



ICT
International Institute
for Counter-Terrorism
With the Support of Keren Daniel

ICT Incident and Activists Database

PERIODIC REVIEW

Summary of Terrorist Incidents and Counter-Terrorist Operations Worldwide February 2014

Highlights

- On February 2, police raided the Musa mosque in Mombasa, Kenya, and arrested more than 100 Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen militants. They also seized an arsenal of weapons.
- On February 9, an IAF strike killed Abdallah Kharti in Dir al-Balah, a town in the Gaza Strip. Israeli authorities said Kharti was responsible for multiple attacks against Israel.
- On February 11, a series of crude but viable explosive devices, were sent to army recruitment offices across southeast England. Scotland Yard said the new IRA claimed responsibility for the incidents.
- On February 12, Naim Abbas, a senior Al-Qaeda-linked militant, was arrested by the Lebanese military and charged with belonging to a terrorist group. He was accused of carrying out two car bombings in Haret Hreik, Lebanon, in January 2014, as well as with the murder and attempted murder of citizens.
- On February 16, authorities foiled an attempted attack on an oil refinery in Aden, Yemen, and arrested 27 suspected Al-Qaeda operatives. Aden Police Deputy Commissioner, Najeeb al-Mughalas, said the thwarted attack was in the preparation phase.
- On February 16, a suicide bomber targeted a tourist bus in Taba, Egypt, killing four people, including three South Korean tourists, and injuring 31 others. Ansar Bait al-Maqdas (also known as Supporters of Jerusalem) claimed responsibility for the attack.
- On February 26, Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale were sentenced in the UK to life imprisonment, with Adebolajo given a full life sentence and Adebowale ordered to serve at least 45 years, for the murder of British soldier, Fusilier Lee Rigby in May 2013.

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Europe

France

On February 2, two French teenagers, who were not identified for legal reasons, were charged with criminal conspiracy in connection with a terrorist enterprise and placed under court supervision.¹ Authorities said that in early January 2014, the boys left their home in Toulouse and travelled to Syria to join Al-Qaeda linked militants. Authorities claimed they were the youngest Westerners to engage in the conflict. One of the boy's fathers launched an appeal for the boys to return to France and claimed that his son had been radicalized on the Internet.² The boys were returned to France by authorities after attempting to enter Syria via the Turkish border and investigators spent two days interrogating them. A lawyer for the younger suspect claimed that the boys' trip was for humanitarian reasons. According to French authorities, more than 600 French teenagers have gone to Syria, are plotting to go or have returned, and more than 20 French citizens have been killed in the fighting.³

Greece

On February 10, Greek security forces, with the assistance of US and Turkish intelligence agencies, arrested four militants as a result of an anti-terrorism raid on an apartment in the Gizi neighborhood of Athens. In the raid, authorities seized weapons, explosives, detonators and berets bearing the emblem of the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C).⁴ Authorities said they received intelligence from an anonymous informer. It was reported that amongst those arrested was the DHKP-C leader, Hüseyin Fevzi Tekin, and İsmail Akkol, who is wanted by Turkish authorities for his alleged involvement in the 1996 murder of businessman Özdemir Sabancı.⁵ Anti-terrorism police did not release the nationalities of those detained but it was reported in local media that the suspects were Kurds with Turkish citizenship. The arrests come after a woman, 44,

¹ AFP, "Two French high school students charged in connection with terrorist enterprise", February 2, 2014.

² RT, "School out for jihad? Two French 15-year olds 'travel' to Syria to fight", January 18, 2014.

³ FOX News, "Teens, other amateurs among hundreds of French Muslims drawn to Syria war", February 2, 2014.

⁴ AP, "Greek police: 4 Turks charged with terror offenses", February 11, 2014.

⁵ DPA, "Greek anti-terrorism police arrest four wanted in Turkey", February 10, 2014.

also believed to be a Kurd, who was wanted in Turkey for terrorism offenses, was arrested in Crete.⁶

Russia

On February 5, Russian Special Forces killed five suspected militants during a raid on their hideout in Makhachkala in the Caucasus republic of Dagestan. One other militant was arrested. Authorities said the group's alleged leader, Alexei Pashentsev, was among those killed. The raid was part of a series of counter-terrorism efforts in the run-up to the Sochi Winter Olympics.⁷ Police said the suspects had ties to the Buynaksk militant group that were linked to the December 2013 Volgograd bombings.⁸

United Kingdom

On February 11, a series of crude but viable explosive devices were sent to army recruitment offices across southeast England, including Oxford, Brighton, Canterbury and Slough.⁹ The motive behind the campaign was unclear.¹⁰ On February 17, the new IRA claimed responsibility for the attack and used a recognized code word in a statement that it sent to the Belfast newspaper, 'The Irish News'. The new IRA was formed in the summer of 2012 following the merger of the Real IRA, an armed vigilante group known as Republican Action against Drugs, and independent armed republican units in Co. Tyrone. The organization released a statement confirming that it was to be known as the IRA going forward and it vowed to continue its armed struggle against the Northern Ireland state, the British government and its armed forces.¹¹

On February 13, wanted ETA militant Antonio Troitino, 56, was arrested under a Spanish police warrant in London. He had been released from prison in the UK in October 2013 by a European

⁶ Hurriyet, "DHKP/C arrests in Greece coordinated by CIA, MIT, EYP", February 13, 2014.

⁷ CNN, "Suspected militants killed in Dagestan raid", February 5, 2014.

⁸ For full details of this incident see the December 2013 ICT Database report <http://www.ict.org.il/Article.aspx?ID=46>

⁹ BBC, "Bomb sent to army careers office in Reading", February 11, 2014.

¹⁰ Guardian, "New IRA sent bombs to army recruitment centres, Met confirms", February 17, 2014.

