

Baghdadi's death is symbolic victory for Trump – but can't undo damage done in Syria

The timing of the ISIS leader's killing benefits Trump, but it is unlikely to hamper the group's plans for attacks

Amos Harel | Oct. 27, 2019

The operation to kill Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISIS, took place at a very convenient time for U.S. President Donald Trump. A few weeks after he abandoned the Kurds – leaving them alone to face the Turkish invasion of northern Syria and setting off a chain of events that might lead to the escape of thousands of ISIS prisoners – this important symbolic victory gives Trump useful ammunition to counter his many critics.

[...]

Yoram Schweitzer, a researcher specializing in terror at the **Institute for National Security Studies**, told Haaretz on Sunday morning that the importance of killing Baghdadi, assuming it is confirmed, is mainly symbolic. According to **Schweitzer**, the main achievement of the international coalition fighting ISIS was already attained nearly two years ago, with the final fall of the caliphate, the “Islamic State” founded over a large area of northern Iraq and eastern Syria. The fall of its last bastions, in the cities of Mosul in Iraq and Raqqa in Syria, changed the modus operandi of ISIS – which reverted to operating as a terror and guerilla organization, without control over territory.

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