

Spotlight on Global Jihad

July 20-26, 2023

Main events of the past week

▶ **This week, there was a moderate increase in the scope of ISIS's activity in Syria. Noteworthy was the counterterrorism activity of the security forces against ISIS in Syria and Iraq and against Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab in Africa.**

▶ **Syria:** Five Syrian army soldiers and/or operatives supporting the army were killed and ten were wounded in the explosion of an ISIS IED in the eastern Homs Province. An SDF fighter and a Kurdish internal security forces fighter were killed by gunfire north of Deir ez-Zor. Two ISIS operatives were killed and another was wounded in counterterrorism activity by the SDF forces and the Global Coalition against ISIS south of Al-Hasakah.

▶ **Africa:**

◆ **Nigeria:** Several soldiers were wounded in ISIS attacks. In an operation by the Nigerian army and a local militia on the outskirts of the Sambisa Forest, eight Boko Haram operatives were killed.

◆ **Somalia:** In Somali army activity against Al-Shabaab northwest of Mogadishu, around 40 operatives were killed, including foreign commanders.

▶ **Morocco:** The Moroccan security forces detained an ISIS operative in the north of the country. Another operative was detained by Spanish security forces west of Barcelona. The two planned to carry out terrorist attacks in Europe.

▶ **United States:** An indictment was filed against a resident of the state of Colorado who planned to travel to Iraq and join the ranks of ISIS.

The Syrian Arena



Provinces of Syria (Free World Maps)

ISIS's activity

Deir ez-Zor-Al-Mayadeen region

- ▶ On July 19, 2023, masked men, apparently ISIS operatives on motorcycles, shot at a fighter of the Kurdish Internal Security forces, the Asayish, in the town of Muhaymidah, about 10 km north of Deir ez-Zor (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, July 20, 2023).
- ▶ On July 17, 2023, shots were fired at an SDF vehicle in the town of Al-'Izba, about 10 km northeast of Deir ez-Zor. One fighter was killed. The vehicle was put out of commission (Telegram, July 19, 2023).

Al-Hasakah region

- ▶ On July 19, 2023, shots were fired at an SDF checkpoint in the village of Al-Raqqai, about 80 km south of Al-Hasakah. One fighter was wounded (Telegram, July 19, 2023).

The desert region

- ▶ On July 22, 2023, an IED was activated against a bus carrying Syrian soldiers and fighters of the forces supporting the Syrian army in the eastern part of the Homs desert region (the exact location was not specified). Five soldiers and/or fighters were killed and ten others were wounded (Telegram, July 24, 2023).
- ▶ On July 20, 2023, a fighter in the Palestinian Al-Quds Brigade was killed and two others were wounded when an old ISIS mine exploded on the outskirts of the village of Marran al-Fawa'irah, about 40 km east of Homs. The three were part of a force searching for ISIS operatives in the desert region (Al-Badia 24, July 20, 2023).

Counterterrorism

Deir ez-Zor-Al-Mayadeen Province

► In the early morning hours of July 22, 2023, a special force of the Kurdish Internal Security forces, the Asayish, with Global Coalition air support, operated against ISIS in the town of Dhiban, about 5 km east of Al-Mayadeen. An arms dealer who was formerly a senior ISIS operative (emir) was detained. Weapons and ammunition were found in his possession (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, July 23, 2023).

► On July 21, 2023, a joint force of the SDF and the US-led Global Coalition operated in the town of Jadid 'Akidat, about 20 km southeast of Deir ez-Zor. Two people were detained, one of them an investor in oil wells. It was reported that the two, who were in contact with the Syrian regime, financed ISIS terror squads by paying “charity” to the organization (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, July 21, 2023).

► On July 19, 2023, SDF Special Forces with Global Coalition support operated against ISIS in the town of Al-Dashisha, about 80 km south of Al-Hasakah. Two ISIS operatives were killed and another was detained (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, July 20, 2023).

Iraq



Provinces of Iraq (Wikipedia)

ISIS's activity by province¹

Kirkuk Province

► On July 18, 2023, the security guard of a prison director was shot dead in the Shoraw area, in north Kirkuk (Telegram, July 21, 2023).

¹ According to ISIS's claims of responsibility and the global media.

Al-Anbar Province

▶ On July 17, 2023, there were exchanges of fire between ISIS and Iraqi Border Policemen near the Ar'ar area, near the Iraqi-Saudi border. The fighters fled (Telegram, July 19, 2023).

