



Spotlight on Global Jihad

October 20-26, 2022



Main events of the past week

► **ISIS's relatively moderate activity around the world continues. On the other hand, the Al-Qaeda-affiliated Al-Shabaab Organization in Somalia continues its intensive activity against the Somali government.**

► **Sinai Peninsula:** Despite the significant decrease in the scope of ISIS activity, this week, the organization managed to kill two Sinai Tribal Union fighters.

► **Syria:** ISIS carried out several attacks against the Kurdish SDF forces in the Deir ez-Zor-Al-Mayadeen and the Al-Hasakah regions.

► **Iraq:** The Iraqi forces' counterterrorism activity against ISIS continues, alongside sporadic attacks carried out by ISIS in the country. The spokesman for the Iraqi Joint Operations Command noted that from the beginning of 2022, ISIS had lost over 150 commanders and as a result lost its command and control capabilities.

► **Africa:** According to a report by an American research institute, the number of terrorist incidents with Islamic background in Africa in the last decade increased by 300 percent.

Nigeria: Militants, apparently Boko Haram or ISIS operatives, raided a medical center in Niger State. In addition, it has been reported that ISIS's West Africa Province and Boko Haram set up camps in Zamfara State, in northwestern Nigeria. This may indicate the expansion of those organizations to other states in Nigeria. **The Democratic Republic of the Congo:**

Seven Christian residents were murdered by ISIS operatives in a village west of the Congo-Uganda border. **Somalia:** This week, there was intensive activity by Al-Shabaab Organization in the southwestern and central parts of the country. The most prominent incident was a terrorist attack on a hotel in the port city of Kismayo in southwestern Somalia, in which nine people were killed and 47 were wounded.

► **France:** French cement firm Lafarge pleaded guilty in a US federal court in Brooklyn, New York, to transferring funds to ISIS and the Al-Nusra Front. It agreed to pay \$777 million as part of the plea agreement.

► **Russia:** Members of an ISIS squad planning to carry out attacks in the southwest of the country were detained.

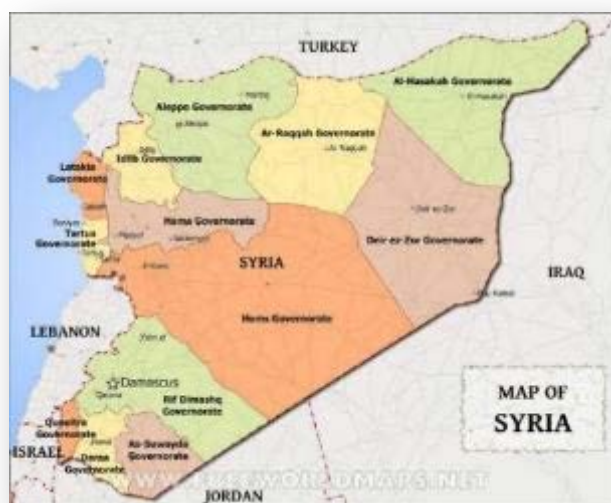
The Sinai Peninsula

ISIS activity

► On October 20, 2022, a Sinai Tribal Union fighter was targeted by gunfire and killed south of Bir al-Abd, in northern Sinai (Telegram, October 23, 2022). The following day, the Facebook page of the Sinai Tribal Union in the Bir al-Abd region reported that one of the Union fighters by the name of Ali Suleiman was killed, without mentioning the circumstances (Facebook page of the Sinai Tribal Union in the Bir al-Abd region, October 21, 2022). The fighter was apparently killed in that incident.

► On October 20, 2022, a Sinai Tribal Union force was targeted by sniper fire in the Jalbanah region, in northwestern Sinai, about 20 km from the Suez Canal. One fighter was killed (Telegram, October 20, 2022).

The Syrian arena¹



Map of Syria's provinces (freeworldmaps.net)

Idlib region

► On October 23-24, 2022, a Syrian soldier and a rebel fighter were killed in exchanges of artillery fire between the Syrian army and the rebel forces in the Idlib enclave (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, October 23-24, 2022).

¹ According to ISIS claims of responsibility on Telegram and the Arab media.

