

The Ramifications of the Military Defeat of the Islamic State

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During the final months of 2017, more than 600 people were killed in two terrorist attacks in Egypt and Somalia by two organizations that are allies of the Islamic State and al-Qaeda.¹ The large number of casualties caused by only two attacks indicates that notwithstanding announcements that the Islamic State and al-Qaeda have been defeated, the campaign against terrorism by Salafi jihadist activists is far from over.

At the close of 2017, it appears that the campaign to dismantle the Islamic State as a political entity with regional governance and unified control over parts of Iraq and Syria has reached an advanced stage. The military operations of the global coalition comprising more than 60 countries on the one hand, and the axis powers comprising Russia, Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah on the other hand, have destroyed Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's plan to establish an Islamic state in the Levant. Indeed, the trend of weakening the Islamic State was already evident in 2016, when military defeats led to its loss of control and governance over key cities and provinces it had seized early in its campaign in Iraq, Syria, and Libya. In February 2016, the city of Ramadi in Iraq was liberated,² followed by Fallujah in western Iraq in June 2016.³ In December 2016, the Islamic State lost control over Sirte, its last stronghold in Libya.⁴ The coalition's victories continued during 2017 when after prolonged fighting, the Islamic State lost the city of Mosul, which served as a stronghold in Iraq: in January 2017, the eastern side of the city was liberated,⁵ and the western side was liberated in July.⁶ In November

2017, once the city of Rawa, close to the Syrian border, was conquered, the complete liberation of Iraq from the Islamic State was announced.⁷

The Islamic State also suffered military defeats this year in Syria, where it lost most of its strongholds: in May 2017, the city of Tabqa and the adjacent dam were liberated;⁸ October saw the liberation of ar-Raqqah, which served as the operational headquarters of the Islamic State in Syria and from where its international terrorist activities were directed;⁹ and in November, Deir ez-Zor was liberated.¹⁰ With these defeats, the Islamic State, created out of nothing in the wake of the Arab Spring upheaval, was effectively dismantled as a distinct entity in the Levant. This in spite of the fact that its combatants are still fighting and launching attacks in both countries, primarily in Syria.

The Islamic State leadership had contended that its territorial base proved the feasibility to its subjects and supporters of realizing the vision of the caliphate, announced when Baghdadi was named caliph in June 2014.¹¹ However, the successive military defeats exposed the gap between the harsh reality and the pretension of realizing the goal. They forced the Islamic State to suspend this vision and replace it with a promise that it will be realized in the future, while stressing that the duty to conduct the military jihad is the only way forward. To this end, Islamic State spokesmen are careful to present military defeats as a tactical and temporary blow only, and propaganda trumpets continue to exhort ranks and supporters to persevere with the historic battle and commit terrorist attacks in enemy cities.¹² Consequently, notwithstanding the Islamic State losses on the battlefields in Iraq and Syria, the attacks by allies that joined its ranks during a series of mergers back when the Islamic State was on the rise continue with greater fervor. This joint activity produced a large number of terrorist attacks throughout the world in 2017 against rivals and local citizens who were used as human shields.

Indeed, the activities of the Islamic State supporters are evident in various countries in the Middle East, including in Egypt,¹³ mainly in the Sinai Peninsula,¹⁴ in Yemen,¹⁵ and even in Iran.¹⁶ In southern Asia, Islamic State allies operated mainly in Afghanistan,¹⁷ eastern Asia, Indonesia,¹⁸ and the Philippines,¹⁹ and threatened to take action in China.²⁰ Boko Haram, one of the Islamic State's key partners in Africa²¹ and which in March 2015 became its representative in western Africa,²² was the main organization active on the continent in 2017. In addition, the Islamic State and its supporters have

declared that Western countries constitute key targets for terrorist activity. In an attempt to counter the image of diminishing power in its territorial strongholds, the Islamic State and its supporters accelerated this strategy in 2017 with terrorist attacks in France,²³ Britain,²⁴ Spain,²⁵ Sweden,²⁶ Finland,²⁷ and the United States,²⁸ and in a foiled attempt to commit two coordinated terrorist attacks in Australia that could have caused massive casualties.²⁹

The terrorist activities of the Islamic State and its supporters in Western countries are carried out in a number of ways:

- a. The organization's headquarters for international terrorist attacks initiates and orchestrates attacks, from planning through execution;
- b. The organization's activists manage overseas volunteers from afar; these volunteers commit attacks after consulting with the senior figures, but carry out the attacks on their own;
- c. Fans and supporters of the Islamic State carry out attacks under its inspiration, but at their own initiative and without any direct contact with the headquarters.

