



## Summary of ISIS Activity around the Globe in 2022

February 9, 2023

### Overview

► The summary of ISIS activity in 2022, which is based on the organization's claims of responsibility,<sup>1</sup> shows that in 2022 there was a decrease in the scope of ISIS attacks around the globe, compared to 2021. **During 2022, ISIS operatives carried out 2,058 terrorist acts,** in which 6,881 people were killed and wounded worldwide, compared to 2,705 in 2021, in which 8,147 people were killed and wounded. **This is a decrease of about 24% in the number of attacks and about 16% in the number of casualties, compared to the previous year.**

► **The largest number of attacks was carried out by ISIS's West Africa Province,** which is active mainly in Nigeria, but also in Chad, Northern Cameroon, and Southern Niger. The province carried out 547 attacks during 2022, in which 1,589 people were killed and wounded. The country where ISIS carried out the largest number of attacks in 2022 was Nigeria (517), followed by Iraq (484), Syria (297), and Afghanistan (the Khorasan Province) (181). **The figures show that Africa has become the dominant continent in which ISIS is active,** at the expense of ISIS's countries of origin, Syria and Iraq.

► The largest number of casualties (dead and wounded) as a result of ISIS activity in 2022 was in Nigeria (1,412), followed by Afghanistan (1,188), Syria (887), Iraq (833), and other countries. However, ISIS operations in the Sahel region (the Niger-Burkina Faso-Mali border triangle area) and Afghanistan claimed the highest average number of casualties per operation. In the Sahel region, there was an average of 37 casualties per operation, and in Afghanistan - about seven casualties on average. This is compared to Nigeria - about three casualties per operation on average, in Syria three casualties per operation on average, and in Iraq about

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<sup>1</sup> The Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center (ITIC) has collected the information on ISIS activity around the world in the last year based on the organization's claims of responsibility published by its media network, especially in Al-Naba weekly and Amaq, ISIS's propaganda wing. Some of the incidents have been verified by reports from local sources. It should be remembered that the actual number of terrorist acts may be higher because in some provinces ISIS reported a lower number of terrorist acts than is actually attributed to it. It is also likely that due to communications problems, some of the information did not reach ISIS's central information system, which is responsible for the reports on behalf of the organization.

two casualties. The difference stems from the fact that in the Sahel region and Afghanistan, attacks were carried out on a larger scale than in Nigeria, Iraq, and Syria, where mostly limited guerilla attacks were carried out.

► The peak of ISIS’s activity during the year was in April and early May 2022. During this period, the organization conducted a campaign of attacks under the title “Campaign of Vengeance,”<sup>2</sup> which was intended to avenge the death of ISIS leader Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi and ISIS spokesman Abu Hamza al-Muhajir, who were killed in a US operation in Syria two months earlier.

### Characteristics of ISIS activity in 2022

► **Targets of the attacks:** The targets of the attacks were diverse and varied from one country to another. They included military and government targets, and the civilian population: especially Shiites in Afghanistan and Iraq; Christian rural populations especially in Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Nigeria; elements affiliated with Al-Qaeda, especially in the Sahel region.

► **Form of the attacks:** The vast majority of the terrorist operations in 2022 were in the form of relatively small attacks, carried out by small squads, which were equipped, for the most part, with light and medium weapons; the activation of IEDs; and targeted killing of civilians. On the other hand, many of the attacks carried out in the Sahel region and Afghanistan (Khorasan) were on a larger scale compared to other places. They were more organized and often involved many dozens and possibly even hundreds of operatives. In Afghanistan, attacks were carried out in crowded places (suicide bombing attacks and the activation of IEDs), which resulted in many casualties. In some of the terrorist operations, ISIS operatives demonstrated a high operational capability and carried out more complex operations, which included attacking aid forces that arrived at the scene, mainly shooting at the forces or planting IEDs ahead of time and activating them upon the arrival of the aid forces. In some operations, ISIS operatives disguised themselves as local security forces.

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<sup>2</sup> On April 17, 2022, ISIS announced a “campaign of vengeance for the [death] of the two sheikhs” (the organization’s leader, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, and his spokesman, Abu Hamza al-Muhajir, who were killed on February 3, 2022 in an operation carried out by American forces in Syria). This is the longest campaign carried out by ISIS so far (16 days), with the highest number of attacks, which caused the highest number of casualties. According to ISIS data, 245 attacks were carried out during the campaign, in which 726 people were killed and wounded, including 23 officers and commanders. For more information, see the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from April 19, 2022: “ISIS announces campaign to avenge the death of its former leader and spokesman”

► **Breaking into prisons:** A prominent form of activity in 2022 was the liberation of ISIS prisoners from prison in complex break-in operations (“Tearing down the Walls,” as ISIS referred to such actions). During 2022, ISIS carried out three complex operations to free its prisoners: breaking into the Al-Hasakah Central Prison (January 20, 2022);<sup>3</sup> attacking Kuje Prison,<sup>4</sup> southwest of the Nigerian capital, Abuja, on July 5, 2022; and breaking into Kangwangura Prison, in northeastern Congo,<sup>5</sup> on August 10, 2022. In these operations, hundreds of ISIS prisoners were released, which is considered a huge achievement for ISIS, especially because during the year, ISIS had difficulty recruiting supporters and operatives. The prisoners who were released and returned to the ranks of ISIS constituted an important pool of personnel for the continuation of the organization’s activity. In addition, this is an important achievement for ISIS in terms of the battle for hearts and minds, since by these actions, the organization embarrassed the countries and the entities entrusted with the security of the prisons.

► **Terrorist activity as part of the economic war:** During 2022, ISIS continued what it calls the economic war, although a decrease in the scope of activity was evident, apparently as part of the decline in the scope of the organization’s activity in general. Despite the decrease in the economic war operations, ISIS operatives managed to carry out attacks near the Suez Canal, the important traffic route for the economy of Egypt and the world. In Mozambique, they continued to threaten international natural gas projects in the northeast of the country. It should be noted that the economic war bears fruit for ISIS, even when it is limited, as it harms the economic infrastructure of the countries and undermines the status of some governments.

## Main processes in 2022

► **Significant harm to ISIS’s leadership and operatives:** 2022 was a year in which the leadership of ISIS suffered particularly severe harm. In February 2022, US forces in Idlib killed Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, ISIS’s second leader. In July 2022, US forces killed Maher al-Aqqal, a senior ISIS operative. In September 2022, it was reported that Bashar al-Sumaidai, a senior ISIS operative who was identified by researchers and security officials as the leader

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<sup>3</sup> See the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from February 8, 2022: “ISIS’s takeover of the prison in Al-Hasakah, which it presents as an achievement, may bring about additional such actions”

<sup>4</sup> See the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from July 17, 2022: “Break-in to Kuje Prison in Nigeria: another ISIS activity to liberate prisoners”

<sup>5</sup> See the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from August 18, 2022: “Spotlight on Global Jihad (August 11-17, 2022)”

of the organization, was arrested by the Turkish security forces. In October 2022, Abu al-Hassan al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, the replacement of Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, was killed in southwestern Syria.<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that the short tenures of the organization's leaders seriously damaged the organization's strength and image.<sup>7</sup>

► **Significant harm to personnel:** In addition to the leadership, hundreds and possibly thousands of operatives were eliminated throughout the year (we do not have the exact numbers), which was a severe blow to ISIS after its recruitment system apparently failed to recruit operatives and fill the ranks. The US Central Command (CENTCOM) reported that during 2022, its forces, acting in collaboration with local entities (the Kurdish SDF forces, the Iraqi army, and the Kurdish forces in Iraq), carried out 313 operations against ISIS in Syria and Iraq, during which senior officials of the organization and about 600 operatives were killed. More than 300 operatives were arrested in Syria and Iraq. In addition to that, there were dozens or even hundreds of operatives who were killed by the Syrian regime and the forces supporting it and by the Iraqi security forces. Hundreds and perhaps even thousands of operatives were also killed in Africa during the year. Despite the heavy blow suffered by ISIS, it should be remembered that in the past, the organization has shown a capacity for recovery, and its recruitment potential, especially in Africa, East Asia, and Europe, is still high.

► **Changes in ISIS's hotspots of activity:** Judging based on ISIS's activity in 2022, it is clearly evident that Africa is increasingly becoming the main epicenter of its activity at the expense of Syria and Iraq, ISIS's countries of origin. The decline in the organization's activity was particularly noticeable in Iraq, mainly owing to extensive countermeasures by Iraqi security forces. In Syria, ISIS continued to operate this year at a level of activity similar to that of 2021. Although the number of attacks decreased, the number of casualties increased, which could indicate a rise in the "quality" of the operations. The epicenters of activity in Syria were mainly the desert area and the Deir ez-Zor-Al-Mayadeen region. Activity was also detected in the Daraa region. ISIS's significant achievement was the liberation of prisoners from Al-Hasakah prison, in an area controlled by the Kurds in northeastern Syria. ISIS's activity in

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<sup>6</sup> See the ITIC's Information Bulletin from December 4, 2022, "ISIS has officially announced the death of the organization's leader and the appointment of a new leader"

<sup>7</sup> The first ISIS leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, served for about six and a half years, between April 7, 2013 and October 27, 2019. The second leader, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, served for two years and three months, between October 31, 2019, and February 3, 2022. The third leader, Abu al-Hassan al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, served in this position for about seven months, between March 10, 2022, and mid-October 2022.

Afghanistan (Khorasan Province) has decreased considerably compared to the previous year. However, during the year, the activity spread to East Asian countries (rockets were fired at Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) and an ISIS media infrastructure was established in Afghanistan, aimed at various target audiences mainly in East Asia.

► **Changes in the structure of the provinces:** During 2022, the establishment of new provinces (Mozambique and Sahel) was announced. In March 2022, the establishment of the Sahel Province as an independent province was announced.<sup>8</sup> In May 2022, ISIS's Mozambique Province was separated from the Central Africa Province, whose activity had until then been concentrated in Mozambique and the Uganda-Democratic Republic of the Congo border. As of May 2022, the Central Africa Province remains operational in the Uganda-Democratic Republic of the Congo border region. This does not mean an actual expansion of the activity, but an organizational/administrative change, which is apparently aimed at subordinating all the provinces to the central organization in Syria and Iraq and allowing each of them to develop independently, assuming that the branches will expand in the future.

► **Changes in the media network:** Along with the decrease in ISIS activity, the organization's media network was also reduced during the year. With the exception of Al-Naba, ISIS's weekly magazine, which continued to be published regularly every week, the organization's main media channels operated on a smaller scale. These channels include mainly Amaq, ISIS's "news agency," Al-Furqan, the video and audio recording production arm of the organization's senior officials, and the organization's social media network. It should be noted that Al-Azaim Media Foundation, operating from Afghanistan, has published since 2022 media materials in various languages, especially African, Asian, and Eastern European. This indicates that ISIS sees its future in recruiting supporters from these regions, given the organization's weakness in Syria and Iraq.

► **The recruitment system:** Little is known about ISIS's recruitment system, but it seems that it also sustained damage and is having difficulty recruiting new operatives. It should be noted that in the past, the organization demonstrated a high capacity for recovery, and it is likely that it will succeed in rehabilitating the recruitment system and recruiting new operatives.

► **ISIS activity in the West:** During 2022, ISIS did not carry out terrorist attacks in Western countries, and there were also no ISIS-inspired attacks (in 2021, two ISIS-inspired attacks

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<sup>8</sup> The Sahel Province, which operates in the Niger-Burkina Faso-Mali border triangle, operated until March 2022 as a sub-branch called the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), which was subordinate to ISIS's West Africa Province.

were carried out on a relatively small scale). This may testify to the high foiling skills of the security services in Western countries, as reflected in the continuous decrease in the number of ISIS terrorist attacks since 2015-2016. It is also likely that this is due to a decrease in the public's motivation to respond to ISIS calls to carry out attacks. However, it must be remembered that the potential for attacks in the West is still very high.

► **Iran:** In 2022, ISIS carried out its first attack in four years. It was a shooting attack on worshipers and security personnel at a Shiite temple in Shiraz. Fifteen people were killed and about 40 were wounded. During the year, the Iranians foiled several additional attacks, which indicates that ISIS attempts to gain a foothold in Iran.

► **Israel:** In 2022, there were three terrorist attacks whose perpetrators were inspired by ISIS. The attacks were carried out in Hadera, Beer Sheba, and Jerusalem. ISIS claimed responsibility only for the attack in Hadera since the attackers pledged allegiance to ISIS's leader before carrying out the attack. It should be noted that no ISIS network subordinate to the organization's leadership was found in Israel.

## Details on ISIS activity around the globe in 2022

► Data from an infographic published by ISIS's media arm, Amaq, which summarizes ISIS's activity in 2022, shows that during this period, the organization's operatives carried out 2,058 attacks in 22 different countries, compared to 2,705 attacks in 20 countries in 2021, which is a decrease of about 24%. The largest number of attacks was carried out in Nigeria (517). Attacks carried out in the other countries: Iraq (484); Syria (297); Afghanistan (Khorasan) (181); the Democratic Republic of the Congo (167); Mozambique (156); Egypt [mainly the Sinai Peninsula] (95); Pakistan (58); Somalia (32); Mali (22); Niger (11); Chad (10); Cameroon (7); the Philippines (6); Burkina Faso (4); Libya (3); Benin (2); India (2); Iran (1); Israel (1); Yemen (1); Uganda (1) (Amaq, Telegram, January 4, 2023).

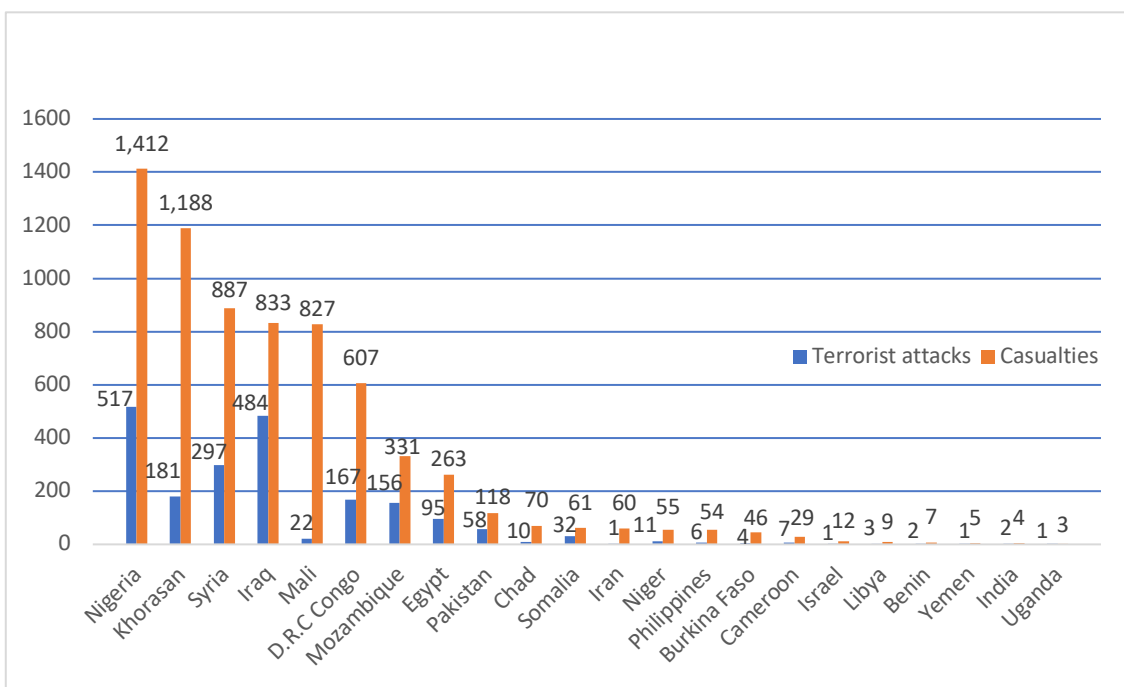
► A total of 6,881 people were killed and wounded in the attacks (compared to 8,147 people in 2021, which is a decrease of about 16%). The largest number of dead and wounded was in Nigeria (1,412). The rest of the dead and wounded were in the following countries: Afghanistan (1,188); Syria (887); Iraq (833), Mali (827); Democratic Republic of the Congo (607); Mozambique (331); Egypt (mainly the Sinai Peninsula) (263); Pakistan (118); Chad (70); Somalia (61); Iran (60); Niger (55); the Philippines (54); Burkina Faso (46); Cameroon (29); Israel (12); Libya (9); Benin (7); Yemen (5); India (4); and Uganda (3). Among the dead were 154 officers and commanders (Amaq, Telegram, January 4, 2023).

► The attacks were carried out along the following lines: raids and exchanges of fire (840); the detonation of IEDs and car bombs (579); assassinations (230); ambush attacks (152); assault and suicide bombing attacks (25); attacks of other types (232). The attacks caused a lot of material damage: houses and churches set on fire (2,310); vehicles destroyed or put out of commission (765); vehicles seized (100); thermal cameras destroyed (156) (Amaq, Telegram, January 4, 2023).



