



ICT Incidents Database Periodical Report

December 2011

The following is a summary and analysis of terrorist attacks and counter-terrorism operations that occurred during the month of December 2011, researched and recorded by the ICT database team. Among others:

- Ayman al-Zawahri, claimed responsibility on 1 December for the kidnapping of Warren Weinstein, 70, a Jewish American development expert on 13 August 2011 in Lahore, Pakistan.
- Mohammad Younis, 44, received a \$2,000 fine on 1 December and was sentenced to three years on probation for assisting Faisal Shazasad fund the failed Times Square attack, in New York, USA on 1 May 2010.
- Nima Yusuf, 25, pleaded guilty on 1 December to financially assisting four men from Minnesota, USA, who were accused of joining al-Shabbab in Somalia.
- "Halil S", 27, was arrested on 6 December in Bochum, Germany, suspected of having ties to the Düsseldorf cell that was led by militant Abdeladim El-K.
- An AQIM splinter group calling known as *the Unity Movement for Jihad in West Africa*, announced their formation on 10 December and claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of two Spaniards and an Italian on 23 October 2011 near Tindouf, Algeria.
- Kevin Lunsmann, an American teenager, 14, escaped on 10 December from captivity by Abu Sayaf militants in the Philippines.
- Ahmed Faraz, 32, a bookseller from Birmingham, UK was convicted on 12 December of possessing and distributing material related to terrorism.
- Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, 62, alias *Carlos the Jackal*, was sentenced a second time, to life in prison in Paris, France on 15 December.
- US Drug Enforcement Administration agents raided an Oklahoma car dealership on 17 December, as the business was suspected of being part of a large network that used their profits to fund Hizballah between January 2007 and early 2011.
- On 22 December, 72 people were killed and 217 were wounded in a series of 14 explosions in Baghdad, Iraq.
- On 23 December, 44 people were killed and 166 injured when two suicide car bombs exploded in succession of each other outside the State Security Directorate and a regional military office in Damascus, Syria.
- On 25 December, 41 people were killed and 57 wounded, in coordinated bomb attacks that targeted Christmas Day church services carried out by Boko Haram militants in northern Nigeria.



EUROPE

France

Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, 62, alias Carlos the Jackal, was sentenced for a second time, to life in prison in Paris on 15 December. He was already serving a life sentence for a triple murder in 1975. He was convicted of being the mastermind behind four attacks in France in 1982 and 1983 that killed 11 people and injured more than 140 others. He had denied any role in the attacks. Police discovered new evidence that led to him being tried for the bomb attacks in Paris and Marseilles.¹ The court also convicted two of his accomplices Kamal Al-Issawi and Johannes Weinrich, to life in prison; Weinrich was already serving a sentence in a prison in Germany. A third suspected accomplice, Christa Margot Frohlich was found not guilty.²

Germany

On 6 December, a man identified only as “Halil S”, 27, was arrested in Bochum by anti-terrorism police. He was suspected of having links to a local al-Qa’ida cell known as the Düsseldorf cell that was led by militant Abdeladim El-K. “Halil S”, studied mechanical engineering and was a computer expert. He used encrypted access when he went online to avoid detection by police. He was suspected of raising money for the planned attack and providing logistical support for three of the other cell members by false use of the internet auction site *eBay*. Authorities thwarted the attack before the cell had selected their target. “Halil S”, was believed to have continued his plans despite the arrest of three of the Düsseldorf cell members in April 2011. He was also suspected of being in possession of fake identity papers and of renting apartments in the Ruhr area in western Germany.³ Video surveillance showed “Halil S”, entering one of the rented apartments that authorities said was the cell’s headquarters.⁴

An envelope containing explosives and shrapnel was addressed to Josef Ackermann, the chief executive of Deutsche Bank.⁵ Authorities said that the parcel contained a fully

¹ BBC, “Carlos the Jackal convicted for 1980s French attacks”, 15 December 2011;

² AP, “Paris court sentences Carlos the Jackal to life in prison for 4 deadly attacks in 1980s”, 16 December 2011;

³ Reuters, “Germany arrests al Qaeda suspect over bomb plot”, 6 December 2011;

⁴ Der Spiegel, “Al-Qaida Still Planning Attacks in Germany”, 13 December 2011;

