

US NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER

COUNTERTERRORISM

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Counterterrorism Digest is a compilation of UNCLASSIFIED open source publicly available press material, to include relevant commentary on issues related to terrorism and counterterrorism over the past seven days. It is produced every Wednesday, excluding holidays. Counterterrorism Digest is produced by the National Counterterrorism Center and contains situational awareness items detailing on-going terrorism-related developments which may be of interest to security personnel. Comments and requests for information pertaining to articles featured in Counterterrorism Digest may be directed to nctcpao@nctc.gov.

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COUNTERTERRORISM DIGEST

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- 2** **VIRGINIA:** On 15 January, a Virginia man arrested at the Richmond International Airport and charged with attempting to provide material support to ISIL. [\[pg. 5\]](#)
- 3** **CALIFORNIA:** On 22 January, an Iraqi-born man pleaded not guilty to a federal charge regarding his previous travel to Syria and fighting for a terrorist organization. [\[pg. 5\]](#)
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- 9** **BANGLADESH:** On 20 January, authorities announced 14 men deported from Singapore face terrorism charges and are linked to the Ansarullah Bangla Team. [\[pg. 8\]](#)
- 10** **MALAYSIA:** On 22 January, seven ISIL-linked suspects were arrested following a three-day operation. The suspects were ordered to attack strategic locations in Malaysia. [\[pg. 15\]](#)

SPOTLIGHT SUMMARY

HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE TERROR THREAT SNAPSHOT

The Homeland Security Committee's January 2016 Terror Threat Snapshot reviews the violent extremist threat from 2015, with 79 ISIL supporters arrested in the US, and 72 ISIL linked attack plots focused on Western targets. While Syria remains a key recruitment zone for terrorists, they continue to carve safe havens in Libya and Yemen. **(HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE)**

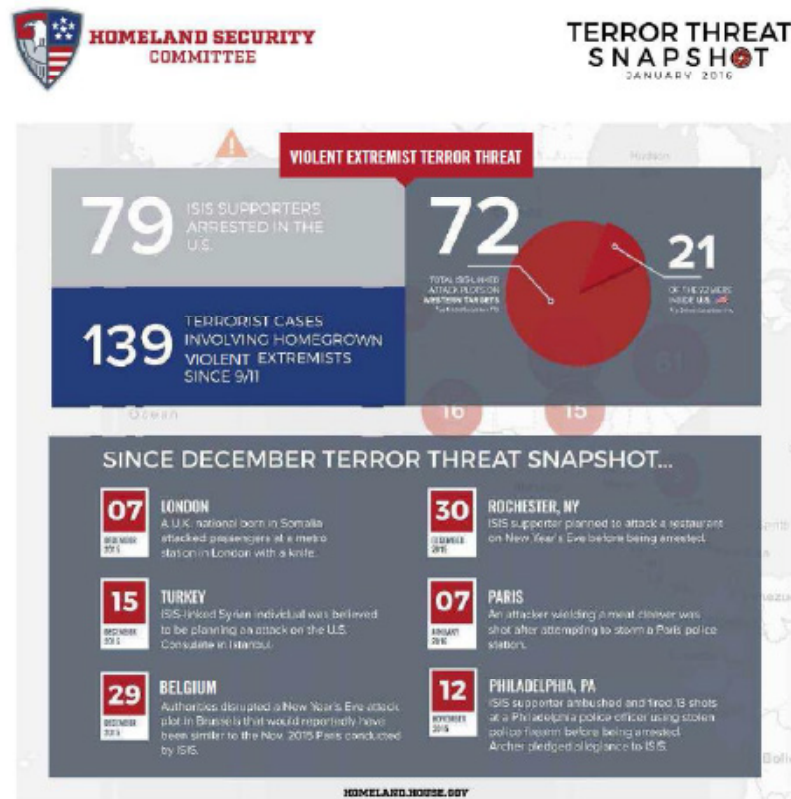
PAKISTAN: TTP FACTION ATTACKS UNIVERSITY

On 20 January, the Tehrik-E Taliban (TTP) splinter group Tariq Geedar, conducted an attack on the Bacha Khan University in Charsadda, Pakistan, killing 21 people and wounding dozens more. Umar Mansoor, the leader, claimed responsibility on social media, and pledged attacks on universities and schools would continue. **(REUTERS, TWITTER, BBC, LAHORE, DAWN, SITE INTEL)**

SPOTLIGHT

This section provides a comprehensive look at a terrorist group(s) or leader(s), and/or CT tools and literature.

Homeland Security Committee



This document is produced by the Majority Staff of the House Homeland Security Committee.

ISIL's global terror campaign in 2015 resulted in the deadliest terror attacks in America since 9/11 and in Europe since 2004. The attacks in San Bernardino, CA, where 14 people were killed, and Paris, France, where at least 130 people were killed, are among the 72 ISIL-linked attack plots against Western targets. Most recently, an ISIL supporter attempted to murder a Philadelphia policeman in a close-range shooting attack on 7 January.

Terrorists have attempted to infiltrate the US as authorities have uncovered violent extremists resettled in America. Two refugees from Iraq, who resettled in the US, were recently arrested on terror-related charges linked to ISIL.

The United States faces an unprecedented terror threat level at home due to ISIL. Law enforcement authorities arrested nearly 80 individuals in ISIL-related cases in the United States since 2014 - 62 in 2015 alone. There has been 21 ISIL-linked plots to launch attacks in the homeland. Over 80 percent of the post-9/11 HVE cases in the US have occurred or have been disrupted since 2009.

