 33 in the previous week). The largest number of attacks was carried out in the Iraq Province (12). Attacks carried out in the other provinces: West Africa (9); Sinai (6); Khorasan, i.e., Afghanistan (6); Syria (5). A total of 84 people were killed or wounded in the attacks, compared to 85 in the previous week. The largest number of casualties was in the Sinai Province (27). The other casualties were in the following provinces: Iraq (26); West Africa (15); Khorasan (11); and Syria (5) (Al-Naba weekly, Telegram, May 19, 2022).

► The infographic indicates that ISIS's activity was similar in scope to that of the previous week, except for the rise in activity of the Iraq Province at the expense of the decline in ISIS's activity in the African provinces. In addition, there was an uptrend in ISIS's activity in Sinai.



Summary of ISIS attacks (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, May 19, 2022)

ISIS attacks by week (according to ISIS data)



Africa

► **Lake Chad killings:** On May 21, 2022, a special unit of the African Coalition (MNJTF)² killed 14 operatives of ISIS's West Africa Province in Lake Chad, in northeastern Nigeria (leadership.ng, May 21, 2022). On the same day, the Nigerian Air Force, which operates as part of the African Coalition, attacked a convoy of vehicles of ISIS operatives in the same area, killing several operatives (www.vanguardngr.com, May 21, 2022). On May 22, 2022, an African Coalition force uncovered a fish market used for funding ISIS's West Africa Province in Lake Chad and arrested 30 merchants who collaborated with ISIS (ripplesnigeria.com, May 22, 2022).

► **Chad calls on Mali not to resign from the 5G:** Chad has called on Mali to reconsider its decision of May 15, 2022 to withdraw from the Sahel Coalition (G5 Sahel), which operates against Islamic terror elements and mainly against elements affiliated with ISIS and Al-Qaeda in the Sahel region. The coalition includes Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso and Niger. Mali announced its withdrawal on the grounds of ineffectiveness, but it is also possible that the local government initiated the withdrawal in an attempt to maintain internal arrangements in the country (www.usnews.com, May 20, 2022). According to a report from May 20, 2022, Italian civilians – a couple and their son – were abducted by Islamic militants in southern Mali (Reuters, May 20, 2022).

²To use its official name: the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), consisting of forces from Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Benin and Niger.

Nigeria

▶ According to official Nigerian sources and eyewitnesses, at least 50 civilians were killed on May 22, 2022, by armed men near the town of Rann, in northeastern Nigeria, about 7 km from the Nigeria-Cameroon border (Reuters, May 23, 2022). No one has claimed responsibility for the incident, but ISIS's West Africa Province or Boko Haram are believed to be responsible for the killings (Reuters, May 23, 2022; dailypost.ng, May 24, 2022).

▶ A total of 30 civilians were killed by operatives of ISIS's West Africa Province on May 21, 2022, in the village of Mudu, in the Dikwa region, about 50 km from the Nigeria-Cameroon border, in northeastern Nigeria). ISIS has not claimed responsibility for the incident (AFP, May 24, 2022).

▶ According to an announcement by ISIS's West Africa Province, on May 22, 2022, its operatives attacked a Nigerian army checkpoint on the Wajiroko-Damboia highway in Borno State, in northeastern Nigeria. Several soldiers were wounded (Telegram, May 23, 2022).

▶ On May 21, 2022, ISIS operatives fired machine guns at a Nigerian police patrol on the Jakana-Mainok highway, in Borno State, in northeastern Nigeria. Seven soldiers were killed (Telegram, May 22, 2022).

▶ On May 19, 2022, ISIS operatives detonated an IED against a Nigerian army armored vehicle on the Arigi-Abadam highway in Borno State, in northeastern Nigeria. Several soldiers in the vehicle were wounded (Telegram, May 19, 2022).

▶ On May 22, 2022, armed men, apparently operatives of ISIS's West Africa Province, shot at a police vehicle on the Maiduguri-Damaturu highway in Borno State, in northeastern Nigeria. Two policemen were killed (humanglemedia.com, May 22, 2022).

▶ According to official sources in Nigeria, operatives of Boko Haram and the Al-Qaeda-affiliated Ansaru organization are moving to the Birnin-Gwari and Chikun forests in the western part of Kaduna State, in central Nigeria. They are doing so due to difficulties that they are encountering in the Sambisa Forest, in the northeast of the country, where the Nigerian army has recently been fighting intensively against them (VOA, May 20, 2022). It should be noted that last week, local officials in Kaduna State expressed concern over reports that Boko Haram and Ansaru were collaborating and recruiting young locals in the Birnin-Gwari forests (vanguardngr.com, May 14, 2022).

