



**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 March 2014**

## Highlights

- On March 1, 29 people were killed and 143 others were injured when a team of suspected Uyghur separatists attacked the largest metro train station in Kunming, southwest China. Four attackers were shot dead by police at the scene. An injured female suspect was reportedly detained. On March 2, three additional suspected attackers were arrested. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed Uighur militants.
- On March 11, seven people were arrested in Tirana, Albania and several other Albanian towns on suspicion of recruiting and training volunteers to join Al-Qaeda linked militants in Syria. Authorities said that it is believed that approximately 300 ethnic Albanians from Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia have joined the rebel forces in Syria.
- On March 12, at least 40 rockets were fired into southern Israel in what the IDF claimed was the largest attack since 2012's Operation Pillar of Defense. According to the IDF, eight rockets hit urban, civilian areas but no casualties were reported. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the attacks.
- On March 14, police in Spain and Morocco arrested seven suspected militants who recruited and sent fighters to Al-Qaeda linked militant groups in Syria and Mali. The cell's activities affected Spain, Morocco, Belgium, France, Tunisia, Turkey, Libya, Mali, Indonesia and Syria. The alleged ringleader of the cell, a Spaniard living in Melilla, Mustafa Maya Amaya, was detained.
- On March 14, a spokesman for the Malian military announced that Oumar Ould Hamaha (aka Abou Ghom-Ghom and "Red Beard"), the spokesman for the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and a former lieutenant to Mokhtar Belmokhtar, was killed between March 4-5 in the Kidal region in Mali.
- On March 20, a team of gunmen opened fire inside the Luxury Serena Hotel in Kabul, Afghanistan, killing nine people and injuring six others, including two of the hotel's security guards. The attackers were killed by the police. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack. On March 25, nine people were arrested in connection with the attack but their identities were not released to the public. The attack was particularly significant because the luxury hotel had long been considered one of the most secure sites for civilians in Kabul.

- On March 21, the IDF announced that it had uncovered a terror tunnel running from Gaza to southern Israel, for which it said Hamas was responsible. Security sources said the terror tunnel was the largest one found by the IDF to date.
- On March 26, Suleiman Abu Ghaith, the son-in-law of Osama bin Laden and former Al-Qaeda spokesman, was convicted in New York, USA, of "conspiring to kill Americans and providing material support to terrorists".

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## Europe

### Albania

On March 11, seven people were arrested in various locations in the capital Tirana and several other Albanian towns, on suspicion of recruiting and training volunteers to join Al-Qaeda linked militants in Syria. According to authorities, it is believed that approximately 300 ethnic Albanians from Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia have joined the rebel forces in Syria.<sup>1</sup> Two of those arrested, the suspected masterminds of the cell, were imams of two mosques in Tirana but they were unauthorized by the Albanian Muslim Community. Authorities said that the raid at the mosques did not uncover explosives or weapons as they had expected, but cartridges, a dismantled offensive grenade, a machine gun and a knife were seized from the homes of the seven suspects. None of the suspects' identities were released to the public.<sup>2</sup>

### France

On March 5, Romain Letellier (aka Abou Siyad al-Normandy), 27, was convicted of defending and promoting terrorism. Authorities claimed that Letellier ran a jihadist Web site that published translations of Al-Qaeda propaganda. Letellier, a convert to Islam, was arrested in September 2013 and detained in Normandy. He pleaded not guilty to the charges against him but was convicted and sentenced to a one-year prison term plus a two-year suspended sentence.<sup>3</sup> No attacks were linked to the site that he managed. Authorities noted that this was the first conviction under a 2012 French law outlawing "cyberjihad."<sup>4</sup> The 2012 law was aimed at toughening anti-terrorism measures after Mohamed Merah attacked a Jewish school in Toulouse in March 2012.<sup>5</sup>

On March 11, eight people were arrested in a counter-terrorist raid on suspicion of planning to join Al-Qaeda linked militants in Syria. The suspects, seven men and one woman, were arrested in and

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<sup>1</sup> AFP, "Albania Arrests Seven Alleged Recruiters for Syria Volunteers", March 11, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Independent Balkan News Agency, "Wave of arrests for recruiting fighters to Syria, AMC denies its involvement", March 11, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> RFI, "French cyber-jihadist jailed for publishing Al Qaida propaganda", March 5, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> New York Times, "Jail Sentence in France Over 'Cyber Jihad'", March 5, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> For full details of the incident see ICT database report March 2012

<http://www.ict.org.il/Article/266/Summary%20of%20Terrorist%20Incidents%20and%20CT%20Operations%20March%202012>

around Paris.<sup>6</sup> They were detained for 96 hours and questioned by the Central Directorate of Internal Intelligence. No further details were made public.<sup>7</sup>

On March 26, police on the French Riviera announced that they had arrested a militant who recently returned to France from Syria. According to the authorities, the suspect had ties to a known terror cell in the region. He was arrested in February 2014 and charged with criminal association with intent to commit a terrorist act. He was identified only as Ibrahim B, 23.<sup>8</sup> The authorities seized 900 grams of triacetone triperoxide (TATP) explosives at his home in Mandelieu-La-Napoule near Cannes,<sup>9</sup> and said that the same substance had been used in the 2005 London transport bombings. Authorities said they were concerned that the suspect was planning to carry out an attack in France but they did not know if a possible target had been chosen or when the militant was planning to carry out the attack.<sup>10</sup>

## Germany

On March 14, German authorities said they arrested a man, identified only as Kreshnik B., suspected of joining the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham (ISIS) in Syria. Federal authorities said the suspect was ordered to remain in custody pending a possible indictment on charges of membership in a terrorist group. The man was suspected of traveling to Syria in July 2012 and undergoing weapons training with the ISIS. He was accused of participating in fighting and performing guard duty.<sup>11</sup>

On March 31, three people with alleged ties to the ISIS were arrested.<sup>12</sup> Authorities conducted simultaneous raids in three cities across the country. Two of the suspects, a German and a Turk, are believed to have travelled to Syria in 2012. The third person, a woman with dual German-Polish

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<sup>6</sup> AP, "France arrests 8 in raid on Syrian-bound radicals", March 11, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Xinhua, "French police arrest 8 volunteers for jihad in Syria: media", March 11, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> AP, "French Jihadist Just Returned From Syria Found With Homemade IED at His Home in French Riviera", March 26, 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Fox News, "French authorities find explosives in France after arrest of former jihadist in Syria", March 26, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> AP, "French Jihadist Just Returned From Syria Found With Homemade IED at His Home in French Riviera", March 26, 2014.