Sanctuaries for terror recruits are expanding as ISIL and al-Qa'ida have gone on the offensive. While Syria remains a key terror recruiting hotspot, global violent extremists are rebuilding strength in Afghanistan and Pakistan while they carve out new safe havens in Libya and Yemen.

Foreign fighters are returning from Syria and plotting attacks in the West. (HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE)

SPOTLIGHT

PAKISTAN: TTP Faction Attacks University

On 20 January, armed terrorists attacked the Bacha Khan University in Charsadda, Pakistan, killing 21 people and wounding dozens a little more than a year after the massacre of 134 students at a school in the area, officials said. The army concluded operations to clear the campus six hours after the attack began with four gunmen dead. A spokesman for rescue workers said 21 bodies were recovered including students, guards, policemen and at least one teacher. Many of the dead were apparently shot in the head execution-style.

- The militants used the cover of fog and scaled the walls of the university during the morning hours before entering buildings and opening fire on students and teachers in classrooms and hostels, police said. Students told media they saw several young men wielding AK-47s storming the university housing where many students were sleeping.
- Umar Mansoor, leader of TTP splinter group Tariq Geedar, involved in the December 2014 attack on the army school in Peshawar, claimed attacks on schools and universities would continue in video footage released on Friday, which highlighted four fighters he said conducted the attacks. He stated the university was targeted because it was a government institution which supported the army; however, later in the day, official Taliban spokesman Muhammad Khorasani issued a written statement disassociating the militants from the attack, calling it “un-Islamic”—the statement was later posted via Twitter showing denial of responsibility.
- Pakistan military spokesperson Lt Gen Asim Bajwa noted major breakthroughs had been made in identifying the terrorists behind the attack. As of 23 January, the Pakistani army arrested five suspects who provided the attackers with shelter, transport, and weapons. Two women are accused of buying weapons for the attackers from a weapons market, with at least three suspects remaining at large. (REUTERS, TWITTER, BBC, LAHORE)

Umar Mansoor, 37, is the TTP Geedar group commander and de facto operational head of TTP. Mansoor serves as the faction commander for Charsadda, Darra Adam Khel, Noshera, and surrounding areas.

- He was the mastermind of the 2014 Peshawar massacre of 132 children and nine staff at the Army Public School, a military-run school in Peshawar.
- Mansoor received a high school education in Islamabad, Pakistan, and later studied in a madrassah. Nicknamed “slim”, he is the father of two daughters and a son. (DAWN)



The graphic denotes TTP Geedar Commander Umar Mansoor highlighting the attackers on social media. (SITE INTEL)

Pakistan: Assault on Bacha Khan University
Open Sources

UNCLASSIFIED



UNCLASSIFIED

27 Jan 2016

ON POINT

This section consists of in-depth counterterrorism press articles including context and background information.

Assessments are written by seasoned NCTC Directorate of Intelligence Analysts.

Comments are written by NCTC Joint Counterterrorism Assessment Team, comprised of law enforcement and first responders.

1 NEW YORK: Yemeni National Pleads Guilty

On 19 January, ^{USPER}Yemeni-born Ali Alvi al-Hamidi, 31, pleaded guilty to conspiring to murder US nationals abroad, conspiring to provide material support to al-Qa'ida and receiving military-type training.

- In early 2008, al-Hamidi traveled to Pakistan to join al-Qa'ida and received training in the use of weapons, explosives and detonators. During the late spring and summer of 2008, al-Hamidi moved to Afghanistan with Taliban forces to fight US military and Coalition Forces stationed there.
- The defendant also aided now convicted ^{USPER}Bryant Neal Vinas in joining al-Qa'ida. Vinas—who is currently incarcerated pending sentence—was arrested in 2008 before he could conduct this attack and pleaded guilty in 2009 to conspiracy to murder US nationals, providing material support to a foreign terrorist organization and receiving military-type training from a foreign terrorist organization. (DOJ)

2 VIRGINIA: Virginia Man Accused of Planning to Join ISIL

On 15 January, authorities arrested ^{USPER}Joseph Hassan Farrokh, 32*, at Richmond International Airport, while intending to depart on the first leg of a planned journey to Syria to join ISIL. He is charged with attempting to provide material support to terrorists. Farrokh will be held without bond until his court appearance in February.

- Authorities also charged ^{USPER}Mahmoud Amin Mohamed Elhassan*, 25, with aiding and abetting Farrokh's plot. Elhassan allegedly knew of Farrokh's intentions and provided him a ride to the airport. (WASHINGTON POST)

3 CALIFORNIA: Iraqi Pleads Not Guilty Regarding Travel to Syria

On 22 January, ^{USPER}Iraqi-born Aws Mohammed Younis al-Jayab* pleaded not guilty to a federal charge that he lied to investigators about traveling to Syria two years ago. If convicted, Aws, 23, could spend eight years in prison and face a \$250,000 fine for making a false statement involving international terrorism. Aws will appear in court on 17 March and remain in custody in Sacramento without bail.

- On 6 January, the complaint filed against Aws alleged he communicated on social media about his intent to return to Syria to fight for terrorist organizations. Between November 2013 and January 2014, he allegedly reported on social media he was in Syria fighting with various terrorist organizations. Analysis of IP addresses and other information established al-Jayab accessed the Internet via a satellite, which covered eastern Turkey and areas of northern Syria during his travel abroad. In January 2014, he returned to the United States; in October he was interviewed by authorities and stated he had never been a member of any rebel group or militia, had not provided material support for any group engaged in terrorist activity, and never assisted a group, which used or threatened to use weapons against others. (CBS)

4 WORLDWIDE: ISIL Recruiting Females to Marry Fighters

As of 20 January, ISIL's latest recruitment tool via social media is targeting mostly women to become brides for fighters. The online recruiting is eye-catching and inviting, with promises for free housing, health-care and cars for women. Men are promised beautiful brides-true to the faith. Allegedly 500 Western women have left their families, to travel to Syria and Iraq, to join ISIL.

