



Spotlight on Global Jihad

May 16-22, 2019



Main events of the week

- ▶ **In the Syrian arena**, the Syrian army offensive in the Idlib region continued, with Russian air support. From the perspective of Abu Mohammad al-Julani, leader of the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham (the dominant jihadi organization in the Idlib region), the Syrian army's attack was aimed at taking control of the Al-Ghab Plain in order to prevent further artillery fire at the Russian airbase in Hmeymim.
- ▶ **However, on the ground, the Syrian offensive has encountered difficulties** in light of the fierce fighting by the rebel organizations. **In the southwest of the enclave**, in the eastern part of the Al-Ghab Plain, the rebel organizations mounted a counterattack, retaking several villages that had been taken over by the Syrian army in the first week of the offensive. **In the northwest of the enclave**, southwest of the town of Jisr al-Shughur, the jihadi organizations halted attempts by the Syrian army to advance, causing it heavy casualties. **A Russian-Turkish attempt to achieve a temporary ceasefire failed.**
- ▶ In Iraq and in ISIS's provinces around the world, "routine" activity continued: **in Iraq**, activity continued in the form of IEDs being detonated against moving vehicles on the roads; **in the northern Sinai Peninsula**, an IED was detonated against an Egyptian army bulldozer; in Libya, ISIS operatives attacked a checkpoint at the entrance to an oil field in the center of the country; **in Niger**, ISIS operatives ambushed and killed around 30 Nigerian soldiers in a convoy moving near the border with Mali; **in the Democratic Republic of Congo**, ISIS operatives continued to carry out attacks against the Congolese army near the border with Uganda; **in Pakistan**, ISIS issued two claims of responsibility for killing a Taliban operative and shooting at Pakistani policemen. In the claims of responsibility, the name "Pakistan Province" appeared for the first time (another expression of ISIS's efforts to demonstrate that it is spreading throughout the world); **in Afghanistan**, ISIS detonated IEDs against vehicles of the police and a tribal leader loyal to the government; **in Somalia**, an attempt to kill a senior police officer in the northeast of the country failed.

Main events in Syria

The Idlib area

Overview

- ▶ In the passing week, **the Syrian army attack against the rebel organizations in the southwestern and northwestern Idlib area was halted.** Abu Mohammad Al-Julani, commander of the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham (the dominant jihadi organization in the region), declared that the Syrian army move was intended to take control of the Al-Ghab Plain in order to defend the Russian airbase in Hmeymim from the continued artillery fire. Al-Julani called on the Turkish-affiliated rebel organizations to join the fighting and thus alleviate the pressure exerted on the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham.
- ▶ On the ground, the Syrian army was forced to retreat from several villages that it had taken over in the southeastern part of the Al-Ghab Plain. In the northwestern sector of the Idlib region, southwest of the town of Jisr Al-Shughur, Syrian army recurrent attempts to advance failed, due to fierce fighting of the rebel organizations. A unilateral ceasefire, brokered by Turkey and Russia, collapsed a short while after entering into effect.

The main moves on the ground

On May 14 and 15, 2019, the Syrian army continued its advance northward, towards the Al-Ghab Plain, following the offensive that it had started last week.¹ After waging battles with the rebel organizations, on May 15, 2019, the Syrian army took over **the village of Al-Hweiz**, which is of major importance (the main pumping stations for the irrigation of the Al-Ghab Plain are located in its area). A day earlier, on May 14, 2019, the Syrian army took over **the village of Al-Hamra and the Shree'ah airstrip** near **the village of Al-Hweiz** (see map).

¹ For further information on the Syrian army offensive moves from May 6 until May 13, 2019, see “Spotlight on Global Jihad (May 8-15, 2019).”