The modus operandi of the direct and indirect terrorist attacks that are credited to the Islamic State include suicide attacks, light weapons attacks, knife attacks, and vehicle-rammings. The use of vehicle-rammings was a tactic employed frequently during 2017 and proved to be a particularly lethal weapon, regardless of the type and size of the vehicle. Sometimes, the vehicle-ramming attacks were combined with gun and knife attacks. These attacks, which caused dozens of deaths and injuries in Western countries, were committed by lone terrorists or by terrorist cells inspired mainly by the Islamic State.³⁰

The attacks committed in Western countries were designed to deter, avenge, and prove to citizens of the West that despite military defeats and loss of control over territories in the Middle East, the Islamic State plans to continue as an active, staunch, and undefeatable rival, and that it has no intention of stopping to inflict terror.

The Islamic State Decline

Continuing Terrorist Attacks on Behalf and in the Name of the Islamic State

The level of terrorist attacks in 2017 throughout the world is expected to continue and perhaps even intensify, due to the reinforcement of operatives who until recently were active in Syria and in Iraq, including experienced terrorists and some who fought among Islamic State ranks, mainly in the Middle East. These operatives gained combat experience; their combat tactics became more brutal; they were indoctrinated with Islamic State values; and they internalized its modus operandi and its world view. They have now left the territories of the lost caliphate and redeployed in various regions throughout the world, with some driven to continue acting on behalf of the Islamic State and commit revenge attacks. Some of them may maintain contact with the organization's surviving commanders and with their comrades in arms; some will try to join the ranks of existing affiliated organizations; some may try to form ad hoc terrorist networks or organizations; and some are liable to commit lone wolf attacks based on the professional combat know-how they acquired. Added to these are many dozens of local residents, Muslims from birth or converts, who live in the West, draw inspiration from Islamic State propaganda, and are recruited to commit terrorist attacks on its behalf.

Strengthening of al-Qaeda and its Allies during the Campaign against the Islamic State

Although the Islamic State, which dominated international headlines and the attention of the United States government over the last four years, poses the most serious terrorism threat today, al-Qaeda has silently rebuilt and reorganized its resources in order to revitalize the war against the United States that its founder Osama bin Laden declared some twenty years ago.³¹ Thus, one of the outcomes of the global campaign against the Islamic State in 2017 was actually the strengthening of al-Qaeda's network of alliances, which benefited from the attention diverted away from it and from the investment of resources in the war by the global coalition primarily against the Islamic State and its affiliates.

At a time that al-Qaeda was forced to contend with the challenge by the Islamic State over leadership of the Salafi jihadist camp, Hamza bin Laden, Osama bin Laden's son, became a more public figure, with filmed appearances alongside Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri. The positioning of Hamza alongside Zawahiri attested to al-Qaeda's efforts to cultivate and refresh the leadership echelon in the form of a figure with symbolic value, and thus attract new recruits and supporters to the organization. These two leaders issued several statements, in which they sketched the future operational directions of the organization and its partners. The two exhorted their loyalists to continue terrorist attacks against the United States, urged their operatives to commit lone terrorist attacks in Europe, and threatened to destroy anyone who attacks Muslims in the various combat arenas. Among the enemies they mentioned as targets were Western countries, including the United States and West European countries, as well as Israel, Russia, China, and Australia, and Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Egypt, and Afghanistan.³²

In Syria, al-Qaeda has continued its activities through its close ties with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, the strong Salafi jihadist opposition organization in Syria, and its allies.³³ Despite the declaration by the Syrian organization's leaders of its formal severance from al-Qaeda, which accompanied its name change from Jabhat al-Nusra to Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, the ties between the organizations prevail, albeit growing disputes over the adequate strategy in the Syrian arena. The announcement of the divide revealed, in essence, the infighting and disputes among the organizations' leaderships, while most of the senior clerics who provide them with religious legitimacy called for the continued alliance between them.³⁴ It appears, therefore, that the strong affiliation between al-Qaeda and the dominant Syrian organization today in Idlib, which is considered the strongest of the Islamist opposition organizations in Syria, still constitutes an important component in establishing the power of the network of alliances that al-Qaeda maintains throughout the world. However, those fault lines over the Syria's desired strategy between al-Qaeda and Hayat Tharir al-Sham's leadership should be watched closely in future.

