



Spotlight on Global Jihad

November 3-9, 2022



Main events of the past week

- ▶ **The most prominent of this week's incidents was an attack carried out by the Somali army and local militias supporting it against the Al-Qaeda-affiliated Al-Shabaab Organization. At least 100 Al-Shabaab operatives were killed. According to Al-Qaeda, dozens of Somali soldiers were killed in the attack.**
- ▶ The downtrend in ISIS's activity around the globe continues.
- ▶ **Sinai Peninsula:** A lieutenant colonel and three Sinai Tribal Union fighters were killed in the explosion of an IED in the village of Jalbanah, in northwestern Sinai. According to ISIS, they were killed by an ISIS ambush.
- ▶ **Syria:** In the Idlib region, fighting between the Syrian army and HTS intensified. In the Daraa region, fighting continued between local militias and ISIS's local cells.
- ▶ **Iraq:** The Iraqi forces' counterterrorism activity against ISIS continued, alongside minor ISIS activity.
- ▶ **Afghanistan:** ISIS claimed responsibility for activating an IED against a minibus carrying Taliban government officials in Kabul. Two people were killed and six were wounded.
- ▶ **Africa: Nigeria:** Two senior operatives of ISIS's West Africa Province were killed in a Nigerian airstrike in the Lake Chad region. **Mozambique:** ISIS announced that over the past two weeks it had carried out 11 attacks against Christian villages and local security forces in the northeast of the country.
- ▶ According to the **UN Counter-Terrorism Committee**, crypto use to finance terrorism has evidently increased.
- ▶ **The battle for hearts and minds:** ISIS's Central Africa Province released a video in which it tries to encourage the spirit of jihad against the "infidels." The video aims to mobilize support and encourage recruitment of operatives following the decrease in the province's activity.

Most prominent incident this week

Somalia

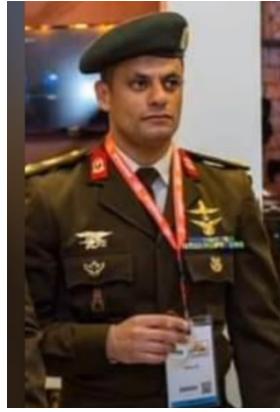
► The Somali Defense Ministry announced that on November 3, 2022, the Somali army and local militias supporting it had operated against operatives of the Al-Qaeda-affiliated Al-Shabaab Organization. The operation was carried out in two villages in the Hiran Province, about 320 km north of Mogadishu, against Al-Shabaab operatives planning to attack government forces. The attack was carried out with US air support targeting the operatives. At least 100 Al-Shabaab operatives were killed. On the other hand, Al-Shabaab claimed that dozens of Somali soldiers had been killed (DW, November 4, 2022; VOA, November 4, 2022; ABC, November 5, 2022). This is part of the campaign waged by the Somali government against the Al-Shabaab Organization, which has escalated over the past months. It should be noted that on October 29, 2022, Al-Shabaab activated two car bombs in the capital Mogadishu. At least 120 people were killed and about 300 others were wounded (Reuters, October 30-31, 2022).¹

The Sinai Peninsula

ISIS activity

► An officer and three Sinai Tribal Union fighters were killed in the village of Jalbanah in northwestern Sinai by shooting from an ISIS ambush against a joint Egyptian army and Sinai Tribal Union force. According to another version, the four were killed in the explosion of an IED planted there (ERM Egyptian news agency, November 7, 2022; November 6-7, 2022). The dead officer is Lieutenant Colonel Assem bin Muhammad Issam al-Din, commander of Battalion 103 of the Egyptian army commando (Sinai Tribal Union Facebook page, November 6, 2022; Bir al-Abd Tribal Union, Al-Araby al-Jadeed, November 6-7, 2022). ISIS claimed responsibility for carrying out the attack. According to the organization, its operatives set up an ambush for a joint patrol of the Egyptian army and the Sinai Tribal Union in the Jalbanah region. They surprised the patrol and exchanged fire with it. As a result, the Egyptian army officer was killed along with three Sinai Tribal Union fighters. ISIS further noted that another Union fighter was wounded in the incident (Telegram, November 8, 2022).