Summary of ISIS activity in the world in 2022 (Amaq, Telegram, January 4, 2023)

### Number of attacks and casualties in ISIS activity in 2022, by country<sup>9</sup>



► In 2022, terrorist attacks were carried out in 22 countries (among the countries where attacks were carried out in 2022 and where no attacks took place in 2021 are Yemen, Benin, Iran, and Israel). In 2022, no terrorist attacks were carried out in Indonesia and Tunisia, in

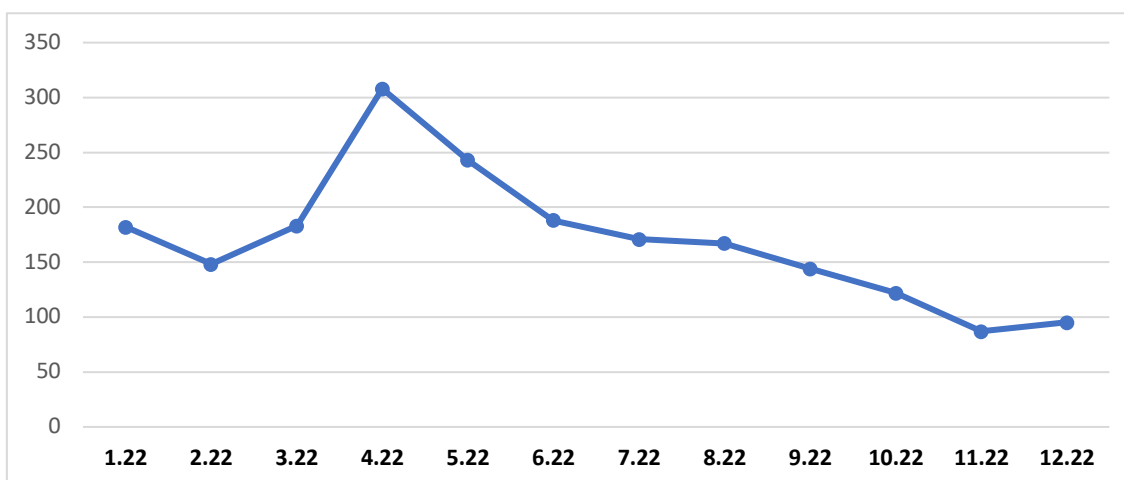
<sup>9</sup> The graph is based on the data of the infographic published by Amaq, ISIS’s media arm.



contrast to 2021. This does not necessarily indicate a trend of expansion of the organization's activity, since the activity in the new countries was extremely limited: one attack on a small scale in Yemen; the activity in Benin was a limited spillover of the organization's activity from neighboring Niger and Burkina Faso; one attack in Iran; and an ISIS-inspired attack in Israel that was not directed by the organization's leadership.

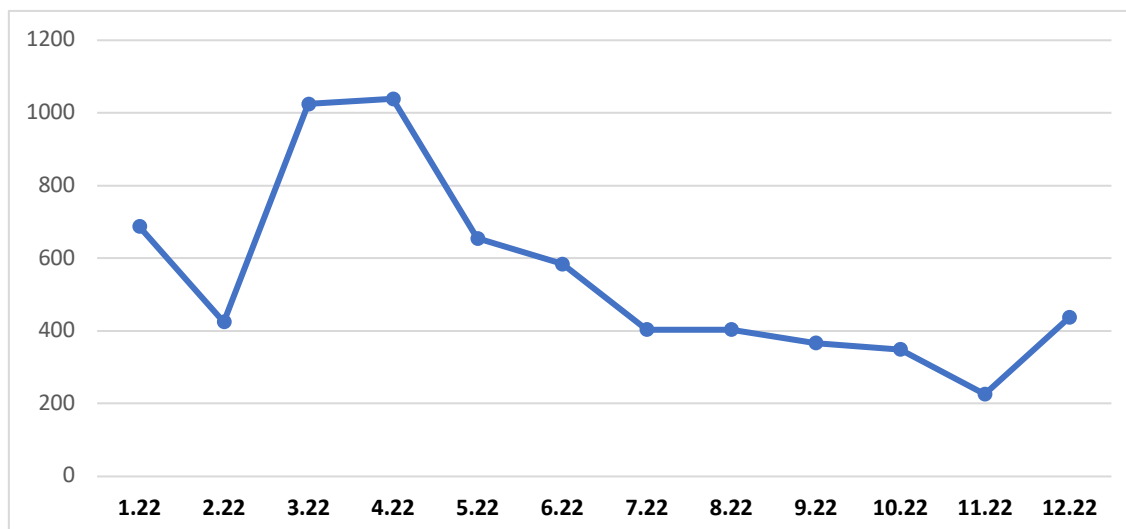
► Apart from the annual summary published by Amaq, the ITIC also relied on ISIS's weekly activity data published by the organization's weekly, Al-Naba, during 2022. According to the weekly data, ISIS operatives carried out 2,038 attacks worldwide (not including the last two days of the year, since Al-Naba publishes the data on a weekly basis, and the year ended in the middle of a week), in which 6,602 people were killed or wounded. Therefore, according to the data of the Al-Naba weekly, the decrease in the number of attacks and casualties in the organization's activity in 2022 is sharper. Amaq's data is likely more accurate since sometimes the reports from the organization's provinces reach the organization's central media network with a delay.

### Number of attacks for which ISIS claimed responsibility during 2022 by month (approximately)





## Number of casualties in ISIS activity around the globe in 2022 by month (approximately)



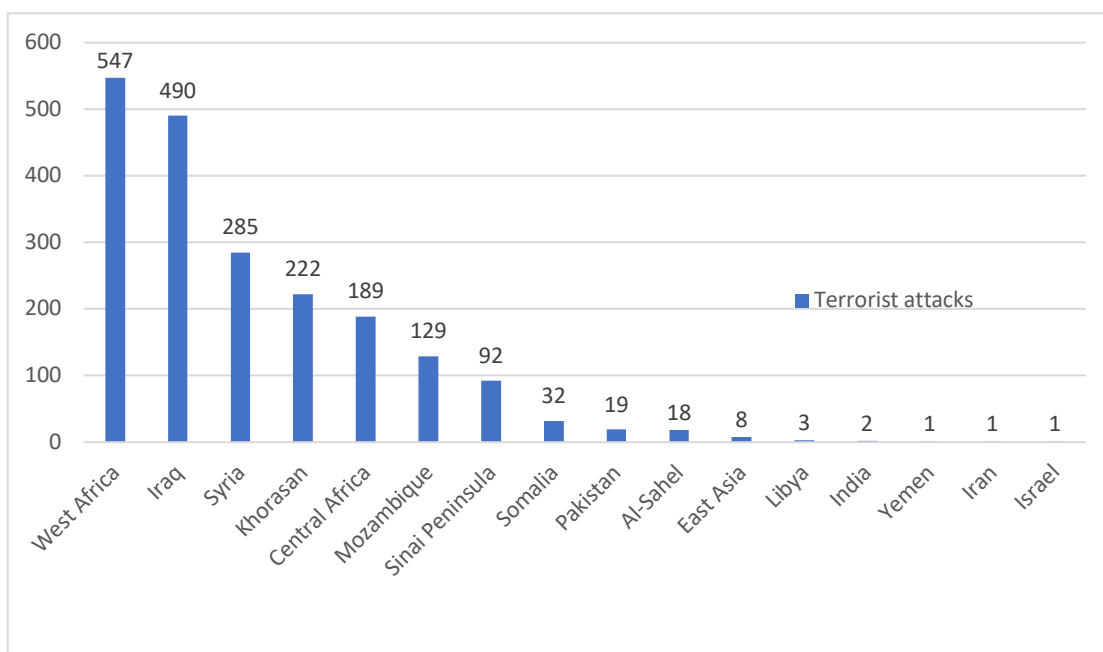
► Looking at the graph, it can be seen that the downtrend in the organization’s activity was particularly evident in the last third of the year. The peak of the attacks was recorded during April and early May 2022, the month of Ramadan, during which ISIS conducted a campaign of attacks designed to avenge the death of its leader and spokesman, who were killed in Syria on February 3, 2022. The campaign was announced on April 17, 2022, (Ramadan 16, 1443), under the title “Campaign of Vengeance for [the deaths of] the two Sheikhs,” and it also continued during Eid al-Fitr (two days after Ramadan). It was the longest campaign carried out by ISIS (16 days), during which 245 attacks were carried out in which 726 people were killed and wounded, the largest number of attacks and casualties this year.<sup>10</sup>

## Characteristics of the attacks around the globe in 2022 by province

► ISIS’s West Africa Province carried out the largest number of attacks in 2022 (547 attacks), followed by the Iraq Province (490) and further on: Syria Province (285); Khorasan Province (Afghanistan) (222); Central Africa Province (189); Mozambique Province (129); Sinai Province (92); Somalia Province (32); Pakistan Province (19); the Sahel Province (18); East Asia Province (8); Libya Province (3); India Province (2); Iran (1); Israel (1); Yemen (1). This shows that northeastern Nigeria, where the province’s activity focused, was the region that suffered the most from the organization’s attacks around the world.

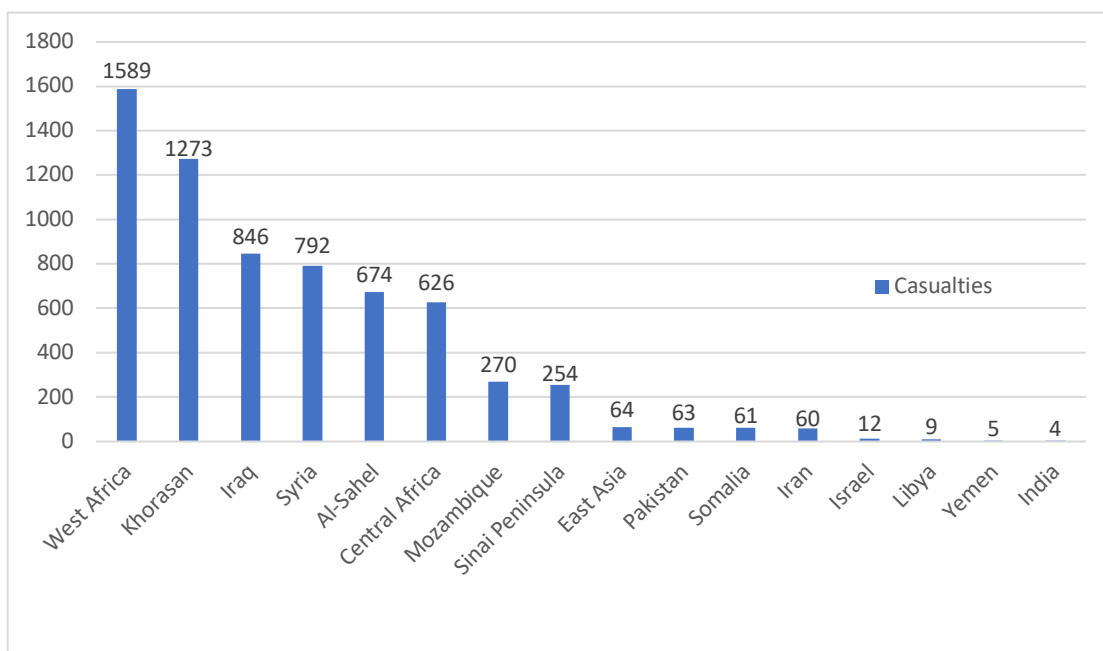
<sup>10</sup> See the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from May 15, 2022, “Summary of ISIS’s campaign of vengeance for the deaths of ISIS’s leader and spokesman”

### ISIS attacks in 2022 by province

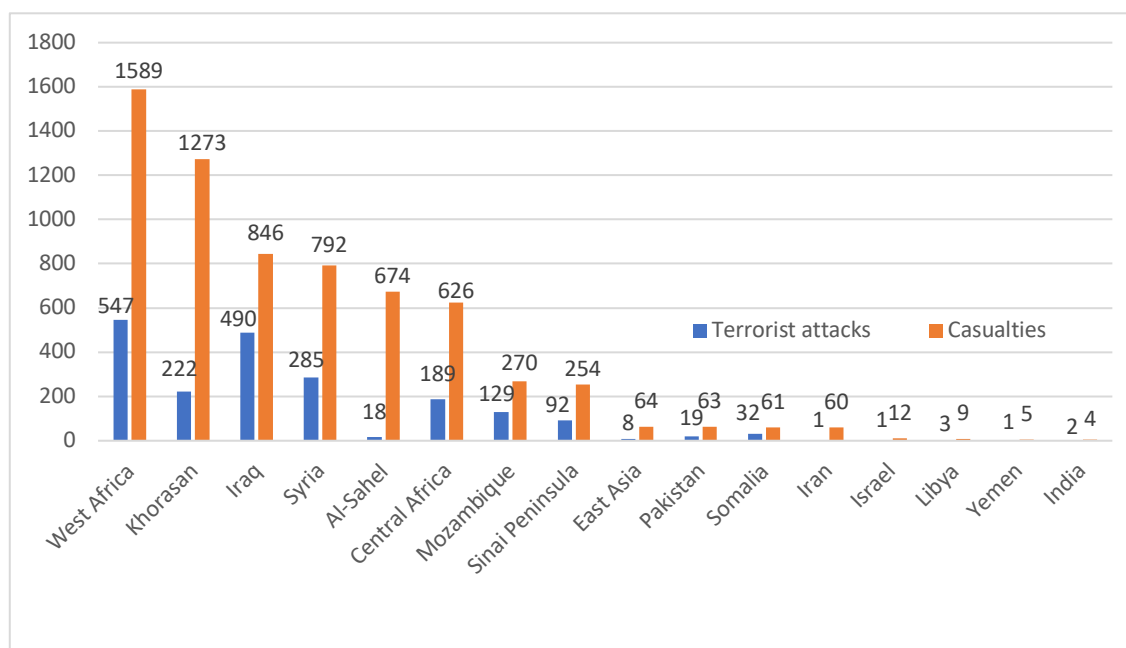


► West Africa Province was also the one that suffered the largest number of casualties (1,589 dead and wounded). followed by Khorasan Province (1,773); Iraq Province (846); Syria Province (792), the Sahel Province (674); Central Africa Province (626); Mozambique Province (270); Sinai Province (254); East Asia Province (64); Pakistan Province (63); Somalia Province (61); Iran (60); Israel (12); Libya Province (9); Yemen Province (5); and India Province (4). It should be noted that citing the number of casualties, ISIS included Iran and Israel in its provinces even though these countries (at least Israel) are not ISIS provinces.

### Casualties in ISIS attacks in 2022 by province



## Number of attacks and casualties in ISIS attacks in 2022 by province



► The data indicates that in 2022, the African continent became the main arena of ISIS activity. As will be recalled, in 2021, the province of Iraq led in the number of attacks and the province of Khorasan led in the number of casualties.<sup>11</sup>

## Africa

### Africa: The center of ISIS activity in 2022

► **In 2022, Africa became the center of ISIS activity.** Africa is also the only continent where the number of the organization's provinces increased after the Sahel Province, which operated as a sub-branch of the West Africa Province, was established in March 2022 and the Mozambique Province was separated from the Central Africa Province and became an independent province in May 2022. This is one of the steps that can testify to the expansion of the organization's activity in Africa: today, six of ISIS's 14 active provinces are located on the African continent: West Africa Province, Central Africa Province, Mozambique Province, the Sahel Province, Somalia Province, and Libya Province.

