

# COUNTERTERRORISM WEEKLY

FOR AMERICA'S PROTECTORS

16-22 MARCH 2016

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

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- (U) November 2015 Paris Attack Suspect Charged

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

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# COUNTERTERRORISM

FOR AMERICA'S PROTECTORS

# WEEKLY

16-22 MARCH 2016

EXECUTIVES' VIEW

## HIGHLIGHTS



- 1 UNITED STATES:** (U) As of 16 March, pro-ISIL hackers released the personal information of 36 Minnesota police officers and threatened the Department of State website. [\[pg. 9\]](#)
- 2 ILLINOIS:** (U) On 17 March, a Sacramento man was indicted in Illinois for attempting to provide material support to acts of violence overseas. [\[pg. 7\]](#)
- 3 ARIZONA:** (U) On 17 March, <sup>USPER</sup>Abdul Malik Abdul Kareem, 44, of Phoenix, was found guilty of conspiracy to provide material support to ISIL, in addition to other terrorism-related offenses. [\[pg. 7\]](#)
- 4 OHIO:** (U) On 16 March, <sup>USPER</sup>Amir Said Rahman al-Ghazi of Sheffield Lake pleaded guilty to attempting to provide material support to ISIL, as well as a firearms violation. [\[pg. 7\]](#)
- 5 NEW YORK:** (U) On 17 March, <sup>USPER</sup>Mufid Elfgeeh of Rochester was sentenced to 270 months in prison for attempting to provide material support to ISIL. [\[pg. 8\]](#)
- 6 FRANCE:** (U) On 16 March, four people, at least one of whom had links to ISIL, were arrested in the Paris area on suspicion they were planning attacks in France. [\[pg. 9\]](#)
- 7 FRANCE:** (U) On 16 March, France conducted a drill—the largest ever conducted in France—which simulated a chemical attack on a football (soccer) arena in Nimes. [\[pg. 14\]](#)
- 8 SWITZERLAND:** (U) On 18 March, three Iraqis were convicted of terrorism offenses—the country's first convictions of foreign terrorists—and sentenced to between 42 and 56 months in prison. [\[pg. 10\]](#)
- 9 ALGERIA:** (U) On 18 March, AQIM militants fired rockets at a jointly run British-Norwegian gas facility in Algeria; the attack resulted in minimal damage and no casualties. [\[pg. 12\]](#)
- 10 TURKEY:** (U) On 19 March, an ISIL-linked suicide bomber killed four—including two dual US-Israeli citizens—and wounded 36 at a shopping district in central Istanbul. [\[pg. 10\]](#)

## SPOTLIGHT SUMMARY

### (U) BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, AIRPORT AND METRO ATTACKS

(U) On 22 March, violent extremists detonated explosives at the Brussels Zaventem Airport and a Brussels metro train departing Maelbeek Station for Schuman. ISIL posted a claim of responsibility for the attack on social media. Belgian authorities believe four individuals conducted the two attacks; three at the airport and one on the metro train. (AP, LYONS EURONEWS)

### (U) NOVEMBER 2015 PARIS ATTACK SUSPECT CHARGED

(U) On 19 March, Belgian-born French national Salah Abdeslam, a prime suspect in the 13 November 2015 Paris attacks, was charged with involvement in terrorist murder, according to Belgian prosecutors. (REUTERS, WASHINGTON POST)

# SPOTLIGHT


## (U) Brussels, Belgium, Airport and Metro Attacks

(U) On 22 March, terrorists detonated explosives at the Brussels Zaventem Airport and a Brussels metro train departing Maelbeek Station. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attacks on social media.

- (U) Authorities identified two of the three men believed to have attacked the airport—who were caught on security camera footage—as Brahim El Bakraoui, 30, and Najim Laachraoui, 25. The third man was not identified. Authorities believe Brahim and the unidentified third man perished after detonating their explosives in baggage lines outside the secure area of the airport. Laachraoui did not detonate explosives, and is still at large. Authorities recovered an undetonated bomb at the scene, and destroyed it in a controlled explosion.
- (U) Laachraoui's DNA was found in houses used by the perpetrators of the November 2015 Paris attacks, prosecutors said, adding he traveled to Hungary in September 2015 with Paris attacks suspect Salah Abdeslam.
- (U) The metro attack was conducted by Khalid El Bakraoui, 27, brother of Brahim El Bakraoui. Khalid detonated an explosive on the second carriage of the train, and perished in the blast.

(U) In a 23 March statement, the Belgian prosecutor placed the official death toll at 31 dead with 270 injured, but stated the numbers would likely rise.

(U) Police raided a home in the Schaerbeek district of Brussels where a taxi picked up the three men suspected of conducting the airport attack. Police found explosives, a suitcase with nails, detonators, and acetone. Police arrested two men at the home address.



**BREAKING NEWS** Statement on the Blessed Brussels Raid against Crusader Belgium

Belgium 12 Jumada al-Akhirah 1437

By Allah's grace, a security team of the Khilafah, may Allah grant it glory and victory, set out to target crusader Belgium, which has not ceased to wage war against Islam and its people.

Allah enabled our brothers and cast fear and terror into the hearts of the crusaders deep in their own lands, where several soldiers of the Khilafah went forth, wearing explosive belts, carrying explosive devices, and armed with automatic rifles, towards specially selected locations in Brussels, the capital of Belgium.

They stormed the airport of Brussels and a metro station, killing a number of crusaders before detonating their explosive belts amid crowds of the disbelievers. The attacks resulted in the killing of more than 40 and wounding of more than 210 citizens of crusader nations, and all praise is due to Allah.

We promise black days for all crusader nations allied in their war against the Islamic State, in response to their aggressions against it, and what is to come will be more devastating and bitter by Allah's permission. Praise is due to Allah for His support and facilitation, and we ask Him to accept our brothers among the shuhada'.

(U) ISIL Claim of Responsibility. (TWITTER)



(U) Damage to Brussels Airport. (NY TIMES)



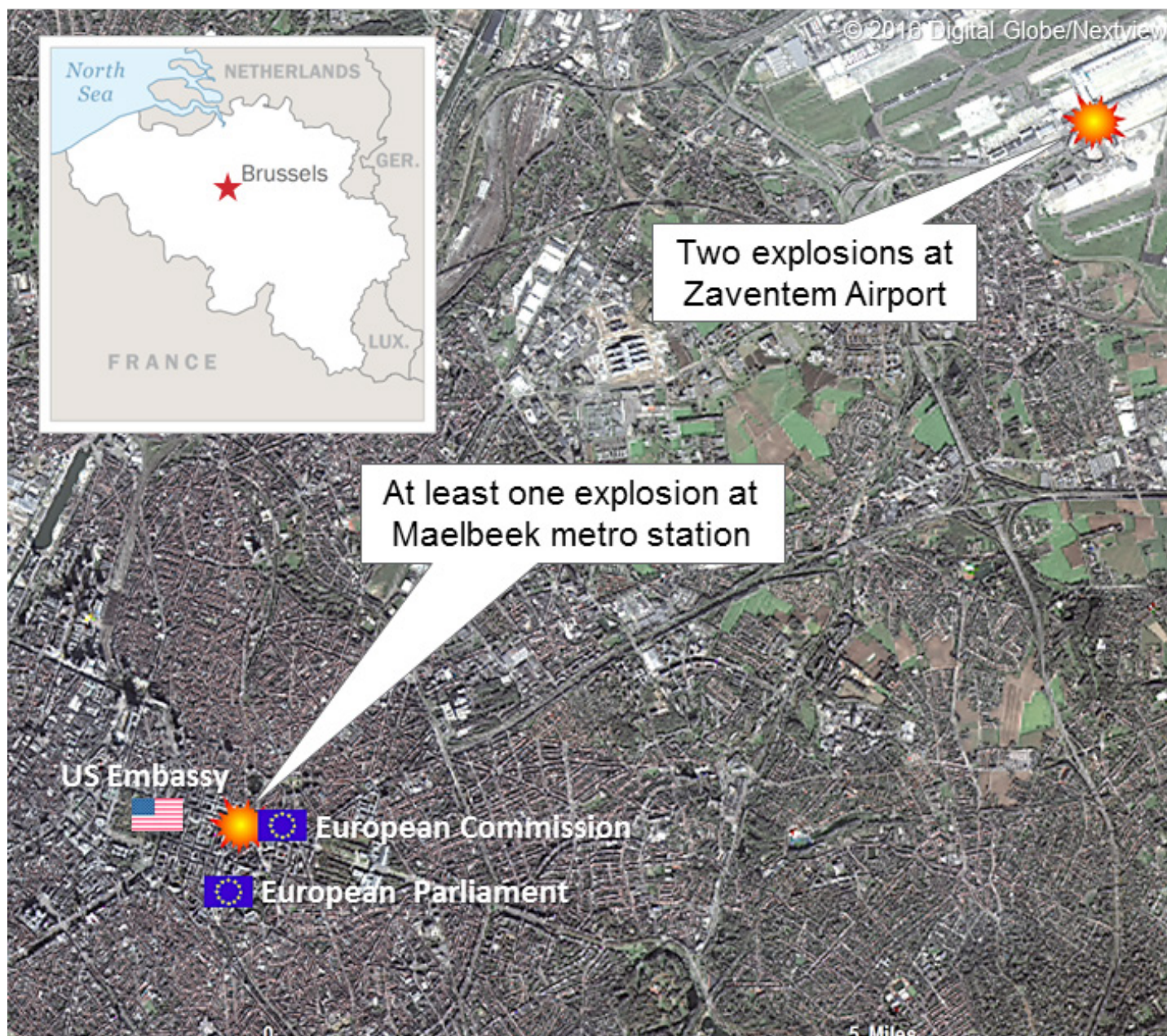
(U) Damage to Brussels Metro Train. (TELEGRAPH)