¹¹ Belfast Telegraph, "IRA' claims responsibility for suspected explosive devices sent to Army offices in England", February 17, 2014.

rights court ruling, which cut the jail time for several ETA convicts in 2013. Troitino had been on conditional release from prison, but Spanish courts demanded that Britain send him back and maintained an extradition warrant for him.¹² Authorities said that Troitino had been a member of ETA's Madrid unit in the 1980s, which carried out some of the separatist group's most serious attacks. He was arrested in 1987 and sentenced to more than 2,000 years in prison for 22 killings. A legal procedural deficiency in April 2011 set Troitino free and before it was resolved he went on the run to London, where he was arrested the following year. In October 2013, he was among scores of ETA members released under the ruling by the European Court of Human Rights, which outraged the families of people killed by the group.¹³

On February 25, four people including former Guantanamo Bay detainee Moazzam Begg, 45, were arrested in Birmingham by West Midlands police, accused of attending a terrorist training camp in Syria, and facilitating terrorism abroad.¹⁴ It was alleged that between July 14, 2013 and August 8, 2013, Begg became involved in an arrangement as a result of which money or other property was to be made available to another person with the knowledge, or reasonable cause for suspicion, that it would be or might be used for the purposes of terrorism. He was also accused of providing instruction or training between October 9, 2012 and April 9, 2013, with the knowledge that the trainee intended to use the skills in the preparation of acts of terrorism. The other suspects - a man, 36, and a woman, 44, and her son, 20, all from Birmingham, were detained on suspicion of assisting terrorism overseas.¹⁵

On February 26, Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale were sentenced to life imprisonment, with Adebolajo given a full life sentence and Adebowale ordered to serve at least 45 years, for the

¹² Euro News, "ETA fugitive wanted by Spain arrested in London", February 14, 2014.

¹³ AFP, "ETA fugitive killer arrested in London", February 13, 2014.

¹⁴ BBC, "Ex-Guantanamo detainee Moazzam Begg arrested by terror police", February 25, 2014. It should be noted that on March 1, 2014, Begg was charged with providing terrorist training and funding terrorism overseas, regarding Syria, and appeared at Westminster Magistrates' Court, entering a plea of not guilty. He faces a plea hearing on July 14, provisionally followed by a trial at the Old Bailey on October 6, 2014. See: BBC, "UK ex-Guantanamo detainee Moazzam Begg remanded in custody", March 1, 2014 and Independent, "Guantanamo Briton Moazzam Begg faces seven-month wait for hearing on Syria charges", March 14, 2014.

¹⁵ Independent, "Guantanamo Briton Moazzam Begg faces seven-month wait for hearing on Syria charges", March 14, 2014.

murder of British soldier, Fusilier Lee Rigby in May 2013.¹⁶ During sentencing, the judge described the men as having been radicalized and said that their actions were "a betrayal of Islam".¹⁷ Adebowale then started shouting and protesting from the dock saying that this was a lie, ranting about America and Britain, and his accomplice joined in, screaming "allahu akbar" and hurling abuse at the prison guards who tackled him to the ground. Following a scuffle with security guards in the dock, both men were removed from the court and the sentencing continued in their absence.¹⁸

Africa

Kenya

On February 2, police raided the Musa mosque in Mombasa and arrested more than 100 people. Police said they carried out the raid upon receiving an intelligence tip that a meeting to recruit fighters was taking place and that the recruits were being trained at the mosque.¹⁹ The men were charged with being members of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen. Authorities recovered an AK-47 rifle, machetes and other iron implements, jihadist flags, stun guns, hundreds of textbooks, maps, registers, pictures, information on alleged spies and 'Muslim traitors', and terrorist training manuals. Police also seized an audio recording calling for Muslim volunteers to carry out attacks on countries oppressing Somali Muslims. More than 200 compact-discs and memory cards with pictures of jihadist training camps in Somalia and Syria were also recovered, as well as audio instructions on light weapons use, combat and doctrine.²⁰ Following the arrests, riots broke out at the mosque and continued for several hours. Two people were killed.²¹

On February 8, four men were charged in a Kenyan court with terrorism-related offenses for the detonation of an improvised explosive device at a popular restaurant at Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta

¹⁶ For full details of the incident see May 2013 ICT database report:
<http://www.ict.org.il/Article.aspx?ID=218>

¹⁷ BBC, "Lee Rigby murder: Adebolajo and Adebowale jailed", February 26, 2014.

¹⁸ Independent, "Rigby killers dragged screaming from the dock as they deny 'betraying Islam' ", February 26, 2014.

¹⁹ Al-Jazeera, "Deadly clashes after police raid Kenya mosque", February 2, 2014.

²⁰ Sabahi, "Kenyan police find trove of evidence in Mombasa mosque raid", February 5, 2014.

²¹ BBC, "Kenya terror charges after Mombasa police raid mosque", February 3, 2014.

International Airport (JKIA) on January 16, 2014.²² The four men were identified as Hassan Abdi Mohamed, Mohamed Osman Ali, Ilyas Yusuf Warsame (a Somali diplomat) and Garad Hassan Fer. The four suspects were alleged to have been in possession of two kilograms of TNT that was found in an abandoned car and 50 grams of the same explosive found at residential house in a Somali enclave in the Nairobi neighborhood of Eastleigh. They men were also charged with acquiring Kenyan identification documents fraudulently.²³ All denied involvement in the attack.²⁴

Mali

On February 8, five Malian International Red Cross workers were allegedly kidnapped in Mali, on the road between Kidal and Gao.²⁵ The Swiss-based International Committee of the Red Cross reported that it had lost contact with a vehicle carrying its team members.²⁶ The Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) claimed responsibility for the kidnapping but said the hostages were “alive and in good health”.²⁷

Nigeria

On February 11, suspected Boko Haram militants killed 62 people in the village of Konduga, Borno State. Witnesses said dozens of militants driving in trucks painted in military colors and armed with automatic weapons and explosives stormed the Konduga local government area burning houses and shooting fleeing villagers. Authorities also said the militants took 20 young girls from a local college hostage. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed Boko Haram.²⁸

²² See January 2014 ICT report.