The al-Qaeda organization itself continues to be active in Afghanistan and in Pakistan under the leadership of Ayman al-Zawahiri, with its forces fighting alongside the local Taliban organizations and the Haqqani network against the governments and security forces. Al-Qaeda and its affiliates

likewise continue to operate elsewhere in the Middle East. In Yemen, for example, al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula, considered the closest and most dangerous of al-Qaeda allies, has consolidated its activities. Even though it has retreated from some of the cities it conquered in Yemen in recent years, this organization remains highly entrenched among the local population and receives considerable support, achieved mainly with its exploitation of the civil war between the current regime, supported by Saudi Arabia, and the Houthi insurgents, in order to strengthen its position among the local residents.³⁵

Extensive terrorist attacks have also been launched in eastern and western Africa by al-Qaeda's partners: the Somali al-Shabaab organization is active in eastern Africa, and its members committed guerrilla and terrorist attacks during 2017, including dozens of suicide attacks, causing heavy casualties.³⁶ Active in western Africa, mainly in Mali and in Burkina Faso, are organizations belonging to the alliance with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), including al-Mourabitoun and the "support group of Islam and Muslims" (Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin – JNIM). Al-Qaeda has another branch in the Indian subcontinent, AQIS, which continues to recruit activists and commit terrorist attacks.

Broad Base of Radical Shia Combatants, Veterans of the Fighting in Syria and Iraq

Against the backdrop of the intensified fighting in Iraq and Syria in recent years and the recruitment of thousands of Shiite volunteers in these states, a large pool of foreign fighters from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Gulf states was formed in Iraq and Syria under the leadership of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in Iran and in close partnership with Hezbollah. According to various assessments, this pool already ranges between 20 and 40 thousand combatants.³⁷ These forces currently remain in the combat arenas in Iraq and especially in Syria, while some have settled there and are fighting battles still underway in Syria.

The question of the deployment of these combatants is liable to create a demographic and security challenge, mainly in Syria, and particularly due to their presence among predominantly Sunni populations, which consider the presence of the foreign combatants, who are primarily Shiite, a hostile force

that must be resisted. Their presence is liable to spur the Sunni population to support militant Sunni jihadist groups, who will offer them protection from the Shiite presence in the event of clashes between the Islamic denominations. The Shiite combatants are also liable to be used as reserve fighters to help realize Iran's aspirations to expand its influence in the Middle East.

Diminished Activity by the Global Coalition; US Withdrawal from the Helm of the Campaign against Global Terrorism

The military mission to prevent the Islamic State from reorganizing and reestablishing its power in failed states is still underway. So is the need to continue taking action against al-Qaeda and its partners. Most of the reasons that led to the growth and resilience of these organizations still exist – the weakness of regimes and their leaders' lack of legitimacy, the Sunni-Shiite rift, weak economies, corrupt governments, the lack of inclusiveness of the society as a whole and the various ethnic communities in the country's management, and the lack of economic opportunities for young people. These circumstances are liable to help the Salafi jihadist forces attract young people to their ranks in an attempt to recapture territories and establish emirates ruled by strict interpretation of *sharia* law.

Notwithstanding the continued focus on the military level, it is clear that the campaign that lies ahead should involve primarily diplomatic, economic, and extensive humanitarian activities in order to reconstruct those regions that were destroyed by the Islamic State and the campaign to defeat it. Enormous investments are needed to rehabilitate and care for the populations in these regions, since without such aid they are liable to be targeted as easy prey by extremist terrorist groups. The prevailing sentiment in the West is that the main military campaign against the Islamic State in the Middle East is nearly over, because the Islamic State is on the verge of collapse, and with it, the military threat it posed. It is evident that members of the Western coalition that fought alongside the United States in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria are tired with the prolonged and extremely bloody campaign and are eager to end their military involvement in wars of this type.

Furthermore, it appears that the character and leadership style of President Trump, who heads this coalition, will influence how much coalition members are willing to accept the continued leadership of the United States. Managing

and maintaining unity in a coalition of many nations and creating cooperative operational and logistics efforts, while resolving infighting and conflicts of interest, are complex tasks that the United States took upon itself. However, the behavioral style and the separatist policy of the current President, who preaches “America first,” have sparked an increasing lack of confidence in the United States. First, President Trump’s declarations about changes in the United States foreign policy – the extensive cut in the foreign aid budget in general and in resources allocated for the State Department’s activities in particular – are liable to constitute a clear obstacle to the “soft” campaign against terrorist organizations. The courses of action in this direction will hinder efforts to assist countries and citizens to recover from the death, destruction, and trauma that they suffered at the hands of the Islamic State.