Deir ez-Zor-Al-Mayadeen region

- ▶ On October 25, 2022, militants, apparently ISIS operatives, fired two RPG rockets at a water pumping station where SDF forces were staying, in the village of Al-Zar, in the Al-Basira region. The SDF forces sent reinforcements to the area. No casualties were reported (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, October 25, 2022).
- ▶ On October 21, 2022, an SDF compound was targeted by gunfire and an RPG rocket in the village of Daman, about 25 km north of Al-Mayadeen. One SDF fighter was wounded, and the compound was damaged (Telegram, October 22, 2022).
- ▶ On October 19, 2022, an SDF “spy” was targeted by gunfire and killed in the Al-Azba region, about 10 km northeast of Deir ez-Zor (Telegram, October 20, 2022).
- ▶ On October 19, 2022, a vehicle carrying an interrogator and a “spy” of the SDF forces was targeted by gunfire in the town of Al-Basira, about 15 km north of Al-Mayadeen. The two were killed. The vehicle was damaged (Telegram, October 19, 2022).

Al-Hasakah region

- ▶ On October 22, 2022, an IED was activated against an SDF vehicle on the Maysara road, about 80 km south of Al-Hasakah. One SDF fighter was wounded (Telegram, October 23, 2022).

Counterterrorism activity

Aleppo region

- ▶ On October 22, 2022, a Turkish-backed force operating in collaboration with Turkish intelligence arrested four ISIS commanders and five operatives in the city of Al-Bab, about 30 km northeast of Aleppo. The operatives intended to carry out terrorist attacks in Al-Bab and on Turkish soil. A large reservoir of digital materials found in the operatives’ apartments was seized (Anatolia News Agency, October 23, 2022).

Southern Syria

- ▶ On October 22, 2022, fighters of local factions loyal to the Syrian army blew up two houses that were used by ISIS commanders as command posts and an Islamic court (Mahkamah Shar’iyyah). One of the houses was situated on a farm of Abu Abd al-Rahman al-Iraqi, who had served as ISIS’s commander in the city of Jassem (about 20 km east of the Syria-Israel border) and was killed on October 15, 2022, in an operation carried out by the factions in the city. The other house had been used by an ISIS commander by the name of Abu Zaid Sabinah,

of the town of Sabinah, on the southern outskirts of Damascus (Al-Araby al-Jadeed, October 23, 2022).

The Iraqi arena



Provinces of Iraq (Wikipedia)

ISIS attacks by province²

Diyala Province

► On October 20, 2022, there was an exchange of fire between ISIS and an Iraqi police force about 10 km north of Baqubah. A chief superintendent (muqaddam) was killed and two policemen were wounded (Al-Sumaria, October 20, 2022).

Kirkuk Province

► On October 20, 2022, four mortar shells were fired at Iraqi police vehicles south of Daquq, about 40 km south of Kirkuk. No damage or casualties were reported (Telegram, October 20, 2022).

² According to ISIS claims of responsibility and the Iraqi media



Mortar shells being fired by ISIS at Iraqi police vehicles (Telegram, October 22, 2022)

Salah al-Din Province

► On October 20, 2022, an Iraqi army patrol was ambushed and targeted by gunfire while operating in the Tarmiyah region, about 30 km north of Baghdad. One soldier was killed and four others were wounded (Telegram, October 20, 2022).

Counterterrorism activity

Security forces' announcement: ISIS lost 150 commanders since the beginning of the year

► **Major General (Liwa) Tahsin al-Khafaji, the spokesman for the Joint Operations Command of the Iraqi security forces**, announced that from the beginning of 2022 until October 18, 2022, ISIS had lost over 150 commanders and as a result, the organization had lost its command and control capabilities. Most of the commanders had been killed in airstrikes carried out by the Iraqi Air Force. Furthermore, according to Khafaji, the Iraqi Border Police and Iraqi army managed to close the border with Syria and placed cameras and watch towers to prevent infiltration by ISIS operatives. According to him, there exists collaboration with the Kurdish Peshmerga forces regarding manhunts to capture infiltrators and anyone attempting to cross the border. In everything pertaining to the region controlled by the Kurdish SDF forces in Syria, there exists collaboration with the Syrian Defense Ministry and the US-led Global Coalition (Iraqi News Agency, October 18, 2022).