²³ Sabahi, “Kenya charges 4 over JKIA explosion”, February 4, 2014.

²⁴ AP, “Kenya: 4 Men Charged in Court for Airport Bombing”, February 4, 2014.

²⁵ International Committee of the Red Cross, “Vehicle disappears with ICRC personnel on board”, February 11, 2014.

²⁶ ICRC, “Mali: ICRC team released”, April 17, 2014.

On April 17, the ICRC staff members, all Malian, were freed by chance during a military operation conducted by French forces in the north of the country. Two of them have minor injuries but their condition is not life-threatening and they will all soon be reunited with their families.

²⁷ AFP, “Al-Qaeda group kidnaps Mali Red Cross staff”, February 11, 2014.

²⁸ Reuters, “Nigeria’s Boko Haram kill 51 in northeast attack – witnesses”, February 12, 2014.

On February 15, suspected Boko Haram gunmen indiscriminately opened fire at residents in Doron Baga, a fishing village located along Lake Chad. Many people jumped in the lake as an effort to escape the attack. On the same day, in a separate but coordinated incident, approximately 100 militants raided the village Izghe, in Gwoza district of Borno State. Authorities said the militants, who were dressed in military uniforms, stormed the Christian farming village and opened sporadic fire on residents, specifically targeting male residents. The gunmen reportedly rounded up a group of men in the village and shot them, before going door-to-door and killing anyone they found. Witnesses said some of the victims were shot, while others had their throats slit.²⁹ The village had been under emergency rule since May 2013 in a bid to stop an Islamist rebellion that has claimed thousands of lives since 2009.³⁰ Following this attacks, suspected Boko Haram gunmen returned to the village on February 23, torching homes, shooting and detonating explosives. Witnesses described how the attackers arrived in trucks and motorcycles, asked the men in the village to gather, and then hacked and shot them to death.³¹ No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed Boko Haram.³²

On February 26, suspected Boko Haram militants launched an attack on a federal college in Buni Yadi, near the capital of Yobe state, killing 59 students. Authorities said gunmen opened fire on the students as they slept in a dormitory. Police said all the victims were boys and the school's 24 buildings, including staff quarters, had been completely destroyed by fire. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed Boko Haram militants.³³

Somalia

On February 1, two car bombs exploded outside the Jazeera Hotel in Mogadishu, killing six people and wounding eight others. The hotel is frequently used by foreigners and government officials. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen

²⁹ BBC, "Nigeria's Boko Haram 'in village massacre'", February 16, 2014.

³⁰ AFP, "Nigeria village hit by Boko Haram targeted again", February 23, 2014.

³¹ BBC, "Nigeria's Boko Haram 'in village massacre'", February 16, 2014.

³² CNN, "A year of attacks linked to Nigeria's Boko Haram", February 27, 2014.

³³ AFP, "Nigerian boarding school attack by Boko Haram gunmen leaves 59 pupils dead, officials say", February 26, 2014.

militants.³⁴

On February 10, a double bombing targeted Somalia's internationally-backed government officials, killing one person and injuring four others. One of the bombs targeted a car carrying Ahmed Omar Mudane, Deputy Security Commander of the lower Shabelle region, seriously injuring him. Police believed the bomb had been attached to his car. A second car bomb exploded several hours later outside the Oriental Hotel in Mogadishu, where government officials were holding a meeting. Police said the car was empty at the time it exploded.³⁵ Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen militants claimed responsibility for the attack.³⁶

On February 22, 11 people were killed and injured when a team of nine Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen militants launched a major suicide attack against the heavily fortified presidential palace in Mogadishu.³⁷ A large car-bomb exploded at the perimeter of the central Mogadishu complex and a group of suicide bombers breached the Villa Somalia compound. Security officials said that the assailants wore military uniforms to gain access. The Chief of Staff to Somalia's Prime Minister was among those killed. Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen militants claimed responsibility for the attack.³⁸

Tunisia

On February 16, gunmen in western Tunisia killed four people, including two police officers, and wounded four others. Authorities said a police patrol had been sent to the Jendouba area to investigate reports that two people had been shot dead. The gunmen then fired on the police car, killing the two officers inside.³⁹ No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed Ansar al-Shari'a militants.⁴⁰

³⁴ AP, "Mogadishu car bomb attacks kill 6", February 1, 2014.

³⁵ AP, "Police: Car bomb explodes outside Mogadishu hotel", February 10, 2014.

³⁶ Reuters, "Two car bombs explode in Somali capital, at least five wounded", February 10, 2014.

³⁷ Reuters, "Somalia's al Shabaab say attack meant to get president 'dead or alive'", February 22, 2014.

³⁸ AFP, "Mass suicide attack against Somalia palace", February 22, 2014.

³⁹ BBC, "Militants in Tunisia kill four, including two police", February 16, 2014.

⁴⁰ Reuters, "Militants kill four in Tunisian border attack", February 16, 2014.