Furthermore, since he was elected, President Trump has pushed for the United States to withdraw from previous security and other commitments to Europe and NATO, including in areas not directly relating to security, such as the Paris Climate Accord. In addition, Trump’s conciliatory policy toward Russia, along with his support and identification with President Vladimir Putin, who is casting his shadow on Europe, and Trump’s insulting comments about leaders of Europe, Australia, and Canada, have created a feeling in the West in general, and in Europe in particular, that the United States is abandoning its Western allies and that American international leadership is weakening profoundly. Against this backdrop, the global coalition, which had joined forces in order to defeat the Islamic State, will apparently disintegrate.

Israel in Light of the Defeat of the Islamic State in the Levant

On the scale of security threats facing Israel, the activity of the Islamic State has until now not been perceived as a key challenge. However, Israel thoroughly prepared for the possibility that the threat posed by the Islamic State and its supporters might intensify. Thus, Israel took appropriate measures to thwart activities on the part of Islamic State supporters within its boundaries, and arrested a few dozen local activists this past year who sought to join its ranks or to act on its behalf. Israel also reinforced its borders against arenas where the Islamic State had been active, mainly its southern border with

Egypt and its northern border with Syria, and prepared for the possibility of Salafi jihadi terrorist activities infiltrating into its territory from Jordan and from Lebanon. In addition, over the past year and a half, Israel invested considerable intelligence and operational efforts to assist its Western allies in thwarting terrorist activities within their borders, and also closely cooperated with Egypt and Jordan in their battles against Salafi jihadist groups. With Israel's proximity to Islamic State activity in bordering countries, Israel contributed substantially to thwart terrorist attacks in the West.

The defeat of the Islamic State in Syria did not entirely eradicate the threat to Israel from Syria, and there are still forces that are liable to try to attack Israel specifically in this period, when the insurgency against Bashar al-Assad is weakening. Salafi jihadist groups in Syria that identify with al-Qaeda may also try to take action against Israel. In addition, Islamic State partners in Egypt, mainly in the Sinai Peninsula, continue to be an avowed enemy of Israel. They have declared their intention of destroying it and launched rockets toward Eilat. These forces continue to exhibit high operational capability during their battles against the Egyptian military and will continue to constitute a security challenge that is shared by Egypt and Israel alike. There is a strong terrorist foundation in Jordan as well, which is partially overt and partially covert, and there too, the security threat continues to constitute a security challenge that is shared by Jordan and Israel.

In addition to these challenges, it appears that the heightened security threat to Israeli and Jewish targets lies in two other arenas: the first – in the international arena. Due to the trend of intensifying international terrorist attacks in the West on behalf of and in the name of the Islamic State, Israeli and Jewish sites are liable to become targets for attack by all groups that identify with Salafi jihad. Apart from official national sites, which are protected by formal Israeli security, most of the civilian sites do not receive any special protection, and as a result, are liable to be vulnerable.

The second key threat that directly derives from the weakening of the Islamic State is the threat from Iran, Hezbollah, and the Shiite forces that came into the region and remained there as a tool for Iranian hegemonic aspirations, which include preparations to attack Israel. The main Israeli concern is about a second front against it in Syria, led by the Revolutionary Guard Forces and with the active involvement of Hezbollah. Some of the

threat derives from the establishment of terrorist infrastructure, in the broad sense of the term; i.e., military infrastructure for the development of rockets and the construction of bases for transferring sophisticated war materials to Hezbollah and perhaps also operatives, composed of foreign Shiite combatants. At this stage, the nature of the ceasefire in Syria remains unclear, as is the questions how many foreign Shiite forces, including Revolutionary Guard Forces and Hezbollah, will remain in Syria. However, the key security challenge is definitely still to rout the Islamic State forces from Syria.

Fighting in Syria between Israel and the Shiite militias composed of foreign combatants from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bahrain, and others armed with Iranian weaponry is liable to pose a new challenge for Israel, in which it is forced to directly confront citizens of distant Muslim countries with whom it had never clashed with in the past.