► In 2022, attacks against Christian residents continued, especially in Mozambique, the Congo, and Nigeria. Researcher Damien Ferré identifies a sharp increase in 2022 in the extent of damage to the Christian population in Africa compared to previous years. In the Sahel <sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> See the ITIC's Information Bulletin from January 25, 2022, "Summary of ISIS activity around the Globe in 2021"

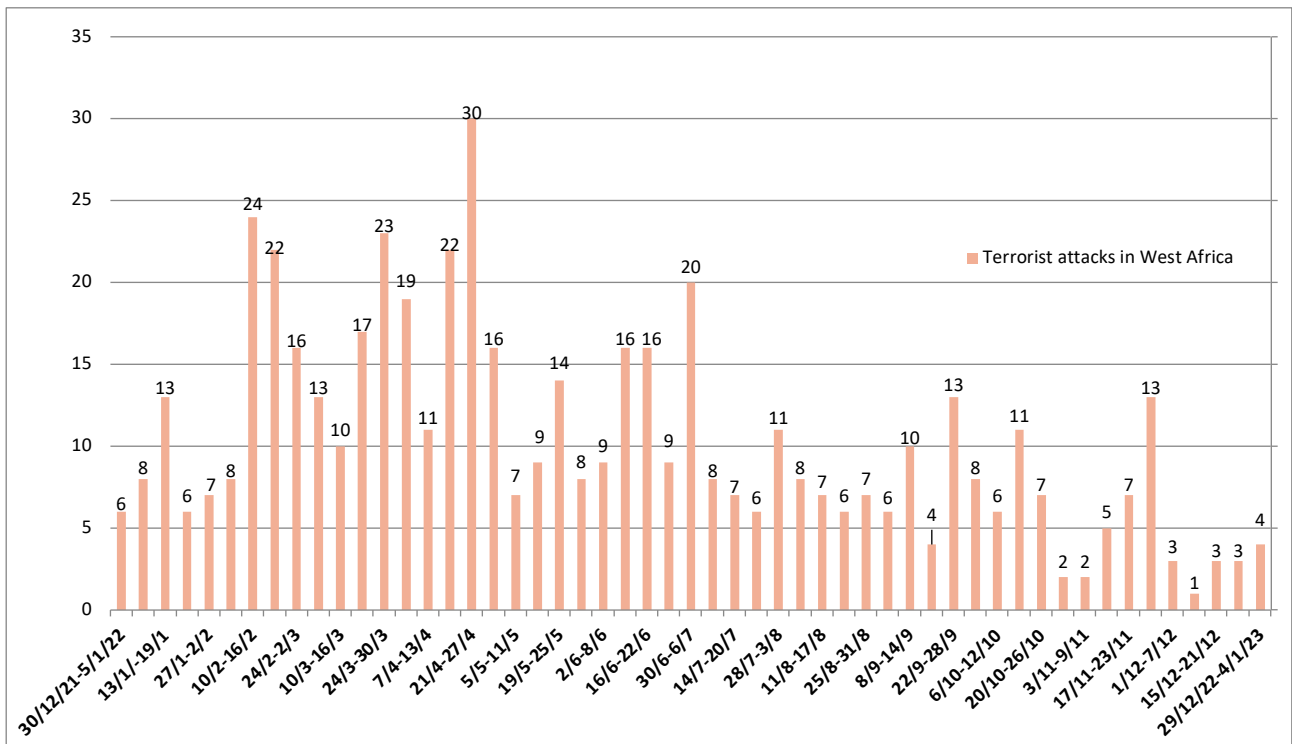
<sup>12</sup> [https://twitter.com/Jihad\\_Analytics/status/1613926212367179776](https://twitter.com/Jihad_Analytics/status/1613926212367179776)

region, there has been an increase in the scope of fighting against operatives affiliated with Al-Qaeda. This year, the activity spilled over to Benin. In Nigeria, the expansion of the activity to other regions was evident, after the activity was reduced in 2021 to the northeast of the country (mainly the Borno State).

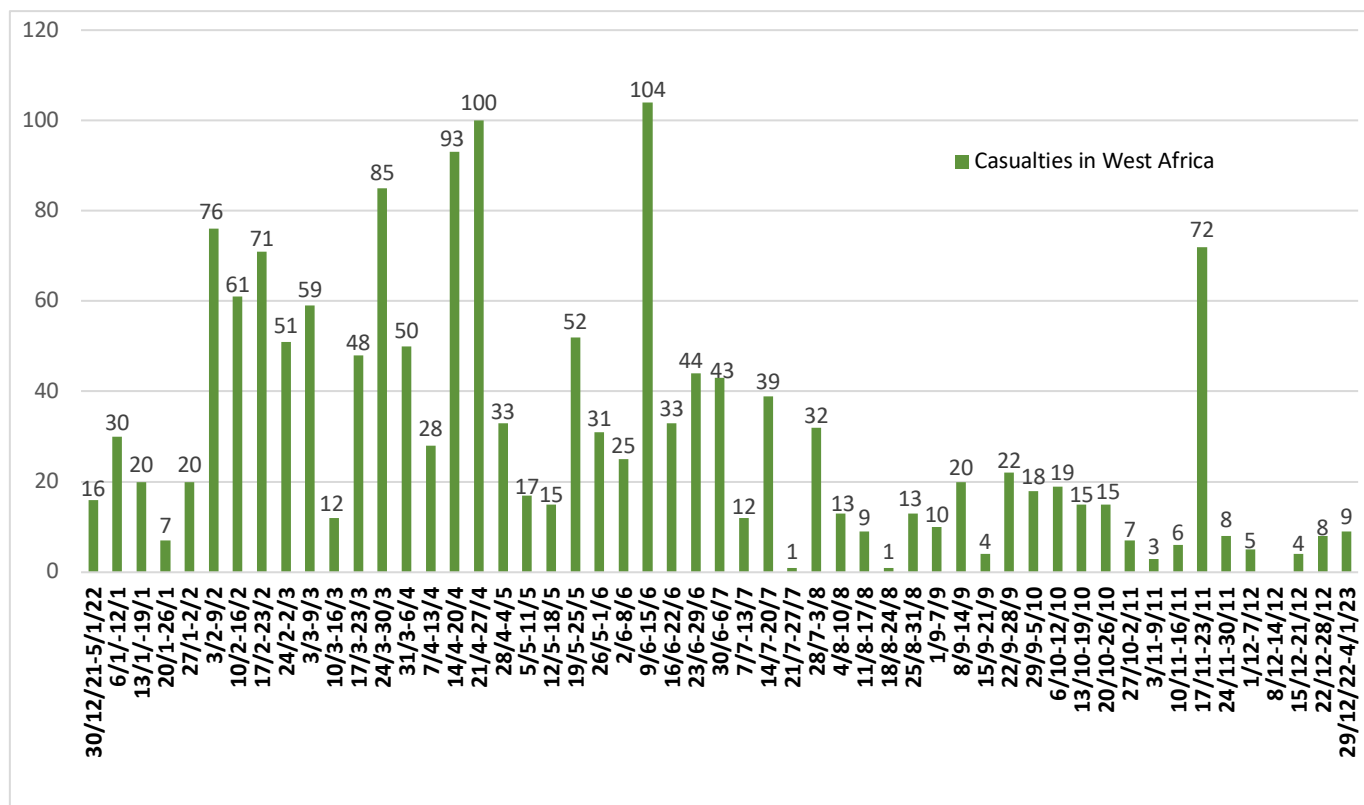
### West Africa Province

► In 2022, **ISIS’s West Africa Province was the province leading in activity** both in terms of the number of terrorist acts it carried out and in terms of the number of casualties. During the year, 547 attacks were carried out, in which 1,589 people were killed or wounded, compared to 2021, when the province operatives carried out 483 operations, in which 2,033 people were killed or wounded. It should be remembered that in March 2022, the Sahel Province was separated from the West Africa Province and operated separately, so that if the activity of the two provinces is summed up (to realistically compare the province’s activity to that of the previous year), it can be noted that this is a significant increase in the province’s activity (565 attacks, in which 2,263 people were killed or wounded). It should be noted that since 2017, there has been a significant and continuous increase in the activity of the province every year.

### Number of terrorist attacks in the West Africa Province in 2022 by week



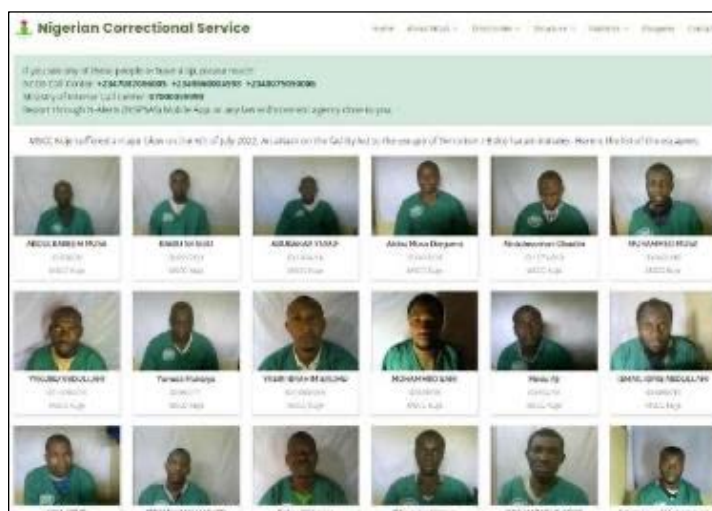
## Number of casualties in terrorist attacks in the West Africa Province in 2022 by week



► **Expansion of West Africa Province’s activity in the country:** During the year, the province operatives operating in the northeast of the country carried out attacks in Niger State, in western Nigeria, and a shooting attack in Ondo State, southwest Nigeria. It was reported that the province operatives and the Boko Haram operatives set up camps in Zamfara State, in northwestern Nigeria. There were also reports on activity by the province in the center of the country. It seems that the expansion of the areas of activity was due to the extensive activity of the security forces in the northeast of the country, which forced operatives to move to other areas in Nigeria.

► **Forms of attacks:** Similar to previous years, most of the attacks were along the lines of an attack carried out by relatively large groups of operatives. The targets of the attacks were mainly military forces and Christian residents. A prominent action of the province was the **liberation of the organization’s operatives from Kuje Prison:** On July 5, 2022, during the night, ISIS operatives broke into the Kuje Prison, about 25 km southwest of the Nigerian capital, Abuja, where 994 prisoners were held. According to the prison authorities and eyewitnesses, over 100 operatives took part in the attack. Over 800 prisoners managed to escape. The next day, a spokesman for Nigeria’s Prison Service announced that over 400 of

the escaped prisoners had been caught (Nigerian news website Premium Times, July 7, 2022). The operation to free the prisoners proved that the West Africa Province operatives had the ability to carry out large and complex operations.



**Some of the escaped prisoners in a prison publication (corrections.gov.ng, July 6, 2022)**

► **Control over local residents.** It seems that in the places where ISIS operates, Islamic indoctrination activity takes place among the local residents. In some places, it is even possible to notice the signs of governance and imposing sharia law on the local population. An example of these signs can be seen in the publication in Al-Naba which documented the activity of ISIS's morality police (Al-Hisba), apparently, in northeastern Nigeria. Among other things, members of the morality police were documented burning drugs (Al-Naba weekly, Telegram, March 10, 2022).



**Right: ISIS's morality police personnel in northeastern Nigeria burning drugs (Telegram, March 10, 2022). Left: Distributing financial aid to residents (Telegram, June 14, 2022)**

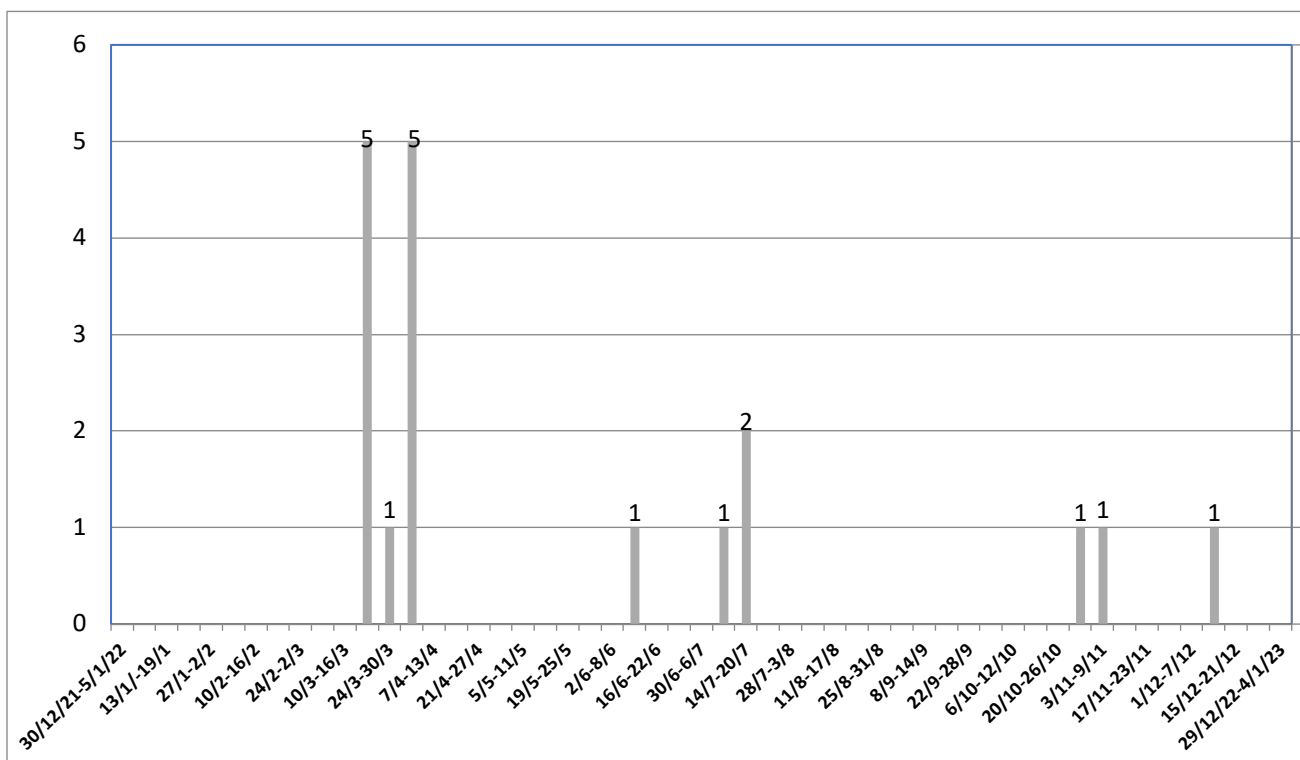
## The Sahel Province

► As stated above, the Sahel Province began to operate in March 2022 in the Mali-Niger-Burkina Faso border triangle area. Since its establishment, the province has been very active, and its operatives attack, in large groups, mainly local militias and Al-Qaeda operatives. Most

of the clashes were concentrated in northeastern Mali. The clashes resulted in dozens of deaths on both sides.

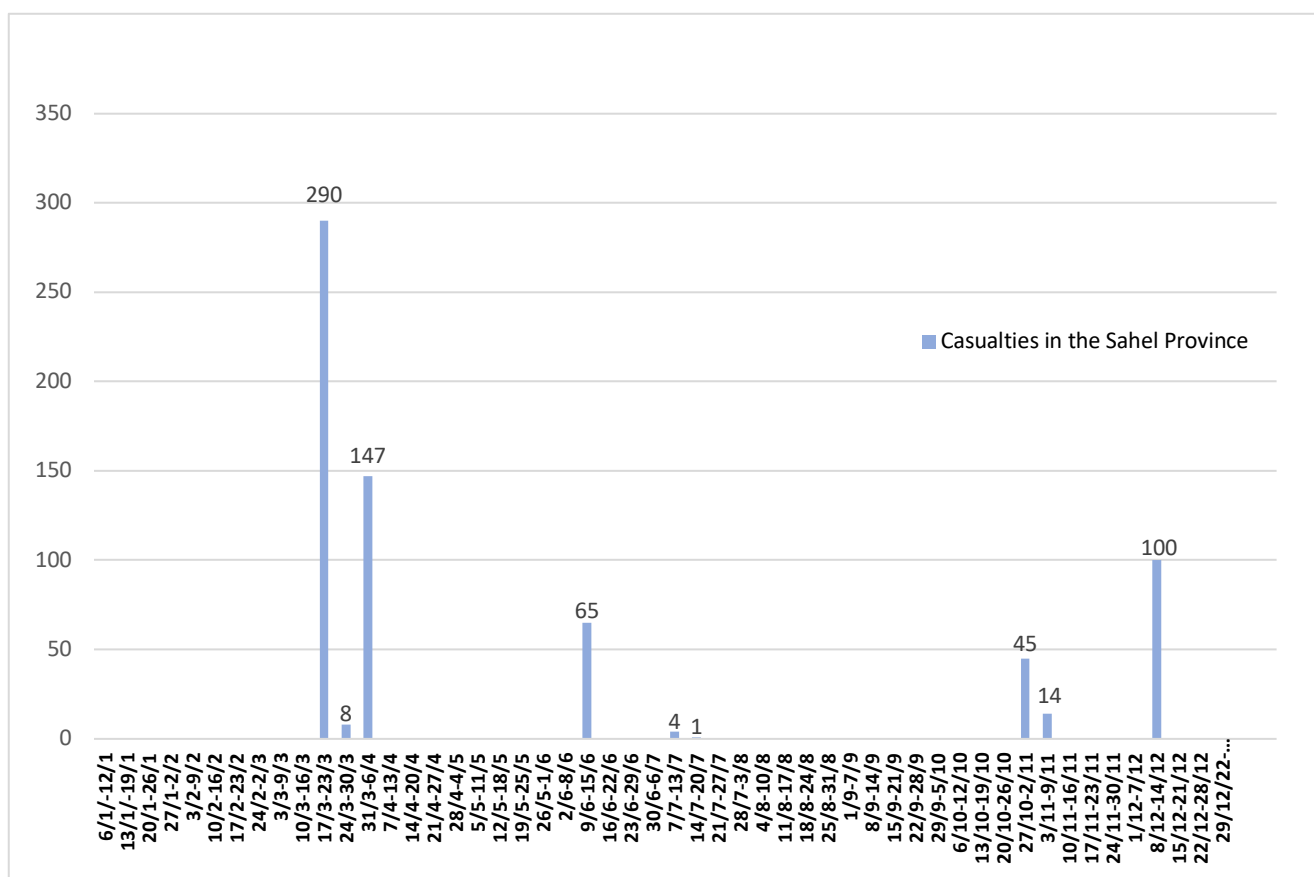
► According to ISIS’s data, since the province was established, its operatives had carried out 18 operations in which 674 people were killed or wounded. Although the number of operations is relatively small, these were large-scale attacks, each of which with 37 casualties on average.

