



Spotlight on Global Jihad

July 22-28, 2021

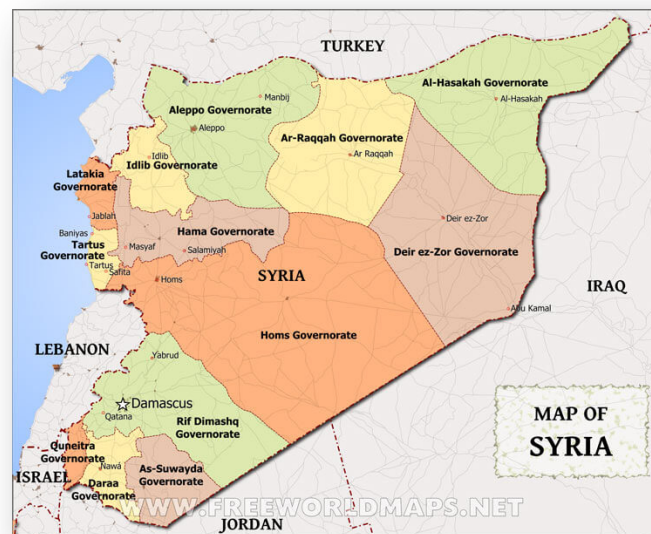


Main events of the past week

- ▶ **Jordan:** According to the Jordanian newspaper Al-Ra'i, in February 2021, **the Jordanian General Intelligence Directorate (GID)** thwarted plans by an ISIS squad numbering four operatives **to carry out a shooting attack against Israeli soldiers on the Jordanian-Israeli border**. The squad members also planned **to carry out an attack against Jews in Jordan**.
- ▶ **This week was marked by a decrease in the volume of ISIS's activity in the various provinces around the globe, despite the fact that it usually increases its activity during the Muslim holidays.**
- ▶ **Syria: In the Idlib region,** the Syrian army and the forces supporting it continued to fire artillery at the rebel enclave, with Russian air support. **In the desert region (Al-Badia),** the Syrian army and the forces supporting it continued to comb the area in search of ISIS operatives. This, with the aid of Russian airstrikes against ISIS targets in the area. **In the Deir ez-Zor-Al-Mayadeen region,** ISIS continued to carry out attacks against the SDF forces this week, on a relatively small scale.
- ▶ **Iraq:** In general, **there was a decline in the volume of ISIS's activity this week.** During a visit by **Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kazemi,** **US President Joe Biden** announced that the US army would complete its combat mission in Iraq by the end of 2021. Before his trip, the Iraqi Prime Minister had noted that there was no need for the presence of foreign fighting forces in Iraq and that the Iraqi army and security forces were capable of defending the country even without the assistance of International Coalition forces. The Prime Minister announced the arrest of ISIS operatives who carried out last week's attack on an open market in Baghdad in which 30 people were killed and 50 others were wounded.
- ▶ **Africa: There has also been a relative drop in ISIS's activity in Africa. The main event was an attack on a bus carrying Christian civilians in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Fifteen people were killed, including women and children.**
- ▶ **Afghanistan:** ISIS continued its activity, mainly against security and government officials.

► **The battle for hearts and minds:** ISIS's media outlets continued to document ISIS operatives in the various provinces, mainly while eating the holiday meal and during prayers. This week's main article in ISIS's Al-Naba' weekly was devoted to the **terrorist attack carried out by ISIS in a Shiite neighborhood in Baghdad last week**. According to the article, the attack is an indication of the failure of the United States and the erosion of its economic and military status. This, while ISIS is gaining in strength and expanding.

The Syrian arena¹



Syrian governorates (freeworldmaps.net)

The Idlib region

► This week, the Syrian army and the forces supporting it continued their artillery fire at the rebel enclave in Idlib. At the same time, Russian fighter jets carried out a series of airstrikes (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, July 26, 2021).

The desert region (Al-Badia)

► This week, the Syrian army and the forces supporting it continued to comb the area in order to locate ISIS operatives. The forces were supported by Russian fighter jets, which carried out airstrikes against ISIS targets (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, July 24, 2021).

Al-Hasakah Province

► The International Coalition and SDF forces carried out security activity in Khirbat Jamoush, east of Al-Hasakah. They surrounded a house where three ISIS operatives were barricaded.