- Analysts note when the women actually arrive to ISIL-controlled territory, they are placed in female dorms for indoctrination. Housing, water, and electricity are scarce, and women do not have a choice in whom they marry. Often they are gifted to foreign fighters, and then recycled. (CNN)

* The charges listed are currently allegations. As in any criminal case, the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

ON POINT

NCTC Comment: Methods employed by violent extremists for recruitment purposes include the use of social media applications. First responder agencies can mitigate the effectiveness of their use of social media and propaganda by keeping abreast of TTPs employed and applying this understanding to their operating procedures. Additionally, the drivers of radicalization differ across various geographic regions making it vital for first responders to establish close-knit relationships with their local community. FBI and DHS both maintain Internet portals containing Countering Violent Extremists (CVE) training resources, including hundreds of the most current CVE training materials, case studies, analytic products, and other resources, including pre-incident indicators. Further information on the portal can be found at: www.dhs.gov/cveas-portal. (JCAT PERSPECTIVE)

5 WORLDWIDE: ISIL Releases 13th Issue of *Dabiq*

On 19 January, ISIL released their 13th edition of *Dabiq*, its English-language magazine, titled “The Rafidah From Ibn Sba to the Dajjal.” The magazine summarized the San Bernardino, California, attacks and suggested the attacks should “awaken more Muslims in America, Europe, and Australia.” The magazine provided new information regarding the perpetrators of the Paris attacks; threatened Iran and Saudi Arabia and discussed the rise of ISIL in Khorasan.

- The magazine featured an image of the militants ISIL claimed were responsible for the November 2015 Paris attacks, which appeared to be a prelude to the release of a future video production. The magazine also focused considerable attention on hostility towards Iran and Shia Muslims, calling for their deaths and urging the killing of Saudi scholars and government members, due to the recent execution of “dozens” of prisoners by Saudi Arabia in early January. (TWITTER, SITE INTEL)



(SITE INTEL)

NCTC Comment: Violent extremist magazines available online offer expanded reach of their ideology, a recruitment tool, instructions on tactics and techniques, procedures for attack plotting, or in this case highlight successful attacks to urge additional ones. This underscores the importance of first responders' familiarity with extremist propaganda. While lone offender type attacks are generally carried out with less planning, decreasing the length of time in the planning cycle and consequently first responders' opportunities to discover and disrupt this activity, there are other discoverable aspects to be aware of. (JCAT PERSPECTIVE)

6 WORLDWIDE: ISIL Video Threatens European Countries

On 25 January, a new video published by ISIL's media center al-Hayat on their Telegram channel eulogized the nine Paris attackers, showing images and last statements of the men prior to the attack delivering anti-Western diatribes with claims of the next execution to occur on the Champs-Élysées. During each speech given, threats were made to Britain, France, Europe, and Italy.

- “These are the last messages of the nine lions of caliphate who were mobilized from their lairs to make a whole country, France, get down on its knees,” a narrator in the video said. (REUTERS, TWITTER)

7 CANADA: Terror Twins Trial Date Pushed to 2017

As of 22 January, the trial for Ottawa twins Ashton and Carlos Larmond, 24, was moved from October 2016 to 8 May 2017 as the case was pushed to the Supreme Court of Justice. Carlos was arrested at a Montreal airport as he awaited an overseas flight to allegedly fight with terrorist groups while his brother, Ashton, was arrested in Ottawa the same day charged with facilitating a terrorist activity, participating in the activity of a terrorist group, and instructing another to conduct an activity for a terrorist group.

- Suliman Mohamed, 22, a close friend of Ashton's, was arrested days later and charged with participating in the activity of a terrorist group and conspiring to participate in a terrorist activity, and will be tried with the brothers. (OTTAWA CITIZEN)

ON POINT

8 UNITED KINGDOM: Men Found Guilty Promoting ISIL

On 22 January, Ibrahim Anderson, 38, and Shah Jahan Khan, 62, from Luton, were found guilty of promoting ISIL outside a Topshop in London's Oxford Street. Anderson and Khan were arrested on 16 December 2014 and their homes searched. Officers at Anderson's home seized his computer, which was subsequently found to have images containing instructions "for travel to Syria to support jihad."

- The court heard the two men had been part of a group of men that handed out leaflets to shoppers which encouraged support for ISIL outside the store in August 2014. Public citizens then took pictures of Anderson and Khan and reported them to the police. (IB TIMES)

9 BELGIUM: New Suspects in Paris Attacks Detained

As of 22 January, Belgian authorities detained two new suspects, Zakariah J., and Moroccan national Mustafa E., in connection to the November Paris attacks. Zakariah reportedly knew one or more of the suspects prior to the attacks and is accused of aiding their preparations.

- Nine men are now in jail with two more facing charges but have been released until they appear before a judge. Five of them were people in touch with Abdeslam after the attacks, with two driving him from Paris to Brussels, and two others drove him around afterward. A fifth is said to have been in touch with him by phone. Four of the others detained and charged were friendly with one or more of the attackers during the period they were being radicalized, while one of the men helped Abdelhamid Abaaoud find a place to hide following the 13 November attacks.
- Four men, including Salah Abdeslam, the surviving member of the attack team, are being sought. The others sought include Mohamed Abrini, a man seen driving Abdeslam between Brussels and Paris, and two men traveling under false Belgian identities who may have played a significant role in directing the attacks. (NYT, REUTERS)

10 ISRAEL: Hizbollah Leader's Son Led Terror Cell

On 20 January, security forces announced they foiled a terrorist suicide bombing and shooting cell based in the West Bank under the command of Hizbollah—set up by the son of Hizbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah—Joad Nasrallah.

