THE MEIR AMIT INTELLIGENCE AND TERRORISM INFORMATION CENTER
AT THE ISRAELI INTELLIGENCE HERITAGE AND COMMEMORATION CENTER

Spotlight on Global Jihad
March 30 – April 3, 2023

Main events of the past week

▸**This week, ISIS continued its relatively moderate activity around the world. Its center of activity was in Nigeria**.

▸**Syria**: ISIS operatives attacked the headquarters of the Kurdish internal security forces in southwest Al-Hasakah. In the Deir ez-Zor-Al-Mayadeen region, attacks were carried out against SDF forces.

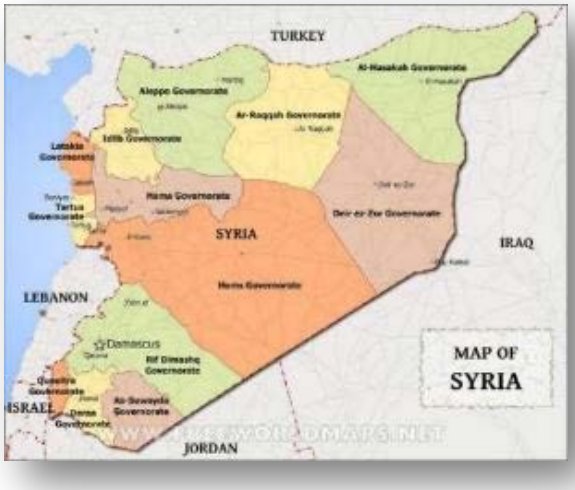
▸**Iraq:** ISIS operatives carried out a number of attacks against security forces in the western Al-Anbar Province and the Iraq-Syria border area. Five wanted ISIS operatives were arrested in the provinces of Baghdad and Salah al-Din.

▸**Africa:**

- **Nigeria:** ISIS continued to carry out attacks mainly against security forces in the northeast of the country.
- **Burkina Faso:** Counterterrorism measures were carried out against terrorist elements in the Burkina Faso-Mali border area and in the Burkina Faso-Mali-Niger border triangle area.

▸**Turkey:** A total of 19 foreign citizens suspected of being connected to ISIS were arrested in Ankara. After their investigation, they will be deported from the country.

The Syrian arena[1]



Map of Syria's provinces (freeworldmaps.net)

ISIS activity

The desert region

▶On April 1, 2023, an anti-vehicle mine was activated in the desert area south of Deir ez-Zor. An officer with the rank of lieutenant in the Syrian regime's Political Security Apparatus and another fighter were killed (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, April 1, 2023).

▶On the night of March 29, 2023, ISIS carried out an attack against a position of an Iranian-backed militia at the T2 Pumping Station, about 70 km west of Albukamal. The ISIS operatives, who were riding on motorcycles, were located and shot at by the militia fighters before infiltrating the position. No casualties were reported (Deir ez-Zor 24, March 30, 2023).

The Al-Hasakah region

▶On April 2, 2023, an SDF vehicle was targeted by gunfire in the village of Al-Sab'ah wa-Arbaeen, about 43 km south of Al-Hasakah. Two fighters were killed and several others were wounded (Telegram, April 2, 2023).

▶On March 30, 2023, two ISIS operatives, dressed in SDF uniforms, armed with assault rifles and hand grenades and wearing explosive belts, attacked the headquarters of the Asayish (Kurdish Internal Security Forces) in the Al-Nashwa neighborhood, in southwest Al-Hasakah. An explosion was heard in the area and then there was an exchange of fire between the two ISIS operatives and the Asayish fighters. The two operatives were killed (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, March 31, 2023). ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack. According to the

[1] According to ISIS claims of responsibility and international media.

organization, one SDF fighter was killed and several others were wounded (Telegram, March 31, 2023).

The Deir ez-Zor-Al-Mayadeen region

- On April 2, 2023, a vehicle of an SDF commander was targeted by gunfire in the town of Al-Kubar, about 35 km northwest of Deir ez-Zor. The commander and another fighter were wounded (Telegram, April 2, 2023).
- On April 1, 2023, an SDF vehicle was targeted by gunfire east of Al-Suwar, about 50 km northeast of Deir ez-Zor. One fighter was wounded (Telegram, April 2, 2023).
- On April 1, 2023, an SDF fighter was targeted by gunfire in the Dhiban area, about 5 km east of Al-Mayadeen. He was wounded (Telegram, April 1, 2023).
- On March 30, 2023, a Syrian army "spy" was targeted by gunfire in the town of Al-Bseyrah, about 15 km north of Al-Mayadeen. He was killed (Telegram, April 31, 2023).
- On March 28, 2023, an SDF checkpoint was targeted by gunfire in the village of Sabah al-Khayr, about 85 km north of Deir ez-Zor. One fighter was killed and two others were wounded (Telegram, March 31, 2023).