<sup>11</sup> AP, "German held over alleged Syria terror links", March 14, 2014.

<sup>12</sup> AFP, "Germany arrests three over links with Syrian militants", March 31, 2014.

citizenship, was taken into custody on suspicion of providing 4,800 Euros (\$6,600) to the group. Authorities said that 100 members of the elite police squad, GSG 9, the federal police force and state police conducted simultaneous searches of ten apartments in Berlin and the western cities of Bonn and Frankfurt, including the homes of five additional suspects.<sup>13</sup>

## Spain

On March 14, police in Spain and Morocco arrested seven suspected militants who recruited and sent fighters to join Al-Qaeda linked militant groups in Syria and Mali. Authorities began investigating the cell in 2010 and eventually garnered the support of the United States FBI, Spain's National Intelligence Service and the Moroccan police. The cell's activities affected Spain, Morocco, Belgium, France, Tunisia, Turkey, Libya, Mali, Indonesia and Syria. Authorities said the suspects include a Spaniard and two Frenchmen who were arrested in the Spanish enclave of Melilla on Morocco's north coast, a Tunisian arrested in the city of Malaga on the Spanish mainland, and three Moroccans detained in Morocco.<sup>14</sup> The alleged ringleader of the cell, a Spaniard living in Melilla, Mustafa Maya Amaya, was also detained. He had held a meeting in his home with two French citizens, identified as Paul Cadic and Farik Cheikh, who were preparing to go to Syria to join Al-Nusra Front militants. They were also arrested. The three suspects arrested in Morocco were identified as Tarik Ahnin, Soufian el Moumni and Mohamed Karraz. In Malaga, a Tunisian man accused of forging documents for the group was arrested and identified as Chafik Jalel Ben Amara Elmedjeri. He had been arrested in 2006 for alleged membership in a terrorist group. Police searched various homes in Melilla, Malaga and Morocco and were expected to seek international arrest warrants for other members of the cell who are in other countries.<sup>15</sup> Following this, on March 24, Moroccan authorities announced the arrest of a French citizen in Rabat on suspicion of belonging to a terrorist recruitment network that was dismantled by Spanish and Moroccan authorities.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> AFP, "German authorities arrest three people for alleged ties to Syrian radical group", March 31, 2014.

<sup>14</sup> AP, "Spain, Morocco bust suspected jihadist cell", March 14, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> CNN, "Spain arrests 7 suspected of sending militant fighters to Syria", March 14, 2014.

<sup>16</sup> AP, "Frenchman arrested in Morocco for terrorism", March 24, 2014.

## United Kingdom

On March 6, a 21-year-old man was arrested at Gatwick Airport after returning on a flight from Istanbul under suspicion that he had attended a terrorist camp in Syria.<sup>17</sup> The suspect was held by Metropolitan Police Counter Terrorism Command (SO15) officers after he got off a flight from Istanbul, Turkey. He was arrested on suspicion of violating Section 6 of the Terrorism Act 2006 and later released on bail. Authorities said the arrest was "not in response to any immediate threat or risk". A spokesman said that the suspect was taken into custody at a north London police station. Police said that they could not give any further detail about the man's arrest at this stage.<sup>18</sup>

On March 11, three men and one woman were arrested on terrorism charges by authorities investigating British jihadists planning to fight in Syria. Two men, ages 29 and 18, and a 21-year-old woman were arrested in Manchester.<sup>19</sup> The elder male suspect was identified as Jamshed Javeed. He was charged with intending to assist others to commit acts of terrorism. All of the suspects were charged with involvement in the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism.<sup>20</sup> A fourth person, a 29-year-old man, was arrested in Oxford on the same charge. Scotland Yard said the suspects were involved with supporting the Al-Nusra Front in Syria but were not planning attacks in the UK.<sup>21</sup>

## Africa

### Algeria

On March 14, seven militants were killed by the Algerian military as they attempted to enter the country in a four-wheel drive vehicle from Tunisia near the city of Tebessa. Authorities said the militants were armed with Kalashnikovs, grenades and ammunition. The militants abandoned their vehicle and attempted to flee into the mountainous terrain during the firefight with security

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<sup>17</sup> AP, "Man arrested at Gatwick airport under suspicion of attending terrorist camp", March 6, 2014.

<sup>18</sup> BBC, "Man bailed after terror arrest at Gatwick Airport", March 6, 2014.

<sup>19</sup> CNN, "UK police arrest 4 on suspicion of Syria-linked terror offenses", March 11, 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Guardian, "Man charged after arrest on suspicion of Syria-linked terror offences", March 12, 2014.