- Five Palestinians, suspected of joining the Hizbollah cell and close to launching attacks, were indicted in court and charged with membership in an illegal organization, contact with the enemy, receiving funds from the enemy, conspiracy to cause death and shoot at people, and trafficking combat equipment.
- The Israeli Shin Bet intelligence agency said it found Joad used social media networks to recruit Mahmoud Za'alul, 32, as the alleged field commander of the cell. The cell was instructed to use secret communications equipment for conducting suicide bombings, assembling bomb vests, gathering intelligence, and setting up training camps. Additionally, members of the cell allegedly asked Hizbollah for assistance in attaining weapons and funds to conduct attacks. (J POST)

11 SAUDI ARABIA: Authorities Jail Three for Terrorism

On 20 January, the Special Criminal Court in Riyadh found three Saudi nationals guilty of committing acts of terrorism and sentenced them to a combined total of nine years and ten months in prison. The defendants joined terrorist organizations in Yemen and Syria by using forged Yemeni identity cards to enter Syria. The court barred them from traveling at the end of the detention periods.

- The first defendant was in contact with numerous terrorist group coordinators and smugglers, who provided him with a forged Yemeni ID card. The second defendant was found guilty of traveling to Yemen through Syria, to take part in ongoing operations. He was in contact with the group coordinator and smugglers who provided him with a forged Yemeni ID. The third convict traveled to Yemen illegally, in order to go to Syria to participate in the ongoing conflict. (ARAB NEWS)

ON POINT

12 MAURITANIA: Escaped AQIM Convict Recaptured

On 20 January, Guinean authorities returned convicted AQIM terrorist Cheikh Ould Saleck, 31, to Mauritania, after he escaped from prison and crossed the Guinea-Bissau border into Guinea.

- On 31 December 2015, Ould Saleck—on death row since 2011 for an al-Qa’ida plot to assassinate Mauritania’s president—escaped. On 19 January, he was recaptured with another man suspected of helping him in his escape. The second man was also deported to Mauritania.
- On 4 January, Mauritanian authorities arrested Ould Saleck’s wife and sister, who visited him often in prison. (AFP, BBC)

13 SOMALIA: Al-Shabaab Claims Responsibility for Beach Attack

On 20 January, five al-Shabaab operatives set off bombs and stormed the Beach View Café, a popular beach-front restaurant in Mogadishu, killing at least 17 people. Al-Shabaab set off two car bombs at the café and engaged in a gun battle against security troops for hours after.

- Reportedly, the attack involved a total of eight al-Shabaab terrorists. Six were shot, one committed suicide and one was arrested. Dutch-Somali man Ismail Muse Ahmed Guled was reportedly arrested and is the alleged mastermind behind the attack. (REUTERS, TRACTERRORISM, NLTIMES)

Guled was wanted by Somali officials for at least a year and is suspected of conducting at least two other hotel attacks, one in Mogadishu and the other in Djibouti.

(CRITICAL THREATS)

14 BANGLADESH: Bangladeshi Supporting Terrorism Arrested

On 20 January, authorities announced the arrest of 27 Bangladeshi construction workers in Singapore, for supporting al-Qa’ida and ISIL, and deported 26 of them to Bangladesh.

- In November and December 2015, 26 of the arrested were deported and the last one jailed for attempting to leave Singapore illegally after hearing of the arrest of the others. Since their return to Bangladesh, 14 of the men are charged with terrorism and were found to be followers of the Ansarullah Bangla Team.
- The Singapore investigation revealed several members of the group considered conducting armed attacks, and recruiting more personnel, but did not plan any in Singapore. Some of them contemplated taking part in terrorism in the Middle East. (REUTERS, NYT)

15 MALAYSIA: ISIL’s Malay Network Releases Their First Video

As of 25 January, ISIL’s Malay extremist network Katibah Nusantara, released their first video online featuring operatives threatening to conduct an attack if police did not stop arresting ISIL supporters and called for the release of those detained. The ISIL network is believed to be led by Syrian-based Malaysian ISIL extremist Bahrun Naim, the mastermind behind the recent Jakarta bombings.

- The Malaysian Prime Minister stated ISIL is a “very real” threat the Government takes very seriously. The director of the police counterterrorism unit noted the video surfaced after the crackdown on ISIL supporters, and featured two Malaysians based in Syria. (REUTERS)

