



Spotlight on Global Jihad

July 4-10, 2019



Main events of the week

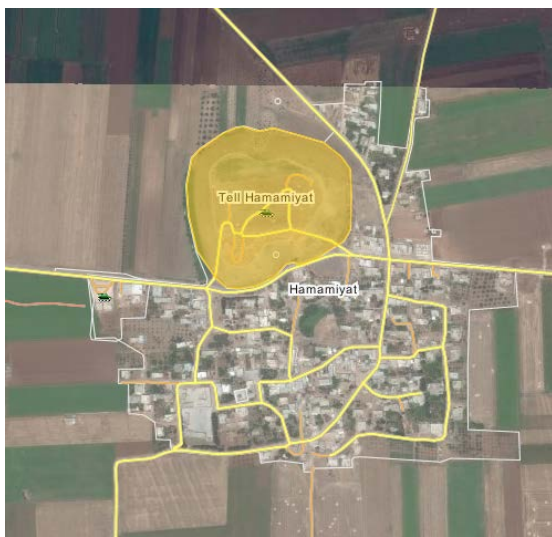
- ▶ **In the Syrian arena**, the Syrian army's ground operation against the rebel organizations in the Idlib region, which has been going on for nearly two and a half months, **is still bogged down**. This week, the rebel organizations carried out an unsuccessful large-scale attack against the Syrian forces holding Hamamiyat, north of the rebel control zone (32 km northwest of Hama). In eastern and northeastern Syria (in the areas controlled by the Kurds), ISIS has increased its terror and guerrilla activity. Its attacks are concentrated in the area of the city of Al-Mayadeen in the Euphrates Valley and in the area of Al-Hasakah, which lies deep within the Kurdish control area.
- ▶ **In the Iraqi arena**, the Iraqi security forces launched a **large-scale security operation to mop up the northern and western provinces of the country from the presence of ISIS**. The Iraqi army, the Popular Mobilization (Shiite militias), and the Tribal Mobilization (the Sunni militias) are all taking part in the operation, with Iraqi and International Coalition air support. At the same time, **ISIS operatives continue their intensive activity in northern and western Iraq**, with the main form of attacks being the detonation of IEDs against vehicles traveling on the roads.
- ▶ **In ISIS's various provinces in the Middle East and around the globe**, "routine" activity continues: **In Nigeria**, Nigerian army bases in the north and northeast of the country were attacked; **In Niger**, ISIS operatives attacked a Niger army base near the border with Mali; **In Mozambique**, ISIS operatives attacked a Mozambican army base near the border with Tanzania (Mozambique has apparently become a new activity arena for ISIS); **In Somalia**, policemen were shot at by ISIS operatives in the northeast of the country (in the city of Bosaso); **In Tunisia**, a suicide bomber blew himself up near a Metro station in the suburbs of the capital Tunis; **In Egypt**, a sniper killed an Egyptian soldier in Sheikh Zuweid in northern Sinai; **In Afghanistan**, ISIS detonated an IED in a Shiite mosque (around 40 dead and

wounded). In addition, ISIS operatives continued their attacks in the Nangarhar Province against the security forces of the Afghan government and against the Taliban.

Main events in Syria

The Idlib region

Nearly two months since the beginning of the Syrian army's ground operation, **fighting in the Idlib region is still concentrated in the area northwest of Hama**. On July 5 and 6, 2019, the rebel organizations headed by the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham carried out **an extensive attack against a Syrian force located in Tal Hamamiyat, about 30 km northwest of Hama** (north of the village of Tal Malah, which is held by the rebels). Although this was an organized attack, with tanks and armored vehicles, **it failed and no significant change took place on the ground**. According to Russian media, in the Idlib region, there are **30,000 operatives of the rebel organizations** ("militants"), including operatives of the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham (the former Al-Nusra Front) (Sputnik, July 6, 2019).



Right: The village of Hamamiyat and Tal Hamamiyat overlooking it, which are held by the Syrian army (1); to the south, the villages of Tal Malah and Jubain (2), held by the rebel organizations (Google Maps). Left: Tal Hamamiyat, which controls the village of Hamamiyat and its surroundings (Wikimapia)

► **Last week, the rebels failed in their attempt to attack the Syrian force in Tal Hamamiyat**, north of Tal Malah. The dominant organization in the attack was the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham. It was carried out from several directions, and tanks, armored vehicles as well as vehicles with mounted machine guns took part in it.