# SPOTLIGHT continued

(U) Belgium raised its terror alert to four—the highest level—diverted planes and trains, and ordered people to stay where they were. Brussels temporarily shut down all public transportation in the city following the attack.

(U) Cities across Europe increased security at airports, including Paris, London, Prague, Amsterdam, and Vienna. Germany's state rail system halted its high-speed rail service from Germany to Brussels. French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said an additional 1,600 security personnel were deployed throughout France, and security boosted at French border posts and major transit hubs. (AP, LYONS EURONEWS)



(U) Location of Explosions in Brussels, Belgium (DIGITAL GLOBE)

**NCTC Assessment:** (U//FOUO) These latest attacks in Europe have resulted in continued calls for enhanced European CT cooperation and implementation of measures proposed in the wake of November's Paris attacks. After a Council of Ministers meeting on 23 March, both the Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Jan Jambon and the Minister of Justice Koen Geens called for enforcing existing measures decided after the Paris attacks. The Minister of Foreign Affairs called for better exchange of information between intelligence services, and confirmed the importance of defeating ISIL and finding a political solution for Syria and Iraq. French Prime Minister Maunel Valls called for tighter security on the EU's external borders and for the adoption of a European Passenger Name Record system

- (U) Three days of national mourning were declared and will run through 24 March.

**NCTC Comment:** (U) Overseas attacks targeting aviation facilities and mass/public transportation components continue to demonstrate terrorist groups' persistent interest in attacking these systems. First responders can use past attacks or disrupted plots to determine which tactics, techniques, and procedures have recently been used or attempted in order to maximize the effectiveness of security measures and emergency response plans, encourage information sharing, develop interagency coordination and multi-discipline training, and establish alignment with private sector partners.

(U//FOUO) Stakeholders should consider certain aspects of the aviation industry, such as the generally high volume of vehicular traffic near airports, large numbers of employees with restricted access, as well as the range of facilities located both within and outside the secure areas of the facilities, when developing protective measures and emergency response plans. The NCTC/FBI/DHS First Responder's Toolbox – "Complex Operating Environment for First Responders – Airports" (16 September 2014) encourages first responders to work with airport owners and operators to ensure interagency cooperation, develop familiarization with the airport grounds and facilities, and implement coordinated response plans.

(U//FOUO) Numerous aspects of mass/public transportation systems are vulnerable to terrorists. Systems carry large numbers of people in confined spaces, are inherently accessible, operate according to well publicized schedules, and are vital to local economies. It is therefore important first responders be intimately familiar with mass transit systems in their jurisdictions. The NCTC/FBI/DHS First Responder's Toolbox "Complex Operating Environment – Mass Transit" (26 February 2016) illustrates the myriad challenges faced by law enforcement and security personnel concerning publicly accessible locations with limited security screening measures and large gatherings of individuals. **(JCAT PERSPECTIVE)**

**FBI Counterterrorism Division:** (U//FOUO) The FBI has increased its investigative activity against ISIL sympathizers in the US and encourages its state and local partners to remain vigilant, although at this time the FBI has no specific and credible threats of ISIL attack planning in the US associated with the Belgium attack. We assess ISIL will likely continue expanding efforts to conduct attacks against soft targets and that ISIL and its supporters will continue media releases praising the Brussels attacks.

(U//FOUO) We judge ISIL will almost certainly consider a diverse selection of soft targets for attacks in the West—including in the US—which extend beyond targeting government, military, and law enforcement officials and facilities, based on the target selection in recent attacks and plots in the West. Supporters of the group and lone offenders who may be located in the Homeland continue to have the ability to conduct relatively unsophisticated attacks with little to no warning.



# SPOTLIGHT

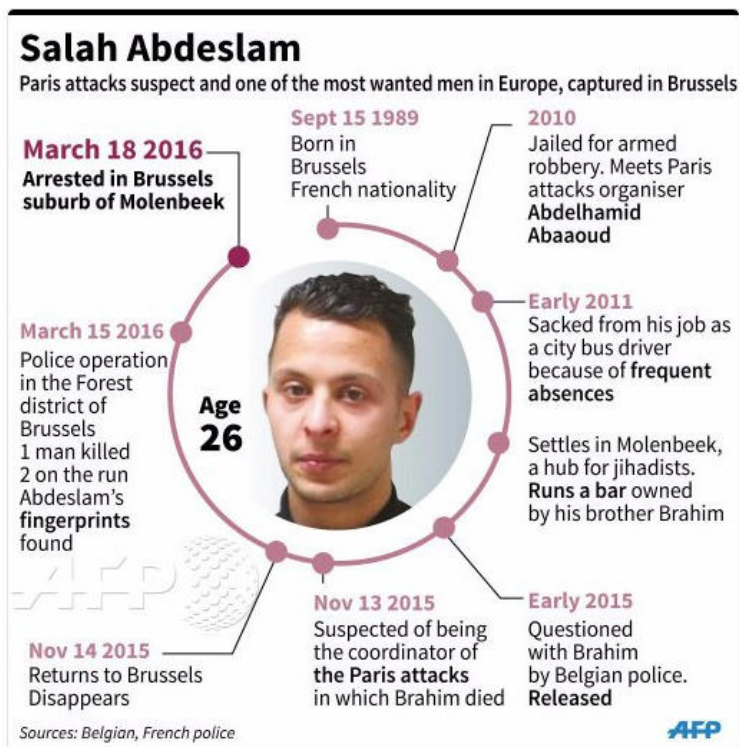
## (U) November 2015 Paris Attack Suspect Charged

(U) On 19 March, Belgian-born French national Salah Abdeslam, 26, a prime suspect in the 13 November 2015 Paris attacks, was charged with involvement in terrorist murder, according to Belgian prosecutors.

(U) A tip-off and a tapped telephone reportedly led police to a mobile phone number Abdeslam used, and—by triangulating the device's location—authorities established his location. On 18 March, police captured him at a house in a neighborhood in Molenbeek after he called an acquaintance for help looking for a new hiding place. During questioning, Abdeslam reportedly told investigators he planned to conduct a suicide attack at the Stade de France as part of the Paris attacks but changed his mind, according to lead French investigator Francois Molins.

(U) Monir Ahmed Alaaj, a.k.a. Amine Choukri—detained with Abdeslam on 18 March—was also charged with involvement in terrorist murder. A third person detained, Abid A., was charged with being a member of a terrorist organization and aiding and abetting criminals. A woman, Djemila M., was charged with aiding and abetting but was released.