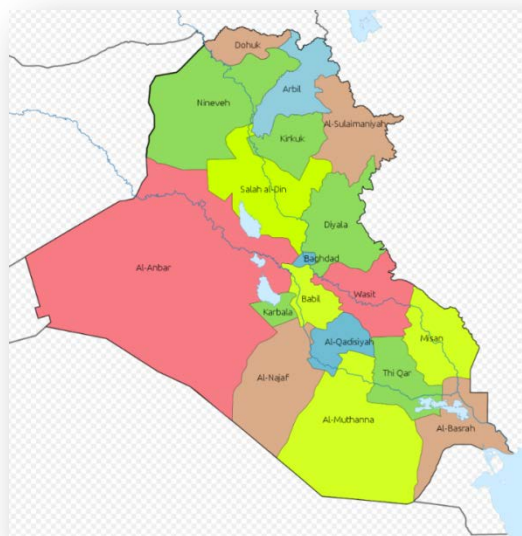
¹ According to ISIS's claims of responsibility posted on Telegram

There was an exchange of fire with Coalition air support. The three people inside the house were killed (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, July 21, 2021).

The Deir ez-Zor-Al-Mayadeen region

- ▶ **On July 22, 2021**, an SDF fighter was targeted by gunfire in Al-Basira, about 15 km north of Al-Mayadeen. He was wounded.
- ▶ **On July 20, 2021**, an SDF commander was targeted by gunfire in Abu Hamam, about 25 km southeast of Al-Mayadeen.

The Iraqi arena



Provinces of Iraq (Wikipedia)

The US army will complete its mission in Iraq by the end of 2021

- ▶ **US President Joe Biden** announced during a meeting in the White House with **Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kazemi** that in accordance with an agreement between the US and Iraq, **the US army would complete its combat mission in Iraq by the end of 2021**. At the moment, about 2,500 US soldiers are stationed in Iraq, operating against ISIS and other terrorist groups. In a few months, when their combat mission is declared over, the US forces will engage solely in training and consulting to the Iraqi army. This decision means that the US forces will leave Iraq 18 years after entering it in George Bush Jr.'s presidency, and about a decade after President Obama had withdrawn most of the US forces from Iraq (CNN, July 27, 2021).
- ▶ Before leaving for the United States, **Prime Minister Kazemi** said that there was no need for foreign fighting forces in Iraq, and that the Iraqi army and security forces were able to defend

the country even without the assistance of the International Coalition forces. Kazemi noted that every withdrawal of the forces would be based on negotiation that would take place in the US and on the needs of the Iraqi forces which, according to him, had proved themselves over the last year by carrying out independent missions against ISIS. Kazemi noted that Iraq was expecting the US presence in Iraq to support the Iraqi forces by assisting in training and developing their skills, by security cooperation, and by maintaining the US weapons in their possession (AP, July 25, 2021).

- ISIS's Iraq Province released photos documenting the operatives (with blurred faces) eating the Eid al-Adha meal and praying (Telegram, July 24, 2021).



ISIS operatives in Iraq eating the Eid al-Adha meal. Left: ISIS operatives praying (Telegram, July 24, 2021)

Attacks by province²

Kirkuk Province

- **On July 23, 2021**, a police post in the Rashad region, about 40 km southwest of Kirkuk, was targeted by gunfire. Three policemen were killed and another was wounded. ISIS operatives seized three rifles, one machine gun and an RPG launcher.

Al-Anbar Province (western Iraq)

- **On July 23, 2021**, an attack was carried out against an Iraqi army camp near Al-Rutba. Three soldiers were killed and two others were wounded. ISIS operatives set fire to the camp.

Salah al-Din Province

- **On July 23, 2021**, mortar shells were fired at a police post north of Samarra. According to ISIS, definite hits were identified.

² According to ISIS's claims of responsibility posted on Telegram

► **On July 21, 2021**, a patrol of the Popular Mobilization-affiliated Saraya al-Salam militia was targeted by gunfire east of Samarra. One fighter was wounded.

Diyala Province

► **On July 19, 2021**, a camp of the Iraqi Interior Ministry's commando unit was targeted by gunfire about 60 km north of Baqubah. Two commando fighters were killed and three others were wounded.

Counterterrorism measures in Iraq

Baghdad Province

► **On July 24, 2021**, the Iraqi prime minister announced the arrest of the operatives of an ISIS squad responsible for carrying out the attack in the open market in the Baghdad Shiite neighborhood, in which 30 people were killed and 50 others were wounded. No additional details were given about the operatives who were arrested (www.ndtv.com, July 24, 2021).

Al-Anbar Province

► **On July 24, 2021**, the Iraqi army found an ISIS weapons cache near Hit. The cache contained several dozen IEDs, two explosive belts, two mortar shells, about 50 tripwires for the activation of IEDs, and explosives (Al-Sumaria, July 24, 2021).

The Sinai Peninsula

► ISIS's Sinai Province released photos documenting its operatives preparing the Eid al-Adha meal, praying, and manning an observation post (Telegram, July 23, 2021).