### Terrorist attacks in the Sahel Province in 2022 by week





## Casualties in terrorist attacks in the Sahel Province in 2022 by week



- According to Al-Naba, between May 22 and June 4, 2022, province operatives carried out three extensive attacks against local militias, in which over 145 people were killed or wounded. In the attacks, seven vehicles were destroyed or put out of commission and the province operatives seized 19 vehicles (Al-Naba weekly, Telegram, June 16, 2022).



The infographic in the Al-Naba weekly (Al-Naba, Telegram, June 16, 2022)

- In July 2022, for the first time, the Sahel Province activity spilled over to Benin when on July 1-2, 2022, the organization's operatives attacked patrols of security forces of Benin and killed

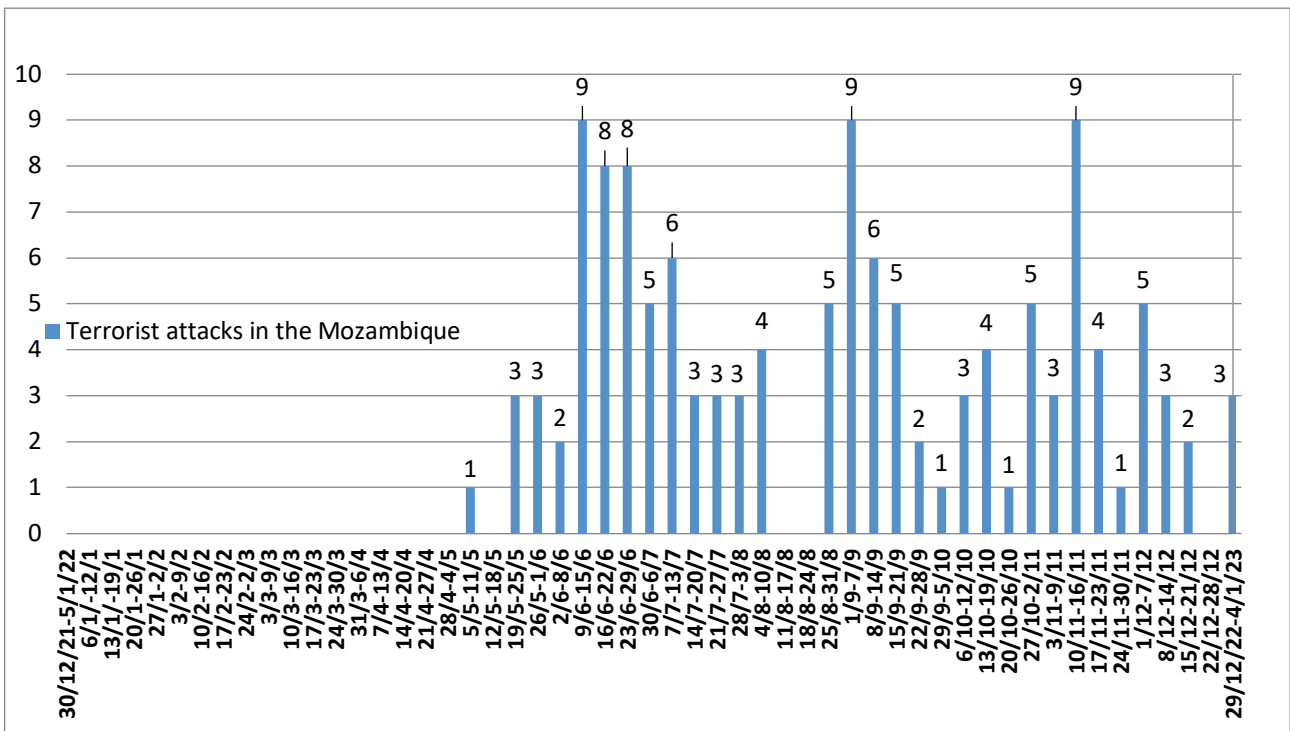
six soldiers. Between July 5 and September 6, 2022, another attack was carried out against security forces in Benin. Seven soldiers were killed (Al-Naba, Telegram, September 15, 2022). The spillover to Benin could further lead to the expansion of the organization in the country.

► In an exchange of fire on December 7, 2022, between ISIS and Al-Qaeda in the Ménaka area, about 65 km north of the Mali-Niger border, according to ISIS, over 100 Al-Qaeda operatives were killed and dozens wounded. Six Al-Qaeda operatives were captured by ISIS (Telegram, December 14, 2022).

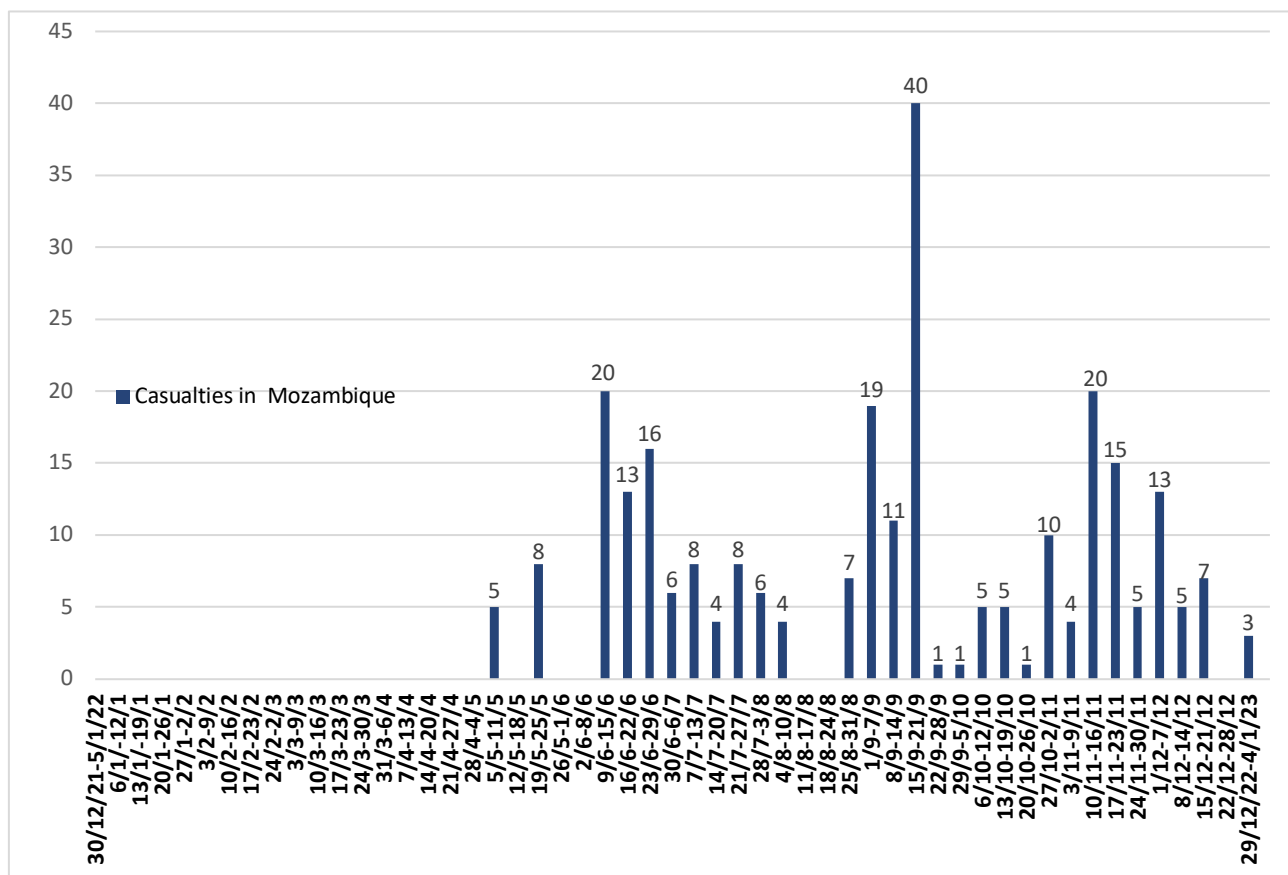
### Mozambique Province

► The Mozambique Province became independent in May 2022. In 2022, the province operatives carried out 156 attacks, in which 331 people were killed or wounded, whereas in the entire year of 2021, the organization carried out 68 attacks in Mozambique, in which 217 people were killed or wounded. This is a significant increase in ISIS activity in the country.

### Terrorist attacks in the Mozambique Province in 2022 by week



## Casualties in terrorist attacks in the Mozambique Province in 2022 by week



► ISIS activity was concentrated in northeastern Mozambique. The ExTrac research institute noted that a gradual increase in the scope of ISIS activity in the country can be seen throughout the year.<sup>13</sup> The targets of the organization's operatives were mainly local security forces, Christian residents, and foreign elements, which the organization claims are exploiting the country's resources. The attacks against Christian citizens were extremely brutal. The operatives also set fire to churches and property. As a result, Christians left the area having nothing.

► As part of the economic war waged by ISIS, repeated attacks were carried out in 2020-2021 on the coast in the northeastern part of Mozambique against the natural gas production project in the area, which is managed by international companies. Following this, the international companies decided in March 2021 to stop their activity. From then until November 2022, the project activity was not fully resumed. On November 29, 2022, it was reported that the port of Mocímboa da Praia, used by the project, was opened for the first

<sup>13</sup> [https://twitter.com/Ex\\_Trac/status/1579406247128100865/photo/1](https://twitter.com/Ex_Trac/status/1579406247128100865/photo/1)

time and that the first ship entered the port, which could indicate the resumption of activity (AFP, November 29, 2022). This is an expression of the tremendous economic damage caused by ISIS to companies and especially to the government of Mozambique and its citizens.

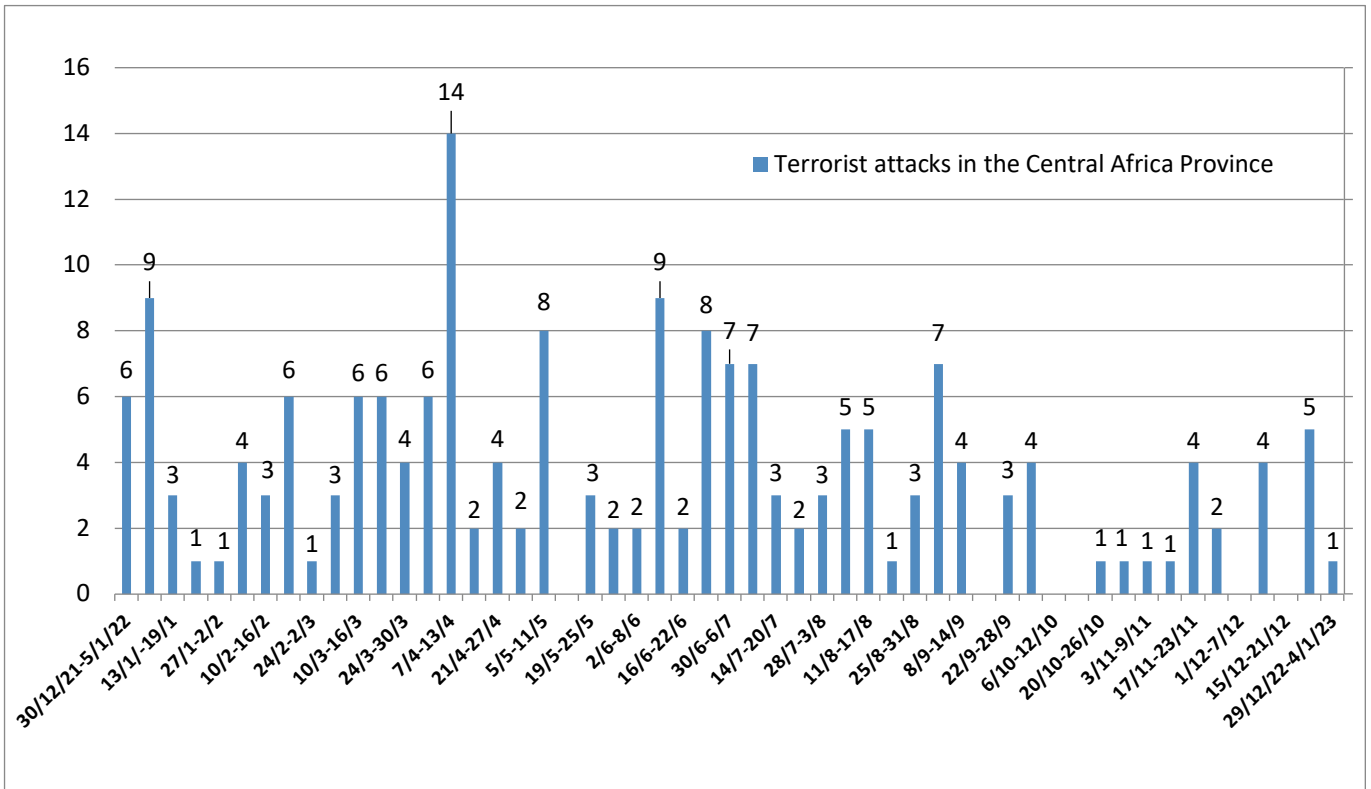
► In addition, ISIS operatives attacked the Montepuez Ruby Mine, in the northeast of the country, and set it on fire. This is one of the largest mines in the world for the mining of rubies, operated by the Gemrock Mining Company, which serves as a subcontractor for the Indian company Diacolour International. Following the attack on the mine, it was reported that the work in the mine was stopped “for security reasons” and that it would not be resumed for the time being (Al-Naba, Telegram, November 10, 2022; The Print, November 12, 2022).

### ISIS’s Central Africa Province

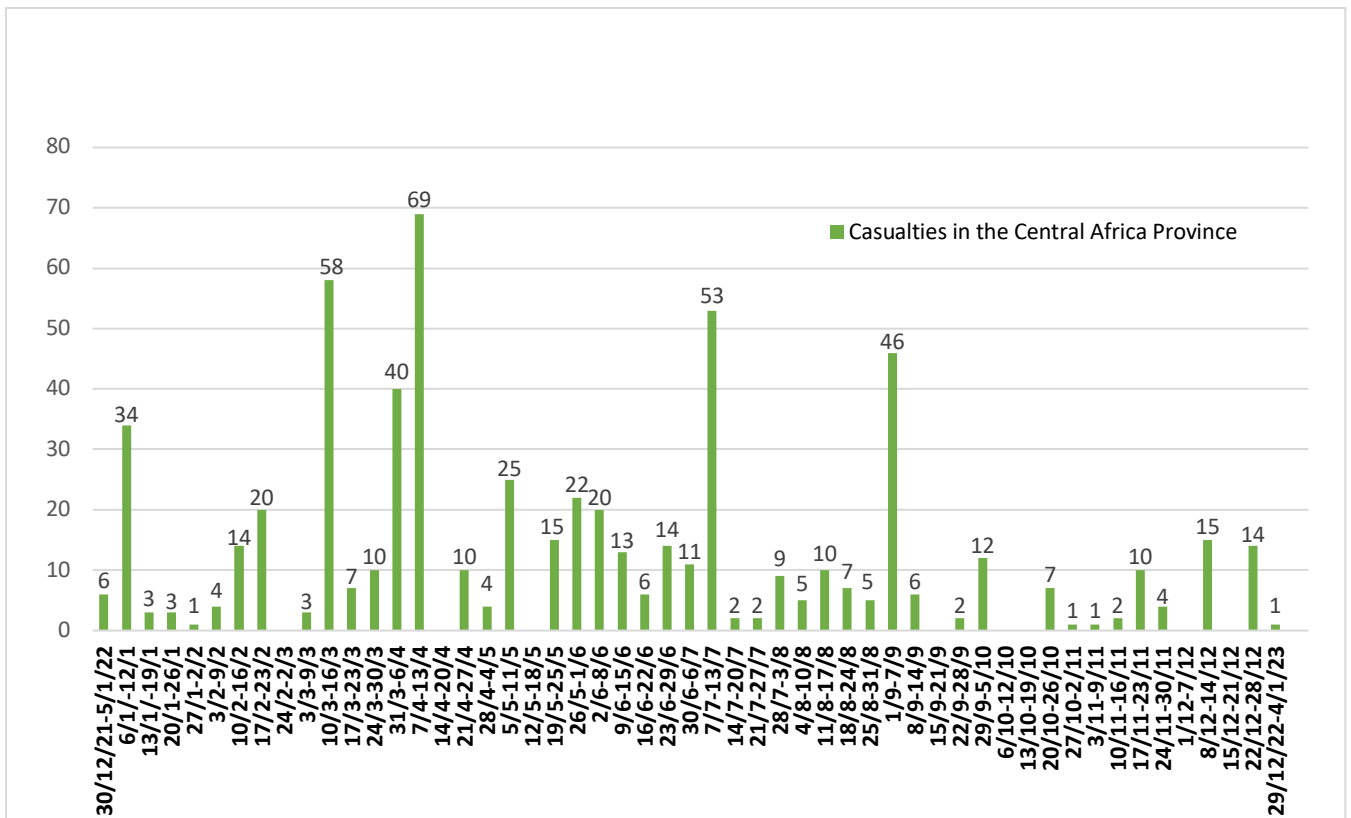
► During 2022, ISIS’s Central Africa Province carried out 179 attacks, in which 626 people were killed or wounded (compared to 187 attacks in 2021, in which 630 people were killed or wounded). Since the number does not include the province of Mozambique, which became independent in May 2022, it is possible to notice an increase in the activity of the province (if part of the activity of the Mozambique Province is added to this province). All the attacks, except for one, were focused on the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the Congo, the activity (similar to the previous year) was concentrated in the Beni region, about 50 km west of the Congo-Uganda border. One attack was carried out in Uganda. Most of the attacks were carried out by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), which pledged allegiance to ISIS and make up the vast majority of the province's operatives.