Conclusion

At the close of 2017, the imminent defeat of the Islamic State, which during the brief years of its existence as an autonomous entity in the Middle East wreaked wide scale murder and destruction, is good news. Nevertheless, various factors still exist that indicate that work remains until a decisive victory is achieved. A map of the remaining threats attests to the fact that the world must continue the war against the Islamic State and its partners around the world, and hunt down, arrest, and perhaps even kill remaining combatants. Another no less important dimension is physical reconstruction of the ruins caused by the Islamic State and the psychological rehabilitation of the citizens traumatized by its rule, so that they will be able to resume a normal life and not be left as prey to its attempts to reestablish its rule in vulnerable regions lacking effective governance.

In many countries, the basic conditions that led to the emergence of the Islamic State still exist. In order to prevent extremist groups from exploiting these conditions to expand the circle of violence and terror, it is essential that the international community take action to deal with them through a broad international coalition. However, while this is an essential need, it is not visible in the near future, especially when the United States – which had been the main world power that took action to unify members and to contend jointly with the challenge – is headed by a President who advocates

an isolationist policy and reduces his country's involvement in assisting and rehabilitating the regions that are vulnerable to the spread of terrorism.

Iran's increasing intervention in numerous Middle East countries, including Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen, and its intention of increasing its involvement in the region in general and its assistance to forces hostile to Israel in particular, suggest that the threat of terrorist attacks against Israel has not been eliminated with the defeat of the Islamic State, but rather the opposite. Stopping the spread of Iran and its agents in the Middle East and in the Gulf is an objective that is shared by Israel and the Gulf states; the United States may embrace this as well, at least according to President Trump's declarations that he will take action to stop the spread of the Iranian hegemony. If this happens, whether at the initiative of the United States, or due to Iran's actions, Shiite terrorism is liable to be the focus of the next campaign against terror, coupled with the expected ongoing fight against Sunni Salafi jihadist terrorism.

Notes

- 1 Roi Kais, "20 Minutes of Terror: 'Whoever Survived, Got a Bullet in the Head; People Tried Jumping out of Windows,'" *Ynet*, November 25, 2017, <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-5047630,00.html>; Jason Burke, "Mogadishu Bombing: al-Shabaab behind Deadly Blast, Officials Say," *The Guardian*, October 16, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/16/mogadishu-bombing-al-shabaab-behind-deadly-blast-officials-say>.
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- 3 Robert Fisk, "Fallujah, the 'Resistance' City, is Liberated yet Again – for the Fourth time in a Decade," *Independent*, June 26, 2016, <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/fallujah-the-resistance-city-is-liberated-yet-again-for-the-fourth-time-in-a-decade-a7104321.html>.
- 4 Thomas Joscelyn, "Pentagon: Islamic State has Lost its Safe Haven in Sirte, Libya," *Long War Journal*, December 7, 2016, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/12/pentagon-islamic-state-has-lost-its-safe-haven-in-sirte-libya.php>.
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- 6 John Bacon, "Iraqi Forces have Fully Retaken Mosul, U.S.-Backed Coalition Confirms," *USA Today*, July 10, 2017, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2017/07/10/iraqi-forces-have-retaken-mosul-u-s-backed-coalition-confirms/465022001/>.
- 7 Hamdi Alkhshali, "Iraqi Forces Retake Last ISIS-Held Town," *CNN*, November 17, 2017, <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/11/17/middleeast/iraqi-isis-rawa/index.html>.
- 8 Ellen Francis, "U.S.-Backed Syria Militias Say Tabqa, Dam Captured from Islamic State," *Reuters*, May 10, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-tabqa/u-s-backed-syria-militias-say-tabqa-dam-captured-from-islamic-state-idUSKBN1862E4>.
- 9 Hilary Clarke, Nick Paton Walsh, Eliza Mackintosh, and Ghazi Balkiz, "ISIS Defeated in Raqqa as 'Major Military Operations' Declared Over," *CNN*, October 18, 2017, <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/10/17/middleeast/raqqa-isis-syria/index.html>.
- 10 Hamdi Alkhshali, Frederik Pleitgen, and Laura Smith-Spark, "ISIS Ousted from Last Major City in Syria, State Media Reports," *CNN*, November 3, 2017, <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/11/03/middleeast/syria-isis-deir-ezzor/index.html>.
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- 13 For example, the suicide bombing in Alexandria on April 9, 2017, which killed 11 people and wounded about 70. See AFP, "Egypt Says Second Church Suicide Bomber Identified," *Yahoo*, April 13, 2017, <https://www.yahoo.com/news/egypt-says-second-church-suicide-bomber-identified-192130808.html>.
- 14 For example, the suicide bombing in al-Barth in the Sinai on July 7, 2017, which killed 26 people and wounded another 26. See AFP, "Suicide Car Bombers Target Egypt Checkpoint in Sinai," *Daily Mail*, July 7, 2017, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-4674304/Suicide-car-bombers-target-Egypt-checkpoint-Sinai.html>.
- 15 For example, the suicide bombing in Aden, which killed 6 people and wounded 14 when a terrorist exploded a car bomb adjacent to security guards. See Ahmed