Suicide bombers who detonated car bombs also participated. **The attacking force retreated after sustaining casualties** (Al-Ikhbariya Channel; SANA; the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, July 5, 6, 2019).



Syrian army tanks and artillery fire at operatives of the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham who advanced on the route leading to Hamamiyat (Al-Ikhbariya Channel, July 6, 2019)



Right: Syrian army artillery hitting a force of the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham advancing along the road leading to Hamamiyat (Al-Ikhbariya Channel, July 6, 2019). Left: Anti-tank missile fired by the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham hits a Syrian army position in Tal Hamamiyat (Ibaa, July 5, 2019)

► **Concurrently, exchanges of artillery fire continued between the Syrian army and the rebel organizations, concentrated in the rural area northwest of Hama.** During the attack against Tal Hamamiyat, there were exchanges of artillery fire between the sides (Khotwa, July 5, 2019). In another sector, the Syrian army fired artillery at positions of the Turkestan Islamic Party (Uyghurs from China) in the northern Al-Ghab Plain, about 10 km south of Jisr al-Shughur (Al-Ikhbariya Channel, July 6, 2019). Russian and Syrian aircraft attacked rebel targets north of Hama (Khotwa, July 6, 2019).



The Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham fires a self-manufactured rocket at Syrian army positions northwest of Hama (Ibaa, July 6, 2019)

Clashes in the area of the Turkmen Mountain

► The "Awaken the Believers" operations room (affiliated with Al-Qaeda) reported that its operatives had clashed with the Syrian army and militias supporting it on the Turkmen Mountain. The main site of the clashes was 25 km west of the city of Jisr al-Shughur, in the northwestern Idlib region. According to the operations room, dozens of Syrian soldiers were killed and wounded, and four were taken prisoner (Khotwa; Telegram, July 9, 2019).



Operatives of the "Awaken the Believers" operations room on their way to attack Syrian army positions on the Turkmen Mountain (Telegram, July 9, 2019)

Interim summary of the losses in the fighting

► The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that since April 30, 2019 (shortly before the Syrian army offensive) until July 8, 2019, **a total of 2,276 people had been killed**. At least 887 of the dead belonged to the rebel organizations, 798 to the Syrian army and the forces supporting it, and 591 were civilians (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, July 9, 2019).

Northeastern Syria

► In recent weeks, **there has been an evident increase in the scope of ISIS attacks in the Al-Hasakah region**, at the heart of the Kurdish control zone. Following are the attacks carried out this week:

- ◆ **July 3, 2019:** Firing a weapon with a silencer at one of the SDF fighters in southwestern Al-Al-Hasakah. The SDF fighter was killed (Telegram, July 4, 2019).
- ◆ **July 5, 2019:** Firing a weapon with a silencer at one of the SDF fighters about 120 km northeast of Al-Hasakah (near the Syrian-Iraqi border). In addition, an SDF fighter was shot at about 60 km northeast of Al-Al-Hasakah. One SDF fighter was killed and another was wounded (Telegram, July 7, 2019).
- ◆ **July 7, 2019:** The Kurdish forces neutralized three IEDs planted by ISIS operatives in Al-Raqqah. Local residents told the Kurdish forces where the IEDs were located (SDF Press, July 7, 2019).
- ◆ **July 7, 2019:** An IED was activated against a vehicle of the SDF forces about 70 km northeast of Al-Al-Hasakah. The passengers were killed or wounded (Telegram, July 8, 2019).

Eastern Syria

► During the past week, ISIS continued its terrorism and guerrilla activity in the **Al-Mayadeen region**. Following are the main activities, according to statements of the Al-Sham Province – Al-Khayr region):

- ◆ **July 6, 2019:** Several IEDs were activated against an SDF headquarters in the village of Al-Tiana, 8 km southeast of Al-Mayadeen. The headquarters building was completely destroyed (Telegram, July 7, 2019).
- ◆ **July 6, 2019:** ISIS operatives captured an “agent” of the International Coalition forces in the village of Diban, 5 km east of Al-Mayadeen. After the “agent” had been interrogated, he was shot to death (Telegram, July 8, 2019).
- ◆ **July 7, 2019:** Several IEDs were activated against an SDF headquarters in the village of Al-Hawaij, 4 km northeast of Al-Mayadeen. The headquarters building was completely destroyed (Telegram, July 8, 2019).
- ◆ **July 7, 2019:** Several RPG rockets were launched at an SDF checkpoint in Al-Basira, 14 km north of Al-Mayadeen, killing one of the fighters (Telegram, July 8, 2019).