Middle East

Egypt

On February 16, a suicide bomber targeted a tourist bus in Taba in the Sinai Peninsula, killing four people, including three South Korean tourists. Authorities said 31 out of the 33 passengers on the bus were wounded, 14 seriously.⁴¹ According to witnesses, a man walked to the bus as tourists were disembarking and detonated his explosive belt.⁴² The Sinai-based militant group Ansar Bait al-Maqdas claimed responsibility for the attack. This was the fourth major incident in Sinai since September 2013 in which Ansar Bait al-Maqdis has used a suicide bomber on foot. All previous suicide attacks involved car bombings. Authorities said that the attack marked a change in tactic by the group, which usually targets Egyptian security personnel or buildings rather than tourists.⁴³

Iraq

On February 5, a series of explosions occurred in Baghdad and the surrounding areas, killing 53 people and wounding 82 others. The worst attack took place across the street from the high-rise building housing the Foreign Ministry. In this attack, two parked car bombs simultaneously exploded in different parking lots, killing at least 12 people, including three policemen, and wounding 22 others. Shortly afterward, a suicide bomber detonated his explosive belt in a nearby falafel restaurant frequented by officials or visitors waiting for security escorts to take them inside the Green Zone. Five people were killed and 12 wounded in that attack. Another parked car bomb exploded in Khilani Square, a busy commercial area in central Baghdad, killing five people and wounding 11 others. Security forces sealed off the area as firefighters struggled to put out the blaze ignited by the bombing. Shortly before sunset, a triple car bombing struck an outdoor market in the mainly Shi'ite suburb of Jisr Diyala in southeastern Baghdad, killing nine people and wounding 24 others. Minutes later, a rocket landed near the western gate of the Green Zone, killing one passerby and wounding seven others. Finally, a bomb exploded inside a cafe in the mainly Sunni neighborhood of Dora, killing two people and wounding six others. No group claimed responsibility

⁴¹ Jerusalem post, "Egyptian security suspects Taba bus bombing was a suicide attack", February 17, 2014.

⁴² Haaretz, "Blast hits tourist bus on Egypt side of Israel border", February 16, 2014.

⁴³ Long War Journal, "Ansar Jerusalem claims tourist bus bombing in Egypt's Sinai", February 17, 2014.

for the attacks, but authorities blamed the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham (ISIS).⁴⁴

On February 10, 21 ISIS militants were killed while attending a suicide bombing training class at a camp in a farming area in the northeastern province of Samara. During the incident, their commander unwittingly conducted a demonstration with a belt that was packed with explosives and detonated. The explosion alerted authorities to the site of the terror cell, where they arrested 23 militants, many of whom had been wounded as a result of the explosion. Stores of explosive devices and heavy weapons were seized from the camp. The identity of the militant who was conducting the training was not made public but authorities said he was a prolific recruiter.⁴⁵ Authorities also searched two houses and a garage in the orchard, and found seven car bombs as well as several explosive belts and roadside bombs. Bomb experts then started the work of defusing the devices.⁴⁶

On February 18, a series of 10 car bombs exploded in or near commercial areas and bus stations in Baghdad and Musayyib. The exact death toll was unclear but authorities said approximately 50 people had been killed⁴⁷ and approximately 90 others injured.⁴⁸ In Baghdad, four of the bombs were reported to have killed 17 people and wounded 49 others. The deadliest bomb hit a bus station, leaving seven dead and 18 wounded. Police also said another four bombs detonated simultaneously in the southern city of Hilla, killing at least 11 people and wounding 35 others. In Musayyib, about 40 miles south of Baghdad, a parked car bomb explosion killed five civilians and wounded 13 others. No group claimed responsibility for the attacks but authorities blamed Al-Qaeda linked militants, and the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham has taken credit for similar attacks previously.⁴⁹

On February 27, a series of bombings in and around Baghdad killed 52 people and injured 70 others.⁵⁰ In the worst attack, a motorcycle bomb targeted a second-hand bike market in Baghdad's eastern Sadr City district as night fell, killing 31 people and wounding 51 others. Authorities said the

⁴⁴ AP, "Iraq bombings kill at least 34 in Baghdad", February 5, 2014.

⁴⁵ Time, "Al-Qaeda Splinter Faction Shows How Not to Be a Terrorist", February 11, 2014.

⁴⁶ AP, "21 recruits killed during car-bomb training", February 10, 2014.

⁴⁷ Reuters, "Bomb attacks kill at least 24 in Iraq capital", February 18, 2014.

⁴⁸ CNN, "Blasts kill at least 16 in Iraq; 90 wounded", February 19, 2014.

⁴⁹ AP, "Iraq car bombs leave dozens dead as sectarian violence worsens", February 18, 2014.

⁵⁰ Reuters, "Baghdad motorbike blast, other attacks kill 52 in Iraq", February 27, 2014.

motorcycle bomb had been slipped in among the other bikes on display. Authorities also reported that two other bombs exploded in Baghdad, targeting minibuses ferrying home laborers at the end of the workday. In Sadr City, officials said a bomb attached to a minibus exploded, killing five civilians and wounding 14 others. Another bomb struck a minibus, killing four people and wounding 11 others in the northern Shaab neighborhood. No group claimed responsibility for the attacks but authorities blamed Al-Qaeda linked militants.⁵¹

Israel and the West Bank

On February 5, four East Jerusalem residents, ages 19 to 21, were indicted with planning to carry out a shooting attack in a functions hall in Jerusalem and were charged with conspiring to assist an enemy of war.⁵² The suspects were identified as Anas Ouisat, Basel Abidat, Ahmed Sarur and Amru Abado – residents of the east Jerusalem neighborhood of Jabal Mukaber.⁵³ They were charged by the Jerusalem District Attorney after the Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet) discovered the alleged terror cell to which they belonged.⁵⁴ According to the indictment, the suspects were motivated by nationalistic reasons to aid terrorist Palestinian organizations in their battle against the State of Israel. The Shin Bet said they made the arrests in January 2014.⁵⁵ According to the indictment, two of the four suspects were planning to enter the ‘Nof’ events hall in Jerusalem dressed as ultra-Orthodox Jews, concealing firearms beneath their clothes. They then planned to open fire at the guests. The suspects allegedly contacted a Palestinian arms dealer in the West Bank who agreed to sell them two Uzi sub-machine guns for NIS 50,000. According to the Shin Bet, three of the suspects surveyed the events hall in December 2013 in order to examine main and staff entrances to determine the most convenient point of attack. One of the suspects previously worked at the hall. The prosecution requested that the court remand all four suspects to police custody until the end of the proceedings.⁵⁶

⁵¹ AP, “Officials: Bombings kill at least 31 in Iraq”, February 27, 2014.