(U) Belgium's federal prosecutor said Abdeslam "relied on a large network of friends and relatives...to keep him in hiding." Following the Paris attacks, two friends drove Abdeslam back to Brussels while others drove him between safe houses in Molenbeek. Investigators believe Abdeslam was planning further operations and possibly had access to weapons. (REUTERS, WASHINGTON POST)



(U) Timeline of Abdeslam's Involvement in Paris Attacks (AFP)

(U) On 19 March, INTERPOL advised extra vigilance at border controls to its 190 member countries, saying Abdeslam's arrest may encourage any accomplices to attempt to flee Europe or elsewhere. An advisory recommended enhanced checks at control points, particularly against INTERPOL's Stolen and Lost Travel Documents (SLTD) database. "It is now vital that countries continue to cooperate and make thorough checks against the information available to them to avoid suspects slipping through the net," added INTERPOL's Secretary General. (INTERPOL)

**NCTC Assessment:** (U//FOUO) Despite Abdeslam's capture, NCTC remains concerned with the threat posed by ISIL's plotting against Europe. On 20 March, Belgian Foreign Minister Didier Reynders said Abdeslam already told investigators he had been planning some sort of new attack in Brussels prior to his arrest, according to French press. As of 21 March, Brussels remained at an elevated threat level, according to French press. French and Belgian police continue to conduct searches for remaining suspects tied to the attacks in Paris on 13 November including probable facilitators Najim Laachraoui and Mohammed Abrini.

- (U//FOUO) Authorities previously discovered Laachraoui's DNA in safehouses in Belgium associated with the attackers. Abrini reportedly drove Abdeslam to Paris to conduct the attacks. (AFP, CNN, LYONS EURONEWS, NCTC)

# ON POINT

## 1 ARIZONA: (U) Phoenix Man Convicted of Terror Charges

(U) On 17 March, <sup>USPER</sup>Abdul Malik Abdul Kareem, 44, of Phoenix, was found guilty by a federal jury of conspiracy to provide material support to ISIL, in addition to other terrorism-related offenses.

- (U) In or around June 2014, Kareem and his two roommates, deceased attackers <sup>Deceased USPER</sup>Elton Simpson and <sup>Deceased USPER</sup>Nadir Soofi, began conspiring to support ISIL by attacking targets in the US. On 3 May 2015, Simpson and Soofi drove from Arizona to Texas and fired assault rifles at security personnel and law enforcement officers working the Muhammad Art Exhibit and Contest. A security guard was injured.
- (U) Kareem did not travel to Texas to participate in the attack but made false statements to the FBI regarding his prior knowledge of it. His sentence carries at least 45 years in prison. (DOJ)

## 2 OHIO: (U) Man Pleads Guilty to Supporting ISIL

(U) On 16 March, <sup>USPER</sup>Amir Said Rahman al-Ghazi, 39, pleaded guilty to attempting to provide material support to ISIL, as well as a firearms violation.

- (U) Al-Ghazi—who changed his name from Robert McCollum in 2015—pleaded guilty to one count of attempting to provide material support to ISIL and two counts of possessing firearms as a felon.
- (U) In 2014, al-Ghazi pledged his support to ISIL and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi via social media, and made multiple statements from July 2014 to June 2015 encouraging others to join ISIL. He also expressed a desire to conduct an attack on the US and attempted to purchase an AK-47. He is scheduled to be sentenced on 23 June. (DOJ)

## 3 ILLINOIS: (U) Man Indicted in Chicago for ISIL Support

(U) On 17 March, <sup>USPER</sup>Aws Mohammed Younis al-Jayab\*, 23, of Sacramento, was indicted in the Northern District of Illinois for attempting to provide material support to acts of violence overseas.

- (U) Al-Jayab allegedly communicated via social media with numerous individuals about his intention to go to Syria to fight for terrorist organizations. Al-Jayab later flew from Chicago to Turkey, then to Syria allegedly to fight with ISIL. He later returned to the US and settled in Sacramento.
- (U) Earlier in 2016, al-Jayab was indicted by a grand jury in Sacramento for making a false statement involving international terrorism. He pleaded not guilty to the charge. His next court appearance will be a status hearing on 12 May. (DOJ)

## 4 CALIFORNIA: (U) FBI: Indications of Self-Radicalization in University of California-Merced Stabbings Case

(U) In March, the FBI announced <sup>Deceased USPER</sup>Faisal Mohammad—who in November 2015 stabbed and wounded four people at the University of California-Merced—may have self-radicalized and drawn inspiration from terrorist propaganda, and likely began preparation for the attack at least one week in advance. No ties to co-conspirators or foreign terrorist organizations were uncovered during the investigation. (FBI SACRAMENTO)

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*(U) On 4 November 2015, Faisal Mohammad, 18, entered a classroom, stabbed a fellow student and attacked three others before he was shot and killed by UC Merced Police. (FBI SACRAMENTO)*

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\* 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

continued

**NCTC Comment:** (U//FOUO) Violent extremist messaging continues to exhort ideologically sympathetic individuals in the Homeland to carry out attacks. These attacks are difficult to disrupt due to the compartmented nature of lone-offender attack planning. These attacks are often opportunistic, and involve little or no planning. Situational awareness serves as a vital component of officer safety. Tips to mitigate or prevent an attack by a violent extremist include: recognizing suspicious activities, items, or behaviors during the course of performing daily duties; reducing off-duty profile; and partnering while on patrol, especially when on foot patrols or standing in a static post. **(JCAT PERSPECTIVE)**

## 5 VIRGINIA: (U) Man Pleads Guilty to Supporting ISIL

(U) On 18 March, <sup>USPER</sup>Joseph Hassan Farrokh, 28, of Woodbridge, pleaded guilty to conspiring to provide material support and resources to ISIL.

- (U) Farrokh conspired with <sup>USPER</sup>Mahmoud Amin Elhassan, 25, to travel to Syria to fight for ISIL.
- (U) In an effort to conceal their plans, Farrokh and Elhassan communicated using messaging applications they believed were secure. On 15 January Farrokh was arrested in Richmond attempting to board a flight. **(DOJ)**

## 6 NEW YORK: (U) Man Sentenced to 22 Years for Attempted ISIL Recruitment

(U) On 17 March, <sup>USPER</sup>Mufid Elfgeeh of Rochester was sentenced to 270 months in prison by the Western District Court of New York for attempting to provide material support to ISIL.

- (U) Between December 2013 and May 2014, Elfgeeh recruited and attempted to send two individuals to Syria to join and fight on behalf of ISIL. Elfgeeh sent anti-American ISIL propaganda videos to one of the individuals and arranged for an English-speaking ISIL contact located in Iraq to communicate with that person over Facebook. In addition, Elfgeeh paid more than \$240 for the individual to obtain a copy of his birth certificate, passport photographs, and an expedited passport. In May 2014, Elfgeeh arranged for an overseas contact to coordinate the logistics of the trip and the admission of both individuals into ISIL-controlled territory in Syria.
- (U) In addition, Elfgeeh also sent \$600 to a third individual in Aden, Yemen, in an effort to assist the individual in traveling from Yemen to Syria for the purpose of joining and fighting for ISIL.
- (U) Finally, Elfgeeh used social media to receive and disseminate information about foreign terrorist groups and their activities in Syria and other countries; to declare his support for violent jihad, ISIL, and other foreign terrorist groups; to inspire and encourage others to engage in violent jihad and/or pledge allegiance to ISIL and other foreign terrorist groups; and to seek financial contributions to assist violent extremists. **(DOJ)**