16 PAKISTAN: Airport-Like Terrorism Plot Foiled

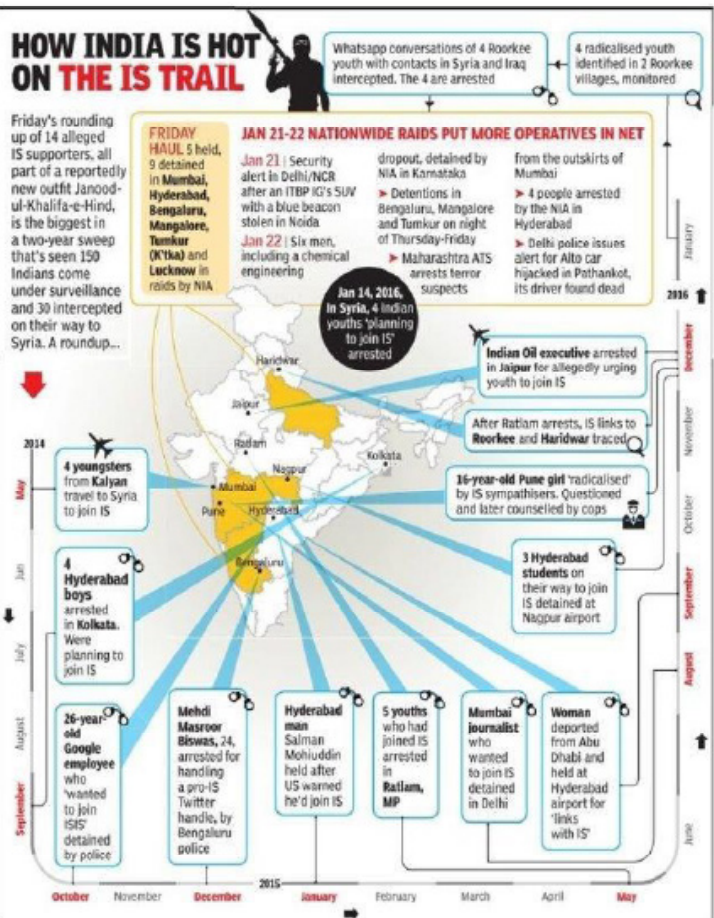
On 20 January, police claimed to foil a “major terrorism plan” in Karachi after arresting 11 suspects associated with al-Qa’ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) and Lashkar-i-Jhangvi (LI) following an encounter which left a policeman wounded. The Counterterrorism Department (CTD) conducted a raid in Ittehad Town after receiving a tip from a security agency, which resulted in the detention of the suspects and the seizure of explosive material, weapons, and extremist pamphlets intended to strike fear and chaos.

ON POINT

- Amongst those captured, CTD identified AQIS commanders Mohammed Irshad, and Qari Mohamad Hasan, along with LI commander Qari Mohammed Akram. Hasan was in charge of targeting people in Karachi, while Irshad and Akram were in charge of “terror teams”, along with being involved in targeted killings and acts of terrorism during the past two years.
- During the initial investigation, the remaining suspects confessed to planning a Karachi airport-like attack on a federal building on Sharea Faisal, along with planning attacks on senior police officers and the CTD. (DAWN)

- On 22 January, the Telangana Special Branch police arrested terror suspect Rafique Khan, 31, in Bommanahalli. Khan is a prime suspect in the 2008 Ahmedabad bomb attacks, which killed 56 people and left over 200 injured. (INDIAN EXPRESS, NEW INDIAN EXPRESS, INTL BUSINESS TIMES)

India: Domestic Crackdown on ISIL Operatives



(THE TIMES OF INDIA)

17 CUBA: Two Guantanamo Bay Detainees Transferred

On 21 January, the Defense Department announced the transfer of two more Guantanamo Bay detainees to Bosnia, and Montenegro, along with a third detainee who declined to accept a resettlement offer. The latest transfer brings the total number of detainees down to 91.

- Officials said Egyptian national Tariq Mahmoud Ahmed al-Sawah, 58, was resettled in Bosnia and was the last Egyptian at the prison. Sawah was taken into US custody in December 2001 and transferred to Guantanamo in 2002. Yemeni national Abd al-Aziz Abduh Abdallah Ali al-Suwaydi, 41, was sent to Montenegro. Yemeni national Mohammed Bwazir, 35, has been at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, since May 2002, and decided for personal reasons to stay at the prison. (WASHINGTON POST, DEFENSE.GOV)

18 INDIA: Authorities Arrest Eight Suspected Terrorists

On 21 January, the National Investigation Agency (NIA), in coordination with the state police, arrested seven suspected terrorists from Karnataka and Maharashtra. Muddabir Mushtaq Sheikh, 33, was arrested in Maharashtra and since 2013 served as the chief of the India wing of ISIL. The NIA confirmed the accused were planning terror strikes and targeting police officials and foreign delegates visiting India.

TRENDS, TACTICS, & PROCEDURES

This section informs readers on methods terrorists are utilizing overseas which could be employed domestically.

US General Discusses “Decisive Action” Against ISIL in Libya With French Counterpart

On 22 January, the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff ^{USPER}General Dunford said he and his French counterpart discussed the fight against core ISIL, as well as the framework against ISIL territories in Libya.

- Speaking to reporters after talks with his French counterpart General Pierre de Villiers, he described France as an “extraordinarily capable partner” in the fight against core ISIL and in the broader fight. “It’s fair to say we’re looking to take decisive military action against ISIL (in Libya) in conjunction with a legitimate political process,” the chairman said.
- In addition to targeting ISIL in the near term, in the context of the political process—the strategy for Libya needs to simultaneously assist partners in the region with their own capability for providing security. (DOD NEWS)

New European Police Center “Will Help Anti-Terror Coordination”

A new European counterterrorism center will soon open to improve information-sharing among national police forces after the terrorist attacks in Paris, according to the Director of EUROPOL.