► **Targets of the attacks:** The targets of the attacks were mainly Congolese security forces, local elements supporting the security forces, and Christian residents. In contrast to 2021, when the province operatives carried out three large-scale attacks in Kampala, the capital of Uganda, in 2022 no activity was detected in this area. This could indicate the weakening of the organization and its inability to operate in the country’s government center.

### Terrorist attacks in the Central Africa Province in 2022 by week



### Casualties in terrorist attacks in the Central Africa Province in 2022 by week



► The main event was the break-in at the Kangwangura Prison in the northwest of the city of Butembo in northeastern Congo on August 10, 2022. According to one estimate, during the break-in over 100 prisoners escaped from the prison. According to a statement by ISIS, which claimed responsibility for breaking into the prison, dozens of the organization's prisoners were released (Amaq, August 12, 2022).



**Right: The entrance gate to the prison (the UN website, December 13, 2016). Left: The prison after the break-in of ISIS operatives (Amaq, August 12, 2022)**

## Somalia Province

► In 2022, Somalia Province continued to carry out attacks on a limited scale mainly in the capital Mogadishu and its surroundings. There was a slight decrease in the number of attacks this year. During 2022, the province operatives carried out 32 attacks in which 61 people were killed and wounded, compared to 38 attacks in 2021, in which 107 people were killed and wounded (and compared to 2020, when 33 attacks were carried out, in which 84 people were killed and wounded).

► Attacks in 2022 were mainly guerilla operations of activating IEDs. The main target was the security forces of the Somali government.

► It seems that ISIS found it difficult to expand throughout Somalia since the Salafi-Jihadist elements in the country mostly belong to Al-Shabaab, which is affiliated with Al-Qaeda. ISIS's Somalia Province tried during the year, apparently unsuccessfully, to recruit operatives from Somalia, neighboring countries, and the Islamic world. In a video released by the province on July 30, 2022, a call was made to Muslims wherever they are, especially in Somalia, to join the organization. In the video, Abu Hafsa al-Ithyobi (i.e., the Ethiopian), a senior official in the province, called for enlistment in the organization and noted that the organization's training camp provides both religious and military training (Telegram, July 30, 2022).



**From the video: Somalia Province recruits in a training camp (Telegram, July 30, 2022)**

## Libya Province

► Libya Province was hardly active. During 2022, only four attacks were carried out, in which nine people were killed or wounded (Telegram, January 4, 2023). The attacks were carried out very far from the capital Tripoli. Two other planned attacks were thwarted by General Haftar's army.<sup>14</sup> The activity consisted of armed guerrilla attacks and the activation of IEDs, directed against Haftar's army.

### ► List of attacks in Libya Province in 2022:

- ◆ On January 18, 2022, an IED was activated against General Haftar's army headquarters in Umm al-Aranib, south of Sabha, about 650 km south of Tripoli. A soldier was killed and two others were wounded (Telegram, January 18, 2022).
  - ◆ On January 24, 2022, a vehicle of General Haftar's army was targeted by gunfire on the Umm al-Aranib-Al-Qatrun road (Al-Qatrun is about 150 km south of Umm al-Aranib). Two soldiers were killed (Telegram, January 24, 2022).
  - ◆ On April 18, 2022, a car bomb was remotely detonated in front of a military base of General Haftar's army in the Umm al-Aranib region. There were no casualties (Erem News, April 18, 2022).
  - ◆ On June 8, 2022, an attack was carried out by armed elements against a military force at the southern entrance to the city of Al-Qatrun. One soldier was severely wounded. ISIS did not claim responsibility for the incident, but according to Haftar's army, ISIS operatives were the ones who carried out the attack (Al-Ayn al-Ikhbariya, June 8, 2022).
- Counterterrorism activity: On June 8, 2022, General Haftar's army repelled an attack by gunmen who shot at a company commander at the entrance to a military base in the area of Umm al-Aranib. The soldiers fired at the sources of the fire and drove the attackers away. ISIS

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<sup>14</sup> General Haftar is the commander of the Libyan national army that controls most of the country.



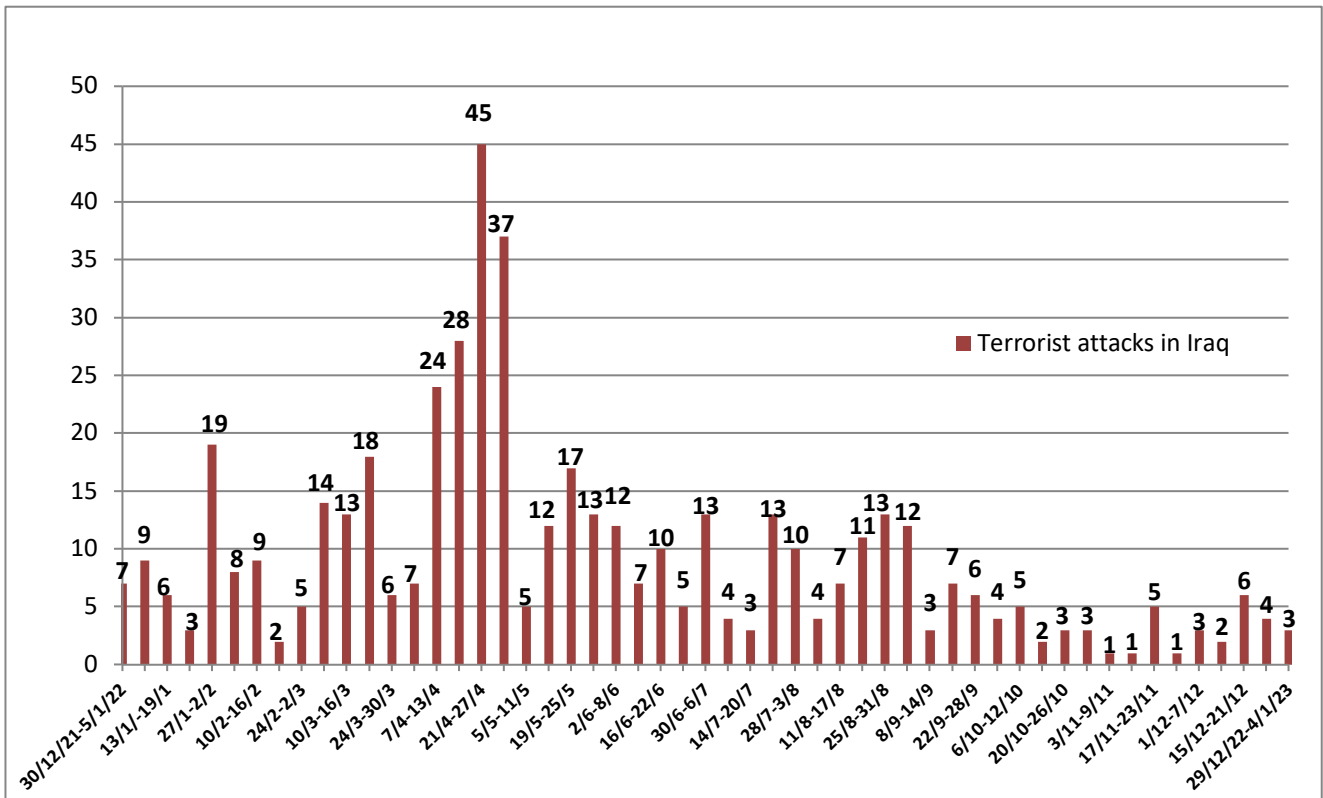
did not claim responsibility for the incident, but according to Haftar's army, ISIS operatives were behind the attack (Al-Ayn al-Ikhbariya, June 8, 2022).

## The Middle East

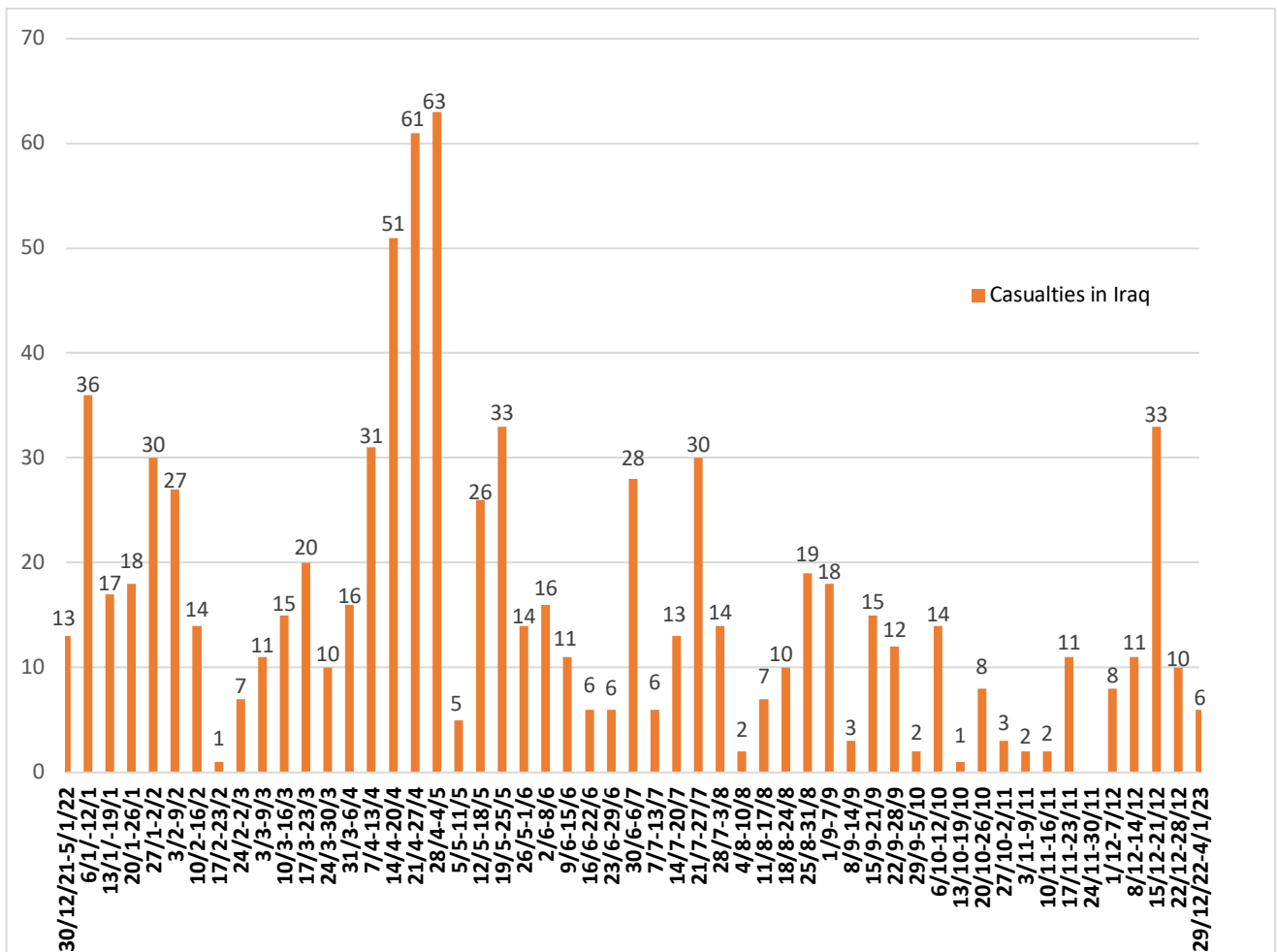
### Iraq

- ▶ In 2022, there was a significant decrease in ISIS's activity in Iraq, compared to 2021, especially in the second half of the year. The organization carried out 484 attacks, in which 833 people were killed or wounded, compared to 1,405 attacks in 2021, in which 2,676 were killed or wounded, that is, about a third of the province's activity in 2021.
- ▶ Most of the attacks consisted of the activation of IEDs, limited attacks, firing rockets and mortar shells, and assassinations. Unlike previous years, no suicide bombing attacks were carried out during 2022. In one case, on August 9, 2022, a suicide bomber, apparently an ISIS operative, was reported to have planned to carry out an attack against a procession of Shiite civilians during the Ashura holiday in Diyala Province. The attack was thwarted after the terrorist, who was surrounded by the security forces, blew himself up with his explosive belt causing no casualties (Al-Nashra, August 9, 2022). The Province's activity was mainly concentrated in the provinces of Kirkuk, Diyala, Salah al-Din, and Al-Anbar.
- ▶ During 2022, hundreds of ISIS operatives were killed and many more were arrested in counterterrorism activity by the security forces. According to the US Central Command (CENTCOM), during 2022, the US Army in collaboration with local forces (the Iraqi Army and the Kurdish forces) carried out 191 operations in which at least 220 ISIS operatives were killed and 159 operatives were arrested (CENTCOM, December 29, 2022). In addition, the Iraqi army carried out counterterrorism activity that included killing and arresting operatives. In these operations, 53 ISIS operatives were killed and 105 others were arrested (Iraqi News Agency, January 5, 2022).

### Terrorist attacks in Iraq in 2022 by week



### Casualties in terrorist attacks in Iraq in 2022 by week



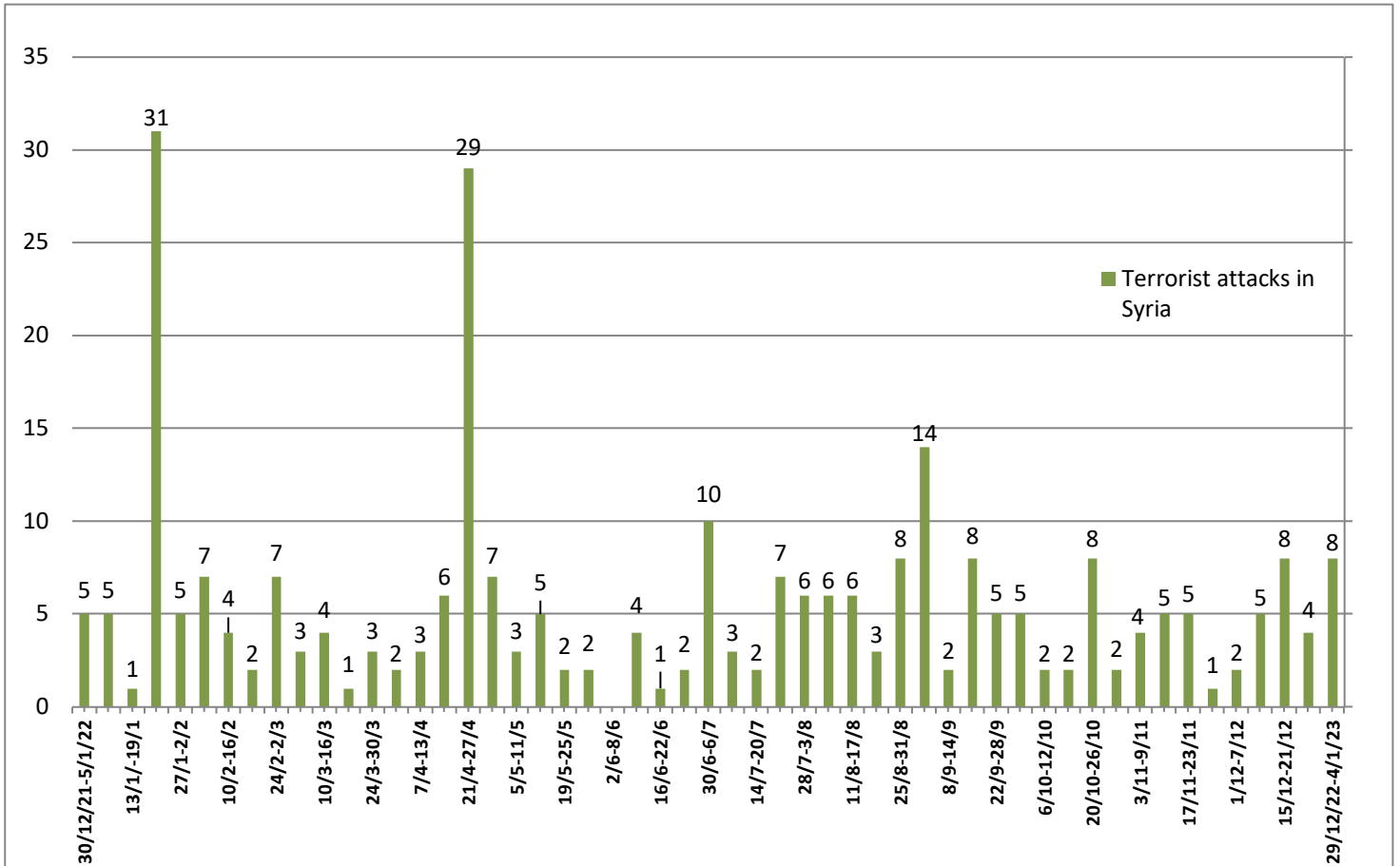
## Syria

- ▶ In 2022, ISIS's Syria Province maintained its strength, and perhaps even got a little stronger. Although the number of attacks carried out by the operatives in 2022 decreased slightly compared to 2021 (by about 16%), the attacks were more deadly and the average number of victims per attack increased (by about 15%).
- ▶ During 2022, the organization's operatives carried out 297 attacks, in which 887 people were killed or wounded, compared to 360 attacks in 2021, in which 771 people were killed or wounded (and compared to 593 attacks in 2020, in which 1,195 people were killed or wounded). It should be noted that the data expresses the minimum scope of activity carried out by the province since not all attacks were reported by the organization, especially those carried out in the desert area, where ISIS cells have difficulty maintaining contact with the organization's central media system.
- ▶ At the same time as carrying out the attacks, the organization suffered many losses. According to the US Central Command (CENTCOM), during 2022, the US Army carried out 108 operations in Syria in collaboration with local entities, as well as 14 exclusive operations. In these operations, 466 ISIS operatives were killed and 215 were arrested (CENTCOM, December 29, 2022). If we add to that dozens or perhaps hundreds of operatives who were killed by the Syrian regime and the forces supporting it (this is an estimate since we do not have exact numbers), it seems that the organization suffered a severe blow in Syria in 2022 and it does not seem that its recruitment system was able to fill the ranks.
- ▶ In 2022, the organization's activity in Syria was focused on three main areas:
  - ◆ **The areas controlled by the Kurdish SDF forces:** Most of ISIS's activity in Syria in 2022 was directed against the SDF forces in the provinces of Deir ez-Zor (Deir ez-Zor-Al-Mayadeen region), Al-Hasakah, and Al-Raqqah. The attacks were mainly along the lines of small guerilla attacks against targets and fighters, assassinations of individuals, and the use of explosive devices. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, during 2022, ISIS carried out 201 attacks in territories controlled by the Kurdish SDF forces, in which 345 people were killed. The high number of casualties is a result of the break-in at Ghuguayran prison (121 SDF fighters, prison guards, and civilians) (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, August 30, 2022, and December 29, 2022).
  - ◆ **The desert area:** In this area, ISIS operated against the Syrian army and the forces supporting it, mainly in the form of activating IEDs and ambush attacks. It should be