Sites taken over on May 14 and 15, 2019: Al-Hweiz (1); Shree'ah airstrip (2); Al-Hamra (3). The area delineated in red was taken over by the Syrian army in the first week of the attack. Subsequently, the Syrian army had to withdraw from some of the sites that it had taken over (Google Maps)

► It appears that **the Syrian army's attempt to advance from the village of Al-Hweiz northward along the Al-Ghab Plain failed.** The operatives of the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham **mounted a counterattack** and reached the village of Kafr Nabudah, east of the Al-Ghab Plain (one of the villages taken over by the Syrian army in the first week of the offensive). The Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham reported that its operatives had killed soldiers of the Syrian army and the forces supporting it, seized a large quantity of weapons and equipment, **and even captured a Syrian officer in the rank of colonel** (Ibaa, May 22, 2019).



Right: The village of Kafr Nabudah, which was retaken by the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham (Google Maps). Left: *Aqid* (col.) Abd al-Karim al-Suleiman, who was captured by the operatives of the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham (Ibaa, May 22, 2019)

► At the same time, the Syrian army continued exerting pressure on the rebel organizations in the northwestern part of the Idlib area, southwest of the town of Jisr Al-Shughur (Kabanah area on the Mountain of the Kurds). The jihadi operatives fighting in this area belong to the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham and the Turkestan Islamic Party (Uyghur operatives from China). **Recurrent attempts by the Syrian army to advance in this area failed due to the fierce fighting of the rebel organizations**, which inflicted heavy losses on the Syrian army (Ibaa, May 16, 18, 19, 21, 2019). The Syrian army reportedly used heavy artillery fire to enable the evacuation of the bodies of its soldiers (Ibaa, May 21, 2019).



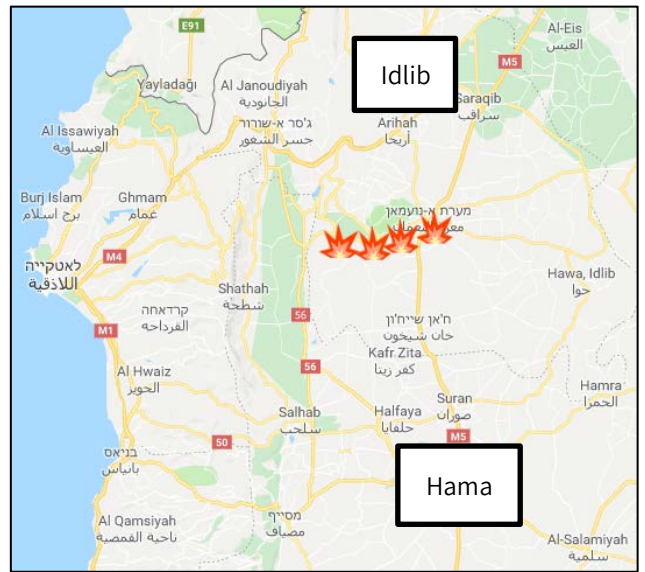
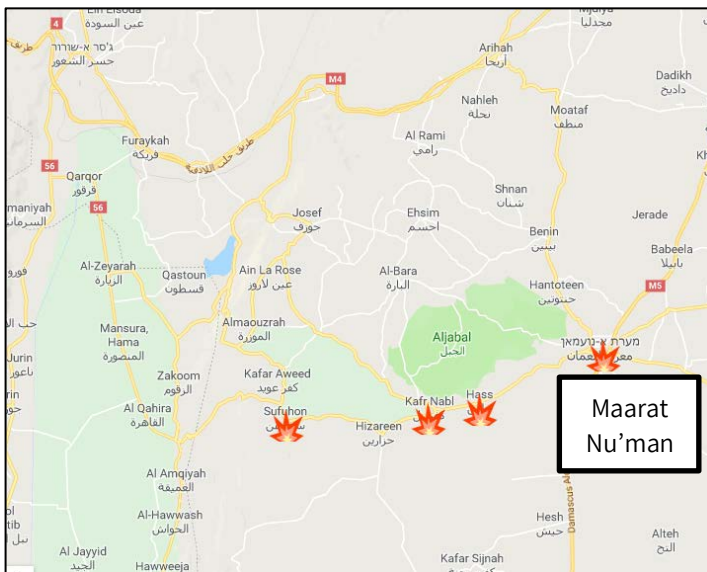
The Kabanah area, southwest of the town of Jisr Al-Shughur, where an additional war effort is taking place on the part of the Syrian army (Google Maps)