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- 16 For example, on June 7, 2017, a pair of terrorist attacks were carried out by gunmen and suicide bombers, who stormed two symbolic targets in Tehran: the Iranian Parliament building and the mausoleum of Ayatollah Khomeini. Twelve people were killed and another 42 were wounded. See Shirzad Bozorgmehr and Angela Dewan, "Iran's Revolutionary Guards Blame Saudis for Tehran Attacks," *CNN*, July 27, 2017, <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/06/07/middleeast/iran-parliament-shooting/index.html>; Alex Vatanka, "Iran's Islamic State Problem Isn't Going Away," *Foreign Policy*, June 19, 2017, <https://goo.gl/GCVnAS>.
 - 17 For example, on October 20, 2017, two suicide bombings on two Shiite mosques in the city of Kabul left 63 people dead and 55 wounded. See Will Worley, "Kabul Attack: Isis Claims Responsibility for Shia Mosque Suicide Bombing Killing at Least 30 in Afghan Capital," *Independent*, October 20, 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/kabul-attack-latest-update-shia-mosque-suicide-bomb-kills-death-afghanistan-capital-prayers-a8011466.html>; AFP, "Nearly 60 Said Killed in Two Suicide Attacks on Afghan Mosques," *Times of Israel*, October 20, 2017, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/nearly-60-said-killed-in-two-suicide-attacks-on-afghan-mosques/>.
 - 18 For example, on May 24, 2017, two Islamic State terrorists committed a suicide attack at a bus terminal in Jakarta, killing three and wounding another seven. See Agustinus Beo Da Costa and Gayatri Suroyo, "Indonesian Police Launch Raid as Jakarta Attacks Linked to Islamic State," *Reuters*, May 24, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-indonesia-blast/indonesian-police-launch-raid-as-jakarta-attacks-linked-to-islamic-state-idUSKBN18K25E>.
 - 19 In May, a coalition of terrorist organizations led by Isnilon Hapilon, the emir of the Islamic State in the region, seized control of the city of Marawi, which triggered combat operations to rout them. On October 23, 2017, Marawi was liberated, after bloody battles that left more than 1,000 people dead, including 165 soldiers and police in the Philippine security forces. See AFP and Rappler.com, "Marawi Combat Operations Over – Lorenzana," *Rappler.com*, October 23, 2017, <https://www.rappler.com/nation/186125-combat-operations-marawi-over-lorenzana>.
 - 20 Joseph Hincks, "Uighur Militants Reportedly Threaten China in ISIS Video," *Time*, March 1, 2017, <http://time.com/4686836/isis-video-china-uighur/>.
 - 21 For example, on June 7, 2017, the organization waged a wide scale attack on the city of Maiduguri, the capital of the Borno province, with four suicide bombers and anti-aircraft gunners, killing 18 people and wounding another 24. See Abdulkareem Haruna, "Nigeria: Many Killed as Boko Haram Execute Coordinated Attacks on