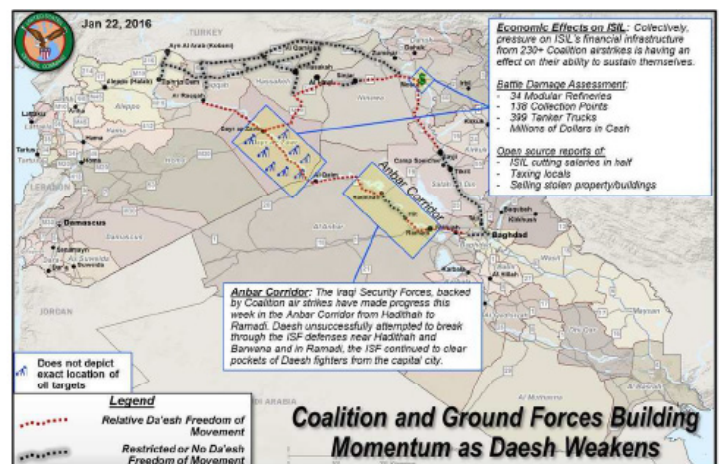
- The new center “will provide French and Belgian police services and their counterparts around Europe with the platform they need to share information more quickly and to crack down on the terrorist groups that are active.”
- The center at EUROPOL’s headquarters in The Hague will also monitor the way in which ISIL and other extremist groups “are abusing the Internet and social media, in particular for their propaganda and recruitment purposes,” he added. (AFP)

ISIL Salaries Cut in Half

As of 20 January, ISIL fighters are not receiving any year-end pay raises. In response to mounting military and economic pressure across Syria and Iraq, the terror group is slashing salaries, according to ISIL administrative documents.

- The administrative records reveal ISIL leaders in Ar Raqqa, reduced the monthly salaries of all fighters by half around November or December 2015, just as the US began to dramatically increase airstrikes against ISIL-held oil fields and other financial targets. The reduction in fighter pay signals the latest setback for the terror group and lends new support to US claims its strategy to disrupt ISIL’s revenue stream is working. ISIL militants have lost 40 percent of the territory once held in Iraq, including the city of Ramadi, and 20 percent of their territory in Syria, according to the US military.
- “On account of the exceptional circumstances ISIL is facing, it has been decided to reduce the salaries that are paid to all mujahideen by half,” reads the official notice, which was translated and first published by Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi, an ISIL expert and fellow at the Middle East Forum. “It is not allowed for anyone to be exempted from this decision, whatever his position.” It also notes fighters will continue to be paid twice a month, as usual. Though precise figures are not available, most ISIL fighters probably earned a few hundred dollars a month prior to the pay cut, said al-Tamimi. He added the military upkeep costs ISIL tens of millions of dollars a month and accounts for roughly two-thirds of the terror group’s operating budget.

(HUFFINGTON POST)



TRENDS, TACTICS, & PROCEDURES

Ireland Drafts Plans to Stop ISIL Fighters From Traveling to Syria, Vet Refugees

As of mid-January, detailed emergency plans, focused on stopping ISIL fighters from traveling and vetting refugees, involving Ireland's Government and the security forces were drafted following realistic exercises based on the Paris attacks. Special Detective Unit (SDU) officers and officials from the Department of Justice are involved in vetting refugees coming to Ireland, with Garda (Irish police) officials traveling to Jordan, Lebanon, and Greece to vet refugees coming to Ireland.

- Assistant Commissioner John O'Mahoney, the head of the Garda Crime and Security branch, said up to 40 individuals traveled from Ireland to participate in various conflicts since 2010 and the Garda were part of a global security response to the threat. Noting the present security situation is one of the biggest challenges facing law enforcement, he stated, "this is an unprecedented global phenomenon which does not respect national borders and utilizes the digital age where the internet and social media are used to radicalize and recruit people and incite terrorist acts."
- Counter Terrorism International unit officers have engaged personnel intent on leaving Ireland for war zones such as Syria and Iraq after receiving tips from concerned family and friends. Members of the SDU and officials from the Department of Justice have boots on the ground in Lebanon, Jordan, and Greece to vet the refugees coming to Ireland so as to mitigate the terrorist threat as much as possible. **(INDEPENDENT)**

Counter-ISIL Cooperation Provides Joint Statement

On 20 January, defense ministers from Australia, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States met in Paris regarding a counter-ISIL cooperation. The discussion focused on opportunities to intensify and accelerate the counter ISIL campaign in Iraq and Syria, the shared approach to defend against ISIL's global ambitions, and ensure the protection of the people.

- The participants continued their commitment to work together to accelerate and intensify the campaign against ISIL, with broad support for the campaign plan objectives, and the need to continue the momentum in targeting ISIL's vulnerabilities. The participants committed to ensuring military actions with comprehensive efforts set the conditions for sustainable political stability in the region. The US Secretary of Defense's proposal for defense ministers to convene their first Defense Ministerial will occur in February.

(DEFENSE)

PARTING SHOTS

This section includes press articles with concise summaries for rapid consumption.

1 **WORLDWIDE: ISIL Releases Propaganda Videos**

As of 19 January, ISIL's media wing released their latest videos claiming ISIL has a duty to attack Christians and Jews, criticizing al-Qa'ida and calling on AQIM to join ISIL. The campaign resembled earlier media targeting efforts when ISIL called upon al-Shabaab to join ISIL. The ISIL Magreb media campaign was likely prompted by the January AQIM attack on the Splendid Hotel in Burkina Faso. (TWITTER)

2 **WORLDWIDE: ISIL Releases 14th Issue of "Al-Naba" Newsletter**

On 19 January, ISIL published online their 14th issue of their Arabic-language "al-Naba" newsletter, which contained their latest battlefield round-ups in Iraq, Syria, and Egypt, along with an articles highlighting "the transgressions of successive Turkish governments." The newsletter also features an article on the ISIL-claimed January Jakarta attacks. (TWITTER)

3 **UNITED KINGDOM: Coventry Woman Detained Under Terrorism Act**

As of 21 January, West Midlands counter terror police arrested a woman, 28, under the Terrorism Act, in Coventry over an alleged terror plot linked to Syria. According to the police the arrest was pre-planned and intelligence led, with no risk to public safety. Officers were conducting searches within the area in connection to the investigation. (IB TIMES)