Right: Syrian army APC which was hit by the operatives of the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham during a failing attempt to advance on the Kabanah route. Left: Syrian army force evacuating killed and wounded soldiers (Ibaa, May 16, 2019)

Russian airstrikes

► In the passing week, **Russian fighter jets continued to carry out intense daily airstrikes against targets of the rebel organizations in the Idlib area. The airstrikes were focused on the city of Maarat Nu'man south of Idlib and targets along the road leading from the Al-Ghab Plain to Maarat Nu'man.**



Towns and villages on the road leading to Maarat Nu'man, where the Russian airstrikes were focused (Google Maps)



Right: Rescue teams near a building which was hit in central Maarat Nu'man, in the wake of a Russian airstrike. Left: Flames in the city following the Russian airstrikes (Ibaa, May 17, 2019)



Right: Russian fighter jet airstrike in Kafr Nubl southwest of Maarat Nu'man. Left: A truck and a building which were hit in the Russian airstrike (Ibaa, May 20, 2019)

The response of the rebel organizations

At the defensive level, the activity of the rebel organizations focused on the effort to halt the Syrian army's advance on the eastern outskirts of the Al-Ghab Plain (see map). **At the offensive level**, the rebel organizations fired at Syrian army forces north and northwest of Hama. In addition, rockets were fired and UAVs were launched at the Russian airbase in Hmeymim and at the rural areas along the coast (Jablah and Al-Qardaha). The Syrian regime reported that on May 21, 2019, several rockets launched by the rebel organizations **hit the center of Aleppo**.

► Following are the main rocket and artillery attacks reported by rebel organizations:

◆ **On May 16, 2019**, the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham announced the launching of Grad rockets and artillery shells at the "Russian occupier's" operations rooms north of Hama (the exact location was not specified) (Ibaa, May 16, 2019).



Right: Field cannon fired by the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham at targets north of Hama. Left: Grad rockets fired by the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham at targets north of Hama (Ibaa, May 16, 2019)

◆ According to a Syrian TV report from **May 18, 2019**, the **anti-aircraft systems at the Russian airbase in Hmeymim fired at rockets and UAVs** launched by the rebel organizations at the rural areas of Jablah, Al-Qardaha and the Hmeymim base. Most of

the rockets were intercepted. Some of them hit houses in a number of villages in the area. Several people were killed (Al-Ikhbariya TV, Syria, May 18, 2019).

◆ **On May 19, 2019**, the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham announced that it had fired dozens of rockets at **Astamo helicopter base**, located seven kilometers north of the airbase in Hmeymim, which serves as a base for Russian army helicopters². According to an announcement by the Russian defense minister, operatives of the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham (the Al-Nusra Front, according to the announcement) attacked **the base in Hmeymim** on May 19, 2019. According to him, there were no casualties and no damage was caused (Sputnik, May 20, 2019).

◆ The Syrian regime reported that on **May 21, 2019**, several rockets launched by the rebel organizations **hit near central Aleppo**. Six civilians were wounded and property was damaged. Various forces, most of which belong to the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham, are deployed in the rural area southwest of Aleppo (SANA News Agency, May 21, 2019).

Statement by Abu Mohammad al-Julani, Commander the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham

► In mid-January 2019, Abu Mohammad al-Julani, commander of the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham (the dominant jihadi organization in the Idlib region), met with around 50 media figures affiliated with the rebel organizations (“the Syrian revolution”). Following are the main comments made by Abu Mohammad al-Julani (Ibaa, May 17, 2019):

◆ The Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham **is opposed to political solutions**, including the Astana Agreements, which he says are intended as a delaying tactic.