⁵² Haaretz, “Jerusalem court charges 4 Palestinians in planned wedding hall attack”, February 5, 2014.

⁵³ Jerusalem Post, “Terror cell charged with planning attack on wedding hall”, February 5, 2014.

⁵⁴ Times of Israel, “our Palestinians ‘planned shooting attack at wedding’”, February 5, 2014

⁵⁵ Ynet, “4 East Jerusalemites indicted for planning terrorist attack”, February 4, 2014.

⁵⁶ Jerusalem Post, “East Jerusalem terror cell charged with planning attack on wedding hall”, February 5, 2014.

On February 9, an IAF strike killed Abdallah Kharti when he was on a motorcycle in the town of Dir al-Balah in Gaza Strip. Another militant was moderately wounded in the strike but his identity has not been publicized.⁵⁷ According to the Shin Bet Kharti was a member of the Popular Resistance Committees and was considered a radical jihadist with close ties to extremist jihadi forces in Sinai. The Shin Bet said he was directly responsible for an August 2012 attack on Route 12 that killed 12 Israelis, and for rocket fire on the southern town of Eilat. He was also involved in smuggling armaments to jihadist groups in Sinai.⁵⁸

Lebanon

On February 1, a suicide car bomber driving a Grand Cherokee Jeep detonated the car bomb at a gas station in the Zahraa area of Heremel, killing three people and wounding 23 others. The city is a Hezbollah stronghold.⁵⁹ The bomb caused a meter-deep hole in the ground, setting the station and nearby cars on fire. Following this attack, on February 22, a suicide car bomber targeted an Army post in Hermel, killing three people, including two soldiers, and wounding 17 others. The Al-Nusra Front in Lebanon, an offshoot of the Al-Nusra Front in Syria, claimed responsibility for both attacks.⁶⁰ The group became known in January 2014 after claiming responsibility for a suicide car bombing that killed four people and injured 46 others in Haret Hreika, a Hezbollah stronghold in a Shia-dominated suburb of Beirut.⁶¹

On February 12, Naim Abbas, a senior Al-Qaeda linked militant with ties to the Al-Nusra Front in Lebanon and the Abdullah Azzam Brigades, was arrested by the Lebanese military. Authorities said that Abbas had played a role in four recent car bomb attacks in southern Beirut and two more in the mostly Shi'ite town of Hermel in eastern Lebanon, all Hezbollah strongholds. Abbas admitted his role in the attacks. He led authorities to two booby-trapped cars, one of which was loaded with 100 kg of explosives in the Corniche al-Mazraa district of central Beirut and another one with explosives near the town of Aarsal, on the border with Syria. Authorities discovered three women

⁵⁷ Jerusalem Post, "IAF strikes suspected Palestinian terrorist in central Gaza Strip", February 9, 2014.

⁵⁸ Times of Israel, "Ya'alon: If Hamas won't prevent terror, it will pay the price", February 9, 2014.

⁵⁹ Reuters, "Suicide bomber kills three in Lebanese Hezbollah stronghold", February 1, 2014.

⁶⁰ Daily Star, "Suicide bomber kills three in e. Lebanon", February 22, 2014.

⁶¹ AFP, "Al-Nusra Front in Lebanon claims Beirut bombing", January 21, 2014.

inside the second car, which had come from Yabroud in Syria where the Syrian army is preparing an offensive to flush out rebels. The women's task was to deliver the car to potential suicide bombers. Abbas' arrest led to a major security sweep in the country, resulting in the arrest of Nidal Sweidan, a Syrian national who had ties to Abbas, on February 27. Authorities claimed that he had carried out various attacks in east Lebanon and that he had handed over \$20,000 to Abbas at a meeting in Jounieh.⁶² Lebanon's Military Investigative Judge charged Abbas with belonging to a terrorist group in connection with the two Haret Hreik car bombings on January 2 and January 21, 2014, as well as with the murder and attempted murder of citizens. The new charges were reportedly issued based on Abbas' links to Jamal Daftardar, a commander in the Abdullah Azzam Brigades who was arrested on January 15, 2014. His case is also connected to that of detained preacher, Sheikh Omar Atrash, who was also charged with having a role in the Beirut attacks. The interlocking ties demonstrate the complex web of militant networks that pose a challenge to Lebanese security services struggling to contain the spillover of the war in Syria.⁶³

On February 19, four people were killed and over 70 others injured in a suicide bombing at an Iranian cultural center in Beirut.⁶⁴ The center was in a Shi'ite-dominated area of southern Beirut. A number of cars were badly damaged in the explosion, as were surrounding buildings.⁶⁵ Bombs also exploded near the Kuwaiti Embassy, a Lebanese army barracks, the Beirut offices of the Iranian state news agency, Irna, and the state broadcaster, Irib, and an orphanage run by an Islamic charity.⁶⁶ Among those injured was the Iranian ambassador and two employees. Authorities said that a Mercedes and a BMW were used in the attack, carrying approximately 160 kilograms of explosives. The attack caused severe damage to surrounding buildings, including a nearby orphanage run by a Sunni charity, whose windows were shattered.⁶⁷ The Abdullah Azzam Brigades claimed responsibility for the attacks on Twitter, saying the Iranian culture center was the target.⁶⁸

⁶² Reuters, "Lebanese army seizes top al Qaeda-linked militant", February 12, 2014.