<sup>21</sup> CNN, "UK police arrest 4 on suspicion of Syria-linked terror offenses", March 11, 2014.



forces.<sup>22</sup> The militants were mainly Tunisians and were linked to Djebbar Abd al-Kamil, an Algerian militant accused of planning attacks in Algeria.<sup>23</sup>

## Kenya

On March 14, anti-terrorism police, assisted by the FBI, claimed to have foiled a planned terrorist attack in the coastal city of Mombasa after they intercepted an explosive laden car.<sup>24</sup> Two men were caught in the car and charged with preparing to commit murder, being members of an outlawed organization and illegal possession of explosives and weapons. Authorities displayed the explosives found in the vehicle, including six cylinders weighing 60 kilograms, six detonators, six grenades, an AK47 rifle and a cache of ammunition. A mobile phone improvised for detonating bombs was also seized. The two men were identified as Abdiaziz Abdulahi Abdi and Isaak Noor Ibrahim, believed to be Somali nationals. According to police sources the two were being monitored after Kenyan security agencies were tipped off about an impending terrorist attack.<sup>25</sup> Two additional suspects, Mohammed Daayo, a Somali national, and Shadrack Nicholas, a Kenyan, were also arrested on March 17 in connection with the planned attack. Following the arrests and investigation, Kenyan authorities, together with Ugandan authorities, said they had received intelligence regarding further possible terrorist attacks being planned by Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen militants in both countries. Specifically, they received intelligence that militants were plotting to launch attacks on fuel trucks in Uganda. Ssenkumbi, a spokesman for police in Kampala, said that the authorities had taken precautionary measures, such as providing police escort to fuel trucks parked or driving on highways.<sup>26</sup>

On March 19, Kenyan police unintentionally parked a car that they impounded from a Somali man and stored outside their counter-terrorism offices for a week. Unbeknownst to them, the car was packed full of explosives already and attached to a Nokia phone detonator outside their office. The blue Toyota four-wheel-drive was only thoroughly checked when foreign counter-terrorist officers

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<sup>22</sup> Reuters, "Algerian troops kill seven militants near Tunisian frontier", March 14, 2014.

<sup>23</sup> AP, "Algerian forces kill 7 militants near Tunisia", March 14, 2014.

<sup>24</sup> AP, "Kenyan police intercept bomb-laden vehicle, arrest 2 suspected terrorists, government says", March 18, 2014.

<sup>25</sup> The Star, "Kenya: Police Arrest Two Most Wanted Terror Suspects", March 18, 2014.

<sup>26</sup> AP, "Kenya, Uganda on alert for possible terror attacks", March 19, 2014.

believed to be from the FBI saw the vehicle and recognized it as one on an international alert list. Authorities said six separate pipe bombs comprising approximately 60 kg of plastic explosive were welded into the vehicle's rear seats, enough to collapse a multi-story building. An AK-47, 250 rounds of ammunition, detonators and grenades were also found in the car. The vehicle was impounded in the Kenyan port city of Mombasa on March 11 and the driver, a Somali, and his passenger, a Kenyan of Somali origin, were arrested and charged with illegally importing a vehicle.<sup>27</sup>

## **Libya**

On March 17, a powerful car bomb attack targeting soldiers leaving a graduation ceremony at a military academy in Benghazi killed 10 people and wounded 23 others.<sup>28</sup> The first bomb exploded at the front gate of the academy as soldiers were leaving the ceremony. Several cars parked outside exploded simultaneously. In a separate explosion hours later in Benghazi, one person was killed when another car bomb detonated near the state oil firm Brega Petroleum Marketing Co., which sells fuel products inside Libya.<sup>29</sup> No group claimed responsibility for the bombings but Libyan security forces blamed Islamist militant groups such as Ansar al Sharia, which have previously carried out similar attacks.<sup>30</sup>

## **Mali**

On March 14, a spokesman for the Malian military announced that Oumar Ould Hamaha, (aka Abou Ghoum-Ghoum and "Red Beard"), the spokesman for the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and a former lieutenant to Mokhtar Belmokhtar, the leader of the Sighed-in-Blood Battalion and former AQIM militant, was killed in a counter-terrorism operation carried out by French forces between March 4 and 5 in the Kidal region.<sup>31</sup> Hamaha was implicated in the April

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<sup>27</sup> Telegraph, "Kenyan police park massive car bomb outside their offices after missing explosives in vehicle", March 19, 2014.

<sup>28</sup> Reuters, "Car bombs kill at least eight at Libya army academy in Benghazi", March 17, 2014.

<sup>29</sup> CNN, "At least 10 killed in car bombing at Libyan military base, Health Ministry says", March 17, 2014.

<sup>30</sup> BBC, "Libya car bomb: Benghazi army base hit by deadly attack", March 17, 2014.

<sup>31</sup> It should be noted that in April 2014, the group denied Hamaha was killed. Despite this denial of Hamaha's death, the Rewards for Justice Program removed him from the list in May 2014. The US Rewards for Justice Program had offered \$3 million dollars (2.2 million Euros) for information leading to his capture.

See: <http://www.rewardsforjustice.net/english/most-wanted/all-regions.html>

2012 abduction of Algerian diplomats in Gao. The French Defense minister, Jean-Yves Le Drian, said as many as 12 militants from AQIM had been killed in the operation. The AQIM fighters were spotted in the Amettetai Valley, in the Kidal region, by French forces operating the US-made Reaper drones.<sup>32</sup> It was also reported that Algerian militant Abou Walid Sahraoui, another former AQIM fighter who played a prominent role in MUJWA, had also been killed in the airstrikes.<sup>33</sup>