Diyala Province

► On October 23, 2022, the Iraqi security forces arrested nine ISIS operatives in the Diyala Province. One of the detainees was responsible for the blowing up of a religious tomb compound (Al-Sumaria, October 23, 2022).

Erbil Province

► On October 23, 2022, an Iraqi Counterterrorism Unit force operating on intelligence received from the Erbil Province security apparatus arrested three ISIS operatives (Iraqi Counterterrorism Unit Facebook page, October 23, 2022).

Al-Anbar Province

► On October 19, 2022, an Iraqi army force arrested six noteworthy ISIS operatives who had been wanted by the Iraqi security forces (SecMedCell Facebook page, October 19, 2022).



The six detained ISIS operatives (SecMedCell Facebook page, October 19, 2022)

Nineveh Province

► A Popular Mobilization force located an ISIS weapons cache, which contained about 40 mortar shells, in the Al-Samaqiya region, north of Mosul (Twitter account of the Popular Mobilization Directorate, October 25, 2022).



Mortar shells found north of Mosul (Twitter account of the Popular Mobilization Directorate, October 25, 2022)

Summary of ISIS's activity in the various provinces

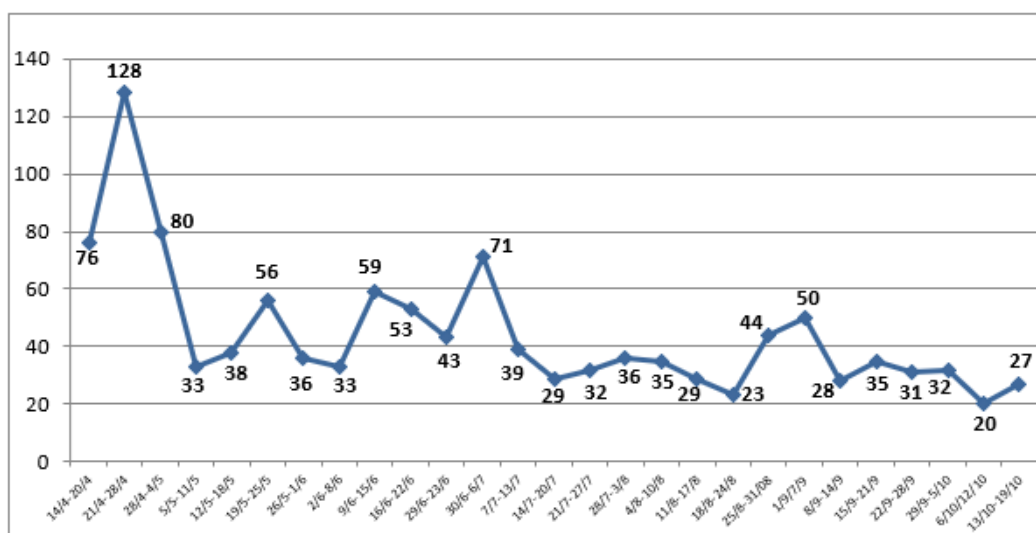
► An infographic published by ISIS, summing up its activity around the world in the period of October 13-19, 2022, indicates that the organization carried out 27 attacks in its various provinces around the globe (compared to 20 in the previous week). The largest number of

attacks was carried out by ISIS's West Africa Province (11). Attacks carried out in the other provinces: Mozambique (4); Khorasan, i.e., Afghanistan (3); Pakistan (3); Iraq (2); Syria (2); and Sinai (2). A total of 45 people were killed or wounded in the attacks, compared to 54 in the previous week. The largest number of casualties was in the West Africa Province (15). The other casualties were in the following provinces: Pakistan (10); Syria (6); Khorasan, i.e., Afghanistan (5); Mozambique (5); Sinai (3); and Iraq (1) (Al-Naba weekly, Telegram, October 20, 2022). **The infographic reflects a continuation of ISIS's relatively limited scope of activity. Africa continues to lead in the number of attacks.**