⁶³ Daily Star, "Lebanese army arrests Nusra Front leader", February 27, 2014.

⁶⁴ AP, "Four Killed in Beirut Suicide Bombing", February 19, 2014.

⁶⁵ Al-Jazeera, "Iranian cultural office targeted in Lebanon", February 19, 2014.

⁶⁶ BBC, "Twin suicide attack' in Beirut kills four", February 19, 2014.

⁶⁷ New York Times, "2 Deadly Blasts Rock Beirut, as Violence Seeps From Syria", February 19, 2014.

⁶⁸ Reuters, "Suicide bombers target Iranian centre in Beirut", February 19, 2014.

Syria

On February 7, a suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden truck outside the gates of a Syrian prison in Aleppo, allowing rebels to enter the facility. The rebels then freed hundreds of prisoners. There were no other reported casualties. The suicide bomber was later identified as Abdul Waheed Majeed, (alias Abu Suleiman al-Britani) a British citizen of Pakistani descent. Authorities said he was the first British citizen to carry out a suicide attack on behalf of the Al-Nusra Front.⁶⁹ A photograph taken before the attack, which was posted on Twitter, appears to show Britani inside a modified truck, or Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED), marked with the black Al-Nusra Front flag.⁷⁰

On February 19, 18 people, including five children, were killed and 20 others were injured in an explosion that targeted the Zeitoun School in the town of Muzeirib, near the border with Jordan. The school was run by UN Agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed Al-Qaeda linked militants.⁷¹

On February 24, Ahrar al-Sham, the Syrian Salafist militant group announced via a Twitter news feed, that Abu Khalid al-Suri, its senior militant commander, had been killed in a suicide bomb attack in Aleppo.⁷² Al Suri, a longtime Al-Qaeda operative with personal links to Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaeda leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, was a founding member of Ahrar al-Sham and a senior leader in the organization at the time of his death. According to authorities, Ahrar al-Sham is the most powerful rebel organization within the Islamic Front, a coalition of rebel groups that was formed late 2013.⁷³ Suri was reportedly sent to Syria by Al-Qaeda to end the infighting between ISIS and other rebel groups. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed ISIS.⁷⁴

Yemen

On February 3, a mortar shell was fired overnight in the direction of the French Embassy in Saana,

⁶⁹ Independent, "First British suicide bomber in Syria' believed to have struck Aleppo prison", February 7, 2014.

⁷⁰ Telegraph, "Syria: 'British fighter' killed in suicide attack", February 14, 2014.

⁷¹ AFP, "UN condemns bombing near Syria school that killed 18", February 18, 2014.

⁷² Al-Jazeera, "Senior al-Qaeda commander killed in Syria", February 24, 2014.

⁷³ Long War Journal, "Al Qaeda's chief representative in Syria killed in suicide attack", February 23, 2014.

⁷⁴ BBC, "Syria rebel leader Abu Khaled al-Suri killed in Aleppo", February 24, 2014.

while a car bomb exploded meters away in Sanaa's diplomatic quarter. The shell fell by a concrete block, installed for security reasons, on a road leading to the embassy. Authorities said there were no casualties and no group claimed responsibility but authorities blamed Al-Qaeda linked militants.⁷⁵

On February 9, a car bomb exploded outside the Yemeni Oil Ministry in Saana, killing three people and injuring five others.⁷⁶ Authorities said the bomb was planted under a car belonging to an officer.⁷⁷ No group claimed responsibility for the attack.⁷⁸

On February 15, a coordinated attack, which included a car bombing targeting the Central Prison in Sanna, killing seven prison guards and injuring four others. As a result, 29 prisoners escaped. According to authorities, armed militants exchanged fire with soldiers and detonated two car bombs just after sunset during the attack. One of the explosions caused a hole in the prison wall near a holding area for inmates convicted of terrorism offenses, including 21 members of Al-Qaeda, according to. Authorities said that among those inmates, 21 militants were members of Al-Qaeda, including explosive experts and several suspects in the attempted assassination of Yemeni President, Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi.⁷⁹ No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).⁸⁰

On February 16, Yemeni security services foiled an attempted attack on an oil refinery in the southern port city of Aden and arrested 27 suspected Al-Qaeda operatives from Abyan Province involved in the plot, six of whom were arrested on their way to carry out the attack after passing through a security checkpoint in the vicinity of Bureiqa. Yemeni sources claimed that the suspects had "modern and sophisticated" weapons in their possession. Aden police deputy commissioner Najeeb al-Mughalas emphasized that the thwarted operation "was in the preparation phase".⁸¹

⁷⁵ AFP, "Explosion and mortar fire near French embassy in Yemen", February 3, 2014.

⁷⁶ UPI, "Three dead, five injured in Yemen car bomb blast", February 9, 2014.

⁷⁷ CNN, "Three killed in Yemen car bomb blast", February 9, 2014.

⁷⁸ Ibid. Upi

⁷⁹ RT, "Several key Al-Qaeda members escaped in Yemen prison assault – report", February 15, 2014.

⁸⁰ AP, "Militants attack Yemen prison killing seven and helping 29 inmates escape", February 2014.

⁸¹ LWJ, "Yemeni security forces thwart al Qaeda attack on Aden oil refinery", February 18, 2014.