## Nigeria

On March 2, 50 people were killed and many others injured, although the exact figure was not reported, in a twin bombing that targeted a busy market in Maiduguri, northeast Nigeria. Initially, a pickup truck carrying firewood exploded. However, this explosion did not cause many casualties. As people went to the scene to help the casualties, a car bomb detonated, causing the majority of casualties.<sup>34</sup> Authorities said the attackers specifically targeted the market on a Saturday night, as it was open late and full of people. It was also targeted as it was a densely populated area with narrow alleyways to maximize the effect of the explosions. The bombings also caused severe damage to surrounding buildings. Authorities said a man who drove the second car to the scene was captured by civilians in the market. Witnesses said the man jumped out of the car, grabbed a tricycle taxi and tried to escape. He was badly beaten and taken to nearby Umaru Shehu General Hospital, where a security guard said that all the wounded who were brought in had died.<sup>35</sup> In a separate attack, 39 people were fatally shot by suspected Boko Haram militants who attacked the Mainok farming village approximately 60 kilometers from Maiduguri, and many homes were destroyed. No group claimed responsibility for either incident although authorities blamed Boko Haram, which has carried out similar attacks over recent months.<sup>36</sup>

On March 25, two suicide bombers traveling in an explosives-laden vehicle attacked a police patrol in Maiduguri, killing five policemen and three civilians.<sup>37</sup> Soldiers and a combined team of mobile

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<sup>32</sup> Al-Jazeera, “French strike 'kills Mali rebel commander'”, March 14, 2014.

<sup>33</sup> Reuters, “French air strikes kill wanted Islamist militant 'Red Beard' in Mali”, March 14, 2014.

<sup>34</sup> Reuters, “Red Cross: 51 killed in car bombs in north Nigeria”, March 2, 2014.

<sup>35</sup> BBC, “Twin Nigeria blasts kill at least 50 in Maiduguri”, March 2, 2014.

<sup>36</sup> AP, “90 killed in 2 attacks in northern Nigeria”, March 2, 2014.

<sup>37</sup> Premium Times, “Nigeria – suicide bombers kill police in Maiduguri; quarter of a million displaced by Boko Haram”, March 26, 2014.

policemen and vigilante youths mobilized at the scene and cordoned off the area to prevent further attacks. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed Boko Haram.<sup>38</sup>

## **Somalia**

On March 15, a car bomb exploded near the Maka Al Mukarama Hotel, popular with government officials and businessmen. Authorities said that despite the significant explosion caused by the bomb, only one person was injured. No group claimed responsibility but authorities blamed Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen militants.<sup>39</sup>

On March 18, Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen militants detonated a car bomb outside a hotel in Buloburde where African Union (AU) and Somali officers were staying. Following from the attack, violent clashes between security forces and the military continued for another five hours. Six soldiers were killed, including a senior Somali army commander. Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen claimed responsibility for the incident.<sup>40</sup>

## **Tunisia**

On March 16, Tunisian counter-terrorism forces conducted an operation in Jendouba, during which three suspected militants were killed, including Rabia Siideni and Ragheb Hannachi, who were wanted by the authorities. The third militant's identity was not released to the public.<sup>41</sup> Several members of the security forces were also injured during the operation. Mohamed Ali Aroui, Spokesman for the Ministry of Interior, said that the suspects were linked to an attack in February 2014 in Ouled Manea, in which three police officers and one civilian were killed. Six people had been arrested in connection with the attack.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Africa Star, "Nigeria – suicide bombers kill police in Maiduguri; quarter of a million displaced by Boko Haram

<sup>39</sup> AFP, "Car bomb blast in Somali capital – police", March 15, 2014.

<sup>40</sup> BBC, "Somalia's al-Shabab attacks army hotel in Buloburde", March 18, 2014.

<sup>41</sup> AP, "Tunisia: Counter-terrorism forces kill 3 militants after long shoot out in the northwest", March 17, 2014.

<sup>42</sup> Tunis Times, "Clashes in Jendouba: 3 terrorists killed, 6 policemen severely injured", March 17, 2014.

## Middle East

### Egypt

On March 4, a bomb exploded outside the UN Refugee Commission, in greater Cairo. As a result of the explosion, a car and a window of a shop were damaged but no casualties were reported. No group claimed responsibility for the incident.<sup>43</sup>

On March 11, an IED exploded in front of the Israeli Embassy in Cairo. There were no casualties, as the building has not been used by Israeli diplomats since a previous attack on the embassy in September 2011. Security sources said that the attack most likely targeted a police car that was parked nearby, rather than the embassy itself. Ajnad Misr claimed responsibility for the incident.<sup>44</sup>

On March 23, police in the northern Sinai Peninsula foiled an attempt to assassinate the Egyptian army's Chief of Staff, Sedki Sobhi.<sup>45</sup> Authorities said they discovered a quarter-ton barrel of TNT at the airport in el-Arish ahead of a tour of a military facility in the region. The barrel was reportedly discovered and safely detonated before Sobhi's arrival.<sup>46</sup>

### Iraq

On March 5, 14 people were killed and 70 others were injured when seven car bombs and two roadside bombs exploded in six Shi'ite-majority areas of Baghdad. Gunmen later attacked three checkpoints in Baghdad while a roadside bomb exploded near a fourth checkpoint in Tarmiyah, killing at least four police officers and three soldiers. Gunmen also attacked a bus northeast of the city of Baquba, killing one person and wounding four others. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed Al-Qaeda in Iraq.<sup>47</sup>

On March 6, a series of bombings targeting shoppers and civilians in and around Baghdad killed approximately 30 people. In the first explosion, a car bomb targeting shoppers in the southwestern

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<sup>43</sup> The Cairo Post, "6th of October City blast caused by bomb: MOI", March 5, 2014.

<sup>44</sup> It should be noted the claim of responsibility occurred on April 2 not immediately- see article for more details. The Long War Journal, "Ajnad Misr claims Cairo University bombings and 3 other attacks", April 2, 2014.

<sup>45</sup> Times of Israel, "Egypt police foil attempt on chief of staff's life", March 23, 2014.

<sup>46</sup> Ynet, "Report: Assassination attempt on Egyptian army commander thwarted", March 23, 2014.

<sup>47</sup> AFP, "Attacks in Baghdad area kill 21 people", March 5, 2014.