Mozambique

►According to a report by ISIS's Mozambique Province, on May 21, 2022, its operatives attacked the Christian village of Nakawi, in the Cabo Delgado Province, in northeastern Mozambique. Four soldiers were killed in an exchange of fire with a Mozambican army force (Telegram, May 23, 2022). No reference to the incident by the local government has been found.

Chad

►According to an announcement by ISIS's West Africa Province, on May 22, 2022, its operatives abducted and executed three Christian residents in the Litri region, on the Chad-Nigeria border and in the Lake Chad region (Telegram, May 22, 2022).

Democratic Republic of the Congo

►According to an announcement by ISIS's Central Africa Province, on May 22, 2022, its operatives fired machine guns at forces of militias loyal to the Congolese army in the village of Nadimo in the Ituri region, about 50 km west of the Congo-Uganda border. The militia fighters fled the scene (Telegram, May 23, 2022). On May 21, 2022, ISIS operatives attacked a Congolese army camp in the eastern Congo region of Rwenzori, not far from the border with Uganda. Three soldiers were killed in the exchange of fire and the rest fled. ISIS operatives seized weapons and ammunition (Telegram, May 21, 2022).

►**Terrorist attack against Christian civilians:** According to an announcement by ISIS's Central Africa Province, on May 19, 2022, its operatives attacked the Christian village of Kazaruhu, in the Ituri region. A total of 12 residents were murdered. In addition, several homes and motorcycles were set on fire (Telegram, May 20, 2022).

Burkina Faso

►On May 22, 2022, armed men attacked two villages in the northern province of Seno. At least 11 civilians were murdered. No one has claimed responsibility for the incident, but jihadi elements affiliated with Al-Qaeda and ISIS are known to operate in the region (Reuters, May 22, 2022).

►According to official sources in Burkina Faso, 11 Burkinian soldiers were killed and about 20 others were wounded in an attack carried out by militants against a Burkinian army base in Madjoari, in the southeast of the country and not far from the border with Benin. The Burkina Faso Air Force chased the assailants, killing 15 of them. No one has claimed responsibility for

the incident, but jihadi elements affiliated with Al-Qaeda and ISIS are known to operate in the region (Al-Jazeera, May 20, 2022).

Morocco

► According to an announcement by the Directorate of Prisons and Rehabilitation of Prisoners in Morocco, as at May 16, 2022, there are 842 detainees in Moroccan prisons due to terrorism and ideological extremism. A total of 91.1% of them are affiliated with ISIS and the rest with other Salafist-jihadi factions (24 Sa'ah, May 20, 2022).

Asia

Afghanistan

► **Suicide bombing attack in Kabul:** According to an announcement by ISIS's Khorasan Province, a suicide bomber wearing an explosive belt blew himself up at the gate of the Istiqlal Hotel in Kabul, where a memorial service was being held for a former Taliban leader. The service was attended by senior Taliban figures. The terrorist managed to evade security until he reached the hotel gate and activated his explosive belt among the attendees. According to ISIS, several Taliban members were killed or wounded in the blast (Telegram, May 22, 2022). The Afghan government imposed a media ban on the incident and did not provide details about the incident or the casualties.



The suicide bomber who carried out the attack in Kabul (Telegram, May 22, 2022)

► **This week, ISIS carried out several IED attacks³:**

◆ On May 20, 2022, an IED was activated against a vehicle carrying Shiite civilians in the city of Kunduz, about 250 km north of Kabul. At least 10 passengers were killed or wounded (Telegram, May 20, 2022).

³According to ISIS's claims of responsibility

◆ On May 21, 2022, an IED was activated against a Taliban vehicle in the city of Kabul.

The passengers were killed or wounded (Telegram, May 23, 2022).

◆ On May 18, 2022, an IED was activated against a minibus carrying Taliban members in the city of Mazar-i Sharif. At least 10 Taliban members in the minibus were killed or wounded (Telegram, May 18, 2022).

◆ On May 17, 2022, an IED was activated against a Taliban vehicle in the city of Kabul. Five Taliban members traveling in the vehicle were killed or wounded (Telegram, May 17, 2022).

► **Targeted killings:** In three separate incidents, ISIS operatives armed with handguns shot and killed five Taliban members in the cities of Kunduz and Taloqan (in northeastern Afghanistan) and in the Nangarhar province (Telegram, May 18-19, 2022)⁴.