Summary of ISIS attacks (Al-Naba, Telegram, October 20, 2022)

ISIS attacks by week (according to ISIS data)



Africa

Dramatic increase over the last decade in the scope of Islamic terrorism in Africa

► According to a report published in August 2022 by Africa Center for Strategic Studies, an American research institute that studies security issues relating to Africa, the number of terrorist incidents with Islamic background in Africa increased by 300 percent in the last decade. Over 6,200 violent incidents with Islamic background have taken place in Africa since the beginning of 2022, meaning a 21 percent increase compared to last year's data. About 15,000 people were killed in those incidents. About 95 percent of the increase since 2019 has been in Somalia and the western Sahel region. In addition, the report notes that the US Army Africa Command (AFRICOM) holds about 6,000 US soldiers on African soil, most of them in West Africa and Djibouti (Air Force Times, October 19, 2022).³

Nigeria

ISIS and Boko Haram set up camps in Zamfara State

► The government of Zamfara State in northwestern Nigeria announced that operatives of ISIS's West Africa Province and Boko Haram set up camps in the state. This is the first report by the Zamfara State government on the existence of ISIS camps on its territory. Thus, it appears that ISIS and Boko Haram expand their activity in northwestern Nigeria, probably due to the pressure exerted on them by the Nigerian army in Borno State, in northeastern Nigeria. In the northwest, Zamfara State is bordered by Niger and the operatives probably cross the border for purposes of escape, provision of supplies, and ties with Islamic networks operating across the border (TVC News Nigeria YouTube channel, October 18, 2022).

³ <https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-military>



Zamfara State in northwestern Nigeria (Google Maps)

ISIS activity

- ▶ On October 23, 2022, a Nigerian army convoy was ambushed and targeted by gunfire on the Katavila-Mararaba road in Adamawa State, about 10 km west of the Nigeria-Cameroon border. One soldier was killed and several others were wounded (Telegram, October 24, 2022).
- ▶ On October 22, 2022, three militia fighters loyal to the Nigerian army were abducted in the Karinoa region, in Borno State. The three were interrogated and then shot to death (Telegram, October 24, 2022).
- ▶ On October 22, 2022, an IED was activated against a Nigerian army patrol on the road between the towns of Sabon Gari and Wajiroko, about 100 km southwest of Maiduguri. The passengers on board an armored vehicle were killed or wounded and the vehicle was destroyed (Telegram, October 24, 2022).
- ▶ On October 19, 2022, militants, apparently Boko Haram or ISIS operatives, raided a medical center in Niger State in western Nigeria. Two patients were shot to death and about 20 were abducted (Prensa Latina, October 19, 2022).⁴

Counterterrorism activity

- ▶ On October 23, 2022, a total of 10 operatives of ISIS's West Africa Province were killed in a Nigerian Air Force airstrike in the Lake Chad region (thecable.ng, October 24, 2022).
- ▶ In September and October 2022, Nigerian army forces carried out patrols and ambushed Boko Haram and ISIS operatives in extensive areas known as their strongholds in Borno State, in the northeast of the country. The said activity took place in the Bama region, about 60 km

⁴ <https://www.plenglish.com/news>

southeast of Maiduguri, in regions near the Nigeria-Cameroon border and near the Nigeria-Niger border, the Sambisa Forest southwest of Bama, and the Chad Lake region. A total of 49 Boko Haram and ISIS operatives were reportedly killed and 107 were arrested (The Guardian, a Nigerian news website, October 23, 2022).

► On October 6-20, 2022, Nigerian army forces operated against ISIS throughout the country. A total of 31 ISIS operatives were killed, 10 were arrested, and two hostages were freed. It has been noted that among 70 people arrested in northeastern Nigeria, 60 had served as ISIS logistical supporters and attended, among other things, to the provision of grains, ammunition, and fuel (365 Daily, October 20, 2022).

The Democratic Republic of the Congo

► On October 19, 2022, a Congolese army compound was attacked in the Christian village of Maboya, about 55 km west of the Congo-Uganda border. The soldiers fled and ammunition was seized. Seven Christian residents were reportedly murdered and several buildings and homes of Christian residents were set on fire (Telegram, October 20, 2022).