Counterterrorism

Nineveh Province

▶ On July 20, 2023, a force of the Iraqi National Intelligence Agency detained four ISIS operatives (the exact location was not specified). The four admitted their affiliation with ISIS and having operated in its ranks (Iraqi News Agency, July 20, 2023).



Four ISIS operatives detained in the Nineveh Province (Iraqi News Agency, July 20, 2023)

Kirkuk Province

▶ On July 23, 2023, a force of the Iraqi Counterterrorism Unit detained two wanted ISIS operatives (the exact location was not specified). In addition, seven ISIS guesthouses were destroyed (Iraqi News Agency, July 23, 2023).



Members of the Iraqi Counterterrorism Unit (Iraqi News Agency, July 23, 2023)

Baghdad Province

▶ On July 23, 2023, a force of the Iraqi Counterterrorism Unit detained two ISIS operatives (the exact location was not specified) (Iraqi News Agency, July 23, 2023).

Al-Anbar Province

▶ On July 23, 2023, a force of the Iraqi Counterterrorism Unit detained three ISIS operatives (the exact location was not specified) (Iraqi News Agency, July 23, 2023).

Al-Sulaymaniyah Province

▶ On July 23, 2023, a force of the Iraqi Counterterrorism Unit, in coordination with the Kurdish Internal Security Forces, the Asayish, detained four wanted ISIS operatives in the Sulaymaniyah Province in northeastern Iraq (the exact location was not specified). One of the operatives formerly served as the person in charge (emir) of a group of ISIS terrorist operatives (Iraqi News Agency, July 23, 2023).

Diyala Province

▶ On July 25, 2023, an Iraqi intelligence force and security forces detained an ISIS operative in the Diyala Province (the exact location was not specified). The operative, described as “dangerous,” took part in transferring weapons and money to ISIS operatives and was also involved in organ trafficking (Iraqi News Agency, July 25, 2023).



ISIS operative detained in the Diyala Province (Iraqi News Agency, July 25, 2023)

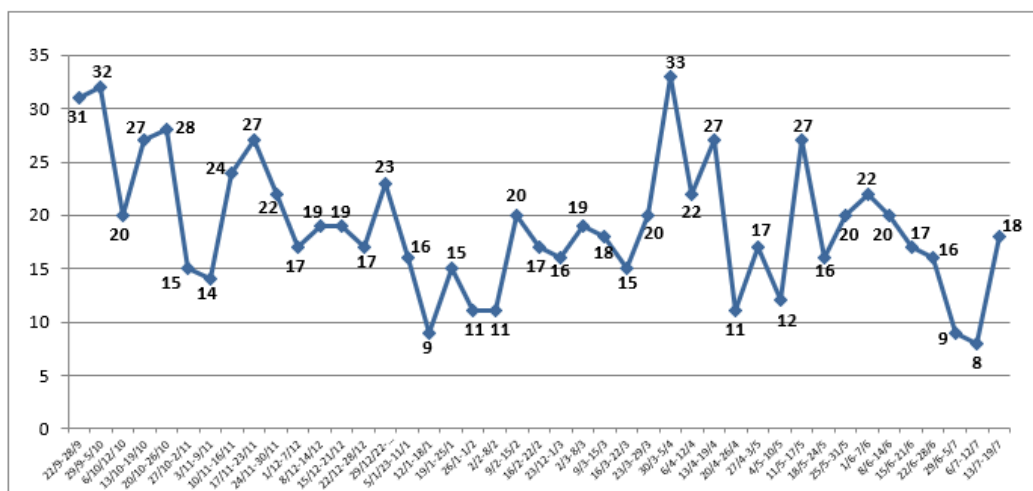
Summary of ISIS’s activity in the various provinces

▶ An infographic published by Al-Naba, ISIS’s weekly, summarizing ISIS’s activity on July 13-19, 2023, indicates that during this period, ISIS operatives carried out 18 attacks in the various provinces (compared with eight the previous week). The highest number of attacks was carried out by the West Africa Province (5). Attacks carried out in the other provinces: Syria (4); Central Africa (3); Mozambique (3); Iraq (2); and East Asia (1). A total of 37 people were killed and wounded in the attacks, compared with 13 in the previous week. The largest number of casualties was in Central Africa (16). In other provinces: West Africa (7); Mozambique (6); Syria (4); East Asia (3); and Iraq (1) (Al-Naba weekly, Telegram, July 20, 2023). This represents an increase in ISIS’s activity around the world.