◆ **The military move initiated by the Syrian regime was intended to take control of the Al-Ghab Plain.** The pretext is that the regime wants to protect the [Russian] airbase in Hmeymim from artillery [by the rebel organizations]. Al-Julani added that **Hmeymim is a military base that harms civilians “and it is only natural for it to be bombed and bombarded.”**

◆ Al-Julani called on the rebel organizations operating in the “Euphrates Shield” area [i.e., the Turkish-sponsored rebel organizations] **to open a front against the Syrian**

² The Astamo helicopter base was set up on September 15, 2015. Russia deployed various types of helicopters there in order to reduce the number of aircraft at the airbase in Hmeymim, due to the heavy congestion resulting from the large number of warplanes and cargo aircraft (ME-NA Media Monitor, April 12, 2019).

regime, thereby reducing the military pressure exerted on the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham.

Interim summary of the losses in the Syrian army offensive (updated to May 21, 2019)

► On May 18, 2019, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that since the beginning of the escalation in Idlib on April 30, 2019, **510 people had been killed**. At least **176 of the dead belonged to the rebel forces, 154 to the Syrian army and the forces supporting it, and 180 were civilians** (SOHR, May 21, 2019).

The failure of the ceasefire and the continuation of diplomatic activity

According to Syrian media reports, an agreement in principle was reached between Turkey and Russia for a **temporary ceasefire for 72 hours in the rural areas of Hama and Idlib**. **The ceasefire entered into effect unilaterally, by the Syrian army, at midnight on May 18, 2019**. The SOHR reported that on May 18, 2019, on the first day of the ceasefire, a tense calm was generally maintained in the battle zones, but the Russians claimed that rebel organizations had violated it from the very first day. However, **on May 19, 2019, the fighting resumed and the ceasefire ceased to exist**.

Eastern Syria

Palmyra and Al-Sukhnah deserts

► ISIS announced that on May 15, 2019, its operatives had infiltrated into a Syrian army position **about 40 km southwest of Palmyra**. During the clashes, eight Syrian army soldiers were killed and one was captured. The ISIS operatives also attacked a reinforcement which arrived at the area, killing 12 soldiers of the Syrian army the forces supporting it (statement of the Al-Sham Province – Homs region as released on Telegram, May 16, 2019).



**Syrian army soldier taken prisoner by ISIS on May 15, 2019, near Palmyra, before being executed³
(Al-Sham Province – Homs as released on Telegram, May 16, 2019)**

► On May 20, 2019, ISIS operatives launched an antitank missile at a Syrian army tank and bulldozer and destroyed them near Mount Al-Bashari, about 80 km northeast of Al-Sukhnah (statement of the Al-Sham Province – Homs region as released on Telegram, May 20, 2019).

Al-Mayadeen – Deir ez-Zor area

► This week, three car bombs were detonated in the Deir ez-Zor and Al-Mayadeen area. No organization claimed responsibility, but these apparently were ISIS operatives. Following are the main incidents:

◆ **On May 17, 2019**, a car bomb was detonated by remote control. The car was parked near a bakery which belongs to the Shiite militias **in a neighborhood close to central Deir ez-Zor**. Three members of the Shiite militias were killed and several others were wounded. Several days earlier, **another car bomb arriving in this neighborhood was deactivated** (Khotwa, May 18, 2019).

◆ **On May 18, 2019**, a car bomb was detonated in a village **4 km northeast of Al-Mayadeen** (Khotwa, May 18, 2019).

◆ **On May 20, 2019**, a car bomb was detonated near an SDF military vehicle north of Deir ez-Zor. Two fighters were killed (Deir ez-Zor 24 Twitter account, May 20, 2019).

► Other ISIS attacks also continued:

◆ **On May 16, 2019**, an IED was activated against an SDF bulldozer in the village of Al-Sabha, about 20 km north of Al-Mayadeen. The driver was killed and the bulldozer damaged (statement of the Al-Sham Province – Al-Khayr region, May 17, 2019).

³ It was reported that on May 16, 2019, ISIS executed seven fighters of the Shiite militias who had been captured in the Syrian Desert (Khotwa, May 18, 2019). It is not known when and in what circumstances they were captured.