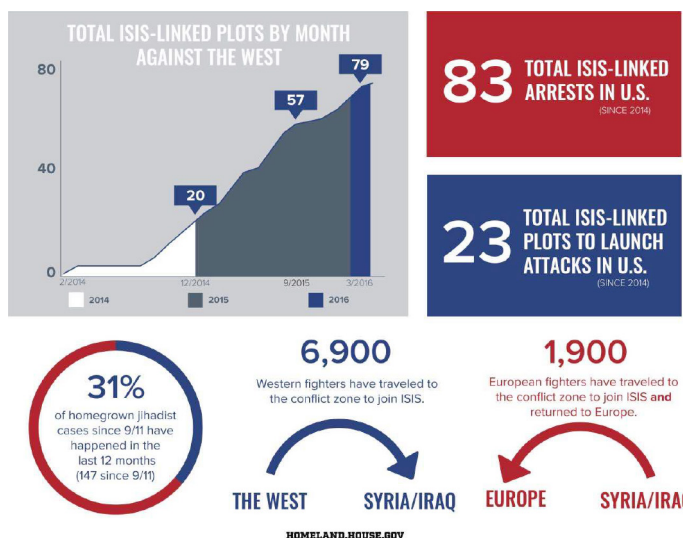


ON POINT *continued***7 UNITED STATES: (U) Homeland Security Committee Releases Terror Threat Snapshot**

(U) In mid-March, the Homeland Security Committee released its Terror Threat Snapshot summary of key terror threats to the US. Key points include:

- (U) ISIL commands a “sophisticated external plotting network” from its sanctuaries and continues to inspire terror recruits worldwide. Al-Qa’ida and its affiliates, particularly AQAP, may build on recent territorial gains by capitalizing further on instability.
- (U) Violent extremists are infiltrating the West by exploiting massive refugee flows, and European security services continue to struggle with the refugee flow.

(HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE)



(U) Summary of ISIL Activity (HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE)

**8 UNITED STATES: (U) Pro-ISIL Hackers Release Police Information, Threaten Department of State Website**

(U) As of 16 March, the FBI was investigating ISIL’s Cyber Caliphate Army (CCA) claim of responsibility for posting a target list of 36 Minnesota police officers online. An e-mail from the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association told the officers ISIL hacked their website. The hackers captured names and personal data of members requesting a quote for auto insurance.

- (U) The list included the name, e-mail, address, and phone number of officers across the state. None of the officers whose names appear on the list were hurt or targeted by any specific acts of violence, but the FBI in Minneapolis stated it was taking the threat seriously.
- (U) On 17 March, the CCA threatened to target the website of the US Department of State and release more information about US police, stating there are “still a lot of names” to be published. (CBSLOCAL, CNN, SITE INTEL)

**NCTC Comment:** (U) Terrorist organizations continue to exploit the Internet and social media to advance their goals, including collecting and disseminating personally identifiable information of law enforcement (LE) personnel. First responder agencies should limit the release of operational or sensitive information on public-facing social media platforms. In addition, first responders are encouraged to minimize their personal online footprint, limit the release of potentially sensitive information, and report suspicious activities to mitigate potential targeting. This may include efforts to identify LE personnel through official documents, highlighting the importance of following respective agency policies/guidance regarding releasability of information upon request.

(U//FOUO) In light of recent attacks on LE personnel and continued calls for additional attacks, first responders should be aware of the potential risks. This is especially true during encounters with individuals who may be sympathetic to ISIL propaganda or instances when LE personnel might be viewed by would-be attackers as vulnerable to attack, such as when responding en masse to an incident. TTPs to mitigate or prevent an attack by a violent extremist include: patrolling soft target areas, making contact with businesses owners, efforts to recognize and report suspicious activities, items, or behaviors during the course of performing daily duties, reducing off-duty profile, and partnering while on patrol, especially when on foot patrols or standing in a static post. (JCAT PERSPECTIVE)

**9 FRANCE: (U) Man Arrested in Paris Had Link to French ISIL Fighter**

(U) On 16 March, four people—a couple and two brothers—were arrested by the French domestic security service (DGSI) in the Paris region on suspicion they were planning attacks in France.

# ON POINT continued

- (U) In 2014, one of the men was convicted of attempting to travel to Syria and join ISIL with another French ISIL sympathizer whose information was found in a cache of approximately 22,000 ISIL documents leaked earlier in March.
- (U) DGSİ identified the four suspects as Youssef Ettaoujar, 28, his wife, and two brothers of Turkish origin, identified in the media only as Aytac and Ercan B. DGSİ did not find any weapons at their residences and was unable to identify the group's specific target or dates of their suspected upcoming attacks. **(ERIU, REUTERS)**

## 10 **SWITZERLAND:** (U) Three Iraqis Convicted of Aiding ISIL

(U) On 18 March, a Swiss court convicted three Iraqis, between 29 and 35 years old, of terrorism offenses—the country's first convictions of foreign terrorists—and sentenced them to between 42 and 56 months in prison. A fourth man was acquitted.

- (U) In early 2014, the three men were arrested on suspicion of planning terrorist attacks and helping ISIL militants enter the country. Authorities said the men used code words for bombs when communicating on social media. **(REUTERS)**

## 11 **TURKEY:** (U) Suicide Bomber Kills Four at Shopping Center

(U) On 19 March, a suicide bomb killed four and wounded 36 at a shopping district in central Istanbul. Two of those killed were dual US-Israeli citizens.

- (U) The attack occurred in the popular shopping district of Istiklal Street. The bomber was identified as Mehmet Ozturk from southern Turkey. Five people were detained in connection with the blast, according to the Turkish Interior Minister. The Minister added Ozturk had ties to ISIL.
- (U) As of 21 March, Turkish authorities were seeking at least three additional men believed to be planning attacks in Turkey on behalf of ISIL. **(REUTERS)**



(U) Image Reportedly Depicting Mehmet Ozturk **(TWITTER)**

**NCTC Comment:** (U) Ensuring public safety in shopping malls requires information sharing, interagency coordination, and robust private sector partnerships to create a common operating picture. Security stakeholders and first responders can identify gaps to determine mitigation strategies which will strengthen security measures and ensure a rapid and adequate emergency response in the event of an emergency. Joint training between first responders and mall staff—as well as security stakeholders from neighboring jurisdictions—can help ensure a unified response and familiarity with the infrastructure and external and internal configuration of the complex.

# ON POINT continued

(U) This overseas attack illustrates the significant challenges mass casualty incidents (MCIs) pose. An MCI such as this would require a unified response to the scene of the attack, and include the coordination of life-saving actions, security sweeps for additional explosives or weapons, and precautionary measures to protect against potential secondary attacks, all while preserving the scene for eventual investigation. Incident management of an MCI must be well-defined in plans and exercised regularly across all first responder disciplines with jurisdictional public and private sector partner input. **(JCAT PERSPECTIVE)**

## 12 **TURKEY:** (U) Dozens Detained in Anti-Terror Raids

(U) As of 17 March, at least 320 suspects were detained by Turkish police in anti-terror operations across Turkey following the 13 March Ankara suicide bombing.

- (U) On 17 March, the Freedom Hawks of Kurdistan (TAK) claimed responsibility for the 13 March attack and stated it was aimed at Turkish security forces in retaliation for the killing of Kurdish people. TAK further stated the attack was conducted by Doga Jiyan, a.k.a. Seher Cagla Demir, the first female TAK member to conduct a suicide attack. TAK further warned it would stage more attacks against those it held responsible for security operations in the mainly Kurdish southeast and stated further civilian losses in its attacks were inevitable.
- (U) On 18 March, a spokeswoman for the German Foreign Ministry announced the temporary closure of diplomatic missions and German schools in Turkey due to a credible security threat.
- (U) On 17 March, the US Department of State released a travel warning to US citizens, which noted increased threats from terrorist groups throughout Turkey and recommended against travel throughout southeastern Turkey. US citizens were advised to exercise extreme caution when traveling throughout the country.

**(STATE DEPT., AP, REUTERS, HURRIYET DAILY NEWS, TAK WEBSITE)**

### PRESS AND PUBLIC

On March 13, 2016 Time: 18: 45 fascist TC's heart in Ankara against the Kurdish people taken to the slaughter decided to take the most brutal methods centers and router fascist focus on targeted action, the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK), as we assume. Actions of our organization depends on the nature of JIA (ages City Iron) made us a unit under the command of our comrades.

Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK) in the bouncer revenge first woman comrades Nature comrades who performed the action, especially President captivity state with centuries Kurdish people considered fitting for slaughter and radical struggle execution stability against the refusal policy has taken place in our ranks in 2013, as reflected not from another country, it held its own country's participation in our ranks. Kurdish people on the basis of revenge from the enemies, then participation is high awareness and perform deep beliefs; Life with female bouncers revolutionary militant stance in line was exalted to perform day to day. The main enemy of the Kurds, baby and shoot by targeting young girls to expose the naked female body, then anger by burning hatred that grew barbarity of an effort to make unrecognizable; hundreds of our comrades have been in great insisting on such action.

Our unit, to account on behalf of the radical revolutionary line of genocidal AKP government in Cizre, in Ankara, which has targeted government forces of fascism and barbarism castle. However, our unit towards the target of the police intervention that led to the civilian casualties. We express our sorrow for the civilian casualties without any bond with the players and therefore responsible for the dirty war. However, as our comrades in Zina RAPERIN action, police and military forces hidden, suggesting the dead civilians was issued.

It should be noted that especially Core comrades, the bouncer, raised our action and determination people leadership of actions in the measure of us to display to the level of reality in all circumstances and our bouncers and martyrs. This year of the bouncer and execution areas, will continue to stand in places where they first and only. Internal AKP response and is covered by increasing security measures did not prevent the government will not be for us. It should be noted that during the Turkey, fascist dictatorship, as a result of the government, it is not possible to remove the TC, which was wanted our comrades, and our staff with the last, and we were wanted our comrades, continuously, persistently, continue. Our comrades and Kurds are continue to find money in all these hostile environment towards the people.

Seher Cagla Demir  
Agnes Kizil and Kurdistan Diger  
Our organization TAK Agnes Revenge  
Steen with fascism and dictatorship in Turkey  
Dogsbody revenge  
Terroristsin Anadolu Kurdistan (TAK)



(U) TAK's Claim of Responsibility for Attack **(TAK WEBSITE)**



ON POINT *continued***13 IRAQ: (U) Pro-ISIL Amaq Agency Posts Video Criticizing US Strategy**

(U) On 19 March, Amaq—a self-described unofficial field news agency which covers ISIL activities—posted a video of UK person John Cantlie speaking about US airstrikes on media kiosks in Mosul.

- (U) Cantlie questioned the use of multi-million dollar airplanes to strike kiosks he claimed cost less than \$50 and claimed the selection of the kiosks as targets was the result of a lack of intelligence and put civilians in danger.
- (U) In November 2012, Cantlie was kidnapped in Syria on his second visit to report on the country and has been used in past ISIL propaganda, including videos and columns in ISIL's *Dabiq* magazine. (GUARDIAN, AMAQ)

**NCTC Assessment:** (U//FOUO) The 19 March video is Cantlie's first appearance in an ISIL video since February 2015, although he has been featured in several editions of the group's English-language *Dabiq* magazine since that time, most recently in November 2015. Amaq News—which released the 19 March video—is a self-described “unofficial field news agency” which is “embedded” with ISIL fighters and claims to provide exclusive access to major ISIL headlines. While ISIL does not publicly recognize Amaq as an official media outlet, it regularly posts breaking news, including ISIL attack claims—such as the 14 January Jakarta attack—before an official attack claim is posted by the group's firstline media distributors.

(U//FOUO) ISIL operates likely dozens of media kiosks in Iraq, Syria, and Libya to maximize outreach and consumption of its propaganda. Most media kiosks are equipped with indoor and outdoor video displays and loudspeakers and are located in heavily populated areas of ISIL's self-declared provinces. Earlier in March, ISIL dedicated a full article to the impact of its media kiosks in its weekly newsletter, indicating the group views them as a critical component of its local influence operations.

(BBC, TWITTER, TUMBLR, NCTC)

**14 ALGERIA: (U) Gas Facility Attacked With Rockets**

(U) On 18 March, AQIM militants fired rockets at the Krechba gas facility in Algeria, according to the energy companies Statoil and British Petroleum (BP).

- (U) The Krechba facility was “hit by explosive munitions fired from a distance” and was shut down as a safety precaution, though no employees were injured, according to statements released by BP and Statoil. On 21 March, both companies announced they were withdrawing their personnel, and operations would be conducted by Algerian personnel in the future.
- (U) AQIM claimed responsibility for the attack as part of its “war on the Crusader interests everywhere.”
- (U) Krechba is jointly operated by Statoil of Norway and BP of Britain, is overseen by the Algerian state-run gas company Sonatrach, and is part of the In Salah gas fields, a major gas-producing area located approximately 440 miles from the border with Libya. (AP, REUTERS, NY TIMES)

The grace of Allah Almighty, enable your brothers the Mujahideen in the «Base of Jihad in the Islamic Maghreb», from Dec. compound and a base (BP) Crusader Alnahph of wealth in favor of the region of Ain in Algeria several missiles "ground-to-ground 130 mm mid-range", as part of our war on the interests of the Crusaders in any place, and in an effort to stop the bleeding theft of oil and gas and the rest of the Muslim wealth.  
And Snoafiqkm detail later, God willing.

(U) AQIM's Claim of Responsibility for the Attack. (TWITTER)

**NCTC Assessment:** (U//FOUO) Later on 18 March, AQIM claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement released via social media. AQIM claimed to have targeted the facility because of its affiliation with Western companies and to protect Muslim resources and interests, which is consistent with the group's agenda. AQIM also revealed in the statement it warned BP and Statoil before the attack, possibly in an effort to clear Muslim employees—whom the group indicated they did not want to target—from the area. Finally, AQIM warned it would conduct additional attacks against Western hydrocarbon companies unless they entered into negotiations with the group.

(U) Unconfirmed media reports on March 20 stated the Algerian military killed four terrorists involved in the attack and wounded three others who were subsequently arrested. (STATE DEPT., TWITTER, NCTC)

# ON POINT continued

## DHS Office of Cyber and Infrastructure Analysis (OCIA)

**Comment:** (U//FOUO) Disruption of the Krechba gas facility is not expected to affect the US, as the US has not imported natural gas from Algeria since 2007. Future events which affect Algerian oil production would have minimal effect on the US, as imports from Algeria in 2011 accounted for only 1.15% of US crude oil imports in 2015. (DHS OCIA; US ENERGY INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION)

## 15 SOMALIA: (U) Kenyan Forces Conduct Attacks Against Al-Shabaab Militants

(U) As of 20 March, Kenyan troops killed 53 al-Shabaab militants over the previous week in multiple operations across Somalia.

- (U) According to a military spokesman, on 15 March, Kenyan forces in Afmadow killed 19 militants suspected of preparing to attack a Somali National Army camp. On 19 March, 21 militants were killed during fighting in Afmadow, which also resulted in the deaths of two Kenyan soldiers. On 20 March, another 13 militants were killed near Ras Kamboni in southern Somalia.
- (U) Kenyan forces recovered 19 AK-47 rifles, 3 RPGs, and a pistol. (REUTERS, DW)

# TRENDS, TACTICS, & PROCEDURES

## (U) NYPD Deputy Commissioner Discusses Terrorism

(U) The March issue of the West Point Military Academy Combatting Terrorism Center (CTC) Sentinel featured an interview of <sup>USPER</sup>John Miller, NYPD Deputy Commissioner for Intelligence & Counterterrorism, and <sup>USPER</sup>Ambassador Michael Sheehan, the Distinguished Chair of the CTC.

- (U) Miller discussed the significant changes over the past decade, to include the nature of terrorist threats and the operating environment law enforcement agencies face, while outlining some of the recent measures taken to protect New York City.
- (U) Miller also noted the shift in perception of terrorist acts committed in the US post-9/11, stating relatively small attacks carried much greater emotional impact. He also stated that while al-Qa'ida hurt itself by focusing on large attack plots, which were easily disrupted, and focusing propaganda on its on leadership, ISIL better understands its audience and focuses propaganda on those it wishes to recruit.
- (U) Miller noted the increasingly diffused nature of terrorism, and the value which Joint Terrorism Task Forces offer to smaller agencies that may someday find themselves responding to a terrorist attack.
- (U) Finally, Miller noted terrorists' increased use of encrypted communications and warned law enforcement's insight into terrorist communications was decreasing. (CTC SENTINEL)

## (U) UK Arrests of Women, Teenagers, and Children Rise

(U) According to a mid-March report by the UK Home Office, the number of children and women arrested for alleged terrorism drastically increased.