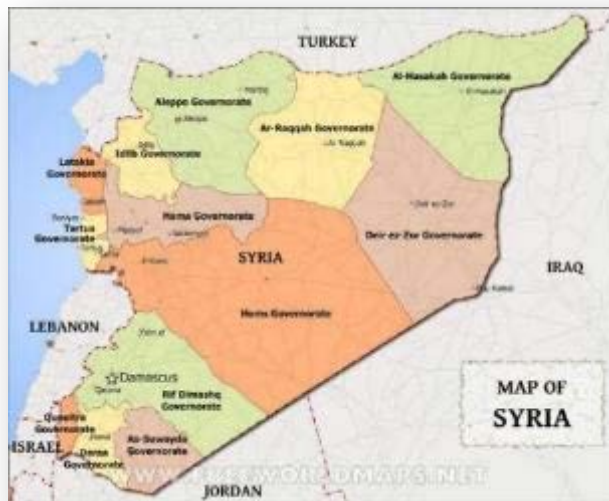
¹ For further details, see the ITIC's Information Bulletin from October 24, 2022, "Al-Shabaab, the Branch of Al-Qaeda in Somalia and the Horn of Africa"



**Lieutenant Colonel Assem bin Muhammad Issam al-Din, killed in the village of Jalbanah
(YouTube account of journalist Mariana Mukhtar, November 6, 2022)**

► On November 3, 2022, it was reported that an Egyptian soldier was killed in an attack, probably by ISIS, in Sinai (Telegram, November 3, 2022). No further details were provided.

The Syrian arena²



Map of Syria's provinces (freeworldmaps.net)

Idlib region

► According to a Syrian opposition report, on November 6, 2022, a Syrian army force fired artillery, concurrently with a Russian fighter jet airstrike against displaced persons' camps near Kafr Jales (about 4 km northwest of Idlib) and Morin (about 8 km northwest of Idlib). A total of 10 civilians were killed and 75 were wounded. Major General Oleg Egorov, deputy head of the Russian Center for the Reconciliation of Conflicting Sides in Hmeymim, Syria, claimed that the artillery fire and the airstrike had been carried out against facilities of HTS,

² According to ISIS claims of responsibility on Telegram and the Arab media.

the umbrella organization of the rebels in the Idlib region, which is affiliated with radical Islam. The targets of the attack included a training camp and underground shelters. A total of 93 militants were killed in the attack, including two field commanders, Saddam al-Dali and Abdullah al-Ahmad, and 135 were wounded (Enab Baladi, November 7, 2022).



**Makeshift structures damaged by the attack on the displaced person's camp
(Hadi@HadiAlabdallah Twitter account, November 6, 2022)**

► On November 7, 2022, **Abu al-Zubair al-Shami, commander of the HTS's military arm**, announced that in response, HTS fired artillery at positions of the Syrian army and the forces supporting it in the rural areas of Latakia, Hama, and Idlib. According to the HTS's Amjad Media Foundation, over 20 Syrian soldiers and fighters supporting them were killed and wounded by the artillery fire (Enab Baladi, November 8, 2022).

Southern Syria

► On the morning of November 5, 2022, exchanges of fire resumed between local factions and ISIS operatives in the city of Daraa, after the announced ceasefire which was intended to allow the exit of civilians from the confrontation zones. Four ISIS operatives, two fighters of local organizations, and a media figure, were killed in the exchanges of fire. The local organizations fired light arms and shells at ISIS operatives surrounded in the neighborhoods of Al-Muhandisin and Tariq al-Sadd in the city of Daraa. Additional exchanges of fire also took place in the city of Al-Sanamayn, about 50 km north of Daraa. Between October 31, 2022, and November 5, 2022, a total of 16 people were killed in Daraa: seven ISIS operatives, four fighters of local organizations, and four civilians, including two children, and a media figure (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, November 6, 2022).