Right: ISIS's observation post in the Sinai Peninsula. Left: ISIS operatives praying (Telegram, July 23, 2021)

An attack against Israel thwarted

ISIS squad planning to carry out attack against Israel exposed in Jordan

► According to the Jordanian newspaper Al-Ra'i, in February 2021, **the Jordanian General Intelligence Directorate (GID)** thwarted plans by an ISIS squad numbering four operatives **to carry out a shooting attack against Israeli soldiers on the Jordanian-Israeli border**. The squad members also planned **to carry out an attack against Jews in Jordan**. One of the squad members was arrested at the end of last year and the three others in February 2021. Charges were pressed against the four operatives at the State Security Tribunal. The indictment reveals that as part of the preparations to carry out the attack, the squad members collected weapons and also determined how the attack would be carried out: at first, Jordanian Border Guard soldiers were to be targeted by gunfire and then Israeli soldiers across the border. One of the squad members was responsible for food, water and first aid supplies, should any of the squad members be wounded. The four are also accused of spreading ISIS propaganda on social media (Al-Ra'i, July 26, 2021).

Summary of ISIS's activity in the various provinces

► Data from an infographic published by ISIS, summing up its activity around the world between July 15 and July 21, 2021, shows that during this period, **ISIS carried out 61 attacks** in the various provinces in Asia and Africa, compared to 85 attacks in the previous week. **The largest number of attacks was carried out in Iraq (22)**. Attacks carried out in ISIS's other provinces: West Africa (17); Khorasan, i.e., Afghanistan (12); Central Africa (5); Syria (3); Sinai (1); and India (1) (ISIS's Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, July 23, 2021).

► A total of **206 people were killed or wounded in the attacks**, compared to 188 in the previous week. **The largest number of casualties was in Iraq (147)³**. The other casualties were in the following provinces: West Africa (29); Khorasan, i.e. Afghanistan (17); Central Africa (9); Syria (2); India (2) (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, July 23, 2021).

³ The large number of casualties is due to the attack in the open market of Baghdad's Shiite neighborhood, in which 30 people were killed and about 50 others were wounded.



Infographic summing up ISIS's activity (Al-Naba' weekly, Telegram, July 23, 2021)

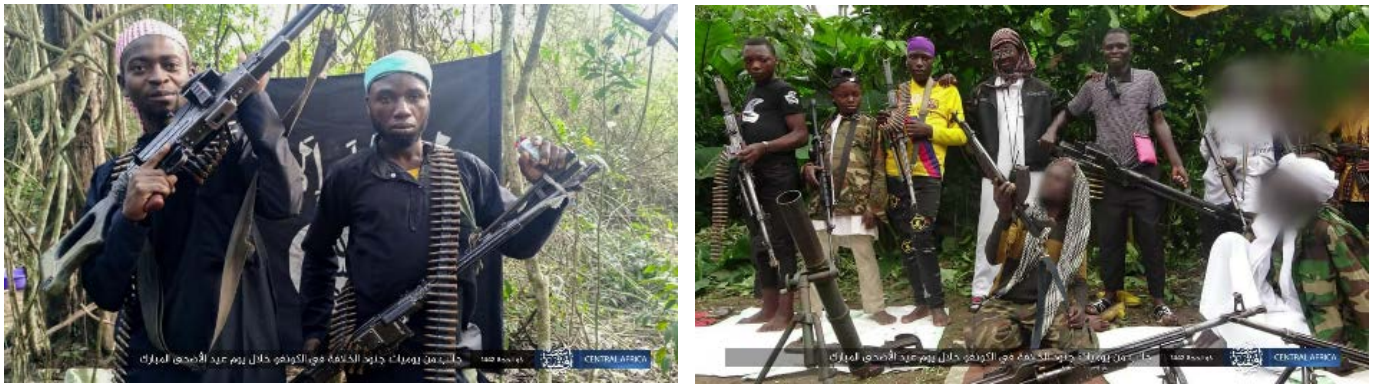
► Usually, during Muslim holidays, ISIS increases the number of its attacks and even announces the launching of campaigns instigating its operatives and supporters to carry out attacks. However, during Eid al-Adha, there was a decrease in the number of attacks reported by ISIS's media outlets.

Africa

► ISIS's Central Africa Province released photos documenting its operatives in the Congo (Telegram, July 22, 2021).



Right: ISIS operatives in the Congo praying. Left: ISIS operatives eating the holiday meal (Telegram, July 23, 2021).



ISIS operatives in the Congo displaying their weapons (Telegram, July 23, 2021)

Nigeria

► An ISIS roadblock was set up on the Mainok-Jakana highway in northeastern Nigeria. **On July 24, 2021**, ISIS operatives at the roadblock abducted a Nigerian army officer, a Christian civilian, and two government officials who were traveling together by car (Telegram, July 25, 2021).