- (U) The number of children under 18 arrested increased 60% since 2014, while the number of women arrested increased by 50% over the same period.

- (U) The report noted a total of 280 terrorism-related arrests in 2015—a drop of 3% compared with 2014. This decline was attributed to a decrease in the number of arrests relating to domestic terrorism. By contrast, the report showed a slight rise in arrests linked to international terrorism, which accounted for more than three-quarters (79%) of all arrests during the most recent reporting period. (MIRROR)

## (U) France Staged Mock Euro 2016 Fan Zone Attack

(U) On 16 March, France conducted a drill which simulated a chemical attack on a football (soccer) arena in Nimes.

- (U) More than a thousand police and fire fighters took part in the attack response drill, the largest ever conducted in France.
- (U) The exercise was designed to simulate a chemical attack in a “fan zone,” a closed perimeter area where football fans can monitor the competition on large outdoor screens when not attending matches in one of the ten stadiums.
- (U) Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve stated, “We don't believe there is a genuine risk of this type of attack, but we must envisage every hypothesis.” (SKY NEWS, REUTERS)

**NCTC Comment:** (U) An effective response to a terrorist attack can be improved through information sharing, interagency coordination, and training, as well as aligning with private sector partners to ensure effective security measures and robust emergency response planning for a unified response. First responder agencies training together, across disciplines and jurisdictions, for these types of incidents can also enhance preparedness, increase early incident stabilization, and ultimately prevent additional loss of life.

- (U//FOUO) Information sharing allows first responders to use past attacks or disrupted plots to determine which tactics, techniques, and procedures have recently been used or attempted in order to maximize the effectiveness of training and exercises.



# TRENDS, TACTICS, & PROCEDURES continued

- (U//FOUO) The focus of information sharing during a large special event should not only address the area a special event is to occur, but also neighboring jurisdictions. Detailed threat assessments can also deter and mitigate a threat by creating a shared operating picture between security stakeholders, an effective deployment of onsite resources, and a unified response plan in the event of an attack.

(U//FOUO) It is important for first responders to incorporate physical layout, operational characteristics, and infrastructure; current terrorist tactics, trends, and procedures; interagency coordination; and private sector partnerships into emergency response planning, SOPs, training, and multidiscipline exercises. Emergency response plans should consider the cascading effects across sectors (public and private), the transition from emergency response to investigation, as well as the continuation of local and regional emergency services. **(JCAT PERSPECTIVE)**

## (U) Over 600 People Left France for Syria or Iraq

(U) On 20 March, French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said more than 600 people left France for Syria or Iraq, and more than 800 others wanted to join ISIL.

- (U) Valls indicated there was little relief in the number of people joining ISIL despite bombing campaigns against ISIL strongholds and a crackdown by French authorities to prevent people from leaving the country, saying “Each day (we)...trace networks, locate cells, arrest individuals. Today, 2,029 French citizens or residents are implicated in jihad networks.”
- (U) Valls said 609 people who were French nationals or had French resident status were among fighters, including 283 women and 18 minors. Almost 170 were killed in Syria or Iraq, and 300 returned to France. Also, he said almost 800 people wanted to go to Syria or Iraq, according to information from intelligence services. Authorities were monitoring 1,000 people. **(REUTERS)**

## (U) France Pushes Aid to Tunisia to Fight ISIL

(U) On 17 March, France’s foreign minister traveled to Tunisia, aiming to strengthen security and economic ties as Tunis struggles with violent extremism fueled by ISIL’s growth in Libya.

- (U) Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault stated “the attacks in Ben Guerdane show more than ever why we need to support the Tunisians,” referring to a 9 March assault by approximately 50 militants who attacked army and police posts in the area.
- (U) France sent military advisers to Tunisia to assist with special operations, and planned to distribute an EU €1 billion (US \$1.1 billion) aid package over five years to help Tunisia develop poor regions, stimulate job creation—especially for youth—and modernize government administration, a major impediment to the disbursement of international aid.
- (U) “There is a socio-economic breeding ground on which radicalization is prospering,” said Ayrault. “There is a direct link between massive youth unemployment, neglected regions, and the fact that Tunisia provides one of the largest contingents of foreign fighters for jihadists.” **(REUTERS)**

## (U) Counter-ISIL Fight in Syria Enters Second Phase

(U) On 18 March, US Central Command spokesman Air Force Colonel <sup>USPER</sup>Patrick Ryder detailed three planned operational approaches to combat ISIL: coalition-enabled pressure on ISIL to isolate Ar Raqqa, Syria; isolating and eventually seizing Mosul, Iraq; and stabilizing Iraq’s Anbar province.

- (U) Ryder identified the Manbij pocket near the Mara line as the last clear route foreign fighters could use to enter Syria. He also noted Syrian Democratic Force (SDF) troops continued to move closer to Ar Raqqa and also made “fairly good progress” in northeastern Syria to liberate ISIL-held territory near Shaddadi.

# TRENDS, TACTICS, & PROCEDURES continued

- (U) Ryder said in the Hit and Hadithah corridor, Iraqi security forces were working with local tribes to clear the Euphrates River Valley and hold liberated territory. He added Iraqi security forces were becoming better at holding terrain they took back from ISIL, “even against an occasional complex ISIL attack.” (DOD)

## (U) Brazilian Military Conducts Chemical Attack Exercises

(U) In mid-March, the Brazilian military conducted an exercise to prepare for a possible chemical, biological, nuclear, or radioactive attack during the August 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. Forces practiced identifying toxic substances, victim isolation, decontamination, and medical evacuation.

- (U) The military is also preparing to work with Civil Defense, police, and health units to respond to an attack outside competition venues. During the Olympics, detection equipment, mobile laboratories, and disinfection stations will be staged near competition venues and areas with high concentrations of people, such as airports. (BRASILIA AGENCIA)

**NCTC Comment:** (U//FOUO) Terrorist groups continue to express interest in pursuing the use of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) products to expand attack capabilities. *Inspire* magazine, 8th edition, notes “The use of poisons or chemical and biological weapons against population centers is allowed and is strongly recommended due to its great effect on the enemy.” Response to calls involving CBRN development, testing, or attacks are highly challenging because the signs and symptoms of exposure may be the first warning of toxic material—symptoms which may not be initially evident. A thorough understanding of all indicators of hazardous materials modified for nefarious purposes is therefore critically important. In addition, first responders should consider injuries resulting from experimentation by illicit actors with chemicals are often distinct. The recognition and reporting of individuals seeking treatment for injuries consistent with nefarious experimentation with hazardous materials may result in the discovery of a terrorist plot. (JCAT PERSPECTIVE)

## (U) Iraq Captures ISIL Fighters Hiding Among Fleeing Villagers

(U) As of 16 March, Iraqi security forces detained 149 ISIL fighters trying to hide among approximately 35,000 civilians fleeing villages in the Euphrates River Valley, according to Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve spokesman Army Colonel <sup>USPER</sup>Steve Warren. Warren stated the ISIL fighters were taken into Iraqi Government custody to be prosecuted. (DOD)

## (U) Understanding Motivations for Moroccan Violent Extremists

(U) On 9 March, Moroccan newspaper Assabah published a commentary by Doha Zineddine, “Returning From ISIL...Disillusioned; Thousands of Youth Migrated From a Destitute Environment to Another Promising Money and Power After Being Brainwashed.”