**Homes of Christian residents going up in flames in the village of Maboya
(Telegram, October 24, 2022)**

Niger

► Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), Al-Qaeda's branch in the Sahel region, claimed responsibility for an attack carried out on October 23, 2022, against a Nigerien army checkpoint in the Tillabéri region in western Niger, about 160 km of the Niger-Mali-Burkina Faso tri-border area. According to JNIM, five collaborators with France were killed. The organization's operatives seized five military vehicles, weapons, and ammunition (Telegram, October 25, 2022).

Mali

► Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) claimed responsibility for two attacks in the Macina region, in central Mali. The first was an attack against a Malian army checkpoint on

October 21, 2022. According to JNIM, two soldiers were killed (Telegram, October 25, 2022). The second was the blowing up of six motorcycles belonging to the Malian army and the Russian Wagner Group on October 23, 2022 (Telegram, October 25, 2022).

Somalia

The Al-Shabaab Organization

► Operatives of the Al-Qaeda-affiliated Al-Shabaab Organization carried out three prominent attacks this week:

- ◆ On October 23, 2022, a car bomb was detonated at the entrance of Tawakal Hotel in Kismayo, a port city in southwestern Somalia. Immediately afterward, Al-Shabaab operatives stormed the hotel. The Somali security forces exchanged fire with the attackers and killed them. Nine people were killed, including students and other civilians, and 47 were wounded. Al-Shabaab Organization claimed responsibility for the attack (Reuters, October 23, 2022).



Tawakal Hotel, the target of the attack by Al-Shabaab Organization (Somalia Eye@Somalia_eye Twitter account, October 24, 2022)

- ◆ On October 19, 2022, a car bomb was detonated at a checkpoint close to government buildings and a military base of African Union soldiers of the peacekeeping force from Djibouti. The explosion took place in the town of Jalalaqzi, in the Hiran Province, west of Mogadishu. A total of 15 people were killed, including the mayor, the chief of the province police, soldiers who manned the checkpoint, and passersby (VOA, October 19, 2022).
- ◆ On October 19, 2022, a motorcycle bomb was activated on a bridge in the town of Bulobarde, about 190 km north of Mogadishu. The bridge connects the southern region to central Somalia. Six people, including four civilians, were killed. The bridge was damaged (VOA, October 19, 2022)

Asia

Afghanistan

- ▶ On October 23, 2022, an IED was activated against a Taliban vehicle in Kabul. The passengers on board were killed or wounded. The vehicle was put out of commission (Telegram, October 23, 2022).
- ▶ On October 22, 2022, a sticky bomb was activated against a Taliban vehicle in the city of Taloqan, the capital of Takhar Province, in northeastern Afghanistan. Two Taliban members were killed and three others were wounded. So far, no organization has claimed responsibility for the attack, but it was probably ISIS (Khaama Press, October 23, 2022).⁵

Counterterrorism activity

- ▶ On October 22, 2022, Taliban forces operated against two ISIS hiding places:
 - ◆ A hiding place in the Takhar Province, in northeastern Afghanistan. Four ISIS operatives were killed, including two commanders (Khaama Press, October 25, 2022).
 - ◆ A hiding place in Kabul. Six ISIS operatives and one Taliban member were killed in the attack. The operatives who were killed had been responsible for two suicide bombing attacks that recently took place in the city, in a Mosque and in an educational center of the Hazara Shiite minority (Reuters, October 22, 2022).

Pakistan

- ▶ On October 22, 2022, a Pakistan police officer was targeted by gunfire and killed in the southwestern part of Peshawar, about 50 km east of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border (Telegram, October 22, 2022).
- ▶ On October 21, 2022, a “sorcerer” was targeted by gunfire and killed in a village in the Punjab Province, about 25 km northwest of Islamabad (Telegram, October 21, 2022).