ATVs of local organizations in Daraa (Enab Baladi, November 6, 2022)

Deir ez-Zor-Al-Mayadeen region

► The following are attacks in the region apparently carried out by ISIS operatives:

- ◆ On November 8, 2022, an SDF checkpoint was targeted by gunfire in the Al-Attal Square, in Al-Basira region, about 15 km from Al-Mayadeen. One SDF fighter was killed and another was wounded (Telegram, November 8, 2022).
- ◆ On November 1, 2022, SDF forces were targeted by gunfire in the village of Al-Hariji, about 50 km northeast of Deir ez-Zor. One SDF fighter was killed (Telegram, November 2, 2022).
- ◆ On November 4, 2022, a mine was activated against a force of the Palestinian Al-Quds Brigade which supports the Syrian regime, while the force was searching for ISIS squads in the desert region south of Deir ez-Zor. A commander in the Al-Quds Brigade was killed and others were wounded (Akhbar Suriya, November 4, 2022; Deir ez-Zor 24, November 5, 2022).
- ◆ On November 6, 2022, an IED hidden inside a battery was activated near the house of a civilian in the town of Abu Hamam, about 30 km southeast of Al-Mayadeen. The house was damaged but there were no casualties (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, November 6, 2022).

Counterterrorism activity

Deir ez-Zor-Al-Mayadeen region

► On November 5, 2022, SDF commando forces and a Kurdish Internal Security force acted in collaboration with Global Coalition forces against ISIS in the town of Al-Azba, about 10 km northeast of Deir ez-Zor. Seven ISIS operatives were detained. The forces found weapons,

ammunition, communications devices, equipment and documents indicating their connection to ISIS (SDF Press, November 5, 2022).



Weapons found on the site (SDF Press, November 5, 2022).

The Iraqi arena



Provinces of Iraq (Wikipedia)

ISIS attacks by province³

Nineveh Province

► On November 1, 2022, ISIS operatives activated an IED against an Iraqi army vehicle near Taloul al-Baj, about 15 km southwest of Shirqat. The passengers on board were wounded (Telegram, November 3, 2022).

Counterterrorism activity

► On November 7, 2022, US Army CENTCOM Commander General Michael Kurilla and Iraqi Army Chief of Staff Lt. General Abdul Amir Rashid Yarallah met and discussed cooperation

³ According to ISIS claims of responsibility and the Iraqi media

and continued fighting against ISIS. The Americans reported that the meeting was meaningful and that General Kurilla had greeted the Iraqi chief of staff and the Iraqi people on the formation of the new government (CENTCOM Twitter account, November 7, 2022).

Nineveh Province

► On November 5, 2022, the Iraqi security forces found an ISIS tunnel 15 meters long in the Badoush region, about 10 km northwest of Mosul. While the Iraqi security forces broke into the tunnel, they exchanged fire with ISIS operatives who were inside. ISIS commander in the Badoush region and two operatives were killed. The soldiers found there an explosive belt and light arms. The tunnel was sealed (SecMedCell Facebook page, November 5, 2022).



ISIS tunnel found in the Badoush region (SecMedCell Facebook page, November 5, 2022)

► On November 6, 2022, an Iraqi army force operated against ISIS in the village of Khouja, about 35 km northwest of Mosul. Three ISIS operatives were killed (Al-Sumaria, November 6, 2022).

Al-Anbar Province

► On November 4, 2022, the Iraqi security forces found an ISIS tunnel about 16 meters long in Wadi Nakhila, in the desert region north of Rawa District, about 85 km east of Al-Qaim. They found there a large quantity of weapons, including explosive belts, logistical equipment and food which served the ISIS operatives inside (Baghdad Times, November 4, 2022).

Salah al-Din Province

► On November 7, 2022, Iraqi Air Force aircraft carried out airstrikes against ISIS targets (no exact locations were mentioned). Three ISIS targets were reportedly destroyed (Iraqi News Agency, November 7, 2022).