► **Economic attack:** ISIS operatives used IEDs to blow up three high-voltage pylons in the Tankhi Tashkargan region in the province of Samangan, in northern Afghanistan. The pylons collapsed (Telegram, May 23, 2022).

Pakistan

► On May 19, 2022, operatives of ISIS's Khorasan Province fired machine guns at a Pakistani police officer in the Peshawar region, near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. The officer and a policeman accompanying him were killed (Telegram, May 19, 2022).

Indonesia

► According to reports, 22 Islamic extremists who were arrested on May 14, 2022, had pledged allegiance to ISIS's leader and posted their pledge of allegiance on one of the social media apps. They were arrested in Sulawesi, an Indonesian island east of Australia where Islamic extremists operate. They are reportedly affiliated with the East Indonesia Mujahideen (MIT) network, which operates on the island (Reuters, May 17, 2022).

Turkey

► On May 17, 2022, Turkey's counterterrorism unit detained 10 suspected ISIS operatives who hold foreign citizenship. Nine of them were detained in Kocaeli Province, east of Istanbul. The 10th was detained in Kayseri Province, in the center of the country (Anatolia News Agency, May 17, 2022).

⁴For details, see the Appendix.

Europe

Britain

► On May 20, 2022, 20-year-old **Nuh Raheel** from Birmingham was convicted of possession of ISIS training materials and was sentenced to three and a half years in prison. Raheel was arrested after a search of his home in October 2020, when a concealed mobile phone containing the training materials was found (standard.co.uk, May 21, 2022).

The battle for hearts and minds

► The editorial of this week's issue of ISIS's *Al-Naba* weekly was entitled "What [will happen] if jihad is abandoned?" and stresses the importance of the value of jihad in the eyes of ISIS. According to the author, if jihad is not maintained, monotheism is compromised and polytheism spreads; The principle of *Al-Walaa wal-Baraa* (i.e., loyalty to Allah and separation from the infidels) is compromised; the distinction between infidels and believers is canceled; Islamic law (Sharia) is not enforced; abandonment of Islam is becoming acceptable; and migration to the State of Islam (Dar al-Islam) is canceled. The author ends the article by calling on ISIS's operatives and supporters to uphold jihad, impose Sharia, exhaust the infidels and defeat them (*Al-Naba* weekly, Telegram, May 19, 2022).



The article on the importance of the value of jihad (*Al-Naba*, Telegram, May 19, 2022)

Appendix

Additional ISIS attacks (according to the organization's statements)

Syria

The Al-Hasakah region

► **On May 15, 2022**, an SDF vehicle was targeted by gunfire south of Al-Hasakah. The vehicle was put out of commission. Apparently, there were no casualties (Telegram, May 16, 2022).

Iraq

Salah al-Din Province

► **On May 23, 2022**, an Iraqi army patrol was targeted by machine gun fire west of Tuz Khormato, about 100 km northeast of Samarra. One soldier was wounded (Telegram, May 23, 2022).

► **On May 23, 2022**, RPG rockets were fired at an Iraqi army post. It sustained damage (Telegram, May 23, 2022).

Kirkuk Province

► **On May 22, 2022**, a Shiite civilian was abducted and beheaded in the Daquq region, in Kirkuk's southern periphery (Telegram, May 23, 2022).

Nigeria

► **On May 16, 2022**, an IED was activated against a Nigerian army armored vehicle in the village of Arigi, in Borno State, in northeastern Nigeria. The vehicle was put out of commission and the passengers on board were killed or wounded (Telegram, May 17, 2022).

Afghanistan

► **On May 19, 2022**, a Taliban member was targeted by gunfire and critically wounded in the Kunar Province (Telegram, May 21, 2022).

► **On May 19, 2022**, three Shiites were targeted by gunfire in the city of Kunduz, about 250 km north of Kabul, near the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border. Two were killed and the third was wounded (Telegram, May 19, 2022).

► **On May 19, 2022**, a Taliban member was targeted by gunfire in the city of Taloqan, in northeastern Afghanistan (about 50 km from the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border), and his weapon was seized (Telegram, May 19, 2022).

► **On May 18, 2022**, two Taliban members were shot to death in the Nangarhar Province and (Telegram, May 18, 2022).

► **On May 15, 2022**, two Taliban members were targeted by machine gun fire in the Nurgal district in the Kunar Province in northeastern Afghanistan. One of them was killed and the other was wounded (Telegram, May 18, 2022).