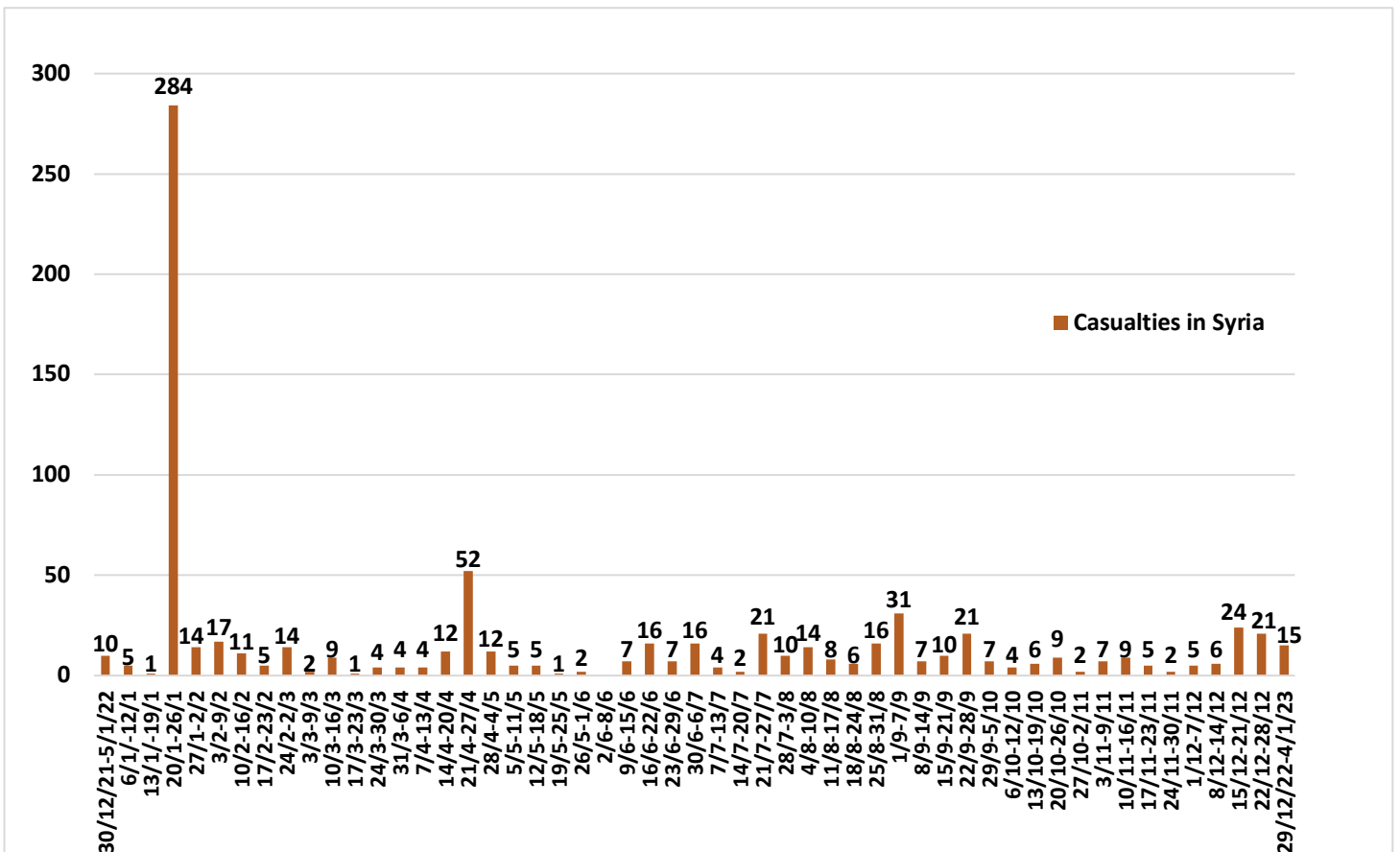
remembered that some of the activity was not reported due to the lack of communication between the cells operating on the ground and the organization's central media network. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, during 2022, ISIS operatives carried out 101 attacks in the desert area, in which 261 soldiers and officers of the Syrian army and militia fighters supporting the Syrian regime were killed (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, January 6, 2023). The Russian Air Force continued to support the Syrian regime in the region by attacking ISIS targets from the air, although to a lesser extent than the previous year, apparently due to the war in Ukraine (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, September 30, 2022 and November 1, 2022).

◆ **Southern Syria:** During the year there was activity in the Daraa region, in southern Syria, which centered on clashes between the organization's cells and local militias, at least some of which are loyal to the Syrian regime. During October 2022, fighting was detected between local militia fighters from the Daraa province and ISIS operatives. Local sources reported that local militia fighters operated on October 14-15, 2022, against ISIS terrorist hotspots in the city of Jassem, in southern Syria, and that seven ISIS operatives, one of them Iraqi, and three of the local militia fighters were killed (SANA, October 15, 2022). In another incident, on October 29, 2022, it was reported that an exchange of fire took place between former fighters in the rebel organizations and ISIS operatives in the Tariq al-Sadd neighborhood in the city of Daraa. It was noted that about 50 ISIS operatives were concentrated in the Tariq al-Sadd neighborhood (Enab Baladi, October 29, 2022; Al-Araby al-Jadeed, October 30, 2022).

### Terrorist attacks in Syria in 2022 by week



### Casualties in terrorist attacks in Syria in 2022 by week



► The most significant attack in Syria was the break-in to Al-Sina'ah-Ghuwayran prison, the central prison of the city of Al-Hasakah, where over 4,000 ISIS operatives were held, on January 20, 2022. A total of 121 members of the SDF forces, guards, and civilians were killed. A total of 374 ISIS operatives were also killed. According to the Kurdish forces, about 1,000 ISIS operatives surrendered to them and 3,500 prisoners in the prison surrendered.



**ISIS operatives in the prison; the operatives breaking a niche in the prison's interior wall and starting to escape with other inmates outside the prison (Telegram, January 23, 2022)**

## Sinai Province

► During 2022, there was a slight decrease in the number of attacks carried out by the province operatives. A total of 91 attacks were carried out, compared to 113 attacks in 2021. Despite the decrease in the number of attacks, there was an increase in the number of victims, 254 people were killed and wounded, compared to 221 in 2021.

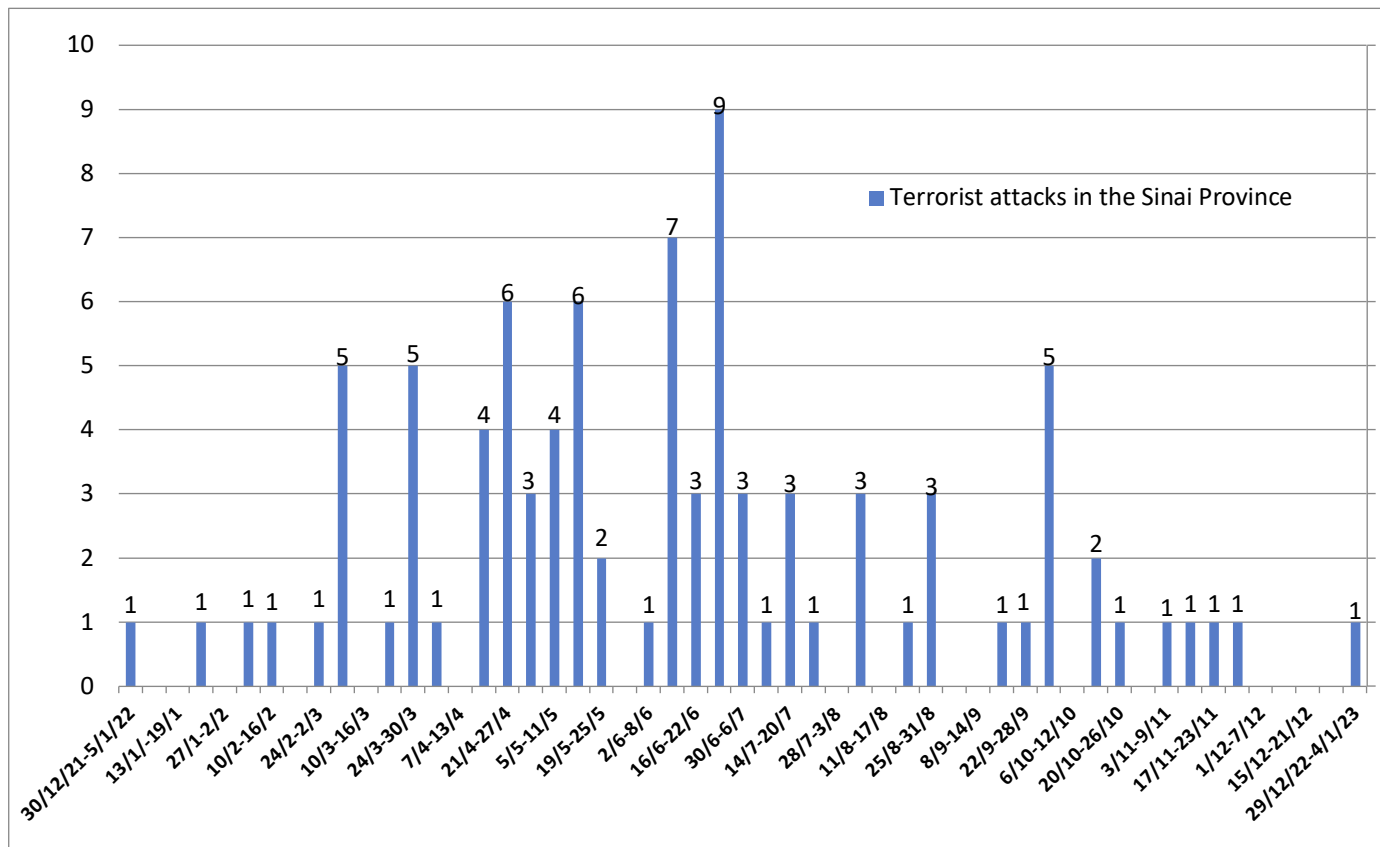
► **Forms of attacks:** Most of the attacks consisted of the activation of IEDs, gunfire, assassinations, ambush attacks, and sniper fire. However, several more complex attacks were also carried out during the year.

► Towards the end of the year, the center of gravity of the province's activity moved to the Suez Canal area (Jalbanah, Al-Qantara Sharq, and Ismailia), where operatives who had difficulty operating in the northern part of the Sinai Peninsula apparently fled. The last attack in 2022 took place on the western side of the canal, in the city of Ismailia, that is, in Egypt itself, which indicates the organization's ability to transfer operatives, weapons, logistical means, and funds needed to carry out attacks on the other side of the Suez Canal. It is possible that in this activity, the province operatives were assisted by radical elements inside Egypt.

► During the year, the Egyptian security forces and the tribal militias supporting them increased their activity to eradicate the organization's presence in the northern Sinai Peninsula, mainly in the areas of Bir al-Abd, Rafah, Sheikh Zuweid, and Al-Arish. This activity

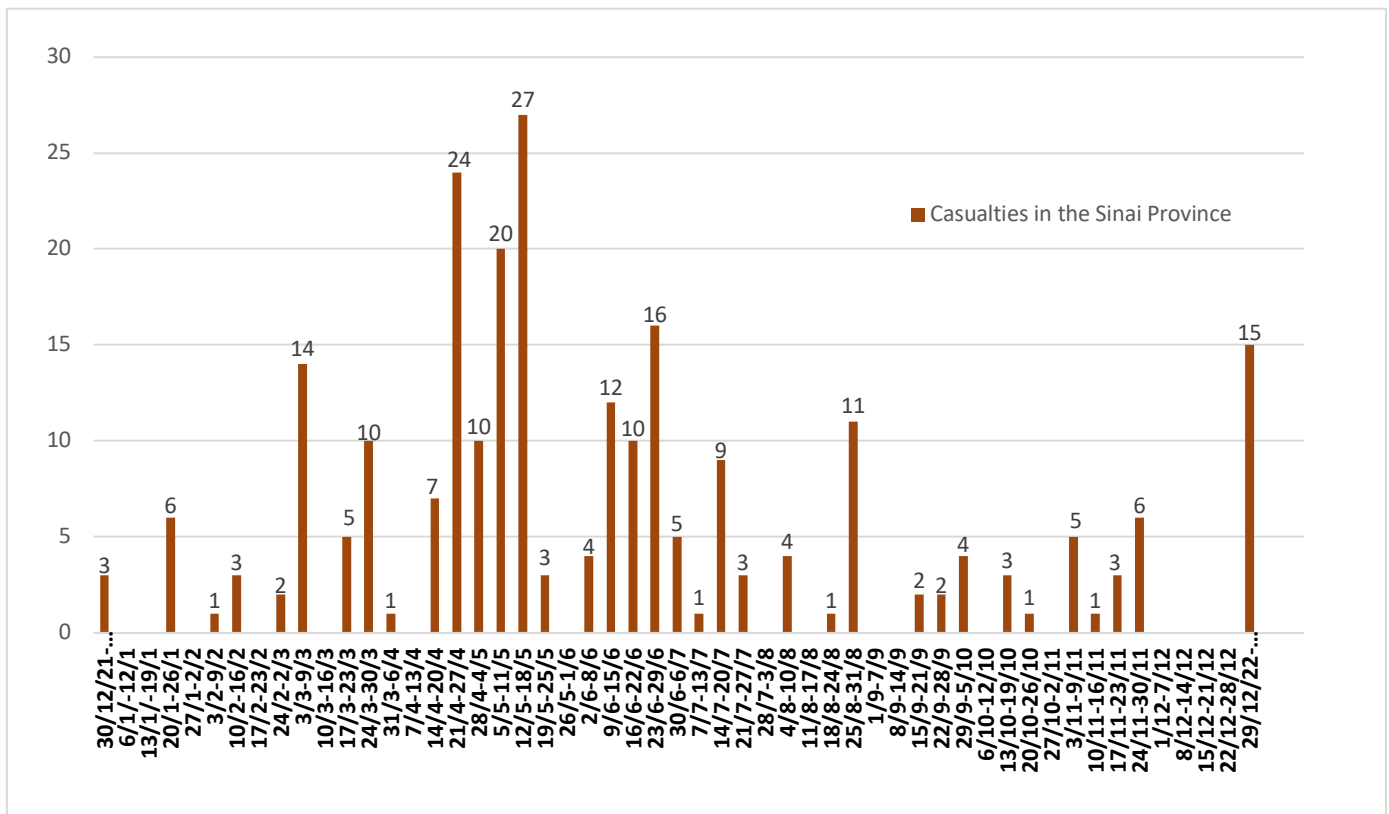
hindered ISIS’s ability to operate in these areas. However, in spite of that, the operatives proved their ability to carry out complex operations and even got closer to the Suez Canal, a very important maritime trade route for the Egyptian and world economy, and there are concerns that ISIS will try to carry out strategic attacks in the canal.