◆ **On May 17, 2019**, an SDF fighter was shot to death about 18 km southeast of Deir ez-Zor (statement of Al-Sham Province – Al-Khayr region, May 18, 2019).

◆ **On May 20, 2019**, an SDF vehicle on the outskirts of the town of Al-Basira, about 14 km north of Al-Mayadeen, was shot at. Several fighters were wounded (Deir ez-Zor 24, May 20, 2019).

Northern and northeastern Syria

Northern Manbij

► **On May 16, 2019**, a car bomb exploded **at a security building of the SDF forces at a school in central Manbij**. Five fighters, including the commander of the Kurdish internal security force, **were killed and over ten were wounded**. The building sustained heavy damage (Orient News, May 16, 2019). ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack. According to ISIS's claim of responsibility, a suicide bomber codenamed Abu Habib the Syrian detonated a car bomb at the SDF command post in the center of the city of Manbij, **killing and wounding at least 20 fighters**. Part of the command post building was destroyed (statement of the Al-Sham Province – Aleppo region as released on Telegram, May 16, 2019).



Scene of the car bomb explosion at the SDF security building in central Manbij (Orient News, May 16, 2019)

ISIS increased its activity in the Al-Hasakah area

► In the passing week, ISIS increased its activity in the Al-Hasakah area, at the heart of the Kurdish control zone:

◆ **On May 16, 2019**, an IED was activated against an SDF vehicle on the road between Al-Hasakah and Tal Nimr, about 14 km west of Al-Hasakah. Several fighters were killed

and wounded and the vehicle was damaged (statement of the Al-Sham Province – Al-Baraka region, May 17, 2019).

◆ **On May 17, 2019**, an IED was activated against an SDF vehicle in the western part of the city of Al-Hasakah. The fighters were killed and wounded and the vehicle sustained damage (statement of the Al-Sham Province – Al-Baraka region, May 17, 2019).

◆ **On May 17, 2019**, an ISIS squad captured an SDF fighter. He was executed southwest of Al-Shadadi (about 80 km southwest of Al-Hasakah) (statement of Al-Sham Province – Al-Barakah region, May 17, 2019).

Main developments in Iraq

ISIS's terrorist and guerrilla activity

► Following are ISIS's main terrorist and guerilla activities:

◆ **Nineveh Province:** On May 18, 2019, a motorcycle bomb was detonated in the western part of the city of Mosul. Two people were wounded (Al-Sumaria, May 18, 2019). So far, no organization assumed responsibility but it can be assumed that ISIS was behind the attack.



Right: Wreckage of a motorcycle bomb detonated in the western part of Mosul. Left: The building which was damaged as a result of the explosion (Al-Sumaria, May 18, 2019)

◆ **Diyala Province:** An IED was activated against a vehicle of policemen engaged in securing oil facilities about 40 km east of Baqubah. The passengers in the vehicle were wounded (Telegram, May 19, 2019).

◆ **Kirkuk Province:** An IED was activated against a patrol southwest of the city of Kirkuk. An Iraqi policeman was wounded (Telegram, May 20, 2019).

◆ **Diyala Province:** An IED was activated against a vehicle of a local council member on behalf of the Iraqi authorities, about 15 km southwest of Baqubah. Passengers in the vehicle were wounded (Telegram, May 20, 2019).

◆ **Nineveh Province:** An IED was activated against a Popular Mobilization force south of the city of Tal Afar. A Popular Mobilization fighter was killed and two others wounded (Telegram, May 20, 2019).

◆ **Nineveh Province:** Two IEDs were activated against two vehicles carrying Shiites south of the city of Tal Afar. Four passengers were killed and three others wounded (Telegram, May 20, 2019).

◆ **Baghdad Province:** An IED was activated against an Iraqi army vehicle 30 km southwest of Baqubah. Soldiers in the vehicle were killed (Telegram, May 20, 2019).