North America

On February 19, Jose Pimentel, 29 (alias Muhammad Yousuf), a Dominican immigrant raised in the US who converted to Islam in 2004, plead guilty to one count of felony attempted criminal possession of a weapon as an act of terrorism.⁸² He was arrested on November 19, 2011, and charged with building pipe bombs and planning to use them against US military personnel and civilians.⁸³ According to legal documents released in the court hearing, Pimentel maintained a Web site with articles praising Osama bin Laden and describing victims of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks as legitimate targets. He then went onto build pipe bombs and was recorded by an FBI informant discussing assassinating a judge, killing returning soldiers and bombing a police station or the George Washington Bridge. Under the plea agreement, he will receive a 16-year term at his sentencing March 25, 2014.⁸⁴

On February 20, Ahmad al-Darbi, a long-held Saudi captive at Guantanamo Bay, pleaded guilty to terrorism charges. Al-Darbi was captured at the Heydar Aliyev International Airport in Baku, Azerbaijan in June 2002. Several weeks later, it was allegedly reported that he had been blindfolded and taken to the US airbase in Bagram, Afghanistan, through which many, if not most, Guantanamo detainees have passed. Before being transferred to Guantanamo, he claimed he was tortured at Bagram.⁸⁵ A military judge accepted the plea deal and found Ahmed al-Darbi guilty to the five charges against him, including terrorism, attacking civilians and hazarding a vessel for complicity in the Al-Qaeda attack on the French-flagged MV Limburg. Al-Darbi will only be sentenced at the earliest in 2017, a move widely expected to give him time to testify against Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, who also faces terrorism charges in the tanker bombing and for allegedly orchestrating the 2000 Al-Qaeda attack on the USS Cole in the Yemeni port of Aden. Authorities also said the plea deal meant al-Darbi waived his rights to a trial and an appeal, that he will not sue the US over his capture,

⁸² CNN, "Guilty plea in N.Y. court on terror-related count", February 19, 2014.

⁸³ For full details of his arrest see November 2011 ICT database report <http://www.ict.org.il/Article.aspx?ID=275>

⁸⁴ BBC, "Jose Pimentel pleads guilty in NYC 'bomb plot'", February 19, 2014.

⁸⁵ New York Times, "Guantanamo Detainee Pleads Guilty in 2002 Attack on Tanker Off Yemen", February 22, 2014.

prosecution and confinement and that he will drop any lawsuit he may have pending.⁸⁶

South America

Mexico

On February 16, police in Mexico arrested wanted ETA militants Juan Jesus Narvaez Goni and Itziar Alberdi in the Pacific tourist resort of Puerto Vallarta. Authorities claimed that the pair, who had been fugitives for 22 years, were responsible for at least 18 murders and were the most sought-after members of ETA. It was reported in local media that Narvaez Goni had allegedly killed SNP officers. They are believed to have joined the ETA in 1990 and belonged to a special unit that was charged with carrying out attacks on Spain's Mediterranean coast ahead of the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona.⁸⁷ The couple was returned to Spain where they faced legal action.⁸⁸

Asia

Afghanistan

On February 10, a car bomb exploded in Kabul, killing two US contractors for the international security force, ISAF. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed the Taliban.⁸⁹

On February 24, 21 Afghan soldiers were killed by suspected Taliban militants at a remote outpost near the border with Pakistan. The militants mounted the attack on ANA's Sher Ghashi checkpoint in the Tunk area. Governor Shujaul Mulk Jalala said that eight soldiers were also kidnapped, one of whom he said was suspected of having ties to the Taliban. The militants had collected weapons abandoned by the troops.⁹⁰ The Taliban claimed responsibility for the incident in a text message,

⁸⁶ AP, "Guantanamo prisoner found guilty in French oil tanker bombing; won't be sentenced till 2017", February 22, 2014.

⁸⁷ AFP, "Two ETA fugitives arrested in Mexico, says Spain", February 16, 2014.

⁸⁸ Mexico Gulf Reporter, "Basque terrorists arrested in Puerto Vallarta", February 18, 2014.

⁸⁹ Reuters, "Bomb kills two American contractors in Afghan capital Kabul", February 10, 2014.

⁹⁰ Long War Journal, "Taliban kill 20 Afghan soldiers, capture 8 in Kunar", February 23, 2014.

saying that only one insurgent had been killed and two others injured.⁹¹ It was reported that authorities had ignored intelligence warnings received about the possibility of a major attack targeting the military.⁹²

On February 25, nine people were killed and 37 others injured, when a suicide bomber targeted a hotel in the southern Afghan province of Uruzgan. All the casualties were Afghan nationals. Provincial Police Chief, Matiullah Khan, said that the bomber had entered the premises and then detonated his explosive belt. According to police, the attacker had initially checked into the hotel with the probable intention of carrying out his attack the following day. However, minutes after he arrived his explosives detonated prematurely. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed the Taliban.⁹³

China

On February 14, a group of armed militants riding motorbikes and others driving a car loaded with natural-gas cylinders ambushed police officers preparing to go on patrol in Wushi County, in Aksu Prefecture.⁹⁴ Police officers said that eight militants were armed with machetes and the others planned to carry out a suicide car bombing. Some of the militants were shot dead at the scene. One militant was arrested and three were killed when they attempted to detonate the car bombs. Two bystanders and two police officers were injured in the attack, while five police patrol vehicles were damaged.⁹⁵ The official accounts did not identify the bombers but it was clear that they were Uighurs.⁹⁶

Pakistan

During February 2014, attacks increased as peace talks between government and Taliban representatives took place, aimed at trying to end Pakistan's violent insurgency. According to an

⁹¹ Guardian, "Taliban kill 21 Afghan soldiers in night raid on Pakistan border", February 24, 2014.

Long War Journal, "Taliban kill 20 Afghan soldiers, capture 8 in Kunar", February 24, 2014.