### Terrorist attacks in the Sinai Province in 2022 by week





## Casualties in terrorist attacks in the Sinai Province in 2022 by week



### ► Complex attacks carried out by the Sinai Province:

- ◆ On December 30, 2022, an attack was carried out against an Egyptian police checkpoint in northern Ismailia, on the western side of the Suez Canal, about 100 km northeast of the capital Cairo. Two policemen, a police officer, and an Egyptian citizen were killed and 14 other people were wounded, including a police officer. One of the gunmen was killed and one or two gunmen escaped. It was later reported that one was captured (Al-Jazeera, December 31, 2022; Sinaa Mubasher Facebook page, December 31, 2022).
- ◆ A significant attack in the Rafah area was against a checkpoint at the entrance to the city on May 11, 2022. According to the Egyptian army, the Egyptian security forces succeeded in thwarting the attack and killed seven ISIS operatives. An officer and four soldiers were killed in the operation (Egyptian army spokesman, May 11, 2022). According to ISIS, 12 soldiers were killed, including an officer (Telegram, May 14 2022).
- ◆ On May 7, 2022, the province operatives carried out a complex attack against a military position securing a strategic water pumping facility, in the northwest of the

Sinai Peninsula, 26 km east of the Suez Canal. The Egyptian army spokesman reported that an officer and 16 soldiers were killed in the operation.<sup>15</sup>

◆ On the night of November 18-19, 2022, there were exchanges of fire between ISIS operatives and Egyptian security forces in Al-Qantara Sharq, near the Suez Canal. The operatives took over a number of government buildings (including a school) in the eastern part of the city. At least five soldiers, including an officer or two, were killed and several others were wounded. ISIS claimed responsibility for the incident. The Egyptian army imposed a media ban on the incident.<sup>16</sup>

## Israel

► Three attacks were carried out in Israel in 2022, the perpetrators of which drew inspiration from ISIS. Arrests were also made of terrorist operatives supporting ISIS who were planning to carry out additional attacks.

► **Attack in Hadera:** On the evening of March 27, 2022, two terrorists opened fire on passersby in Hadera. Two terrorists, cousins, residents of Umm al-Fahm, killed two Border Guard fighters and wounded six before being shot dead by two policemen who were in the area. In a video distributed on the Internet, the two recorded themselves pledging allegiance to ISIS's leader shortly before they left for the attack. It should be noted that one of the terrorists was arrested in Turkey in 2016, after trying to reach Syria and join ISIS. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack.



**Photo from the video released by the two terrorists before leaving for the attack  
(Telegram, March 27, 2023)**

<sup>15</sup> For further details, see the ITIC's Information Bulletin from May 17, 2022, "ISIS attacks a strategic facility in Sinai – Significance and possible implications"

<sup>16</sup> For further details, see the ITIC's Information Bulletin from November 24, 2023, "Incident between Egyptian army forces and ISIS in the Suez Canal region"

► **Attack in Be'er Sheva:** On March 22, 2022, a resident of Hura arrived in his vehicle at a gas station in Be'er Sheva, got out and stabbed to death a woman who was at the station. He then continued driving and stopped at a shopping mall in the heart of the city and stabbed two people. He got into his vehicle again and tried to escape, and while driving against the direction of traffic, hit a cyclist who was killed by the impact. Later he got out of the vehicle again armed with a knife and tried to stab passersby. A bus driver who was there shot and killed him. Four people were killed in the attack, two women and two men. Two other women were wounded. The perpetrator was in prison between 2015-2021 for holding meetings of ISIS supporters in Hura (Israeli media, March 22, 2022).



**The terrorist at the scene holding a knife before he was shot to death  
(Dunya al-Watan, March 22, 2022)**

► **Double attack in Jerusalem:** On November 23, 2022, two explosive devices exploded, almost simultaneously, in two different scenes in Jerusalem, a bus stop at the western entrance to the city and a bus stop at Ramot junction. Two Israeli civilians were killed and around 20 others were wounded, some seriously. A suspect, a resident of East Jerusalem, was arrested. His interrogation revealed that he acted alone under the inspiration of ISIS. As part of the investigation into the attack, a resident of Ein Nakuba, which is close to Abu Gosh, was also arrested on suspicion of being an ISIS supporter. His interrogation revealed that he had planned to carry out another attack in the area of Jerusalem's Central Station (Israel Police website, Israel Police Facebook page, Israeli media, December 27, 2022).



**The terrorist who perpetrated a double attack in Jerusalem  
(Israel Police website, December 27, 2022)**

► In addition, arrests were made of members of other networks. One of the networks included six residents of Nazareth who were suspected of intending to carry out terrorist activity within the framework of ISIS in Israel. According to the indictment filed against them, the six planned to carry out an attack on a Muslim high school in Nazareth. They also worked to locate targets for an attack, such as a busy bus station in a city in the north of the country, a police station in the vicinity of their residence, woods where Jewish citizens walk, and more (Israel Police website; Ynet, October 2, 2022).



**Five of the six detained ISIS operatives (ISA media, October 2, 2022)**

► In another activity by Israeli security forces, on July 14, 2022, two residents of Umm al-Fahm were arrested for questioning on the suspicion that they intend to carry out terrorist activity within the framework of ISIS in Israel or outside of it. Among other things, there was also a suspicion that the two intended to join the fighting in Africa as part of ISIS (ISA media, August 15, 2022).

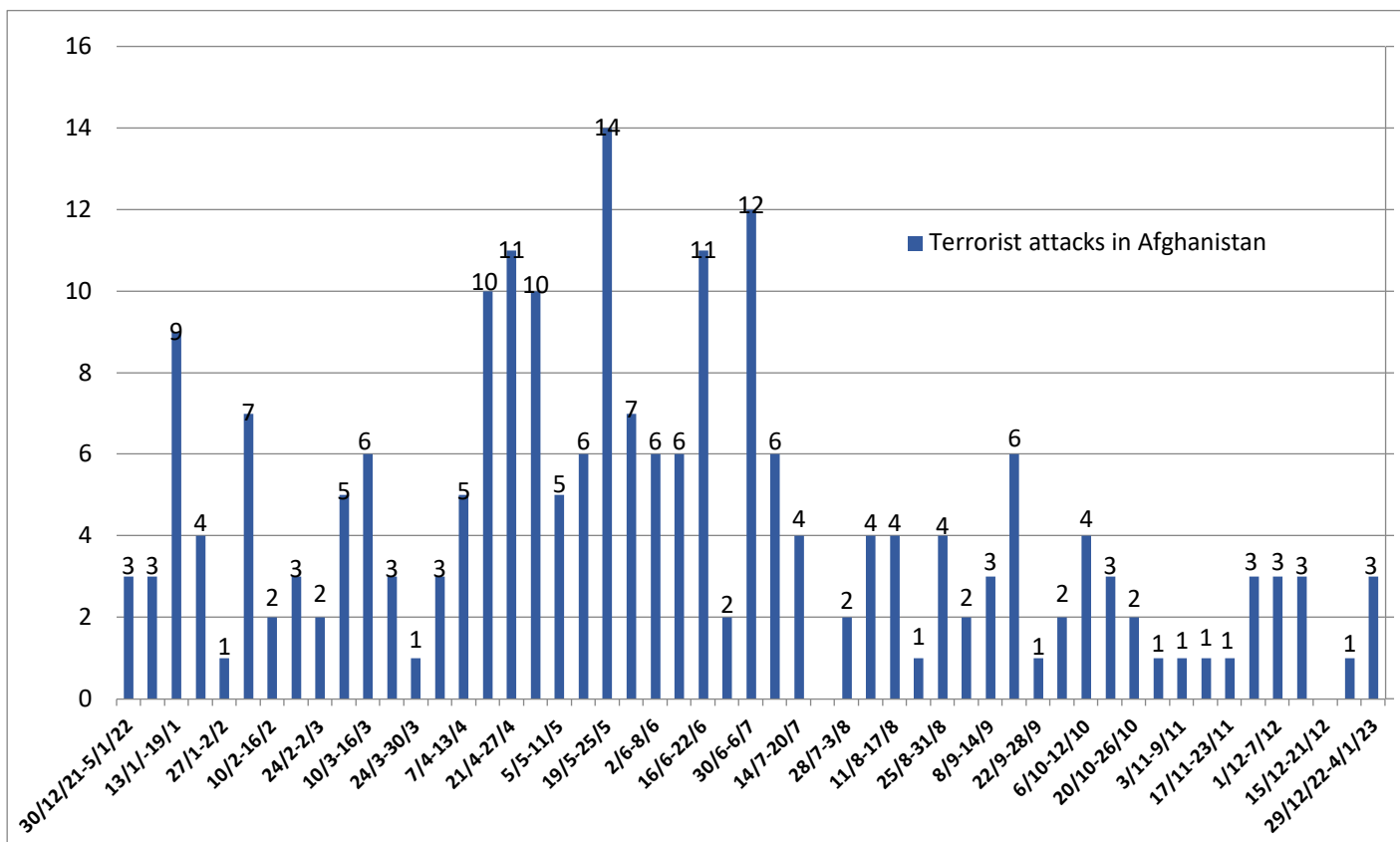


**The two detainees (ISA media, August 15, 2022)**

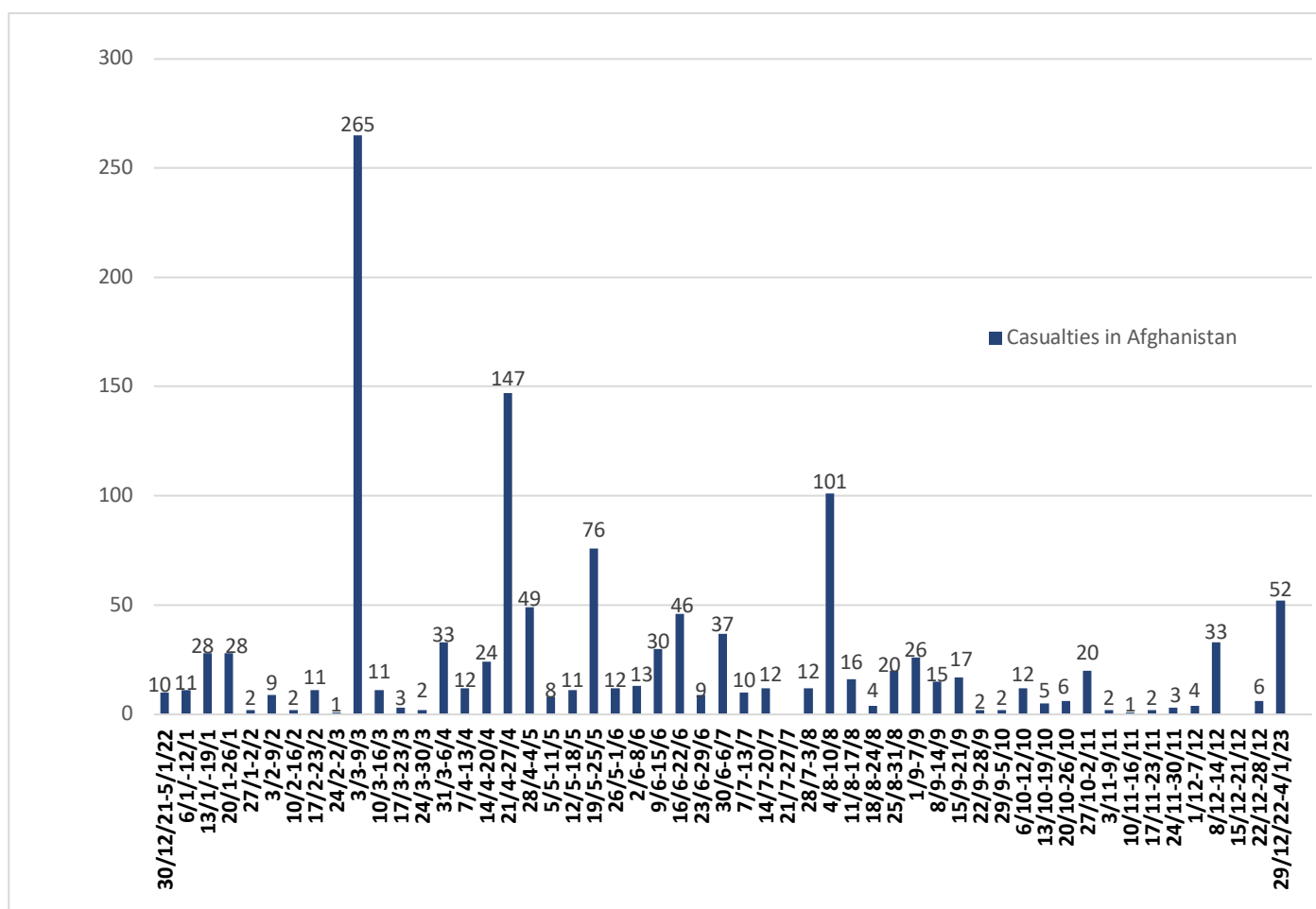
### **Afghanistan (Khorasan Province)**

- ▶ During 2022, there was a significant decrease in the scope of activity in the Khorasan Province compared to 2021, which was a peak year for ISIS activity in the province, apparently due to the chaos that prevailed in the country. During 2022, the province operatives carried out 181 attacks, in which 1,188 people were killed or wounded, compared to 365 attacks in 2021, in which 2,210 people were killed or wounded. The main targets of ISIS attacks were the Taliban, Shiite citizens, members of the Hazara minority, and Sikhs. At the end of the year, an unusual attack was carried out against Chinese tourists. The attacks mainly consisted of the use of explosive devices, assassinations, and shootings.
- ▶ During 2022, the spillover of the Khorasan Province activity to the border area with Pakistan and other countries continued (see the chapter on East Asian countries). The operations that spilled over to Pakistan were quite small and not necessarily coordinated with the organization's Pakistan Province, which is mainly active in the Kashmir region and Islamabad.

### Terrorist attacks in Afghanistan in 2022 by week



## Casualties in terrorist attacks in Afghanistan in 2022 by week



### Main terrorist attacks

► On September 30, 2022, a suicide bomber activated a bomb that he carried on his body inside a hall in a study center in a neighborhood in southwest Kabul, most of whose residents are members of the Hazara minority. A total of 53 people were killed, including 46 girls and young women. Also, 110 people were wounded. ISIS did not claim responsibility for the attack but apparently it is behind it (India Today, October 3, 2022; France 24, September 30, 2022; CNN, September 30, 2022).



**The scene of the attack: thick smoke rising from the building (Fars News, September 30, 2022)**

► A car bomb was detonated on September 23, 2022, against Taliban members going out of a mosque after the Friday prayers in northern Kabul. A total of 19 people were killed and about 40 were wounded. Another Taliban source reported that seven senior members of the Haqqani network were killed and 13 civilians were wounded. It was noted that many high-ranking officials of the Taliban government were among the worshipers in the mosque at the time. ISIS did not claim responsibility for the attack but it was apparently behind it (Al Jazeera, September 23, 2022; Khaama Press, September 24, 2022; BNN Newsroom, September 25, 2022)



**The scene of the car bomb explosion, near the Wazir Akbar Khan Mosque in Kabul (Khaama Press, September 24, 2023)**

► On June 18, 2022, a combined attack was carried out at a Sikh temple in Kabul. A member of the Sikh religion and a Taliban member were killed and seven other civilians were wounded. According to ISIS's claim of responsibility, the attack was carried out as an act of defense of the honor of the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, and as revenge on the "infidel Sikhs and Hindus," against the backdrop of insulting remarks made by senior officials in the ruling party in India against Muhammad. The attack was preceded by a series of threats made by ISIS officials (@SaleemMehsud Twitter account, June 9, 2022).



► **Detonation of an explosive device in a mosque in Kabul:** An explosive device exploded on May 25, 2022, in a mosque in Kabul. According to the Afghan Ministry of Interior, two people were killed and 10 were wounded. It is estimated that ISIS was behind the incident, although no one claimed responsibility (Reuters, May 25, 2022). On that day, three explosive devices were set off in three minibuses in the city of Mazar-i Sharif, in northern Afghanistan. Nine people were killed and 15 wounded (Reuters, May 25, 2022; Al Arabiya, May 26, 2022).

► **Suicide bombing attack in Kabul:** A suicide bomber wearing an explosive belt blew himself up on May 22, 2022, at the gate of Istiqlal Hotel in Kabul, where a memorial service was being held for one of the Taliban leaders in the presence of senior members of the movement. According to ISIS, several Taliban members were killed and wounded (Telegram, May 22, 2022). The Afghan government imposed a media ban on the incident and did not disclose details either about it or about casualties.



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

► Khorasan Province claimed responsibility for carrying out an attack on April 21, 2022, at a Shiite mosque in Mazar-i Sharif. An operative of the organization infiltrated the scene with a booby-trapped bag and as a result of its activation (apparently by remote control or cell phone) 33 people were killed and 43 wounded (France 24, April 22, 2022; Telegram, April 21, 2022).