Amil neighborhood killed seven people and wounded 17 others. A bomb then exploded at a cafe in Baghdad's Sadr City neighborhood, killing four people and wounding 15 others. A third bomb detonated in a commercial street in central Baghdad, killing three people and wounding 13 others, while an explosion near the Green Zone killed three people and wounded eight others. In Baghdad's southeastern suburb of Jisr Diyala, a bombing killed two civilians and wounded seven others. In Hilla, two car bombs killed nine civilians and wounded 28 others. Authorities said an explosion killed four people and wounded 10 others in the nearby town of Iskandariyah, about 50 kilometers south of Baghdad. In Mishada, about 30 kilometers north of Baghdad, a car bomb killed five civilians and wounded 14 others. No group claimed responsibility for the attacks but authorities blamed Al-Qaeda in Iraq.<sup>48</sup>

On March 9, 47 people were killed and 160 others were wounded when a suicide car bomber targeted a security checkpoint in Hilla.<sup>49</sup> Authorities said more than 30 cars waiting at the checkpoint were set on fire by the explosion, and some of the drivers and passengers were trapped inside. The attack killed security officers and civilians, including women and children.<sup>50</sup> Authorities also said that a gun attack on a checkpoint North of Hilla that same day killed two policemen and injured four others. In Abu Ghraib, west of Baghdad, gunmen fatally shot two soldiers and wounded one more at an army checkpoint. Six attacks north of the capital killed three policemen and two soldiers and wounded 40 others. No group claimed responsibility for the incidents but authorities blamed Al-Qaeda in Iraq.<sup>51</sup>

On March 20, 12 people were killed and 38 others were injured, many seriously, when a suicide bomber targeted a Baghdad cafe where customers were watching a soccer game on television. Witnesses said the bomber had socialized with people in the cafe before detonating his explosives-laden belt. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed Al-Qaeda in Iraq.<sup>52</sup>

On March 21, 37 people were killed a series of attacks in throughout Iraq. Authorities also said that

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<sup>48</sup> AP, "Bombings, clashes in Iraq kill at least 42", March 7, 2014.

<sup>49</sup> BBC, "Iraq bomb attack kills at least 32 at Hilla checkpoint", March 9, 2014.

<sup>50</sup> New York Times, "Suicide Bomber Kills at Least 45 at Checkpoint in Southern Iraq", March 9, 2014.

<sup>51</sup> BBC, "Iraq bomb attack kills at least 32 at Hilla checkpoint", March 9, 2014.

<sup>52</sup> AP, "Iraq: Suicide bombing in Baghdad cafe kills 12", March 20, 2014.

eight soldiers were kidnapped.<sup>53</sup> In the first incident, 12 people were killed, including a senior police officer, when a suicide car bomber rammed an explosives-laden tanker into the police headquarters in the village of Injana, in Diyala Province in northeastern Iraq. In Samarra, gunmen attacked and seized control of an army unit, killed five soldiers and kidnapped eight others. A curfew was imposed in Samarra. Several hours later, a suicide bomber detonated his explosive belt among mourners in a mosque in Ramadi, the capital and largest city in Anbar Province in central Iraq. At least ten mourners were killed in the attack and 37 others were wounded. The mourners had gathered for the funeral of Nasir al-Alawan, a leader in the anti-Al-Qaeda Sunni militia known also as Sahwa, who had been killed in a roadside bombing a day earlier.<sup>54</sup> In the city of Tikrit, northwest of Baghdad, a roadside bomb exploded as a convoy of the commander of the army's Fifth Brigade was passing by, killing the commander and two of his guards. In Kirkuk, two car bombs exploded in a public market, killing five civilians and wounding 15 others. No group immediately claimed responsibility, but authorities blamed the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham (ISIS).<sup>55</sup>

On March 27, a series of bombings targeting commercial areas of Baghdad killed 26 people and wounded dozens more, although the exact figure was unclear.<sup>56</sup> In the first explosion, a car bomb exploded after sunset in a commercial street in the Sunni-dominated northern neighborhood of Azamiyah, killing 12 people and wounding 28 others. Minutes later, another bomb exploded near a market in the same neighborhood, killing seven people and wounding 27 others. An explosion was then reported in a shopping street in the capital's Aamiriyah district, killing three people and wounding 15 others. Finally another bomb detonated in a commercial street in southwestern Baghdad, killing four people and wounding 14 others. No group immediately claimed responsibility, but the attacks bore the hallmarks of ISIS.<sup>57</sup>

## **Israel and the West Bank**

On March 12, the IDF said that at least 40 rockets had been fired into southern Israel, in what it

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<sup>53</sup> New York Times, "Iraq Hit by Wave of Bombings and Attacks", March 21, 2014.

<sup>54</sup> RT, "Double bombing hits Iraq after Friday wave of attacks claimed 50 lives", March 22, 2014.

<sup>55</sup> New York Times, "Iraq Hit by Wave of Bombings and Attacks", March 21, 2014

<sup>56</sup> New York Times, "Iraq: Bombs Kill at Least 33 in Baghdad", March 27, 2014.