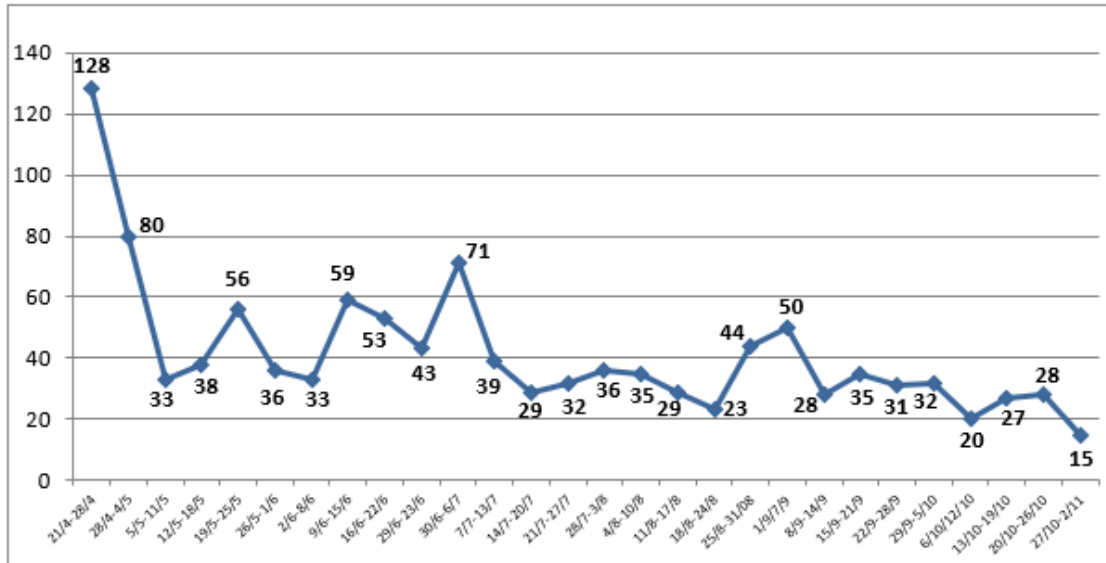
Summary of ISIS's activity in the various provinces

► An infographic published by ISIS, summing up its activity around the world between October 27 and November 2, 2022, indicates that the organization carried out 15 attacks in its various provinces around the globe (compared to 28 in the previous week). The largest number of attacks was carried out by ISIS's Mozambique Province (5). Attacks carried out in the other provinces: Iraq (3); West Africa (2); Syria (2); Khorasan, i.e., Afghanistan (1); Central Africa (1); and Al-Sahel (1). A total of 88 people were killed or wounded in the attacks, compared to 110 in the previous week. The largest number of casualties was in the Al-Sahel Province (45). The other casualties were in the following provinces: Khorasan, i.e., Afghanistan (20); Mozambique (10); West Africa (7); Iraq (3); Syria (2); and Central Africa (1) (Al-Naba weekly, Telegram, November 3, 2022). This indicates a continuation of the drop in the scope of ISIS's activity around the globe.



Summary of ISIS attacks (Al-Naba, Telegram, November 3, 2022)

ISIS attacks by week (according to ISIS data)



Africa

Nigeria

ISIS activity

- This week, ISIS carried out limited activity in the northwest of the country. According to ISIS, on November 5, 2022, its operatives fired at Nigerian police forces in the town of Magumeri, about 40 km northwest of Maiduguri, in Borno State, killing two policemen and wounding others (Telegram, November 7, 2022).
- On November 3, 2022, the operatives attacked a Nigerian army checkpoint near the town of Azari, in Borno State, and the soldiers fled (Telegram, November 4, 2022).

Counterterrorism activity

- According to the Nigerian Defense Ministry, between October 20 and November 2, 2022, the Nigerian army and other security forces in the country operating in six regions around the country killed a total of 60 ISIS operatives, detained 90, and 145 others, including their families, surrendered to the Nigerian security forces (Nigerian Tribune, November 3, 2022). In this context, it was reported that during these two weeks, 19 ISIS operatives were killed and 27 others were detained in northeastern Nigeria alone (mainly in Borno State). In addition, the forces found a large store of weapons, various ammunition, and logistical equipment (Daily Post, a Nigerian news website, November 3, 2022).