The Iraqi arena

Provinces of Iraq (Wikipedia)

ISIS attacks by province[2]

Al-Anbar Province

- On April 2, 2023, an Iraqi army compound was targeted by gunfire by light and medium weapons near Al-Al-Rutba, in western Al-Anbar Province. The compound sustained damage (Telegram, April 2, 2023).
- On April 1, 2023, an IED was activated against a Popular Mobilization vehicle in the village of Al-Faydah, south of the Al-Rutba area. One fighter was killed and several others were wounded (Telegram, April 2, 2023).
- On March 31, 2023, light and medium weapons were fired in two separate incidents, at a Popular Mobilization vehicle and a Popular Mobilization compound on the Akashat-Al-Rutba road. The compound was damaged (Telegram, March 31; April 1, 2023).

Counterterrorism

Salah al-Din Province

- On March 30, 2023, the Federal Intelligence and Investigations Agency, operating within the Ministry of the Interior, announced the arrest of five wanted ISIS operatives in the Baghdad and Salah Al-Din provinces, on suspicion of providing logistical assistance to the organization's operatives in the Salah al-Din Province and passing on information about the movements of the Iraqi security forces in the province (Iraqi News Agency, March 30, 2023).

Arrested ISIS operatives (Iraqi News Agency, March 30, 2023)

- On March 29, 2023, the General Directorate for Intelligence and Security at the Ministry of Defense announced the arrest of a dangerous, wanted ISIS operative in the Baiji district, in the northern Salah al-Din Province, about 200 km northwest of Baghdad (Iraqi News Agency, March 29, 2023).

[2] According to ISIS's claims of responsibility and international media.

ISIS operative who was arrested in the Salah al-Din Province (Iraqi News Agency, March 29, 2023)

Diyala Province

▶On April 1, 2023, a force of the Rapid Response Division operating within the framework of the Ministry of the Interior carried out searches in Al-Muqdadiya District, about 40 km northeast of Baqubah. They found a stockpile of ISIS weapons, which includes mortar shells, standard rockets, a self-manufactured rocket, explosives, mines, and additional equipment (Al-Sumaria, April 1, 2023).

ISIS weapons found in the Diyala Province (Al-Sumaria, April 1, 2023)

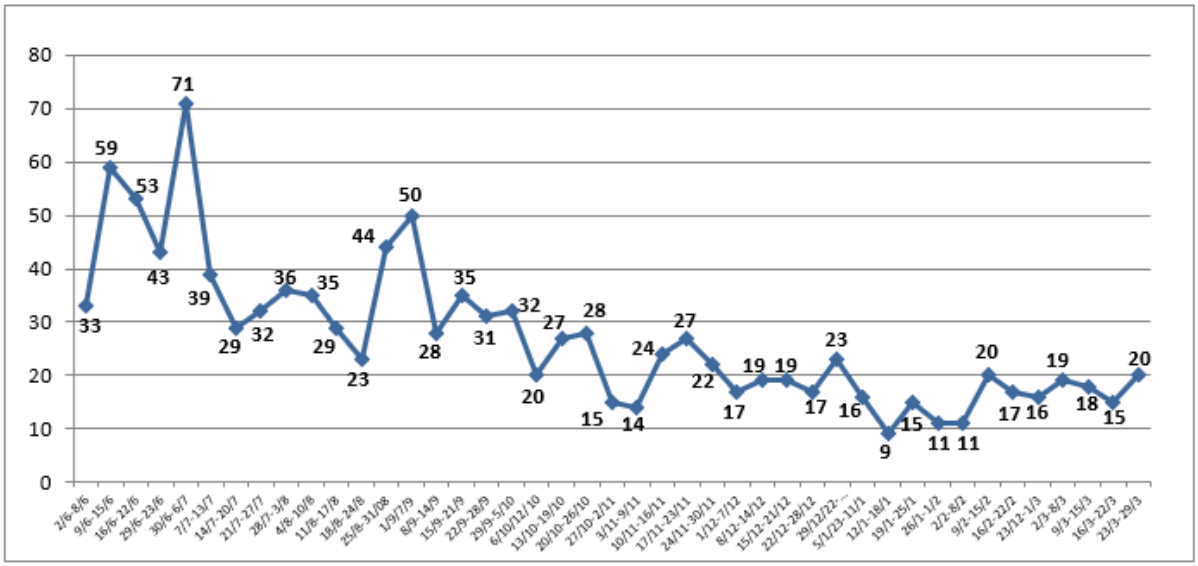
Summary of ISIS's activity in the various provinces

▶An infographic published by ISIS's Al-Naba weekly, summing up ISIS's activity around the globe on March 23-29, 2023, indicates that the organization carried out 20 attacks in its various provinces (compared to 15 in the previous week). The largest number of attacks was carried out by the West Africa Province (10). Attacks carried out in the other provinces: Iraq (3); Syria (2); Khorasan, i.e. Afghanistan (2); Somalia (1); Central Africa (1); and Mozambique (1). A total of 69 people were killed and wounded in the attacks, compared to 39 in the previous week. The largest number of casualties was in the West Africa Province (22). The other casualties were in the following provinces: Khorasan (Afghanistan) (21); Central Africa

(10); Syria (6); Iraq (4); Somalia (3); and Mozambique (3) (Al-Naba weekly, Telegram, March 30, 2023).