<sup>57</sup> AP, "Iraq: Bombings kill 26 people in Baghdad", March 27, 2014.

claimed was the largest attack since 2012's Operation Pillar of Defense, and that eight rockets had hit urban, civilian areas. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for attacks.<sup>58</sup> One rocket landed in Sderot but there were no casualties. The Iron Dome rocket defense system deterred three of the rockets. The IDF fired artillery rounds at two terrorist infrastructure targets in response. The Israel Air Force (IAF) struck an Islamic Jihad cell in southern Gaza, minutes after identifying it as being responsible for a mortar attack on an IDF unit on the Gaza-Israel border. The IAF targeted Islamic Jihad targets in Rafah, the Khan Yunis area, Deir al-Balah and in the Beit Lahia area, as well as a base of Hamas' military wing. Sources said that IAF jets repeatedly returned to targets that had been attacked; there were no reports of Palestinian casualties. Following the IAF strike, a power outage was reported in large area of Rafah. According to military sources, militants fired a mortar shell at soldiers who were conducting routine security measures near the border.<sup>59</sup>

On March 21, the IDF announced that it had uncovered a terror tunnel running from Gaza to southern Israel and held Hamas responsible. Security sources said the terror tunnel was the largest the IDF had found to date. IDF Spokesman, Lt. Col. Peter Lerner, said that the advanced tunnel was intended to “pose a direct link and threat to Israeli territory, and enable Hamas terrorists to reach and harm Israeli civilians”. The IDF was continuing its investigation and as unclear as to exactly how far the tunnel went.<sup>60</sup>

## **Lebanon**

On March 17, a suicide bomb explosion killed two people and injured 14 others on a highway near Nabi Uthman in the Bekaa valley. The suicide bomber was speeding and raised the suspicion of a number of young men. When he stopped, the bomb exploded. A group called the "Free Sunni Brigade in Baalbek" was the first to claim responsibility for the bombing on Twitter. The Al-Nusra Front in Lebanon, an offshoot of the Syrian rebel group, also claimed on Twitter that it was responsible for the suicide attack and called the "Free Sunni Brigade" a fraud. The Free Sunni Brigade also addressed the Lebanese Army and Hezbollah saying, "Be prepared for the battle of

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<sup>58</sup> Jerusalem Post, “Barrage of at least 40 rockets fired from Gaza into southern Israel”, March 12, 2014.

<sup>59</sup> Ynet, “IDF attacks numerous terror targets in Gaza in response to rocket fire”, March 12, 2014.

<sup>60</sup> Times of Israel, “IDF says it exposed massive Gazan terror tunnel”, March 21, 2014.



Yabroud inside Lebanon!"<sup>61</sup>

On March 29, a suicide bomber in an explosives-laden car targeted a Lebanese army checkpoint in the Bekaa Valley, killing three soldiers and wounding four others. A group calling itself Liwa Ahrar al-Sunna in Baalbek, Arabic for the "Brigades of the free Sunni Muslims" claimed responsibility for the attack via a message on the social media site, Twitter. It said the attack was to avenge the death of Sami al-Atrash, a suspect wanted in connection with car bombings that targeted Lebanon's Shia armed group, Hezbollah. Atrash was killed on March 27 in a shoot-out with the army.<sup>62</sup>

## Syria

On March 6, 15 people were killed and 30 others were wounded in a car bombing in Homs. The explosion targeted the city's government-controlled Armenian district, which is home to mostly Christians and Alawites. It was also reported on the same day that a car bomb exploded in Hama, killing four people and wounding 22 others. No group claimed responsibility for either incident but authorities suspected Al-Qaeda linked militants.<sup>63</sup>

## Yemen

On March 18, a suspected Al-Qaeda suicide car bomber detonated at the gate of a military intelligence headquarters in Lahj Province's Sabr district, killing a guard and wounding 13 others, including two children.<sup>64</sup> The explosion destroyed the headquarters building. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed AQAP militants.<sup>65</sup>

On March 24, 20 Yemeni soldiers were killed in a dawn attack on a checkpoint near Reida, 135 kilometers east of the provincial capital, Mukalla. Authorities said the militants approached the checkpoint in a convoy of vehicles, shooting the soldiers on duty with automatic weapons before hurling grenades at an adjacent tent where the majority of the soldiers were sleeping. No group

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<sup>61</sup> CNN, "Suicide car bomb kills two in Lebanon", March 17, 2014.

<sup>62</sup> Al-Jazeera, "Car bomb hits Lebanese army checkpoint", March 30, 2014.

<sup>63</sup> AP, "Car bombs in central Syria kill 17", March 6, 2014.

<sup>64</sup> AFP, "Al-Qaeda attack' kills 20 Yemen soldiers", March 24, 2014.

<sup>65</sup> LWJ, "Suicide attack at Yemeni military intelligence HQ", March 18, 2014.

claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed AQAP militants.<sup>66</sup>

## North America

On March 1, Suleiman Abu Ghaith, the son-in-law of Osama bin Laden and a former Al-Qaeda spokesman, went on trial in New York, accused of conspiracy to kill Americans and supporting terrorists.<sup>67</sup> He was best known for making incendiary threats in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. He pleaded not guilty on all three counts against him. However, on March 26 at the culmination of his trial, Abu Ghaith was found guilty of "conspiring to kill Americans and providing material support to terrorists".<sup>68</sup> The decision to prosecute Abu Ghaith in federal court reignited the debate over whether international terrorists should be placed in military custody and sent to the United States naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.<sup>69</sup> He was the highest ranking Al-Qaeda militant to be convicted after the 9/11 attacks. Sentencing was set for September 8, 2014. The charges carry a potential penalty of life in prison.<sup>70</sup>

On March 17, Nicholas Teasant, 20, was arrested near the Canadian border in Washington State and charged with attempting to travel to Syria to fight alongside Al-Qaeda linked militants, specifically the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham.<sup>71</sup> A criminal complaint was filed in federal court in Sacramento, as he was a resident of California. On March 26, a federal grand jury in Sacramento indicted him on a single charge of attempting to provide support to a foreign terrorist organization. If convicted, he faces a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.<sup>72</sup> He was described as a student at San Joaquin Delta Community College in Stockton and a member of the

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<sup>66</sup> BBC, "Yemen attack on military checkpoint 'kills 20 soldiers'", March 24, 2014.

<sup>67</sup> Times of Israel, "Bin Laden's son-in-law faces trial in New York", March 2, 2014.