► On November 5, 2022, the Nigerian Air Force carried out an airstrike killing two senior operatives in ISIS's West Africa Province in the Lake Chad region, during a meeting of senior ISIS operatives in the province. The two were members of the Shura Council of the Province (i.e., the council of the province leadership), **Mallam Ali Kwaya** and **Mallam Bukar Mainoka** (dailypost.ng, November 6, 2022). About an hour after this airstrike, another airstrike was carried out against two vehicles carrying 13 ISIS operatives who were wounded in the first attack and were trying to find shelter somewhere else. All of them were killed (Akhbar Al-Aan, November 6, 2022).

Mozambique

► During the recent two weeks, ISIS carried out several attacks against Christian villages (killing and wounding residents and setting their property on fire) and against local security forces in the Cabo Delgado Province in northeastern Mozambique. ISIS reported most of the attacks in a considerable delay, probably due to communications difficulties with the organization's central media network in Iraq and Syria.

► **Attacks against military targets:** On November 1, 2022, ISIS operatives in Mozambique attacked a compound of the Mozambican army and the militias supporting it in the village of Minhanha, in the Meluco region in Cabo Delgado Province, in northeastern Mozambique. Two soldiers or local fighters were killed, and others were wounded. Weapons and ammunition were seized (Telegram, November 2, 2022). On October 26, 2022, ISIS operatives exchanged fire with fighters of local militias in the Christian village of Lishi, in Cabo Delgado. Several fighters of the local militias were killed or wounded (Telegram, November 2, 2022).

► **Attacks against Christian villages in the Cabo Delgado Province:** On October 29, 2022, ISIS operatives shot at a group of Christian residents in the village of Marumia. Several Christian residents, including the head of the village, were killed and wounded. A church, several homes of Christians and their vehicles were set on fire (Telegram, November 2, 2022). That same day, ISIS operatives set fire to the homes of Christian residents in the village of Nihatamat (Telegram, November 2, 2022). On October 26, 2022, the Christian village of Lishi was attacked, over 200 homes of residents were set on fire, and their property was seized (Telegram, November 2, 2022). On October 23, 2022, ISIS operatives attacked the Christian village of Nabulobu, in the Macomia region, in the eastern part of the Cabo Delgado Province. Five Christian residents were killed, and a home, two trucks, and two motorcycles were set on fire (Telegram, November 2, 2022).

► On October 26, 2022, ISIS operatives abducted a Christian resident in the village of Bilibisa and beheaded him (Telegram, November 2, 2022).

Activity of ISIS's Mozambique Province

► ISIS's Al-Naba weekly published an infographic summing up the activity of the Mozambique Province between October 20 and November 1, 2022. According to the infographic, in this period, the province operatives carried out 11 attacks against Christian residents and the Mozambican army, in which 23 people were killed and wounded (20 Christian residents and three soldiers). In these attacks, hundreds of Christian residents were forced to leave their homes, and over 229 homes, three churches, 34 vehicles, and four motorcycles were set on fire (Al-Naba weekly, Telegram, November 3, 2022).



Summary of the Mozambique Province's activity (Al-Naba, Telegram, November 3, 2022)

Somalia

► On November 7, 2022, two suicide bombers, apparently Al-Shabaab operatives, detonated two car bombs in a Somali army camp in the Galguduud region, about 350 km north of Mogadishu. Immediately afterward, armed men, apparently the organization operatives, started to exchange fire with the soldiers. At least 10 soldiers were killed. The attackers seized weapons and military vehicles (Reuters and Al-Jazeera, November 7, 2022).

► On November 5, 2022, an Al-Shabaab suicide bomber detonated a car bomb near a Somali army training camp in Mogadishu. Five people were killed, including new recruits to the Somali army, and 11 others were wounded. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack (Al-Jazeera, November 6, 2022).

Kenya

► On November 1, 2022, Somali militants suspected of being Al-Shabaab operatives set up an ambush in the Mandera Province, near the Kenya-Somalia border, and hijacked an ambulance with two paramedics, a driver, and a patient from the Lafey hospital, about 10 km

northwest of the Kenya-Somalia border. The abductees were lost after being transferred to Somali soil (Nation, November 1, 2022; Al-Jazeera, November 2, 2022).