- (U) Official data reportedly estimated more than 1,300 Moroccans joined ISIL, 156 of whom returned to Morocco. Authorities prevented another 2,700 from joining the group. Many of the returnees reportedly joined the group in the beginning of the Syrian conflict to help the Syrian people but became disillusioned when ISIL revealed its plan to create an Islamic Caliphate.
- (U) According to Zineddine, despite research on the nexus between poverty, unemployment, and ISIL’s recruitment of young Moroccans, authorities do not understand what motivates Moroccans to join the group.
- (U) Zineddine noted the number of would-be recruits declined after Moroccan authorities increased efforts to counter ISIL in Morocco and raised Moroccans’ awareness of ISIL’s crimes against Muslims and non-Muslims.
- (U) Zineddine cited a British study which revealed 48.5% of ISIL recruits from the Middle East and North Africa were university graduates, 44% of whom had engineering backgrounds. The study concluded, however, the scientific training “failed to teach critical thinking skills” which rendered students easy prey for violent extremist recruiters. (CASABLANCA ASSABAH)

# TRENDS, TACTICS, & PROCEDURES continued

## **(U) South Korea Conducts Joint Counterterrorism Training Exercise**

(U) On 15 March, South Korea's military, police, firefighters, private, and public organizations held a joint anti-terror training exercise amid growing concerns of terrorist attacks by North Korea. The police-led drill was held at the largest express bus terminal in southern Seoul, and included 220 participants. The day-long training session focused on a mock terrorist attack with hostages and terrorists.

- (U) Authorities trained with sniffer dogs, a bomb disposal team, and helicopters. The government used the drill to test the capability of local emergency services to promptly evacuate civilian casualties. (YONHAP NEWS)

## **(U) South Korean President Calls on Police to Thwart Terrorist Attempts**

(U) On 18 March, President Park Geun-hye called on the police to thwart any possible terrorist attempts by North Korea amid rising tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

- (U) South Korea assessed North Korean leader Kim Jong-un ordered officials to concentrate on building capabilities for terror attacks and cyberattacks against the South in part due to increased tensions following the North's 6 January nuclear test and 7 February long-range rocket launch.
- (U) Separately, South Korea deported 53 foreigners in recent months due to possible links to terrorist groups. (YONHAP)



# PARTING SHOTS

## 1 **AUSTRALIA:** (U) Two Arrested on Suspicion of Financing ISIL

(U) On 22 March, Australian police said they arrested a man, 20, and a girl, 16, on suspicion of raising funds for ISIL. The arrests in a Sydney suburb were part of counterterrorism operations aimed at disrupting attackplans by domestic radicals at home and disrupting the flow of funds to foreign fighters overseas. Australian person Federal Police Deputy Commissioner Michael Phelan said the latest arrests were not connected to any threat of an imminent attack.

(REUTERS, NEWS.COM)

## 2 **FRANCE:** (U) Brother of Toulouse Attacker to Face Trial

(U) On 16 March, Abdelkhader Merah was ordered to stand trial on terrorism charges stemming from the 2012 attacks conducted by his brother Mohamed Merah. Seven were killed in the attacks, including French paratroopers and people at a Jewish school. Authorities initially believed Mohamed acted alone, but after a nearly four-year investigation, the Paris prosecutor's office announced Abdelkhader and one other person will be sent to trial. Among the charges was complicity to murder.

(WASHINGTON POST)

## 3 **GERMANY:** (U) Homes Searched of Two Syrians Suspected of Planning Attack

(U) On 17 March, German police announced they raided the home of two Syrian brothers linked to ISIL whom police suspected were preparing for an attack. Police confiscated an air pistol, electronic storage devices, mobile phones, and EU €14,000 (US \$16,000) in cash, but did not arrest the brothers, aged 21 and 30. In February 2015, the older brother entered Germany on a forged passport obtained by ISIL, a crime for which he was sentenced and fined that year. Prosecutors said he promoted ISIL, threatened German authorities, and justified the November 2015 Paris attacks on social media. (REUTERS)

## 4 **GERMANY:** (U) Police Detain Suspected Violent Extremist at Frankfurt Airport

(U) On 16 March, police arrested Tarik S., 22, at Frankfurt Airport following allegations he joined ISIL and appeared in propaganda videos for the group. According to federal prosecutors, Tarik entered Syria in 2013 and took part in fighting and production of propaganda videos. Tarik made an initial appearance in front of federal judges in Karlsruhe. (THE LOCAL)

## 5 **KOSOVO:** (U) Police Arrest Man Suspected of Financing ISIL Networks

(U) On 16 March, police arrested Fatos Rizvanolli on suspicion of financing ISIL networks in Kosovo. Rizvanolli reportedly had close links to violent extremists, leaders, and recruiters. Police in Pristina searched four businesses and sixty vehicles owned by Rizvanolli and confiscated hundreds of thousands of euros. According to a court statement, Rizvanolli's illegal activities included "recruitment for terrorism," "organization and participation in a terrorist group," and "financing to help terrorism," and provided legal ground to order a 30-day detention. (PRISTINA ZERI)

## 6 **TURKEY:** (U) Security Forces Disarm Bomb in Vehicle

(U) On 18 March, Turkish bomb-disposal experts disabled an explosive device in a vehicle found near a government building in the city of Hani. The vehicle contained 150 kg (331 lbs) of explosives. US Embassy Ankara issued a statement saying US citizens "should be mindful of their security precautions," and warned Kurdish New Year (Newroz) celebrations could turn confrontational and escalate into violence. (CHANNEL NEWS ASIA ONLINE, REUTERS)

## 7 **LEBANON:** (U) Man Arrested for Plotting Suicide Bombings

(U) On 17 March, Lebanese General Security announced the arrest of a Lebanese national suspected of belonging to a violent extremist group, who confessed to building explosive devices and preparing suicide bombers for attacks in Lebanese territory. The suspect was referred to the judiciary for further investigation. (SYNDIGATE)

# PARTING SHOTS continued

## 8 SYRIA: (U) Hostage Video Shows Missing Japanese Journalist

(U) On 17 March, an apparent hostage video emerged showing Japanese journalist Jumpei Yasuda, who went missing in Syria in June 2015. In the video, which was posted to Facebook and Twitter, Yasuda, identified himself by name, sent a message to his family, and appealed to the Japanese Government to work for his release. The Japanese Government stated it was not aware any ransom demand was made. (JAPAN TIMES)

## 9 IRAQ: (U) Second Attack on US Base

(U) As of 22 March, the US military base Firebase Bell came under attack twice in three days. A group of approximately ten ISIL fighters conducted the attack with small arms, and also attacked another nearby US/Iraqi installation in Makhmur. No US personnel were wounded in the latest attack, and at least two ISIL fighters were killed, according to an Army spokesman. (CNN)

## 10 IRAQ: (U) American Regrets Decision to go to ISIL Stronghold

(U) As of 19 March, <sup>USPER</sup>Mohamad Jamal Khweis of Virginia who is under FBI investigation for travelling to ISIL-controlled Mosul, stated he “made a bad decision” and was trying to return to the US when he was captured by Kurdish forces. “I wasn’t thinking straight. I wanted to go back to America,” he said, “I didn’t complete the whole Sharia. I didn’t agree with their ideology.” (CNN)

## 11 EGYPT: (U) Sinai Mortar Attack Kills 15

(U) On 19 March, a mortar attack on a checkpoint in el-Arish killed 15 police personnel, according to the Egyptian Interior Ministry. ISIL-Sinai claimed responsibility for the attack, but claimed a suicide bomber—identified as Abu al-Qaaqaa the Egyptian—detonated a vehicle at the checkpoint. Security officials later stated five of the attackers were killed in clashes near the checkpoint following the attack. (AFP, WASHINGTON POST)

## 12 YEMEN: (U) US Strikes AQAP Camp in Yemen

(U) On 22 March, the US military conducted an airstrike against an AQAP training camp in Yemen. The camp—located in a mountainous region—was used by more than 70 violent extremists, according to a DOD press release. (DOD)

## 13 PAKISTAN: (U) Security Personnel Arrest Taliban Leader

(U) As of 22 March, dissident Taliban leader Mullah Muhammad Rasool, who refused to pledge allegiance to the movement’s new leader Mullah Akhtar Mansoor, was reportedly detained by Pakistani security personnel. Rasool was chosen as head of the breakaway faction in early November 2015 by factions of the Taliban opposed to Mansoor’s appointment. Rasool was arrested after he fled recent infighting in southern Zabul province, where dozens of insurgents, including the breakaway faction’s deputy chief Mansoor Dadullah, were killed by Mansoor’s loyalists. (PAJHWOK AFGHAN NEWS)