⁵ Telegraph, “‘Parcel bomb’ sent to Deutsche Bank chief executive”, 7 December 2011;



functional bomb and was intercepted on 7 December at 13:00 in the bank's mail room.⁶ An Italian leftist anarchist group claimed responsibility for the thwarted attack.⁷

United Kingdom

On 2 December, nine men, mainly of South Asian origin, pleaded not guilty in a British court to plotting terror attacks on targets in London, including the Houses of Parliament and the US embassy. The suspects were arrested in a series of raids by counter-terrorism officers on 21 December 2010.⁸ The suspects were accused of choosing targets, discussing materials and methods, attending operational meetings, and researching files that contained practical instructions on how to carry out an attack. Five of the men were also accused of possessing certain documents that contained information of a kind "likely to be useful to a person committing or preparing for an act of terrorism". Four of the suspects were accused of possessing two editions of the al-Qa'ida magazine *Inspire* and a document titled "39 Ways to Serve and Participate in Jihad".⁹ Initially, twelve suspects were arrested in Birmingham, Cardiff, East London, and Stoke-on-Trent. However, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) chose to only proceed with charges against nine men. They were identified as Gurukanth Desai, 28, of Cardiff; Omar Sharif Latif, 26, of Cardiff; Abdul Malik Miah, 24, of Cardiff; Mohammed Moksudur Rahman Chowdhury, 20, of London; Shah Mohammed Luftar Rahman, 28, of London; and Nazam Hussain, 25, Usman Khan, 19, Mohibur Rahman, 26, and Abul Boshier Mohammed Shahjahan, 26, all of Stoke-on-Trent. Three of the suspects had previously served time in prison for petty crimes and were radicalized in prison.¹⁰

Ahmed Faraz, 32, a bookseller from Birmingham was convicted on 12 December, of possessing and distributing material related to terrorism. His shop, *Maktabah al-Ansar (library of the faithful)* was originally founded by Moazzam Begg, who was arrested in Pakistan in 2002 after fleeing from Afghanistan during the fall of the Taliban and held in Guantanamo Bay. Faraz was found guilty of 11 of 15 counts against him at the Kingston Crown Court, London. Faraz supplied terrorist related material to Mohammed Sidique Khan, the leader of the 7 July 2005 bomb plot, and members of the trans-Atlantic airline gang, who

⁶ AP, "German police: Package to Ackermann was a bomb", 9 December 2011;

⁷ Reuters, "Deutsche Bank CEO target of suspicious envelope: police", 7 December 2011;

⁸ AP, "9 men deny terrorist bomb plot against high-profile targets including British Parliament", 3 December 2011;

⁹ AFP, "Nine men deny UK terror plot charges", 2 December 2011;

¹⁰ Jamestown, "Bringing London's "Christmas Bombers" to Trial", 16 December 2011;



ICT Incidents Database Periodical Report

December 2011

quoted from his texts in their suicide videos. He also provided books to Habib Ahmed, a senior al-Qa'ida lieutenant from Manchester, and Andrew Ibrahim, who planned to blow up a shopping centre in Bristol.¹¹ One of the books he was found guilty of distributing was a special edition of *Milestones* by Sayyid Qutb, which was developed specifically to promote extremist ideology. Other charges related to military training videos, including bomb-making instructions.¹²

AFRICA

Algeria

On 10 December, a previously unknown group calling themselves the *Jamat Tawhid Wal Jihad Fi Garbi Afriqqiya* (Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa-MOJWA) claimed responsibility, in a written and audio video message, for the kidnapping of three aid workers from a refugee camp near Tindouf, Algeria on 23 October 2011.¹³ The hostages, two Spaniards and an Italian, were shown to be alive. In the message, the hostages identified themselves in their own languages; the male hostage had his foot bandaged whilst the two women were dressed in blue gowns and yellow headscarves. In the background of the video, masked gunmen are guarding the hostages. A man claiming to be the group's spokesman said the militants had broken away from AQIM but did not provide an explanation.¹⁴ Authorities believe the group is comprised of ex-AQIM fighters who are Sahrawis and West Africans, as well as Algerians. Analysts suggested that the new group formed by AQIM fighters who revolted against their Algerian leaders due to financial disagreements.¹⁵ Authorities presumed the leader of the group is Mauritanian Hamada Ould Mohamed El Kheiri, as he appeared to be the group's spokesman. Reporters from the AFP news agency also reported that Kheiri threatened the French government and stated that his visions for the new group were to assert "Jihad in Africa until the application of Sharia laws".