4 **AMSTERDAM: ISIL Planning for Large-Scale Attacks**

On 25 January, the chief of EUROPOL announced ISIL has honed the ability to launch global attacks and is set to focus more on Europe following the Paris massacre. A report coinciding with the opening of a new counterterror center in the Hague shows "how ISIL developed a new combat style capability to conduct a campaign of large-scale terrorist attacks on a global stage-with a particular focus in Europe." (AFP)

NCTC Comment: Highlighted in this overseas police raid is the tactic of a booby-trapped location. In addition, first responders may unwittingly encounter clandestine efforts to produce IEDs or homemade explosives (HME) when responding to calls for service. Rudimentary devices and components may have inherent dangers and should be treated accordingly until rendered safe by subject matter experts. First responders should be aware of precursor materials and components and the potential dangers of these items if encountered during normal activities. (JCAT PERSPECTIVE)

5 **FRANCE: President to Seek Renewal for State of Emergency**

As of 22 January, French President Francois Hollande announced he would seek a renewal of a state of emergency for an additional three months on 3 February, which would continue to allow the police to stage raids without the permission of a judge and place people under house arrest. There have been more than 3,000 raids since the measures were put into effect and over 400 people placed under house arrest since the November Paris attacks. (NYT)

6 **TURKEY: Police Arrest 10 Suspected ISIL Recruiters**

On 25 January, anti-terror squads conducted raids targeting suspected ISIL recruiters in Ankara. At least 10 people suspected of recruiting for ISIL were arrested. (AP)

7 **GERMANY: Syrian Suspected of Involvement in Peacekeeper Arrested**

As of 22 January, a Syrian suspected of being among terrorists who kidnapped a UN peacekeeper—likely Canadian Carl Campeau—in Damascus in 2013 was arrested by German authorities. Suliman A.-S., 24, is believed to be a member of a branch of al-Nusrah Front. The arrest warrant against Suliman is on suspicion of a war crime against a humanitarian operation. (LOCAL)

Campeau was abducted on 17 February 2013 while driving through a Damascus suburb and freed in October 2013 without a ransom payment. (LOCAL)

PARTING SHOTS

8 GERMANY: ISIL Terrorist Appears Before Court

On 20 January, German ISIL terrorist Nils D. confessed to being a member of ISIL and traveling to Syria during the start of his trial in Düsseldorf. As a member of the “Storm troops” a special cell which caught deserters and spies and used violence to take them to ISIL prisons. He admitted to witnessing torture the special cell used on victims, however, denied participating in the activities. Nils D. could face up to ten years in prison for being a member of ISIL. (AFP)

9 BULGARIA: Canadian Wanted for Hizballah Bombing

As of 22 January, Bulgarian authorities indicted Lebanese-born Canadian Hassan El-Hajj Hassan, 27, for his alleged role in a 2012 Hizballah bus bombing which killed five Israeli terrorists and their driver in Lebanon. Australian Meliad Farah was also charged, but neither have been arrested. (NATIONAL POST)

10 ITALY: Authorities Arrest Suspected Foreign Fighter

On 25 January, authorities arrested Moroccan national Mehdi Hamilin southern Italy suspected of seeking to become an ISIL foreign fighter. Since July, Hamil, 25, has been under investigation when he was refused entry to Turkey. Authorities monitored him as he accessed violent extremist propaganda on the Internet and made plans to move to Belgium. He is held on suspicion of training for the purpose of international terrorism. (AP)

11 SYRIA: Ahrar al-Sham Commanders Killed in Suicide Attack

As of 25 January, a car bomb exploded near a building used by the Ahrar al-Sham group in Aleppo, killing at least 23 people—including four Ahrar al-Sham commanders, and wounding others. Opposition activists said the attack was conducted by a suicide bomber driving a tanker truck. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack. (AP)

12 EGYPT: ISIL Claim Responsibility for Cairo Attack

On 21 January, a bomb attack killed nine people in Cairo, including six police officers, and injured 10 others. The Interior Ministry stated the building was booby-trapped and the device went off as the bomb squad tried to defuse it. ISIL claimed responsibility in a statement on social media, noting its’ fighters carried out the operation which killed six policemen and three others during a police raid on a booby-trapped home. (REUTERS, DAILY MAIL)

NCTC COMMENT: Highlighted in this overseas police raid is the tactic of a booby-trapped location. In addition, first responders may unwittingly encounter clandestine efforts to produce IEDs or homemade explosives (HME) when responding to calls for service. Rudimentary devices and components may have inherent dangers and should be treated accordingly until rendered safe by subject matter experts. First responders should be aware of precursor materials and components and the potential dangers of these items if encountered during normal activities. (JCAT PERSPECTIVE)

13 RWANDA: Police Kill Suspected ISIL Recruiter

On 24 January, police killed a Rwandan deputy imam Muhammad Mugemangango, accused of recruiting for ISIL in Kigali, while attempting to escape police custody. Mugemangango was a deputy imam at Kimironko Mosque in Kigali under investigation for encouraging Rwandan youth to join ISIL. (REUTERS)

14 SUDAN: Security Releases ISIL Sympathizers

On 21 January, the general coordinator of the One Nation Movement group and ISIL supporter, Mohamed Ali al-Gizouli, said the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) released four members of his group after five hours of detention. Al-Gizouli stated, in a post on Facebook, the members were conducting a video survey at the Sudan University of Science and Technology on the “aspiration of young people towards the future and unity of the nation in light of the current divisions”, stressing the survey was approved by the students union. (SUDAN TRIBUNE)