Summary of ISIS attacks (Al-Naba weekly, Telegram, July 20, 2023)

Attacks by week (according to ISIS's figures)



Africa

Nigeria

ISIS's activity

- ▶ On July 24, 2023, a Nigerian army checkpoint was attacked in the town of Pulka, about 90 km southeast of Maiduguri, near the Nigeria-Cameroon border. One soldier was wounded. An assault rifle and equipment were seized (Telegram, July 25, 2023).
- ▶ On July 23, 2023, a Nigerian army checkpoint was attacked in the town of Mafa, about 40 km northeast of Maiduguri. The soldiers manning the checkpoint fled. Three RPG rockets were seized (Telegram, July 24, 2023).

▶ On July 20, 2023, a Nigerian army checkpoint was attacked near the town of Monguno, about 100 km northeast of Maiduguri. Several soldiers were wounded. A medium machine gun was seized (Telegram, July 21, 2023).

▶ On July 17, 2023, a Nigerian army checkpoint was attacked in the town of Jimtilo, Borno State, in northeastern Nigeria. The soldiers manning the checkpoint fled. Some of the equipment at the checkpoint was seized (Telegram, July 19, 2023).

▶ On July 17, 2023, an IED was activated and shots were fired at a Nigerian army armored vehicle between the towns of Sabon Gari and Wajiroko, southwest of Maiduguri. The soldiers on board the vehicle were wounded (Telegram, July 19, 2023).

Counterterrorism

▶ Nigerian army forces in collaboration with fighters of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) operated against three Boko Haram hiding places on the outskirts of the Sambisa Forest, about 60 km southeast of Maiduguri. Eight Boko Haram operatives were killed (Zagazola, July 20, 2023).

Somalia

Thwarting Al-Shabaab Terrorism

▶ This week, a Somali army force operated against Al-Shabaab operatives:

◆ In an operation west of the Wajid Province, about 300 km northwest of Mogadishu, 25 operatives were killed, including foreign commanders, who were planning an attack at the time (Somalia News Agency, July 25, 2023).

◆ In an operation in the Jame'o area, about 200 km northwest of Mogadishu, 15 operatives were killed, including three commanders (Somalia News Agency, July 20, 2023).

▶ The US Africa Command (AFRICOM) killed five Al-Shabaab operatives in an attack it carried out in Somalia north of the capital Mogadishu on July 19, 2023. It was the fourth attack carried out by AFRICOM in the past month in the country in support of the Somali army (AFRICOM website, July 20, 2023).

Morocco

▶ A force of the General Directorate for Territorial Surveillance and the Spanish Civil Guard carried out a joint operation against ISIS infrastructure in Morocco and Spain. The Moroccan force detained a suspected ISIS operative in the port city of Nador in northern Morocco. At the same time, the Spanish force detained his partner in the city of Lerida (about

120 km west of Barcelona). The two reportedly had ties to ISIS cells operating in various areas in Syria and were preparing to carry out attacks in Europe on instructions from ISIS commanders. The two were also in contact with a migrant smuggling network to obtain forged identification documents and use them while carrying out the attacks they planned (Morocco World News, July 19, 2023).

Asia

Pakistan

ISIS's activity

▶ On July 24, 2023, a Pakistani government “spy” was shot dead in the city of Qalat in Baluchistan Province, about 90 km southeast of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border (Telegram, July 24, 2023).

India

Counterterrorism

▶ On July 19, 2023, an Indian police force arrested five suspected terrorist operatives in Bengaluru, southwest India. The five, residents of Bengaluru between the ages of 25 and 35, were planning to carry out attacks. Explosives, firearms, and daggers were found in their possession. Reportedly, this is not the first time that they have been arrested. In 2017, they were arrested in connection with a murder case, served a prison sentence of 18 months, and were released in 2019. The Indian police are looking for another person apparently residing outside India who has been behind the supply of weapons and explosives to the five detainees (NDTV, July 19, 2023). The organizational affiliation of the five detainees was not mentioned, but they may have been ISIS operatives.



The five detainees in Bengaluru (NDTV, July 19, 2023)

Turkey

▶ During a counterterrorism operation against terrorist operatives, the Ankara police detained nine foreign nationals suspected of being ISIS operatives. They were detained after

the police suspected that in recent years, they had been in conflict zones carrying out operations for ISIS (aa.com.tr, July 26, 2023).

United States

▶ On July 14, 2023, Davin Daniel Meyer, 18, of Castle Rock, about 20 miles south of Denver, Colorado, was arrested while trying to board a flight to Turkey. According to an affidavit submitted, Meyer pledged allegiance to the leader of ISIS and intended to travel to serve as a fighter for ISIS in Iraq (US Department of Justice website, July 17, 2023).