Mali

► On October 31, 2022, operatives of ISIS's Al-Sahel Province shot at a local militia force in the Gao region, in northeastern Mali (about 150 km north of the Mali-Niger-Burkina Faso tri-border area). A total of 14 militia fighters were killed and several others were wounded. The operatives seized several assault rifles and seven motorcycles (Telegram, November 3, 2022).

ISIS's Al-Sahel Province activity report

► ISIS's Al-Naba weekly released an infographic summing up the activity of the Al-Sahel Province (operating in the Mali-Niger-Burkina Faso border area) between August 7 and October 31, 2022. According to the infographic, during this period, the province operatives carried out 16 attacks against local militias, the Malian and Burkina Faso armies, the Wagner Group (Russian mercenaries sent by the Russian government), and "spies." Over 256 people were killed or wounded in these attacks. A total of 26 vehicles and 13 motorcycles were destroyed or put out of commission, and the province operatives seized 25 vehicles and seven motorcycles (Al-Naba weekly, Telegram, November 3, 2022).



Summary of the activity of ISIS's Al-Sahel Province (Al-Naba, Telegram, November 3, 2022)

Asia

Afghanistan

► ISIS claimed responsibility for the activation of an IED on November 2, 2022, against a minibus carrying officials of the Taliban Rural Development Ministry in west Kabul. Two

officials were killed and six others were wounded. This is the second attack in 2022 against officials of this government ministry (Al-Jazeera, November 2, 2022).



**Smoke rising in the blast area in Kabul
(Fazila Baloch@IFazilaBaloch Twitter account, November 2, 2022)**

Yemen

Counterterrorism activity

► On November 4, 2022, a force of the Southern Transitional Council (STC) , which operates autonomously in southern Yemen, repelled Al-Qaeda operatives in the Abyan Governorate, in southern Yemen, and brought about the retreat of the organization operatives from Wadi al-Khila in the governorate. Al-Qaeda was active in the region for recruiting operatives and storing weapons and as a point of departure for its attacks. While retreating, the Al-Qaeda operatives planted IEDs in the area. Three STC fighters were killed and four others were wounded (Arab News, November 5, 2022).

Europe

Hungary

► On November 3, 2022, a Budapest court announced the temporary arrest of a Tajiki citizen whose country Tajikistan issued an international arrest warrant against him on account of his activity in the ranks of ISIS. The citizen reportedly arrived in Istanbul with his father in April 2016 and illegally crossed the border into Syria, where he joined ISIS. In Syria, he was involved in war crimes against the Syrian army and the forces supporting it and because of that, he is expected to be sentenced to 12 years in prison in Tajikistan. The Budapest court is now looking into extraditing him to Tajikistan (Hungary Today, November 4, 2022).

United States

- ▶ On November 7, 2022, the US Department of the Treasury imposed sanctions on four men residing in South Africa, after accusing them of providing technical, financial or material support to ISIS. In addition, sanctions were also imposed on eight companies owned, controlled or directed by the sanctioned men (MSN, November 7, 2022).
- ▶ On November 4, 2022, the FBI announced the identification of a man holding radical views, who had planned to attack Jews in synagogues in New Jersey on November 3, 2022. This man reportedly no longer represents a risk (New York Times, November 4, 2022). There are about 572,000 Jews in New Jersey today and it is one of the largest communities of US Jews (Barron's, November 3, 2022).
- ▶ Allison Fluke-Ekren, 42, a US citizen who grew up in Kansas, converted to Islam, joined ISIS in Syria, and in 2017 commanded an all-female battalion known as Kateebat Nusaybah, was tried and on November 2, 2022, sentenced to 20 years in prison after admitting aiding a foreign terrorist organization. Fluke-Ekren commanded over 100 women and girls, some of them 10-11 years old, and trained them in shooting a Kalashnikov rifle, throwing hand grenades, and detonating explosive belts. In addition, Fluke-Ekren, who was codenamed Umm Mohammed al-Amriki and Umm Jibril, was convicted of brainwashing young girls and training them to kill (Asharq al-Awsat, October 31, 2022; ABC News, November 2, 2022).