Counterterrorist and preventive activity of the Iraqi security forces

► The Iraqi security forces detained ISIS operatives and destroyed ISIS facilities in the various provinces. IEDs and explosive belts were also found and neutralized. Following are the main incidents:

◆ **Al-Anbar Province:** An Al-Anbar Province police force detained three ISIS operatives who had carried terrorist attacks against the Iraqi security forces in 2014 (Al-Sumaria, May 17, 2019).

◆ **Nineveh Province:** An Iraqi army force destroyed four ISIS guest houses about 120 km west of Mosul. These guest houses were used to store food and equipment (Al-Sumaria, May 17, 2019).

◆ **Nineveh Province:** The Nineveh Police SWAT detained an ISIS commander codenamed Jihad al-Ansari in eastern Mosul. The detainee had been in charge of ISIS's mortar battalion in the Nineveh Plain (Al-Sumaria, May 19, 2019).



Jihad al-Ansari, an ISIS commander detained in eastern Mosul (Al-Sumaria, May 19, 2019)

◆ **Salah al-Din Province:** Iraqi Military Intelligence forces uncovered two ISIS guest houses about 30 km northwest of Baiji. In these guest houses, they found explosive belts, IEDs, and mobile phones. In addition, they found documents containing names

of ISIS operatives, their family members and phone numbers (Iraqi News Agency, May 19, 2019).

◆ **Salah al-Din Province:** A force of the Iraqi Counterterrorist Service detained an ISIS operative who headed a squad which planned to carry out terrorist attacks in Tikrit (Iraqi News Agency, May 19, 2019).

The Sinai Peninsula and Egypt

► On May 21, 2019, ISIS's Sinai Province claimed responsibility for the detonation of an IED against an Egyptian army bulldozer south of Al-Arish. The explosion killed and wounded the bulldozer crew (Telegram, May 21, 2019).

ISIS's activity around the world

Libya

► According to an announcement by ISIS's Libya Province – Barqa, on May 18, 2019, **the organization's operatives attacked a checkpoint in the town of Zillah**, some 340 km northeast of Sabha (which was attacked by ISIS operatives in early May 2019). ISIS's operatives took over the checkpoint after an exchange of fire with soldiers of Haftar's Army, killed three of them and captured four (Telegram, May 18, 2019).

► According to local sources in Libya, two security personnel were abducted and two others were executed (Libyan TV channel TV218, May 19, 2019). Security sources noted that **the checkpoint is located at the entrance to the Zillah oil field, which ISIS's operatives apparently planned to take over. The operatives were located and eliminated by the local forces** (www.afriatenews.net, May 19, 2019; Al-Hadath, May 19, 2019).



The town of Zillah, about 340 km northeast of Sabha (Google Maps)

► According to military sources in Libya, **during an exchange of fire with ISIS operatives who were attacking in Zillah, the Libyan army killed 25 ISIS operatives.** According to the sources, the exchanges of fire took place in the area between Zillah and Al-Fuqaha, around 100 km from Zillah (where the ISIS operatives apparently tried to flee). Several ISIS operatives who took part in the attack were reportedly detained (Al-Marsad Al-Libi, May 19) 2019).



The town of Zillah (1), the oil facility northwest of the town (2), and an oil well near the oil facility (3) (Google Maps)

Zillah is a town in central Libya. **An oil facility belonging to the Libyan government company (of the Haftar Government)** is situated 17 km northwest of it. **There are oil wells** in the area. Zillah is located on the road leading to the coastal city of Sirte, about 100 km from Al-Fuqaha, a town that was taken over by ISIS for a few hours about a month and a half ago. (Google Maps, CNN in Arabic, April 9, 2019). There is an **airport** some 25 km northwest of Zillah.

West Africa

Niger

ISIS attack on Niger army convoy

► ISIS's West Africa Province announced that the organization's operatives had **ambushed a Niger army convoy** in the Tongo Tongo region, near the border with Mali (see map). On May 15, 2019, ISIS operatives exchanged fire with the Niger army soldiers. **Thirty soldiers were killed** and 10 others were wounded in the exchange of fire (Telegram, May 16, 2019). **The Niger Ministry of Defense** confirmed that a military convoy had been attacked. According to its announcement, 28 soldiers were killed. After the attack, the ISIS operatives reportedly fled to the border (with Mali) (AP, May 16, 2019).