India

- ▶ On October 19, 2022, the Indian National Investigation Agency (NIA) operating in Varanasi, in the state of Uttar Pradesh in northern India, arrested Basit Kalam Siddiqui, a senior ISIS operative. He was charged with the preparation of IEDs, training, and the use of social media to instigate violence and promote radicalization among youth in India to recruit them to carry out terrorist attacks in the country (Republic World, October 20, 2022).

⁵ <https://www.khaama.com/taliban-members-killed>

China

► In an article published in ISIS's organ "Voice of Khorasan" operating from Afghanistan, ISIS's Khorasan Province criticized "Chinese imperialism" and China's harsh behavior toward the Uyghur Muslim minority in its territory (VOA, October 22, 2022).

Iran

► On October 19, 2022, Jaysh al-Adl (the Army of Justice), the Salafist-jihadi terror organization operating mainly in southeastern Iran where there is a substantial concentration of Sunni Baluchis, released a video in support of the protest against the regime in Iran and called for an armed struggle against it. The 10-minute video shows fighter units on vehicles in a camp situated in a desert region. It also shows a commander speaking with his face blurred. The video also includes pictures of demonstrators who were killed in the protests held in Iran since September 16, 2022, following the murder of Mahsa Amini by members of the regime because she did not wear hijab (MEMRI, October 20, 2022).

Turkey

► On October 19, 2022, Abdel Rahman Alawi, 64, an ISIS operative who in 2013-2016 served as a qadi (judge) on behalf of ISIS, was sentenced to three life sentences by a Turkish court because in 2016 he instructed to burn to death two Turkish soldiers in northern Syria (Baladi, October 19, 2022).

Europe

Russia

► On October 24, 2022, the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) arrested several members of an ISIS squad in the city of Pyatigorsk, in the Caucasus region in the southwest of the country. According to the report, the terrorist squad, which included also citizens of central Asian countries, planned, at the instruction of foreign operatives, to sabotage and attack a police station in Pyatigorsk. The squad members admitted to the charge. Searches carried out in their apartments revealed substances and equipment for making IEDs, charts including instructions on how to make IEDs, ISIS symbols, as well as means of contact disclosing details on their intentions to carry out terror attacks (TASS, October 24, 2022).

France

► On October 20, 2022, France repatriated 15 mothers and 40 children from detention camps for ISIS's wives and children, controlled by Kurdish SDF forces in Syria. The minors have been transferred to child welfare services while the adults have been handed over to the judicial authorities. The women arrived of their own free will to territories controlled by ISIS in Iraq and Syria and were arrested after the organization's defeat in 2019. Many of the children were born in Syria. In early October 2022, French Minister of Justice Éric Dupond-Moretti announced that so far, France had repatriated about 300 French minors who had stayed in areas of activity of jihadi terrorist organizations in Syria and Iraq. A total of 77 of them were officially repatriated to France (France 24, October 20, 2022).

► On October 18, 2022, the French cement firm Lafarge pleaded guilty in a federal court in Brooklyn, New York, to conspiring to provide material support to the terrorist organizations ISIS and the Al-Nusrah Front (the previous framework of the Al-Qaeda-affiliated HTS). According to the indictment filed in the United States against the firm, it transferred millions of US dollars to ISIS and the Al-Nusrah Front, from August 2013 until November 2014, to receive permission to operate its cement plant, Lafarge Cement Syria, under ISIS's control. The firm noted that from 2017, those responsible are no longer employed there. It agreed to a plea bargain which includes the payment of financial penalties and forfeiture of assets totaling \$777 million (ABC News, October 18, 2022).

Spain

► On October 24, 2022, Mohammed Yassin Amrani⁶, an ISIS operative who planned to carry out a terrorist attack with an explosive-packed drone in Camp Nou during a Barça-Real Madrid football match, was sentenced to three years in prison by a Spanish court. According to the indictment, after he had undergone radicalization, in 2020 Amrani approached an ISIS operative in charge of recruitment to the organization. The latter asked to chat with him through the Telegram app so that conversations between them would be encrypted. He instructed Amrani to carry out the attack. Amrani was arrested in May 2020 (AP, October 25, 2022).

⁶ Mistakenly referred to in various news agencies as Mohammed Yassi Amrani.