<sup>68</sup> New York Times, Jurors Convict Abu Ghaith, Bin Laden Son-in-Law, in Terror Case, March 26, 2014.

<sup>69</sup> AP, "Jury reaches verdict on bin Laden's son-in-law", March 26, 2014.

<sup>70</sup> BBC, "Bin Laden son-in-law Abu Ghaith on trial in New York", March 5, 2014.

<sup>71</sup> Fox News, "Nicholas Teasant, California man, arrested after trying to join extremists in Syria, police say", March 17, 2014.

<sup>72</sup> AP, "California man indicted on charge of providing support to terror group; had planned Syria trip", March 26, 2014.

AP, "I would love to join Allah's army': National Guardsmen 'plotted to bomb the L.A. subway system and wanted to help al-Qaida", March 17, 2014.

Fox News, "Nicholas Teasant, California man, arrested after trying to join extremists in Syria, police say", March 17, 2014.

National Guard who was in the process of being discharged for failing to meet basic academic requirements.<sup>73</sup> According to the indictment, Teasant began expressing radicalized views in Spring 2013, saying "I would love to join Allah's army but I don't even know how to start". Later that year, he took to another online forum to say he hoped to fight in Syria.<sup>74</sup>

On March 19, Shelton Thomas Bell, of Florida, pleaded guilty to conspiring to travel to Yemen to join Ansar al-Sharia militants. The US Attorney's Office in Jacksonville said the suspect was charged with conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists and attempting to provide material support to terrorists.<sup>75</sup> According to the court indictment, Bell recruited an unnamed juvenile in September 2012 and together they travel to Amman, Jordan, and made contact with someone who investigators said could help them travel to Yemen to participate in violent jihad. However, the pair was unable to enter Yemen and were deported from Jordan to the United States in November 2012. Bell was arrested in the Jacksonville area on state charges in January 2013. He was still being held in the Duval County jail in Jacksonville in July 2013 when a grand jury indicted him on the terrorism charges. If convicted, he faces a sentence of 30 years in prison.<sup>76</sup>

On March 25, Jose Pimentel was sentenced to 16 years in prison for attempting to conduct an Al-Qaeda-inspired homegrown terrorism campaign in the United States. Pimentel, 29, admitted trying to build pipe bombs to conduct terrorist attacks.<sup>77</sup> He was arrested on November 19, 2011, and charged with building pipe bombs and planning to use them against US military personnel and civilians.<sup>78</sup> In February, he pleaded guilty to one count of felony attempted criminal possession of a weapon as an act of terrorism.

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<sup>73</sup> AP, "California man indicted on charge of providing support to terror group; had planned Syria trip", March 26, 2014.

<sup>74</sup> AP, "'I would love to join Allah's army': National Guardsmen 'plotted to bomb the L.A. subway system and wanted to help al-Qaida'", March 17, 2014.

<sup>75</sup> ABC news, "Fla. man pleads guilty to terrorism charges", March 19, 2014.

<sup>76</sup> AP, "Florida man pleads guilty to terror charges after attempting to join al-Qaida", March 19, 2014.

<sup>77</sup> AP, "16 years in prison for man in NYC terror bomb plot", March 25, 2014.

<sup>78</sup> For full details of his arrest see November 2011 ICT database report <http://www.ict.org.il/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=CisjelfHhHs%3d&tabid=380>  
For Full details of the charges against him see February 2014 ICT database report <http://www.ict.org.il/Articles.aspx?WordID=25>

## Asia

### Afghanistan

On March 18, a suicide bomber detonated his explosives near the entrance to a busy market in Maymana, the capital of Faryab Province, killing 15 people and wounding 27 others. Authorities said the attacker had been riding a three-wheel motorcycle when he detonated his explosives. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed the Taliban.<sup>79</sup>

On March 20, a team of gunmen opened fire inside the luxury Serena Hotel in Kabul, killing nine people and injuring six others, including two of the hotel's security guards.<sup>80</sup> Among the victims was former Paraguayan diplomat, Luis Maria Duarte, who was in the country as an international observer in the upcoming Presidential elections. Afghan authorities said the victims included foreign nationals from New Zealand, Pakistan, India and Canada. At least two of were seriously injured during the attack.<sup>81</sup> Witnesses said the gunmen opened fire inside the hotel restaurant, leading to a three-hour standoff with Afghan security forces. The attackers were killed by the police. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>82</sup> On March 25, nine people were arrested in connection with the attack but their identities were not released to the public. The Interior Ministry said in a statement to the media that the company employed by the Serena Hotel was negligent, which enabled the four attackers to hide small handguns in their shoes and avoid detection to enter the premises.<sup>83</sup> The attack was particularly shocking because the luxury hotel had long been considered one of the most secure sites for civilians in Kabul.<sup>84</sup>

Also on March 20, seven suicide bombers and gunmen stormed a police station in Jalalabad, killing 11 people and wounding around 20 others. Authorities said the attackers stormed the building and then detonated their explosives inside. General Ayub Salangi, Afghanistan's Deputy Minister for Security in the Interior Ministry, said the majority of casualties were police, including Jalalabad Police Chief, Aminullah Khan. Gun battles between security forces and the militants lasted several

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<sup>79</sup> BBC, "Afghan suicide bombing at market leaves many dead", March 18, 2014.

<sup>80</sup> Wall Street Journal, "Taliban Kill Nine People in Attack on Serena Hotel in Kabul", March 21, 2014.

<sup>81</sup> New York Times, "Illusion of Safety at Afghan Haven Is Shattered", March 25, 2014.

<sup>82</sup> IANS, "9 People killed in a Terrorist Attack at Serena Hotel in Kabul", March 20, 2014.