Right: The area where ISIS operatives attacked a Niger army convoy (Google Maps). Left: Operatives of ISIS's West Africa Province alongside military vehicles of the Niger Army (Telegram, May 18, 2019)

Attack on Niger security forces

► According to an announcement by ISIS's Amaq News Agency, on May 14, 2019, **ISIS operatives attacked a concentration of Niger security forces in the Koutoukalé prison area, north of the city of Niamey (the capital of Niger)**. ISIS's operatives exchanged fire

with the Niger army soldiers, killing and wounding many of them (Telegram, May 16, 2019). Official sources in Niger confirmed the report (Al-Hayat, May 15, 2019).



The prison in Koutoukalé (2), about 35 km northwest of the capital Niamey (1) (Google Maps)

Congo

► ISIS operatives **continued to carry out attacks against the Congolese army in the east of the country, near the border with Uganda.** Last week, ISIS announced that its operatives had killed four Congolese army soldiers in the Beni area in the eastern part of the country (Telegram, May 16, 2019). The Central Africa Province announced that its operatives had carried out another attack on a Congolese army base in the Beni area. One soldier was killed, and weapons and equipment were seized (Telegram, May 17, 2019).



The Beni area, near the border with Uganda, is the main arena of ISIS's activities in eastern Congo (Google Maps)

Pakistan Province

► This week, for the first time, ISIS issued a **claim of responsibility on behalf of a new province by the name of Pakistan Province**. According to the claim of responsibility, the organization's operatives fired a handgun at Taliban operatives in the **city of Quetta** (about 70 km from the border with Afghanistan), killing a Taliban operative and wounding three others (Telegram, May 15, 2019). Five days after the first claim of responsibility, ISIS's Pakistan Province issued **another claim of responsibility**. According to the claim of responsibility, on May 18, 2019, ISIS operatives fired machine guns at Pakistani police **in the city of Karachi**, killing one policeman and wounding another (Telegram, May 20, 2019).



The city of Quetta, some 70 km from the border with Afghanistan (Google Maps)

These claims of responsibility **may indicate a splitting of ISIS's Khorasan Province**, which up to now included Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran. At this stage, it is not yet clear whether the split is only at the media level or also at the organizational and practical level. However, the announcement of the new province **reflects ISIS's trend of announcing the establishment of new provinces** in order to demonstrate that **the organization continues to spread around the world** (last week, the **India Province** issued its first claim of responsibility).

Afghanistan

► ISIS's Khorasan Province claimed responsibility for detonating an IED against two Afghan police vehicles in the city of Jalalabad. One policeman was killed and two others were wounded (Telegram, May 21, 2019). In addition, the Khorasan Province claimed responsibility for detonating an IED against the car of a tribal leader loyal to the Afghan government. The leader survived but his driver was killed (Telegram, May 21, 2019).

Somalia Province

► **ISIS's Somalia Province continues to demonstrate operations in the area of the city of Bosaso**, in the northeast of the country (on the shores of the Gulf of Aden). This week, the province claimed responsibility for detonating an IED against a vehicle driven by Muhyi al-Din Ahmad Musa, commander of the Puntland police and head of the counterterrorism agency.

The senior police officer survived but four of his escorts were wounded (Telegram, May 18, 2019).



The city of Bosaso in northeastern Somalia, the site of intensive activity by ISIS (Google Maps)

The battle for hearts and minds

► The Al-Safa Foundation, which is affiliated with ISIS's unofficial propaganda network, published two posters **threatening to carry out terrorist attacks in London and New York** (Telegram, May 21, 2019).



Right: Poster in English stating that the attacks in London are “coming soon” (Telegram, May 21, 2019). Left: Poster showing a terrorist holding a bloody knife against a background of New York City, with a caption in English: “Fight them in your country” (Telegram, May 21, 2019)