Right: The two Nigerian government officials abducted by ISIS. Left: The Christian who was abducted (Telegram, July 26, 2021)

► **On July 20, 2021**, an attack was carried out against a Nigerian army camp in the Ajiri region, about 15 km south of Maiduguri, in northeastern Nigeria. The sides exchanged fire. ISIS operatives seized weapons and ammunition (Telegram, July 21, 2021).

Cameroon

► **On July 24, 2021**, an attack was carried out against a Cameroonian army position in the Fotokol region, on the Cameroon-Nigeria border. At least eight soldiers were killed and several others were wounded. ISIS operatives seized a variety of weapons and ammunition (Telegram, July 25, 2021).



Weapons and ammunition seized by ISIS operatives (Telegram, July 25, 2021)

► On July 22, 2021, an IED was activated against a Cameroonian army vehicle in the Mora region, near the Cameroon-Nigeria border. All the passengers on board the vehicle were killed (Telegram, July 24, 2021). The day before, a Cameroonian army camp in the region was targeted by gunfire. Several soldiers were wounded (Telegram, July 23, 2021).

Democratic Republic of the Congo

► On July 25, 2021, there were exchanges of fire between ISIS operatives and Congolese army forces that were trying to advance towards ISIS's positions in Mavivi (the ITIC could not locate the place), in the Ituri region, about 50 km west of the Congo-Uganda border. Six soldiers were killed including an officer, and several others were wounded (Telegram, July 25, 2021).



Weapons and ammunition seized by ISIS operatives in Mavivi (Telegram, July 25, 2021)

► On July 22, 2021, a bus carrying Christian civilians was attacked in the Oicha region, about 20 km north of Beni, on the Congo-Uganda border. Fifteen of the bus passengers were killed and the bus was set on fire (Telegram, 23 July 2021). Local sources confirmed the news, claiming that at least 16 people were killed in the incident, including six women and two children (Reuters, July 23, 2021).

Somalia

- ISIS's Somalia Province released photos documenting its operatives (Telegram, July 23, 2021).



Right: ISIS operatives in Somalia praying. Left: Armed operatives moving on the ground (Telegram, July 23, 2021).

Libya

- ISIS's Libya Province released photos documenting its operatives (Telegram, July 23, 2021).



Right: ISIS operatives in Libya praying. Left: ISIS operatives eating the holiday meal (Telegram, July 23, 2021)

Asia⁴ Afghanistan

- On July 24, 2021, an Afghan intelligence “spy” was targeted by gunfire in Jalalabad (Telegram, July 24, 2021).
- On July 21, 2021, an IED was activated against an Afghan intelligence vehicle in the Kunduz region, near the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border. The three people on board the vehicle were killed or wounded (Telegram, July 21, 2021).

⁴ According to ISIS’s claims of responsibility posted on Telegram

The battle for hearts and minds

- ▶ This week, the main article in ISIS's Al-Naba' weekly (Telegram, July 23, 2021), is devoted to the multi-casualty attack carried out by ISIS in a Shiite neighborhood in Baghdad last week⁵. The author notes that the attack was carried out in accordance with the divine order to fight the Shiites ("the objectors"). According to the author, their crimes against members of the Sunni community in Iraq will not be forgotten. He further notes that the attack is indication of the failure of the United States, whose economic and military status in Iraq has been eroded, while ISIS, on the other hand, is gaining in strength and expanding.
- ▶ The author addresses those who doubt the path of jihad, noting that Allah is the one who directs the success of the jihad fighters, and is the one who made sure that the attack was successful. The author emphasizes that despite the criticism leveled against them, the jihad fighters must adhere to their path because this is the will of Allah. All Muslims must adhere to the belief that Baghdad belongs to the Sunni community and that it is not the capital of the Shiites or the "Crusaders" (the Christian West), and that it will return to the bosom of Muslims, like Jerusalem, Mecca and Damascus. The author ends the article with promises that the attack in Baghdad will not be the last attack and that jihad is an act that expresses faith in Allah and willingness to help Islam in the best way possible.

⁵On July 19, 2021, on the eve of Eid al-Adha, there was an explosion in the Al-Wahilat open market in Madinat Sadr, a Shiite neighborhood in east Baghdad. Thirty people were killed in the explosion, including children. Another 50 people were wounded. **ISIS issued a claim of responsibility for the attack.** According to the claim of responsibility, the attack was carried out by an ISIS operative wearing an explosive vest.



The article on the attack in Baghdad (Telegram, July 23, 2021)