◆ **July 9, 2019:** An IED was activated against an SDF truck in the village of Al-Zir, about 10 km north of Al-Mayadeen. Three SDF fighters were killed and four others were wounded (Telegram, July 9, 2019).

◆ **July 9, 2019:** An IED was activated against SDF vehicles in the village of Al-Basira, 14 km north of Al-Mayadeen, killing three SDF fighters (Telegram, July 9, 2019).

◆ **July 9, 2019:** An IED was activated against an SDF vehicle in the village of Al-Tiana, 8 km southeast of Al-Mayadeen. Four SDF fighters were wounded (Telegram, July 9, 2019).

Main developments in Iraq

ISIS's terrorist and guerrilla activity

This week, ISIS continued its intense activity in the north and west of Iraq. The most prominent modus operandi continued to be the detonation of IEDs against vehicles traveling on the roads.

► Following are the highlights of the terrorist and guerrilla attacks for which ISIS claimed responsibility in the past week:

◆ **Nineveh Province:** ISIS operatives manning a checkpoint north of Sinjar killed a member of the National Security Service (Telegram, July 2, 2019).

◆ **Salah al-Din Province:** Several IEDs were detonated against three vehicles of the oil facilities security police around the Alas oil field, about 40 km northeast of Tikrit. The passengers were either killed or wounded (Telegram, July 3, 2019).

◆ **Kirkuk Province:** An IED was activated against an Iraqi police vehicle about 50 km west of Kirkuk. Four policemen, including an officer, were killed (ISIS's Kirkuk Province, posted on Telegram, July 3, 2019).

◆ **Salah al-Din Province:** ISIS operatives attacked a Tribal Mobilization staging zone about 30 km north of Baghdad. Subsequently, ISIS operatives ambushed a rescue force arriving at the scene and activated an IED against the fighters. About 20 operatives of the Tribal Mobilization were killed and wounded. Two operatives were captured, and one of them was executed (Telegram, July 5, 2019).

◆ **Diyala Province:** Iraqi army soldiers were targeted by sniper fire. One of the soldiers was wounded (Telegram, July 5, 2019).

- ◆ **Diyala Province:** A vehicle of the Popular Mobilization was targeted by sniper fire about 30 km northeast of Baqubah. Two Popular Mobilization operatives were wounded (Telegram, July 5, 2019).
- ◆ **Diyala Province:** An IED was activated against an Iraqi army vehicle about 20 km south of Baqubah. Two soldiers were wounded (Telegram, July 5, 2019).
- ◆ **Diyala Province:** An Iraqi army soldier was targeted by sniper fire about 20 km south of Baqubah and was wounded (Telegram, July 5, 2019).
- ◆ **Diyala Province:** A Popular Mobilization fighter was targeted by sniper fire about 70 km northeast of Baqubah. He was wounded (Telegram, July 5, 2019).
- ◆ **Diyala Province:** An IED was activated against a Popular Mobilization patrol about 70 km northeast of Baqubah. When a rescue force arrived at the scene, the ISIS operatives active another IED. Some five Popular Mobilization fighters were killed or wounded (Telegram, July 5, 2019).
- ◆ **Diyala Province:** An IED was activated against a vehicle carrying Tribal Mobilization fighters about 80 km northeast of Baqubah. One fighter was killed and another was wounded (Telegram, July 7, 2019).
- ◆ **Diyala Province:** ISIS killed an Iraqi government “spy” about 30 km northeast of Baqubah (Telegram, July 7, 2019).
- ◆ **Salah al-Din Province:** Three IEDs were activated against a Tribal Mobilization vehicle in the Shirqat area, about 90 km south of Mosul. Six Tribal Mobilization fighters were killed and wounded (ISIS’s Amaq News Agency and ISIS’s Dijla Province, posted on Telegram, July 9, 2019).