<sup>83</sup> AP, "Afghan police detain 9 in Kabul hotel attack", March 25, 2014.

<sup>84</sup> New York Times, "Illusion of Safety at Afghan Haven Is Shattered", March 25, 2014.

hours after the initial attack. The explosion also damaged the nearby state-owned RTA-TV building and shops. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>85</sup>

## China

On March 1, 29 people were killed and 143 others were injured when a team of suspected Uyghur separatists attacked the largest metro train station in Kunming, southwest China. The attackers were armed with knives and meat cleavers, and indiscriminately stabbed civilians waiting for trains or disembarking from arriving trains.<sup>86</sup> Witnesses said the militants were dressed in black clothes, mimicking Chechen black widows.<sup>87</sup> Four attackers were shot dead by police at the scene. An injured female suspect was reportedly detained.<sup>88</sup> On March 2, three other suspected attackers were arrested. In a statement to the media, the Ministry of Public Security said that six men and two women, led by a person identified as Abdurehim Kurban, were responsible for the attack. There were no details about how the suspects were identified and captured.<sup>89</sup> No group claimed responsibility for the attack. However, authorities said that evidence, such as insignia and flags about "East Turkestan" found at the scene of the attack, suggests Uighur separatists from Xinjiang were responsible.<sup>90</sup>

## India

On March 24, four militants, including Indian Mujahideen leader, Zia-Ur-Rahman (aka "Waqas") were arrested in the State of Rajasthan, suspected of planning attacks to target legislative elections, which were to be held in April 2014. Authorities said that Zia-Ur-Rahman, a Pakistani national, was wanted for bombings in Mumbai, Pune and Hyderabad over the past several years, including the bombing of Zaveri market in July 2011. They also said that the militants had a large quantity of

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<sup>85</sup> VOA, "Taliban Militants Storm Police Station in Eastern Afghanistan", March 20, 2014.

<sup>86</sup> Xinhua, "Kunming terrorist attack suspects captured", March 1, 2014.

<sup>87</sup> NPR, "Who's Behind The Mass Stabbing In China?", March 3, 2014.

<sup>88</sup> USA Today, "Dozens dead in knife attack at China train station", March 1, 2014.

<sup>89</sup> South China Post, "Police name Kunming massacre 'mastermind' as three suspected attackers are arrested", March 4, 2014.

<sup>90</sup> Time, "Deadly Terrorist Attack in Southwestern China Blamed on Separatist Muslim Uighurs", March 1, 2014.

explosives in their possession at the time of arrest<sup>91</sup> and that the latest arrests were made possible based on information gathered from two arrested Indian Mujahideen militants.<sup>92</sup>

## **Pakistan**

On March 1, 11 people, including one child, were killed and 10 others were wounded when an IED bomb exploded in the Lashoro area of the tribal region's Jamrud district. Authorities said the bomb was detonated remotely and targeted security personnel guarding a polio vaccination team in Khyber tribal agency. Two vehicles belonging to the security forces were damaged in the attack.<sup>93</sup> Authorities said a fierce gun battle between security forces and the militants took place following the explosions.<sup>94</sup> Following this incident, on March 11, two policemen who were escorting a polio vaccination team were shot dead in Pakistan's northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. The policemen were attacked by unidentified gunmen in the Dera Ismail Khan district. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed the Taliban who are opposed to the vaccinations.<sup>95</sup>

On March 3, 11 people were killed and 24 others injured when militants opened fire at a judicial court in Islamabad.<sup>96</sup> The attack began with gunfire, followed by two suicide bombings. It marked the first suicide bombing in Islamabad since June 2011. Gunmen entered the court complex and opened fire before at least two suicide bombers detonated explosives at a time of the morning when crowds gather.<sup>97</sup> The TTP, which announced a one-month cease-fire on March 1, denied any involvement in the attack. Instead, Ahrar-ul-Hind, a group that recently split from the TTP, claimed responsibility.<sup>98</sup>

On March 14, 11 people were killed and 45 others were injured in a suicide attack that targeted police in the outskirts of Peshawar. Senior police official, Najeeb-ur-Rahman, said that the suicide

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<sup>91</sup> RFI, "Arrests amid security concerns ahead of India legislative elections", March 24, 2014.

<sup>92</sup> Reuters, "Indian police arrest four suspected Islamist militants", March 23, 2014.

<sup>93</sup> Dawn, "Blasts targeting polio team kill 11 in Khyber agency", March 1, 2014.

<sup>94</sup> BBC, "Pakistan polio team hit by deadly attack", March 1, 2014.

<sup>95</sup> BBC, "Suspected militants attack Pakistan polio protection team", March 11, 2014.

<sup>96</sup> Reuters, "At least 11 killed in brazen attack on Pakistani court", March 3, 2014.

<sup>97</sup> BBC, "Deadly attack on court in Pakistani capital Islamabad", March 31, 2014.

<sup>98</sup> News International, "TTP splinter faction, Ahrar-ul-Hind claims staged Islamabad attack", March 3, 2014.

bomber approached the police vehicle on foot. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities suspected the Taliban despite a month long cease-fire that had been declared.<sup>99</sup>

## **Philippines**

On March 10, seven Philippine Army soldiers and three local police officers were killed during three attacks by suspected New People's Army (NPA) militants in Mantanao municipality in Davao del Sur Province. The three police officers were killed during an NPA assault on a police station in the town of Mantanao. Separately, two militants were killed during an assault on an army detachment in the village of Donganpekong. Seven soldiers who arrived as reinforcements following the attack were also killed when their vehicle hit a landmine placed by NPA militants as they withdrew.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> AFP, "Seven Police Killed By Suicide Bomber In Northwestern Pakistan", March 11, 2014.

<sup>100</sup> Xinhua, "10 killed in NPA attack of Davao police station", March 10, 2014.

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