¹¹ Telegraph, "Terrorists' favourite bookseller guilty", 15 December 2011;

¹² BBC, "Bookseller Ahmed Faraz found guilty of terror offences", 12 December 2011;

¹³ Echorouk, "Tawhid and Jihad" splinter group claims kidnap of three Europeans south of Algeria, 4 January 2012;

¹⁴ AFP, "'Al Qa'ida splinter group' claims kidnap of Westerners", 11 December 2011;

¹⁵ Magrehebia, "Al-Qaeda splinter group reveals internal erosion", 30 December 2011;



Authorities believe the group follows the ideology of al-Qa'ida and may have links with Boko Haram militants in Nigeria.¹⁶

Ethiopia

Martin Schibbye and Johan Persson, two Swedish freelance journalists, were sentenced on 27 December, to 11 years in prison after being found guilty a week earlier of supporting terrorism and entering Ethiopia illegally.¹⁷ They were arrested with members of the Ogaden National Liberation Front rebel group in July 2011.¹⁸

Kenya

On 23 December, police in Mombasa and Nairobi arrested six al-Shabaab militants suspected of plotting to carry out attacks over the Christmas period in Kenya. Police said the militants belonged to a local cell of the group with links to the global al-Qa'ida terror network. Police said the suspects had traveled on several occasions to Somalia to take part in al-Shabaab terrorist training camps.¹⁹

Nigeria

Three Boko Haram militants were killed on 17 December when the bombs they were making prematurely exploded at a house they were using to make home-made bombs in Maiduguri. Police also seized large quantities of rifles and ammunition from the building.²⁰

On 19 December, 14 suspected Boko Haram militants were arrested after a shoot-out in which three police officers and four militants were killed in Kano. It was reported that the leader of Boko Haram was amongst those arrested but the group denied this.²¹

On 25 December, 41 people were killed and 57 wounded in coordinated bomb attacks that targeted Christmas Day church services carried out by Boko Haram militants in northern Nigeria. The attacks targeted the cities of Madalla, Jos, Gadaka, and Damaturu.²² The first attack was a suspected car bomb that targeted the St Theresa Catholic Church in Madalla

¹⁶ North Africa United Journal, "The Unity Movement for Jihad in West Africa (Mujao) have claimed the kidnapping of three Western hostages ", 13 December 2011;

¹⁷ BBC, "Ethiopia jails Swedish journalists on terror charges", 27 December 2011;

¹⁸ Bloomberg, "Ethiopia Convicts Two Swedish Reporters of Aiding Terrorism", 22 December 2011;

¹⁹ AllAfrica.com, "Police Arrest Six Over Christmas Terror Plot", 23 December 2011;

²⁰ AFP, Explosion at 'bomb-making' house in Nigerian city, 17 December 2011;

²¹ BBC, "Nigeria arrests Boko Haram 'militants' in Kano", 19 December 2011;

²² BBC, "Nigeria churches hit by blasts during Christmas prayers", 25 December 2011;



and killed 35 people. Dozens of people were injured but the exact figure was unclear. The bomb severely damaged the church, some houses in the area, and burned out five cars. A second explosion then occurred near the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Church, in the business district of the city of Jos, and gunmen opened fire on police guarding the area, killing one policeman. Police also discovered two other bombs in a nearby building and defused them safely. In Damaturu a suicide car bomber killed three people and another bomb exploded at a church in the northeastern area of Gadaka, but no one was reported killed.²³ Police confirmed they arrested two men, who were believed to be Boko Haram members. Their identities were not released to the public.²⁴

Somalia

Somali police stopped a suspicious vehicle on the 6 December, at the K4 junction, a busy intersection in Mogadishu, where they discovered the vehicle was laden with explosives. Before making an arrest, the police made a fatal error by returning the bomber to the vehicle, where he managed to detonate the explosives killing four people.²⁵ The car bomb exploded close to the Turkish embassy. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack.²⁶

MIDDLE EAST

Iraq

On 2 December, two people were injured when a bomb exploded near the Iraqi parliament in Baghdad. Officials claimed the attack was an assassination attempt on Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri; he was unhurt in the attack.²⁷ A black SUV containing 20 kilograms of locally-made explosives entered the Green Zone with a convoy and then the suicide bomber detonated the bomb. Several people were arrested in connection with the attack.²⁸

On 5 December, 21 people were killed and approximately 100 others wounded in a series of bomb attacks that targeted Shia pilgrims celebrating the festival of Ashura.²⁹ The first attack was a car bomb that targeted a procession of pilgrims in the al-Nil area, killing 16 people.