⁹² BBC, "Afghan suicide bomb 'kills nine' in Uruzgan province", February 25, 2014.

⁹³ BBC, "Afghan suicide bomb 'kills nine' in Uruzgan province", February 25, 2014.

⁹⁴ AP, "China kills 11 terrorists' in Xinjiang", February 11, 2014.

⁹⁵ Afp, "Police shoot dead 'several terrorists' in China's Xinjiang", February 14, 2014.

⁹⁶ New York Times, "Police Fatally Shoot 8 After What China Calls a Terrorist Attack", February 14, 2014.

official report, at least 95 people were killed and 388 others injured in over 40 explosions, including six suicide attacks that killed 34 people and injured 118 others in different areas of the country.⁹⁷

On February 2, a double grenade attack targeting the Picture House Cinema, as it is known locally, situated in the Kabuli Qissa Khawani Bazaar, in Peshawar, killed four people and wounded over 30 others.⁹⁸ At the time of the attack, 90 to 100 people were believed to be inside the cinema. Bomb-disposal experts confirmed that two grenades were thrown by people sitting at the back of the cinema. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).⁹⁹

On February 3, 13 people were killed and 57 others injured when a bus carrying Pakistani police officers was targeted by a suicide bomber in Karachi.¹⁰⁰ The explosion took place near the exit of the Razzaqabad Police Training Center in Shah Latif Town just as a police bus was leaving the premises. The bus was carrying police commandoes on their way to provide security at Bilawal House.¹⁰¹ The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility for the attack.¹⁰²

On February 4, nine people were killed and 50 others were wounded in a suicide bombing that targeted a hotel in Peshawar. The explosion destroyed the dining hall and other parts of the hotel; some nearby shops were also damaged. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed the Taliban.¹⁰³

On February 11, three grenades exploded inside the Shama Cinema in Peshawar, killing 13 people and wounding 20 others. The attack took place at about 15:40 local time while a film was showing inside the cinema. It was reported that 80 people were inside the hall when three grenades were hurled at the patrons. The explosion mimicked the attack on February 2 (see above) at the Picture House Cinema situated in the Qissa Khawani Bazaar. It was unclear if the two attacks were linked. No group claimed responsibility for the attack, but cinema owners say they had received warnings

⁹⁷ Xinhua, "95 killed, 388 injured in 40 bomb attacks in Pakistan in February", March 1, 2014.

⁹⁸ Daily Times, "Four killed in hand grenade attacks on Peshawar cinema", February 11, 2014.

⁹⁹ Al-Jazeera, "Deadly grenade attack on Pakistan cinema", February 2, 2014.

¹⁰⁰ Pak Tribune, "Karachi explosion kills 13 policemen, injures 57", 13 February 2014.

¹⁰¹ BBC, "Pakistan: Police killed in Karachi 'suicide bomb blast'", February 3, 2014.

¹⁰² AFP, "Karachi car bomb kills 13 policemen; TTP claims attack", February 13, 2014.

¹⁰³ CNN, "Suicide attack in Peshawar hotel kills nine", February 4, 2014.

from militants to shut down their businesses. Authorities blamed the TTP.¹⁰⁴

The worst attack occurred on February 13 when a suicide bomber attacked a bus carrying police personnel in the country's southern port city of Karachi, killing 14 people and leaving 58 others injured. Authorities said it was unclear whether the explosion was set off by a suicide bomber or a roadside bomb. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed the TTP.¹⁰⁵

On February 20, the Pakistani Air Force launched airstrikes on suspected Taliban hideouts in North Waziristan, killing approximately 20 suspected militants (the exact figure was unclear). Senior Pakistani security officials said that the militants killed included 13 "foreign fighters." A large cache of arms and ammunition was also destroyed during the strike.¹⁰⁶ A military official said six targets were hit in the overnight aerial raids. Authorities said the militants included Uzbeks who belonged to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, which has been operating in the region under the patronage of TTP and the Haqqani network.¹⁰⁷

On February 23, a remote controlled explosion struck a passenger vehicle, killing 13 people, including a woman and a child, and injuring 14 others in the northwestern district of Kohat.¹⁰⁸ Also on February 23, a suicide bomber detonated near the residence of the Iranian Consul General in Peshawar, killing two security personnel and wounding 11 others. Senior police official, Ijaz Khan, said that the bomber had turned toward a nearby tent camp for forces of the Pakistani Frontier Constabulary, which had been deployed to help protect the Iranian facilities, because of heavy security outside the consulate and the adjacent residence. On the same day, a senior Pakistani Taliban commander and three of his aides were killed in the North Waziristan tribal region when gunmen opened fire on their vehicle. The commander, Asmatullah Shaheen Bhattani, was appointed interim leader of the Pakistani Taliban in 2013 after Hakimullah Mehsud was killed in an American drone strike. There was no claim of responsibility for the attack but authorities claimed that inter-tribal rivalries may have been a factor. Bhattani had close ties with the Mehsud tribe, which has

¹⁰⁴ BBC, "Peshawar cinema hit by deadly Pakistan blasts", February 11, 2014.

¹⁰⁵ Reuters, "Bomb attack in Pakistan kills at least 11 policemen", February 13, 2014.

¹⁰⁶ DW, "Pakistani jets bomb suspected Taliban 'hideouts'", February 20, 2014.

¹⁰⁷ Dawn, "Air strikes target foreign militants in N. Waziristan", February 20, 2014.

¹⁰⁸ Xinhua, "95 killed, 388 injured in 40 bomb attacks in Pakistan in February", March 2, 2014.

generally provided leadership of Taliban militants.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ New York Times, “Suicide Bomber in Pakistan Strikes Near Iran’s Consulate”, February 24, 2014.

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