Counterterrorist activities by the Iraqi security forces

Large-scale security operation against ISIS

- On July 7, 2019, the Iraqi security forces launched a security operation intended to mop up the provinces of Salah al-Din, Nineveh, Al-Anbar and Al-Jazeera (the desert area in northwestern Iraq) from ISIS operatives. Iraqi army forces, the Popular Mobilization and Tribal Mobilization forces are participating in the operation, which is due to last for several days, with Iraqi and International Coalition air support (Al-Sumaria, July 7, 2019).



A motorized force of the Iraqi security forces during the security operation against ISIS (Al-Sumaria, July 7, 2019)

► **Jawad Kazem al-Rabi’awi, a senior commander in the Popular Mobilization Operations Department**, announced that 13 Popular Mobilization brigades were taking part in the security operation to mop up the Al-Jazeera desert. According to his statement, during the second phase of the operation, the Popular Mobilization forces destroyed ten “guesthouses” and two camps of ISIS. In addition, three car bombs were blown up and 27 IEDs were destroyed (al-hashed.net, July 8, 2019).



Wreckage of an ISIS car bomb which was destroyed by the Iraqi security forces in the Al-Jazeera area (al-hashed.net, July 7, 2019)

Additional activity of the Iraqi security forces

► Following are highlights of additional activities carried out by the Iraqi security forces in the various provinces:

- ◆ **Nineveh Province:** An Iraqi police force detained an ISIS operative dressed in women’s clothing south of Mosul. The operative had been in charge of inflicting punishments (sentencing people to death) while Mosul was under ISIS’s control (Iraqi News Agency, July 5, 2019).



**ISIS operative detained by Iraqi police south of Mosul
(Iraqi News Agency, July 5, 2019)**

- ◆ **Baghdad Province:** The Iraqi security forces detained a suicide bomber wearing an explosive belt in the area of Abu Ghreib, 17 km west of Baghdad. He intended to blow himself up among civilians in the area (Al-Sumaria, July 6, 2019).
- ◆ **Kirkuk Province:** An Iraqi police force located two ISIS hideouts in the Kirkuk Province (Iraqi News Agency, July 6, 2019).
- ◆ **Kirkuk Province:** International Coalition warplanes carried out an airstrike against an ISIS hideout about 30 km southwest of Kirkuk. Three ISIS operatives were killed (Al-Sumaria, July 7, 2019).
- ◆ **Nineveh Province:** Iraqi security forces located two explosive belts and four IEDs composed of plastic canisters containing explosives in west Mosul (Al-Sumaria, July 7, 2019).

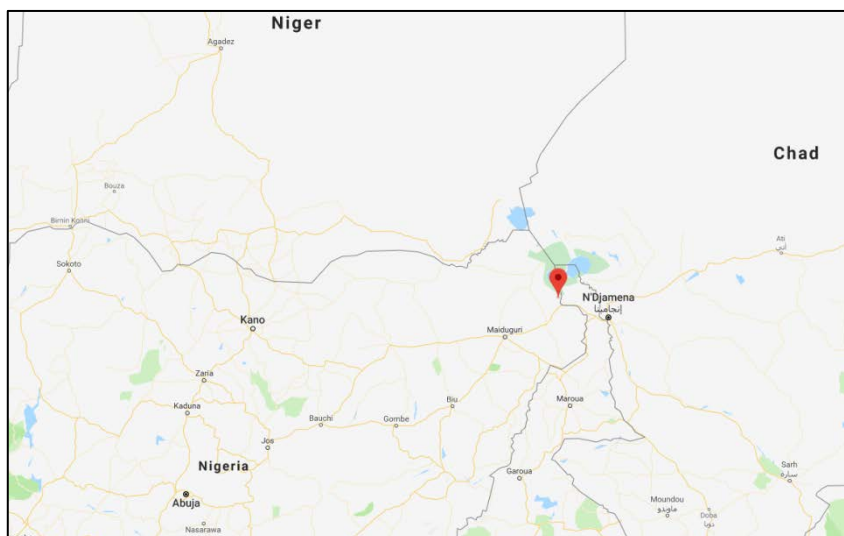
ISIS's activity around the globe

Nigeria

- ▶ Clashes between ISIS operatives and the Nigerian army continued in the northeast of the country:
 - ◆ ISIS's West Africa Province announced that **on July 4, 2019, the organization's operatives repulsed an attack by Nigerian soldiers in the town of Duskali in Borno State, in northeastern Nigeria.** In the exchange of fire between the sides, 25 Nigerian soldiers were killed and wounded. **On July 5, 2019, ISIS operatives attacked a Nigerian army base** in the town of Wulgo, in Borno State (not far from the Nigeria-Cameroon border). Several Nigerian soldiers were killed and wounded (Telegram, July 6, 2019).