## 14 PAKISTAN: (U) Clashes Kill Eight Militants, Two Security Personnel

(U) On 17 March, the Pakistani Army stated two members of the security forces and eight militants were killed in separate clashes. Soldiers conducted a raid in the Tarel valley, killing three militants involved in attacks on tourists and security forces. Separately, soldiers killed five militants after militants attacked a checkpoint in the Khyber tribal region. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack. (WASHINGTON POST)

## 15 PAKISTAN: (U) Bus Explosion Kills 15 Government Employees

(U) On 16 March, an IED planted on a bus carrying Pakistani Government officials exploded, killing at least 15 people and injuring at least 30. The bomb exploded as the bus was taking civil secretariat employees for duty to Peshawar from Mardan. Lashkar-e-Islam claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it was to avenge a military court’s sentencing of 13 militants to death. (REUTERS, NEW DELHI HINDUSTAN TIMES)

# PARTING SHOTS continued

## 16 AFGHANISTAN: (U) Key Taliban Leader Arrested in Ghazni Province

(U) As of 17 March, a former Taliban commander involved in terrorist activities was arrested in the Ghazni province of Afghanistan, according to the Afghan National Directorate of Security. Khalil-ur-Rehman, a former senior Taliban commander, organized suicide attacks and other terrorist activities in Ghazni city. (ALALAM NEWS)

## 17 AFGHANISTAN: (U) NATO Chief Predicts Tough Year Ahead

(U) On 16 March, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg predicted a difficult year ahead for Afghanistan as the government continued to battle the Taliban and other militant factions vying to assert their presence in the country. Stoltenberg stated he believes the Taliban, al-Qa'ida, and ISIL will continue attacks across Afghanistan throughout 2016. NATO maintains approximately 3,000 troops in Afghanistan under the Resolute Support non-combat mission, in addition to 9,800 US troops. (WASHINGTON POST)

## 18 ALGERIA: (U) Militant Killed in Military Operation

(U) On 13 March, Algerian authorities reportedly killed veteran militant Mouloud Baal, a.k.a. El Moundhir, in Gouraya. Baal was a former member of the Armed Islamic Group, which tried to overthrow the Algerian Government during the 1990s. In 2001, Baal facilitated suicide attacks against the Algerian Cherchell Military Academy, attacks claimed by AQIM. (WASHINGTON POST)

## 19 ALGERIA: (U) Troops Kill Six Militants

(U) On 22 March, the Algerian Ministry of Defense announced Algerian troops killed six armed militants in the southeast town of El Oued—near the Tunisian border—and captured arms and munitions. Troops recovered Kalashnikov rifles, handguns, and two off-road vehicles. (REUTERS)

## 20 TUNISIA: (U) Gunmen Killed Near Libyan Border

(U) On 19 March, security forces killed two gunmen hiding outside Ben Guerdane, near the Libyan border. Three civilians and a member of the national guard were wounded by shots fired by the gunmen. On 20 March, other fighting was reported near Tunisia's border with Algeria; a Defense Ministry spokesman said one soldier was wounded in a shootout in the Kasserine region. (AP)

## 21 TUNISIA: (U) Security Forces Dismantle Terrorist Cell Recruiting University Students

(U) On 14 March, the Tunisian Interior Ministry stated it dismantled a terrorist cell which consisted of university students in Gafsa. Security units in Gafsa captured seven members of the cell who were attempting to recruit university students for ISIL. The investigation was initiated after authorities received information indicating science faculty students were possibly being recruited. (TUNISIA INTERIOR MINISTRY)

## 22 TUNISIA: (U) Security Forces Dismantle Terrorist Cell

(U) As of 22 March, the Tunisian National Guard uncovered a violent extremist cell active in Tunis responsible for recruiting young people to join ISIL. The investigation revealed the cell previously facilitated militants who were arrested or killed in Ben Guerdane. Twelve people were arrested and face prosecution, according to the Tunisian Interior Ministry. (TUNISIA INTERIOR MINISTRY)

## 23 NIGERIA: (U) Female Suicide Bombers Attack Maiduguri Mosque

(U) On 16 March, two women disguised as men conducted an attack on a mosque during morning prayers in Maiduguri, killing at least 24 people and injuring at least 18. One of the women detonated her explosives among the congregation sitting in the first row; the other detonated her explosives outside the mosque as others attempted to flee. There was no immediate claim of responsibility; however, Boko Haram regularly hits "soft" civilian targets, often with female suicide bombers. (AFP, AP)



# PARTING SHOTS continued

## 24 CAMEROON: (U) Boko Haram Fighters Sentenced to Death

(U) On 17 March, Cameroon sentenced 89 Boko Haram militants to death. A military court convicted the militants of terror charges for their role in several attacks in Cameroon's northern region, which borders Nigeria. In 2014, Cameroon passed an anti-terror law which introduced the death sentence; this was the first case in which the measure was utilized. (BBC)

## 25 CAMEROON: (U) Soldiers Kill 20 Boko Haram Fighters in Nigeria

(U) On 16 March, Cameroonian soldiers killed 20 militants during a raid in Djibrila, Nigeria, conducted under the auspices of a multinational force tasked with defeating Boko Haram. A spokesman for Cameroon's Defense Ministry stated 12 hostages were freed, and munitions and armored vehicles were seized during the operation. (REUTERS)

## 26 MALI: (U) Gunmen Attack EU Military Mission

(U) On 21 March, a gunman was killed, and two suspects were arrested following an attack on the headquarters of a European Union military training operation in Bamako. "One of the assailants was killed. We are verifying the sack he was carrying, which could contain explosives," Malian Colonel Salif Traoré said on state television. As of 22 March, Malian police arrested 19 suspects. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack. (REUTERS, AP)

## 27 BENIN: (U) Troops to Deploy Against Boko Haram

(U) On 15 March, the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) created to combat Boko Haram announced Benin will deploy 150 troops in April to combat Boko Haram. Troops from Benin will serve as a reserve rapid intervention force. The MNJTF is composed of approximately 9,000 troops from Chad, Niger, Nigeria, and Cameroon, and became operational in 2015. (REUTERS)

## 28 PHILIPPINES: (U) Army Kills Seven Militants, Injures Wanted Commander

(U) On 18 March, Philippine troops engaged approximately 100 Abu Sayyaf Group militants in the jungle near Patikul town. Troops killed seven militants and reportedly injured top rebel commander Radulan Sahiron. Sahiron was wanted by both the US and Philippine Governments, and the US offered US \$1 million for any information leading to his capture and prosecution. Sixteen Philippine soldiers and five militants were also injured during the fighting. (AP)



(U) Claim by Amaq Media Agency Stating an Abu Sayyaf-Affiliated Battalion Pledged Loyalty to ISIL. (TWITTER)

## 29 MALAYSIA: (U) Man and Friend Jailed for Supporting ISIL

(U) On 16 March, the Malaysian High Court sentenced a man and his friend to three years and six months in prison after they pleaded guilty to promoting a terrorist act and supporting ISIL. Muhammad Armie Fatihah Mohd Hashim, 24, used Facebook to communicate with and obtain information on terrorist groups, and previously traveled to Syria. Mohammad Hafiz Zahri Suparyatnoh, 29, attended a meeting held to convince people to join a group known as "Daulah Islamiah" to go to Syria, and proposed setting up a "jihad" training camp in Pulau Rimau, Penang. (FREE MALAYSIA TODAY)

# PARTING SHOTS continued

## 30 SINGAPORE: (U) Four Arrested For Links to Middle East Conflicts

(U) On 16 March, Singapore's Government announced it arrested four citizens with links to conflicts in Yemen and a Kurdish militia group fighting ISIL. Two of the men, Mohammad Razif Yahya and Amiruddin Sawir, have been held since August 2015 for "voluntarily taking up arms and participating in the armed sectarian conflict in Yemen." The other two men, Mohamed Mohideen Mohamed Jais and Wang Yuandongyi, were released in March under orders which ban overseas travel, public statements, and joining any organization without approval. Jais performed armed sentry duties in Yemen but did not open fire. Wang intended to join a Kurdish militia group fighting ISIL and left Singapore in January for Syria, but was detained in a transiting country.

(WASHINGTON POST)



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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.