Terror financing

The UN: Rise in crypto use to finance terrorism

- ▶ Svetlana Martynova, senior legal officer at the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, said in an interview that a rise is evident in crypto use to fund terrorism. She added that a couple of years ago, 5% of terrorist attacks were viewed as crypto-financed or linked to digital assets, but “now we’re thinking that it may reach about 20%.” And yet, Martynova added that the use of cash is still the most popular method of financing terrorism (Bloomberg, October 31, 2022).

The battle for hearts and minds

- ▶ The editorial of ISIS's Al-Naba weekly published this week, entitled “The offspring of the Companions [of the Prophet Muhammad are] in the heart of Iran,” deals with the attack in the

Shah Cheragh shrine in Shiraz, carried out by ISIS.⁴ According to the article, ISIS is committed to fighting against polytheism and Shiites are polytheists and are not considered Muslims at all. The author notes that hostility between Sunnis and Shiites has religious and historic roots and the history of the Shiites is replete with fighting against the Sunnis. He notes that ISIS will hunt Shiites anywhere, without any territorial barrier, in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, and anywhere else. The author stresses that the attack in Shiraz represents an indication of ISIS's continued commitment to fight the Shiites and that the attack against the stronghold of Shia, Iran, is a blow to the motivation of Iran's proxies elsewhere. He adds that Sunni Muslims have to fight the Shiites, who offend the good name of the Prophet Muhammad's Companions, and that Allah's curse should be upon them. According to the author, ISIS operatives must take revenge on the Shiites (Al-Naba weekly, Telegram, November 3, 2022).



Al-Naba weekly's editorial on the attack in Iran (Al-Naba weekly, Telegram, November 3, 2022)

Video by ISIS's West Africa Province

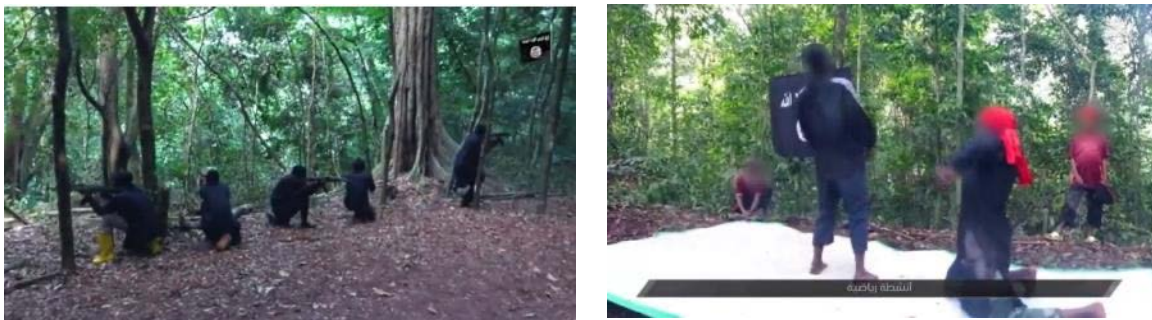
► On November 5, 2022, ISIS's West Africa Province, which operates along the border between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, released a video entitled “Jihad life,” in which it attempts to encourage the spirit of jihad against the “infidels” (i.e., soldiers of the Congo and Uganda armies and the Christian residents on the border area between the countries) while warning the “infidels” that war against them is eternal or until they accept Islam. The video shows the province operatives eating together, praying, chanting verses encouraging the spirit of jihad according to ISIS's ideology, and carrying out fitness exercises and fight training. The 19-minute video includes calls for carrying out jihad against the

⁴ For further information, see the ITIC's Information Bulletin from November 3, 2022, “ISIS's attack on a Shiite shrine in Shiraz, Iran – analysis and possible implications”

“infidels.” At the same time, it attempts to recruit additional operatives to try to resume ISIS’s activity, given its decreased activity around the world and especially in the West Africa Province (Telegram, November 5, 2022).



The province operatives chanting verses praising the spirit of jihad (Telegram, November 5, 2022)



The operatives training in self-defense (Telegram, November 5, 2022)



A speaker conveys a message while a “spy” is seen executed (Telegram, November 5, 2022)