Vehicles seized by ISIS operatives in the town of Duskali in northeastern Nigeria (Telegram, July 6, 2019)



The town of Wulgo in Nigeria, near the Nigeria-Cameroon border, where ISIS operatives attacked a Nigerian army base (Google Maps)

◆ ISIS's West Africa Province announced that on July 5, 2019, the organization's operatives **had attacked a Nigerian army base in the Lake Chad area, in the northeast of the country** (near the border between Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad). Several Nigerian soldiers were killed and wounded in the exchange of fire between the sides. **On the same day, ISIS operatives attacked another Nigerian army base in Yobe State in northeastern Nigeria.** The Nigerian soldiers at the base reportedly fled.

Niger

► ISIS's West Africa Province announced that **the organization's operatives had attacked a Niger army base near the border with Mali.** At the beginning of the attack, two ISIS operatives carried out suicide bombing attacks (apparently using booby-trapped vehicles). Afterwards, ISIS operatives attacked the soldiers at the base. In the battle between the sides, **dozens of Niger army soldiers were killed and wounded.** Those who survived fled (Telegram, July 3, 2019).

► According to ISIS's announcement, the base that was attacked was a large base of International Coalition forces, which was used for training Niger's military and security forces. ISIS operatives took over the base and set it on fire. The operatives seized large quantities of weapons, ammunition, and vehicles. At the end of the attack, they retreated from the scene (Amaq News Agency, July 3, 2019).

► According to local government sources, **18 Niger army soldiers were killed in the attack**. Four other soldiers were declared missing. According to these sources, **the attack began with the detonation of two car bombs, which was followed by an attack carried out by gunmen on motorcycles**. It was also reported that the attackers fled the country, partly **because of the airstrikes carried out by American and French planes** (BBC, July 2, 2019).



The place where the Niger army base was attacked, near the border with Mali (Google Maps)



One of the suicide bombers, codenamed Abu Qatada al-Ansari, before the attack on the Niger army base (West Africa Province, as posted on Telegram, July 5, 2019)

Mozambique

► ISIS's Central Africa Province announced that on July 3, 2019, **the organization's operatives attacked a Mozambican army base in the Nangade region in northern Mozambique, near the border with Tanzania**. ISIS operatives killed and wounded several soldiers. The survivors managed to flee (Telegram, July 5, 2019). According to local sources, an attack by "militant elements" in northern Mozambique killed seven people: a policeman and six civilians, including two children.

► **This is the second time that ISIS has claimed responsibility for a terrorist attack in northern Mozambique**, an area where the security situation is precarious. The first attack took place on June 3, 2019, but there was no verification. However, various terrorism researchers expressed doubt regarding ISIS's statements, claiming that the organization was unlikely to have ties with the fighters in Mozambique (www.swissinfo.ch, July 5, 2019; AP, July 6, 2019).



Right: Weapons and equipment seized by ISIS operatives in an attack on the Mozambican army base (ISIS's Central Africa Province, July 5, 2019). Left: The Nangade area in northern Mozambique, near the border with Tanzania, where the base was attacked (Google Maps)

Somalia

► ISIS operatives shot and killed a Somali policeman **in the city of Bosaso**, in northeastern Somalia (ISIS's Amaq News Agency, July 7, 2019).

► ISIS's Somalia Province announced that the organization's operatives had shot and killed a Somali policeman in the capital Mogadishu (Telegram, July 7, 2019).