PARTING SHOTS

15 **SOMALIA:** Al-Shabaab Targets Lido Beach, Kills 24

On 21 January, al-Shabaab militants detonated two car bombs and stormed the Beach View Hotel, on Mogadishu's Lido beach, killing 24 civilians. Somali security forces secured the area and reportedly killed four of the attackers and captured one gunman. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack via Radio Andalus. (BBC, AFP, AL JAZEERA)

16 **KENYA:** Police Kill Four in Shootout

On 20 January, the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit killed four terrorists in a raid on a house in Kwachocha, Malindi, with three others escaping with reportedly severe gun-shot wounds. Among those killed was al-Shabaab fighter Suleiman Mohammed Awadh, wanted for his role in the April 2015 mass killings at the Garissa University College in eastern Kenya. During the raid, police recovered five hand grenades, a Beretta pistol with ammunition, phones with several SIM cards and maps of Malindi—indicating places the terrorists intended to attack and showing how to connect to the Boni forest from Malindi. (NAIROBI DAILY NATION, AP)

Kenyan authorities placed Awadh on their most wanted list offering a 2m-shilling (20,000 USD) bounty following the April 2015 massacre. (NAIROBI DAILY NATION)

17 **CAMEROON:** Suicide Attack Kills At Least 28

On 25 January, suicide bombers conducted an attack in Bodo killing at least 28 people and wounding 65. Officials said four explosions struck a busy market and entrances to the town. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack. (REUTERS)

18 **NIGERIA:** Suspect in Chibok Abductions Arrested

On 21 January, Nigerian authorities confirmed Boko Haram leader Jarasu Shira was arrested in Bamboa, with 10 other suspects. He is alleged to be the leader of Boko Haram militants operating in Damboa, Chibok, and Askira Uba, and believed to possess knowledge regarding the whereabouts of the Chibok girls kidnapped from their school in April 2014. (DAILY TRUST)

19 **NIGERIA:** Army Kills Dozens of Terrorists and Frees 370 Hostages

On 23 January, Nigerian soldiers killed dozens of insurgents during army raids on Boko Haram terrorist camps in the northeast part of the country. The army seized AK-47 rifles, mortar bombs, explosive devices, and vehicles, and 370 hostages were brought to an internally displaced person's camp. (IBT)

20 **MOROCCO:** Authorities Arrest Three Suspected of Links to ISIL

As of 20 January, the Interior minister stated authorities arrested three suspects, with close ties to Moroccan fighters in Syria and Iraq, planning to conduct attacks with bladed weapons against people who did not believe in ISIL's doctrine. The three arrested were also suspected of planning robberies to fund their trip to reach ISIL territory. (MOROCCO WORLD NEWS)

21 **LIBYA:** Oilfields Heighten Security After Warning of Planned Attack

On 21 December 2015, following information ISIL in Libya is preparing to attack and control oilfields in the central districts, oilfields' security force officials declared a "state of maximum alert and readiness to counter any attack by terrorists approaching the oil crescent." A spokesperson for the oilfield stated, "Sidra and all areas within the jurisdiction of the security branch are safe." (KANO PYRAMID RADIO)

PARTING SHOTS

22 AFGHANISTAN: Bombing Close to Russian Embassy Kills Seven

On 20 January, a suicide car bomb attack near the Russian embassy in Kabul killed seven people and wounded 25 others. The attack targeted a commuter minibus owned carrying employees of a production company working for the country's largest television network, Tolo TV. A Taliban spokesperson claimed responsibility for the attack, stating they specifically targeted Tolo TV employees for providing false propaganda, and warned of more attacks to come. (AP, REUTERS)

23 PAKISTAN: Motorcycle Suicide Attacker Kills Ten

On 19 January, a suicide bomber traveling on a motorcycle detonated himself when he reached a tribal police checkpoint on the outskirts of Peshawar. The bomb exploded during morning rush hour, killing 10 people and wounding 36 others. (LAHORE NEWSWEEK)

24 MALAYSIA: Authorities Arrest Seven ISIL-Linked Militants

On 24 January, Malaysian police announced the arrest of seven members of an ISIL cell following a three-day operation launched in four states. The suspects were given orders by Muhammad Wanndy Mohamed Jedi, a known Malaysian ISIL recruiter, and received instructions to conduct attacks in strategic locations in Malaysia by Syrian-based Malaysian ISIL members, including Bahrin Naim. One of the suspects was believed to be responsible for collecting and channeling funds for Malaysians interested in joining ISIL in Syria along with using the funds for a terrorist operation in Malaysia. (REUTERS)

25 MALAYSIA: Court Sentences Soldier Over Possession of ISIL Publications

On 21 January, a soldier was jailed for nine months by the High Court after pleading guilty to possessing 11 publications linked to ISIL. Private Mohammad Rosdan Mohammad Khir, 25, was arrested in Perak, on suspicion of involvement in terrorist activities revealed in the accused's mobile phone. (BERNAMA ONLINE)



NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER (NCTC)

NCTC serves as the primary organization in the US Government for integrating and analyzing all intelligence pertaining to terrorism possessed or acquired by the US Government (except purely domestic terrorism); serves as the central and shared knowledge bank on terrorism information; provides all-source intelligence support to government-wide counterterrorism activities; establishes the information technology (IT) systems and architectures within NCTC and between NCTC and other agencies that enable access to, as well as integration, dissemination, and use of, terrorism information.

NCTC serves as the principal advisor to the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) on intelligence operations and analysis relating to counterterrorism, advising the DNI on how well US intelligence activities, programs, and budget proposals for counterterrorism conform to priorities established by the President.