## Expansion of Khorasan Province activity to Pakistan

► The Khorasan Province continued its activity this year in western Pakistan, on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. A noteworthy attack took place on March 4, 2022, at a Shiite mosque in Peshawar, about 40 km east of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. The attack was carried out by an ISIS operative who was wearing an explosive belt and was equipped with a rifle. The attacker arrived at the mosque during the Friday prayers. He killed the two guards at the entrance, then broke into the mosque and detonated his explosive belt among the

worshippers. According to another report, the attack was carried out by two operatives who shot at the mosque and one of them entered the mosque and blew himself up inside (Reuters, March 4, 2022). It was reported that 63 people were killed and about 200 were wounded in the attack (AP, March 5, 2022). ISIS's Khorasan Province claimed responsibility for the attack (Telegram, March 4, 2022).



**Right: The suicide bomber before leaving for the attack (Telegram, March 4, 2022). Left: The scene of the attack (Jadidha YouTube channel, March 4, 2022)**

## Pakistan Province

- In 2022, there was an increase in ISIS activity in Pakistan. ISIS's Pakistan Province carried out 58 attacks in which 118 people were killed and wounded, compared to 15 attacks in 2021, in which 108 people were killed and wounded (Telegram, January 4, 2023). Despite the significant increase in the number of attacks (almost four times), the number of casualties was similar. This is mainly because the attacks in 2022 were mostly small guerilla operations, mainly assassinations and attacks on members of the security forces and “spies.”
- A noteworthy attack occurred on March 8, 2022, when a suicide bomber detonated his explosive vest among Pakistani military and police personnel who were securing an annual event in Balochistan, in southwestern Pakistan, attended by senior officials of the Pakistani government. At least five military and police personnel were killed and more than 25 were wounded (Telegram, March 8, 2022). According to the Pakistani police, it was not a suicide bomber but a side charge explosion, which resulted in the death of three people and the wounding of 28 others, most of them policemen (ABC News, March 8, 2022).



**The suicide bomber before leaving for the attack (Telegram, March 8, 2022)**

## **Expansion of the Khorasan Province to the countries of East Asia**

► Despite the decrease in the scope of activity of the Khorasan Province, it seems that the province has begun to be an influential axis for the countries of Northeast Asia (primarily Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) and the countries of Southeast Asia, primarily India. This is reflected in the launching of rockets at Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and in the activity carried out by the Khorasan Province's media network for the Southeast Asian countries to distribute propaganda materials in Southeast Asian languages (see the chapter on the media network) and possibly even beyond that. In this respect, it seems that Khorasan Province strengthened its position in 2022 and established itself as one of the most important provinces of the organization.

► **Expansion into Uzbekistan:** On April 18, 2022, Khorasan Province operatives fired 10 rockets at positions of the Uzbek army in the area of the city of Termez, in the south of the country, near the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan border. According to the organization, definite hits were identified (Telegram, April 18, 2022). Officials in the Uzbek government denied the report, claiming that no rockets were fired at Uzbekistan (eurasianet.org, April 19, 2022). It was the first time that Khorasan Province operatives fired rockets at Uzbekistan. At the same time, ISIS also operated in the past year in northern Afghanistan, near the border with Uzbekistan, against the Taliban.

► **Expansion into Tajikistan:** On May 7, 2022, the Khorasan Province announced that the organization's operatives had fired nine rockets at the Tajik army headquarters in the Khawaja Ghar region, in the Takhar province, near the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border (Telegram, May 7, 2022). Official sources in Tajikistan confirmed the report (Sputnik, May 8, 2022).

► **Iran:** The organization’s operatives carried out an attack after four years in which ISIS did not carry out attacks in Iran. On October 26, 2022, an ISIS operative armed with a rifle entered the compound of a Shiite temple in the city of Shiraz, in southern Iran, and shot at worshipers and security personnel. At least 15 people were killed and about 40 were wounded (Tasnim, October 26, 2022). ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack (Telegram, October 26, 2022).



**The perpetrator of the attack as seen in the security cameras (Telegram, October 26, 2022)**

► Although this is only a single attack in Iran, this indicates the organization’s ability to carry out attacks in the country even though there does not seem to be an established ISIS infrastructure in Iran. In view of the riots in Iran and the weakening of the Iranian regime, ISIS will likely take advantage of the situation to carry out more attacks and to recruit supporters mainly from the Sunni minorities, who feel threatened by the radical Shiite regime.

## East Asia

### The East Asia Province

► The year 2022 was characterized by a further decline in the activity of ISIS’s East Asia Province, which is mainly active in the Philippines. This is a continuation of the trend that characterized the year 2021. In 2022, the East Asia Province carried out six attacks (one of them as part of the economic war), in which 54 people were killed or wounded, compared to 12 attacks in 2021, in which 46 people were killed or wounded (and compared to 2020, in which the province operatives carried out 37 attacks, in which 215 people were killed or wounded). The targets of the operations were mainly Philippine security forces.

#### ► Noteworthy actions:

- ◆ Exchange of fire on May 25, 2022, with Philippine military forces in the village of Bindatin, in the region of Datu Salibo, in Mindanao, in the southern Philippines. According to ISIS, six soldiers were killed and 10 others were wounded (Telegram, May 25, 2022). Official sources in the Philippines did not comment on that report.

◆ On February 28, 2022, severe clashes broke out between the organization's operatives and Philippine military forces in Lanao del Sur, in the southern Philippines. Four soldiers were killed and at least 10 others were wounded (Telegram, March 17, 2022).



**Weapons and ammunition of the Philippine army seized by ISIS (Telegram, March 17, 2022)**

◆ On May 25, 2022, an explosion occurred in a bus in the city of Koronadal, on the island of Mindanao. Two passengers were wounded. According to the Philippine police, elements associated with ISIS were behind the incident (philstar.com, May 27, 2022).

◆ Explosive devices were activated against a high-voltage pylon that supplies electricity in the Lanao del Sur area in the southern Philippines. The destruction of the pylon caused a power outage in the area (Al-Naba weekly, Telegram, February 17, 2022).



**Explosive devices attached to the high-voltage pylon, which collapsed after the explosion (Al-Naba, Telegram, February 17, 2022)**

► The effective countermeasures of the Philippine security forces were remarkable, especially during March-May 2022. On March 3, 2022, the Philippine security forces, supported by the Air Force, raided a camp of terrorist operatives affiliated with ISIS in Lanao del Sur, in the southern Philippines, killed at least seven operatives and seized weapons, explosive devices, and mines (ABC News, March 3, 2022). On March 18, 2022, a security official in the Philippines



said that 39 operatives affiliated with ISIS surrendered to the security forces in the south of the country and handed over their weapons and improvised explosive devices in their possession (www.philstar.com, March 20, 2022). On May 3, 2022, it was reported that the security forces arrested an ISIS recruiter and arms supplier in the Zamboanga Sibugay area of the southern Philippine island of Mindanao (Philippines News Agency, May 4, 2022).

## India

- ▶ In 2022, there was a decline in ISIS activity in India. ISIS's India Province carried out two attacks, in which four people were killed and wounded, compared to 2021, when the organization carried out nine attacks in which 13 people were killed and wounded (Telegram, January 4, 2023).
- ▶ It should be noted that despite the little activity in the province, ISIS sees great importance in the province mainly as a potential for recruiting supporters, due to the large number of Muslims in the country (about 200 million), the vast majority of whom are Sunni. In light of this, ISIS's intense activity in the field of propaganda is evident, inter alia, through the organization's magazine Voice of Hind, which addresses the Indian population.

## Western countries

- ▶ **During 2022, ISIS did not carry out attacks in Western countries.** This reflects the continued decline in the organization's activity in the West in recent years. In 2021, two terrorist attacks attributed to ISIS were carried out in Western countries. Both attacks were on a fairly small scale.
- ▶ Regarding one attack, there is a question mark as to whether ISIS is behind its execution. This is a shooting attack carried out on June 5, 2022, by "Islamic extremists" in the city of Oslo in Norway. Two people were killed and 21 were wounded. The perpetrator is an Iranian resident of Norway who underwent a process of Islamic radicalization. It was not stated that the attack was inspired by ISIS and the Norwegian police referred to it as an "Islamist terrorist activity," without mentioning a specific organization that the perpetrator was a member of or was inspired by.
- ▶ The downtrend in terrorist attacks in the West can indicate a continuation and even improvement in the counterterrorism capabilities of the security services in Western countries, in a way that is reflected in a continuous decrease in the number of terrorist attacks carried out by ISIS since 2015-2016, the peak years, in which ISIS managed to carry

out deadly large-scale attacks as well as triggering ISIS-inspired attacks. This could also indicate a decrease in the attractiveness of ISIS and a decrease in its ability to recruit supporters and organize squads from Western countries to carry out attacks.

► However, it must be remembered that the potential to carry out attacks directed by ISIS or inspired by it in the West is still very high, both due to the large movement of immigrants from the Middle East and Africa to the West and due to the existence of extremist Islamic groups active in the West.

## ISIS's economic war in 2022

► During the year 2022, ISIS continued what it calls the economic war, although there was a decrease in its scope compared to 2021. ISIS's economic war includes damage to oil and gas facilities, high-voltage pylons, communication towers, transformers and generators, setting fire to agricultural produce, and the destruction of public and private property of parties associated with the government. This war was intended to damage the economic infrastructure of the various countries and harm the morale of the residents. The centers of activity of the economic war were Africa (mainly Nigeria, Mozambique, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo), Syria, and Iraq. Despite the decrease in the scope of activity, it seems that the potential risks of economic damage which ISIS poses to local economies and the global economy are still great.

► The most significant risk this year was **the proximity of ISIS activity to the Suez Canal area**, which is an international trade route. So far, the actions carried out by ISIS have not succeeded in disrupting international commercial activity in the canal. Due to the great risk, especially to the Egyptian economy, the Egyptian security forces significantly reinforced the defense of the canal.

► **Continuation of the threat on the natural gas deposits of Mozambique:** Following ISIS's repeated attacks on the northeastern coast of Mozambique, where there are large natural gas deposits managed by international companies, the companies decided to stop their operations in March 2021. From then until November 2022, the activity on the project was not resumed in full capacity. On November 29, 2022, it was reported that the port of Mocímboa da Praia, which is used by the project, was opened for the first time and that the first ship entered the port, which could indicate the resumption of activity there (AFP, November 29, 2022). This reflects the enormous economic damage to the companies and especially to the

government of Mozambique and its citizens on the part of ISIS. There is concern that the project will further sustain damage since ISIS operates in the areas adjacent to it.

► **Attack on a ruby mine in Mozambique:** ISIS's Al-Naba weekly reported that on October 20, 2022, the organization's operatives attacked a ruby mine in the Cabo Delgado province in northeastern Mozambique, and set it on fire. According to the report, mining equipment was destroyed and this caused large financial losses to the company. Following the attack, work at the mine was reportedly stopped "for security reasons" and will not be resumed for the time being (Al-Naba, Telegram, November 10, 2022; The Print, November 12, 2022).

► Setting fire to a lot of equipment and property, especially in Africa, is an activity that mainly affects poor Christian populations. This forces the affected residents to abandon their place of residence, which creates, in addition to the loss of property, a severe humanitarian problem.

## ISIS's media network in 2022

► In 2022, ISIS's media network decreased. The organization's main channels continued to operate, but apart from **Al-Naba**, the organization's weekly magazine, which continued to be published regularly every week, it is evident that the rest of the means of information were operating in a reduced format. Among the media entities whose activity decreased are **Amaq**, ISIS's media arm, and **Al-Furqan**, the video and audio recording production arm. There was also a decrease in the organization's activity on social media, especially on **Telegram**.

► It is evident that during the year, the organization's operatives in the various provinces encountered problems in relaying information to the organization's central media network, apparently located in Syria or Iraq, which is reflected in the delay in publishing statements, especially with regard to carrying out terrorist attacks. This was especially noticeable in Mozambique.

► Towards the end of 2022, ISIS's media network issued a statement that three media entities affiliated with the organization would merge with **Sarh al-Khilafah** Foundation and operate on its behalf. Among the foundations that were mentioned are **Al-Khayr Media** Foundation, **Al-Ghulam al-Dawli** Foundation, and **Khidamat al-Ansar** Foundation. The reason for the merger, according to the announcement, is to join forces and facilitate the transfer of propaganda materials (Telegram, November 8, 2022). This is a move that indicates the weakness of the organization's media network and an attempt to improve it by merging several institutions that apparently are not able to function well enough independently.





### The announcement on the merger of ISIS's media foundations (Telegram, November 8, 2022)

► Despite the decrease in its activity, the organization's media network showed the ability to expand its publications to additional target audiences and launched publications in African, Asian, and Eastern European languages, apparently to recruit populations from Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe, which it sees as targets for recruitment and activity in light of its weakening in Syria and Iraq. This activity was carried out especially by **Al-Azaim** Foundation, operating in Afghanistan. As part of this, in January 2022, the foundation launched an English magazine, "Voice of Khurasan," and began to operate channels in additional languages (especially on social media). **I'lam** Foundation, of ISIS's supporters, also distributed content in many languages, including Pashto, Dari, Urdu, Hindi, Bengali, Indonesian, Persian, Uighur, Amharic, Russian, Uzbek, Tajik, and Turkish.<sup>17</sup> Recently, an ISIS magazine was launched in Turkish, called "Maydan," which is a daily news update referring to the organization's military activity in the various provinces (Dr. Michael Barak's Twitter account, October 14, 2022).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> <https://jamestown.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/TM-PDF.pdf?x29503>,  
<https://www.militantwire.com/p/iskp-ups-status-in-global-is-media>

<sup>18</sup> [https://twitter.com/Michael\\_Barak/status/1580678694041182209/photo/1](https://twitter.com/Michael_Barak/status/1580678694041182209/photo/1)



**ISIS update in Turkish (Dr. Michael Barak's Twitter account, October 14, 2022)**

- ▶ **From the publications of ISIS's media network in 2022, it appears that the organization considers Africa as the target with the highest potential for its expansion.** This is reflected, for example, in the editorial published in the organization's weekly, Al-Naba, on June 16, 2022, under the title "Africa - the Land of Migration [Hijrah] and Jihad." The article describes the organization's activity in Africa as a success story and calls on the organization's supporters around the world to immigrate (Hijrah) to Africa and carry out jihad there within the organization (Al-Naba, Telegram, June 16, 2022).
- ▶ Another piece of evidence is a video released on January 18, 2022, by the media office of ISIS's West Africa Province under the title "Generation of Empowerment" (Jil al-Tamkin),<sup>19</sup> in which it documents the training of African boys in a training camp. These boys are intended to be the next generation of the organization (Telegram, January 18, 2022).

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<sup>19</sup> In the opening slide of the video, the term "Jil al-Tamkin" was translated into English as "Empowerment Generation." The Islamic term "Tamkin" indicates the achievement of power, influence and ideological and political hegemony of Islam that will be realized, inter alia, through the establishment of a political entity that implements Sharia (Islamic law), i.e., by the creation of a caliphate ruled by Sharia.



The opening slide of the video (Telegram, January 18, 2022)

## ISIS's recruitment system in 2022

► Although little is known about ISIS's recruitment system, there is an impression that the recruitment activity during 2022 decreased compared to 2021 and that the organization is having difficulty recruiting new operatives. The difficulties in recruiting operatives surfaced from time to time in the editorials of the organization's Al-Naba magazine, which tried to encourage Muslims around the world to join the organization. The attempts of the organization's propaganda machine in the last year to attract new target audiences in various languages, especially African and East Asian languages, can also testify that the organization is trying to reach new audiences, due to its difficulties in recruiting operatives and supporters. Beyond ISIS's commitment to its prisoners, it seems that the difficulty of recruiting and expanding the ranks also motivated the organization to increase its activity to release prisoners from prisons. It should be noted that despite the difficulties, the organization has proven in the past its ability to recover from difficult situations and it may succeed in rehabilitating itself, as it did in the past, and recruit new operatives.

## Summary

► Despite the weakening of ISIS in most of its areas of activity around the world during 2022, several trends in the organization's activity emerge from the study:

- ◆ Continued increase in activity in Africa and expansion to new areas in Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Benin.

- ◆ Continuation of activity in Syria and even its expansion.
- ◆ Carrying out several ISIS-inspired attacks by Israeli Arabs.
- ◆ Demonstrating high capabilities to perform complex operations, primarily breaking into prisons, especially in Africa.
- ◆ The growing influence of the Khorasan Province (Afghanistan) on the territories of East Asia and Eastern Europe is evident, especially in the field of propaganda, which places Afghanistan as an important center for the organization's media activity.
- ◆ It should also be noted that despite the relative calm in the countries of West and East Asia (especially India, the Philippines, and Indonesia), which is due in no small part to the high deterrence capabilities of the local security services, it is evident that ISIS's growth potential is still high, especially in view of the economic situation around the world and the existence of large immigrant groups in the West, some of whom are exposed to radical Islamic ideologies.
- ◆ In conclusion, despite its weakening, the organization still poses a significant threat to world peace, in some of its areas of activity. Under these circumstances, even the countries that were least affected by it in 2022 may be affected by it in the following years, in light of ISIS's high growth potential, especially in Africa, East Asia, Western countries, and possibly elsewhere as well.