Tunisia

► On the night of July 2, 2019, Tunisian security forces carried out a manhunt after a suspected terrorist. **The terrorist detonated his explosive belt near a Metro station in a suburb of the capital Tunis.** The terrorist was killed and there were no other casualties. The terrorist who was killed was identified as **Ayman al-Samiri**, 23, who was wanted by the security authorities in Tunisia. The day before he blew himself up, the Tunisian government issued a statement stating that the terrorist was wanted for involvement in two suicide bombings in the city of Tunis, for which ISIS has claimed responsibility (Al-Arabiya, July 3, 2019). According to a statement issued by the Amaq News Agency after the detonation of the explosive belt, “the Islamic State fighter blew up his explosive belt among Tunisian security personnel” (Telegram, July 4, 2019).



Right: Suicide bomber Ayman al-Samiri. Left: The scene of the attack near the Metro station (Al-Arabiya, July 3, 2019)

Afghanistan

► ISIS’s Khorasan Province claimed responsibility for **detonating an IED in a Shiite mosque in the city of Ghazni**, about 130 km southwest of the capital Kabul. According to ISIS, some 40 people were killed and wounded (Telegram, July 6, 2019). According to local sources, three people were killed and around 20 were wounded (Reuters, July 6, 2019; shiawaves.com, July 7, 2019).



Left: The attack on the Shiite mosque. Right: One of the people wounded in the attack (shiawaves.com, July 7, 2019)

► The activity of the Khorasan Province **was concentrated in the Nangarhar Province in Afghanistan**. Following are the highlights of its activity (according to announcements issued by the Khorasan Province):

- ◆ **July 4, 2019:** ISIS operatives raided residential compounds belonging to militias loyal to the Afghan regime, 35 km south of Jalalabad, in the Nangarhar Province. Several militiamen were killed or wounded (Telegram, July 5, 2019).
- ◆ **July 5, 2019:** An IED was detonated against an Afghanistan army vehicle in the Nangarhar Province. The passengers were killed and wounded (Telegram, July 6, 2019).
- ◆ **July 5, 2019:** Snipers fired at a Taliban operative in the Nangarhar Province. He was killed (Telegram, July 5, 2019).
- ◆ **July 5, 2019:** An IED was detonated against an Afghanistan police vehicle in the Nangarhar Province. A security official and three of his escorts were killed (Telegram, July 5, 2019).
- ◆ **July 6, 2019:** An IED was detonated against a Taliban force in the Nangarhar Province. Several Taliban operatives were killed and wounded (Telegram, July 7, 2019).
- ◆ **July 6, 2019:** A sticky bomb was detonated against the vehicle of an Afghan Military Intelligence officer and one of the commanders of the militias loyal to the Afghan regime, in the Nangarhar Province. The military intelligence officer was killed, along with two of his escorts (Telegram, July 7, 2019).
- ◆ **July 8, 2019:** An IED was detonated against an Afghanistan army vehicle in the city of Jalalabad. Eight soldiers were killed and wounded (Telegram, July 8, 2019).
- ◆ **July 8, 2019:** An ISIS sniper wounded an Afghan border policeman in the Nangarhar Province (Telegram, July 8, 2019).

The Sinai Peninsula and Egypt

► ISIS's Sinai Province announced that an ISIS sniper had killed an Egyptian soldier at a checkpoint in south Sheikh Zuweid (Telegram, July 9, 2019).

Counterterrorism and preventive activity

Libya

► Ahmed al-Sharif, who is considered ISIS's No. 2 man in Libya, was recently arrested by the Special Deterrent Force, a local militia that carries out policing operations in the city of Tripoli and its environs. According to reports, Ahmed al-Sharif, who was involved in a number of murders, is considered the brain behind ISIS's activity in Libya (Akhbar Libya 24, July 9, 2019).

The battle for hearts and minds

Libya Province operatives renew their pledge of allegiance to ISIS leader Al-Baghdadi

► As part of the campaign to renew the pledge of allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the operatives of the Libya Province also renewed their pledge of allegiance. A video entitled "The [welcome] results will benefit the adherents [of the religion of Islam]" (the usual title for these videos) shows a masked operative codenamed Abu Mus'ab the Libyan. The operative speaks before dozens of ISIS operatives, noting that the ISIS operatives in Libya continue their commitment to the Islamic State through their adherence to Allah.



Right: ISIS operatives gather before renewing their pledge of allegiance to ISIS leader Al-Baghdadi (Telegram, July 6, 2019). Left: ISIS operatives renewing their pledge of allegiance (Telegram, July 6, 2019)