- Maiduguri,” *AllAfrica*, June 8, 2017, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201706080336.html>; Kayode Idowu, “Osinbajo Visits Maiduguri as Multiple Bombings Kill 18,” *Punch Newspaper*, June 9, 2017, <http://punchng.com/osinbajo-visits-maiduguri-as-multiple-bombings-kill-18/>.
- 22 BBC, “Nigeria’s Boko Haram Pledges Allegiance to Islamic State,” *BBC News*, March 7, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-31784538>.
- 23 For example, on April 20, 2017 a terrorist stopped his vehicle alongside a police car on the Champs-Élysées and opened fire on the police force. One police officer was killed and three others were wounded. On August 9, three soldiers in Paris were wounded in a vehicle-ramming attack, and on October 1, a Tunisian immigrant stabbed two women to death outside of a train station in Marseille and attacked soldiers. See BBC, “Paris Champs Elysees Attack Gunman Named as Karim Cheurfi,” *BBC News*, April 21, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39671542>; Richard Lough, Benoit Tessier, “Car Rams into Soldiers in Paris Suburb, Suspect Arrested after Manhunt,” *Reuters*, August 9, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-attacks-france/car-rams-into-soldiers-in-paris-suburb-suspect-arrested-after-manhunt-idUSKBN1AP0OS>; Julian Robinson, “Knifeman Who Shouted ‘Allahu Akbar’ Before Murdering a ‘Brilliant Student’ and Her Cousin in Marseille is Named as a 29-year-old Tunisian Illegal Immigrant,” *Daily Mail*, October 3, 2017, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4943330/Marseille-knifeman-named-29-year-old-Tunisian.html>.
- 24 For example, on May 22, 2017, a suicide bomber blew himself up at the entrance to a concert hall in Manchester, killing 22 people and wounding about another 160. The attack was committed under the direct orchestration of the Islamic State headquarters in Libya. On June 3, three terrorists committed a combined vehicle-ramming and stabbing attack in London, which killed seven and wounded 48 people. See Jack Moore, “Manchester Attack: Bomber ‘Received Permission’ from Isis in Syria and Recruiter in Dallas,” *Newsweek*, August 14, 2017, <http://www.newsweek.com/manchester-attack-bomber-received-permission-isis-syria-recruiter-dallas-650300>; Harriet Alexander, “London Bridge Attack – Everything We Know,” *Telegraph*, June 6, 2017, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/06/03/london-bridge-everything-know-far>; Mark Hodge, Neal Baker, and Emma Lake, “Seconds from Slaughter London Bridge Attack – ISIS Claims Responsibility for Borough Market terror as video shows Jihadis Stalking Pubs Searching for Victims,” *The Sun*, June 7, 2017, <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/3717339/london-bridge-attack-victims-terrorists-isis/>.
- 25 For example, on August 17, 2017, a local terrorist cell committed a vehicle-ramming and shooting attack and killed 14 people in Barcelona. This attack was committed after a “work accident” had occurred in an apartment in Alcanar used as

a bomb factory, when gas canisters exploded and thus prevented the terrorists from carrying out their planned coordinated attack on a pedestrian street, church, and port. See BBC, "Barcelona and Cambrils Attacks: What We Know So Far," *BBC News*, August 21, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40964242>; Israel Intelligence Heritage & Commemoration Center (IICC), "The Vehicle-Ramming Attacks in Spain: Status Report (updated to the afternoon of August 20, 2017)," Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, August 20, 2017, <https://goo.gl/9aknVR>.

- 26 On April 7, 2017, a vehicle-ramming attack was committed with a truck at a shopping center. Four people were killed and 15 more were wounded. See Lauren Said-Moorhouse and Bryony Jones, "Dazed but Defiant, Stockholm Unites after Attack," *CNN News*, April 8, 2017, <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/04/08/europe/sweden-truck-attack-aftermath/>.
- 27 On August 18, 2017, a stabbing attack was committed, killing two women and wounding another eight. The terrorist was shot and arrested. See Nicola Harley, "Finland 'Terror' Attack: Briton Stabbed Four Times 'Trying to Save' Women Targeted in Attack Which Left Two Dead," *The Telegraph*, August 19, 2017, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/08/19/finnish-knifeman-moroccan-say-police/>.
- 28 On October 31, 2017, an Uzbek resident of the United States committed a vehicle-ramming attack that left eight people dead and wounded another 11. The terrorist claimed that he had acted out of identification with the ideas of Islamic State, which also assumed responsibility for the attack. See Jim Hoffer, "New York City Rampage: What We Know about the Suspect," *ABC Eye Witness News*, October 31, 2017, <http://abc7chicago.com/new-york-city-rampage-what-we-know-about-the-suspect/2589184/>; Jose A. DelReal and Corey Kilgannon, "Mangled School Bus, Bodies Everywhere in Manhattan; 'It Was Surreal,'" *New York Times*, October 31, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/31/nyregion/nyc-scene-terror-attack-truck-witnesses.html?_r=0; Benjamin Mueller, William K. Rashbaum, and Al Baker, "Terror Attack Kills 8 and Injures 11 in Manhattan," *New York Times*, October 31, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/31/nyregion/police-shooting-lower-manchattan.html>.
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