Summary of ISIS attacks (Al-Naba weekly, Telegram, March 30, 2023)

ISIS attacks by week (according to ISIS data)



Africa

Nigeria

ISIS activity

▶This week, ISIS's activity in the country continued at a relatively high level of intensity. The main incidents are specified below:

▶On April 1, 2023, Nigerian policemen were targeted by gunfire in the town of Jakana, about 30 km east of Maiduguri, in the Borno State. They fled (Telegram, April 2, 2023).

▶On March 29, 2023, two Christian citizens were kidnapped and shot to death in the town of Gulak, about 20 km west of the Nigeria-Cameroon border, in northern Adamawa State, in northeastern Nigeria (Telegram, April 1, 2023).

▶On March 29, 2023, an attack was carried out against a compound of the Nigerian Army in the town of Ajiri, about 15 km south of Maiduguri. The soldiers manning the compound fled. The compound was set on fire (Telegram, April 1, 2023).

▶On March 29, 2023, two IEDs were activated against a Nigerian army patrol near the town of Bulabulin, about 50 km southwest of Maiduguri. The passengers on board the vehicle were killed or wounded. The vehicle was destroyed (Telegram, April 1, 2023).

▶On March 29, 2023, a Nigerian army patrol was targeted by an IED and gunfire between the towns of Mafa and Ajiri, which are close to Maiduguri. The soldiers fled the scene after their vehicle was put out of commission (Telegram, March 31, 2023).

▶On March 28, 2023, an ISIS IED was activated against a Nigerian army patrol near the town of Dikwa, about 80 km northeast of Maiduguri. The vehicle was put out of commission (Telegram, March 31, 2023). Interruption. The day before, March 27, 2023, an attack was carried out against a Nigerian army checkpoint. The soldiers manning the checkpoint fled (Telegram, March 31, 2023).

Burkina Faso

Terrorist activity

▶On March 29, 2023, terrorist operatives attacked the village of Kossouka, in northern Burkina Faso, about 90 km south of the Burkina Faso-Mali border. Two civilians and four fighters of the organization “Volunteers for the Defense of the Homeland” – VDP[3], who assist the Burkina Faso army, were killed. In addition, many terrorist operatives were reportedly killed (Zagazola, March 31, 2023).

Counterterrorism

▶On the evening of March 29, 2023, Burkina Faso security forces operated along with the VDP against a convoy of terrorist operatives which included vehicles and over a hundred motorcycles, which spread over two kilometers on their way to the village of Vato, about 85 km south of the Burkina Faso-Mali border. Vehicles and many motorcycles were destroyed.

[3] In French, VDP, Volontaires pour la défense de la patrie.

Weapons, radios, laptops, gas tanks and other equipment were found at the scene (Zagazola, March 31, 2023).

Cameroon

ISIS activity

- On March 30, 2023, a Cameroonian army patrol was targeted by gunfire near the town of Fotokol, in the north of the country, on the Cameroon-Nigeria border. One soldier was killed (Telegram, April 1, 2023).

Asia

Pakistan

ISIS activity

- On April 1, 2023, a Christian civilian was targeted by gunfire in Peshawar, about 30 km east of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. He was killed (Telegram, April 2, 2023).
- On March 31, 2023, a Sikh civilian was targeted by gunfire in Peshawar and was killed (Telegram, April 2, 2023).
- On March 29, 2023, a motorcycle bomb was detonated against a vehicle in which a Pakistan Police officer was riding in Bolan district, in central Balochistan, in western Pakistan. The officer was wounded and his vehicle was put out of commission (Telegram, March 31, 2023).

Turkey

Counterterrorism

- On March 30, 2023, the Turkish police announced the arrest of 19 foreign citizens in the capital Ankara. The detainees are suspected of having been in contact with ISIS operatives in Iraq and Syria. It was stated that after their investigation, they will be transferred to the Immigration Authority and deported from the country. A hunt is underway for five suspects who escaped during the operation to arrest them (Daily Sabah, March 30, 2023).

Norway

- On March 28, 2023, two ISIS women and their three daughters, who were born from connections these women had with ISIS operatives, were handed over to a Norwegian diplomat in Syria. The women and their daughters were held in Al-Roj detention camp, in northeastern Syria, under the management of the Kurdish forces. The two women, Norwegians of Somali origin, left Norway in 2013 at the ages of 16 and 19 in order to join ISIS

in Syria. It was noted that they applied for assistance to return to Norway together with their daughters and that they are aware that they will be arrested upon their arrival in the country (Kurdistan24, March 29, 2023).