²³ AP, "Scores killed in deadly bomb attacks at churches in Nigeria", 25 December 2011;

²⁴ New York Times, "Nigeria Arrests 2 in Blast That Killed 26 in Church", 26 December 2011;

²⁵ BBC, "Mogadishu 'suicide car bomb kills Somali police'", 6 December 2011;

²⁶ Reuters, "Suicide bomber hits Somali capital, dozens killed in south", 6 December 2011;

²⁷ AFP, "Iraq blast was assassination attempt says official", 2 December 2011;

²⁸ AP, "Iraq PM: Green Zone bomb was assassination attempt", 2 December 2011;

²⁹ AP, "Attacks kill 21 Shiite pilgrims in Iraq", 5 December 2011;



Then two other attacks occurred in Baghdad killing 11 pilgrims who were taking part in festive celebrations. No group claimed responsibility for the attacks but authorities suspect al-Qa'ida in Iraq.³⁰

On 22 December, 72 people were killed and 217 were wounded in a series of explosions in Baghdad. The Interior Ministry said that there were 14 explosions throughout the city, including in al-Amil, Halawi and Karrada. Of the 14 bombs, 10 were improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and four were car-bombs.³¹ The highest number of casualties occurred when a suicide bomber, posing as an ambulance driver, drove his explosive-laden vehicle into a government anti-corruption office in the Karrada neighbourhood. Two police officers at the scene said the bomber claimed he needed to get to a nearby hospital. After the guards let him, he drove to the building where he blew himself up, killing 25 people and wounding 62. The explosion also left a crater approximately five meters wide in front of the building.³² In addition to these attacks a gunman killed a family of five and a local bodyguard in the city of Baqubah. Several shootings took place in Mosul, killing two people and injuring four others. Five people injured in Musayyib and Jurf Al-Sakhar south of the capital, and a body was found in Kirkuk. Later in the evening, local journalists reported at least four additional explosions. The official death toll was raised to 72 after these further bombings, which included attacks in the Al-Shurтта and Al-Jihad districts in southwestern Baghdad.³³

Israel including West Bank and Gaza Strip

On 8 December, an IAF airstrike against militants who were about to launch rockets into Israel killed Isam Subahil Samil Batash a senior Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades militant and another militant who was not identified.³⁴ The IAF said that Batash was responsible for several previous terror attacks in which terrorists from the Gaza Strip infiltrated Israel via Sinai.³⁵ Gaza militants responded to the airstrike by firing several rockets towards Israel, including a Grad missile that exploded in an open field near Beersheba and a Qassam rocket that landed in the Sdot Negev Regional Council, however there were no casualties. Israeli

³⁰ BBC, "Deadly bomb attacks on Shia pilgrims in Iraq", 5 December 2011;

³¹ BBC, "Dozens killed in co-ordinated Baghdad attacks", 22 December 2011;

³² AP, "Baghdad bomb attacks leave scores dead and hundreds injured", 22 December;

³³ Reuters, "Death toll rises in Baghdad blasts", 22 December 2011;

³⁴ Haaretz, "Gaza militants fire rockets at Israel's south following IDF strike", 8 December 2011;

³⁵ IDF, "Gaza militants fire rockets at Israel's south following IDF strike", 8 December 2011;



airstrikes also targeted Hamas facilities as a response to the rocket fire, killing one civilian and injuring several others.³⁶

Arsonists set fire to the Nebi Akasha mosque in central Jerusalem during the night of 13 December. There was no structural damage however, the walls were spray painted with graffiti reading “Price Tag” and anti-Islamic phrases such as “Muhammad is Dead,” and “Muhammad is a Pig.”³⁷ The deserted mosque is located in central Jerusalem and is unique as it is located in the middle of an Ultra-Orthodox neighborhood. It was abandoned in the Israeli War of Independence. Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat strongly condemned the incident.³⁸

Syria

On 23 December 2011, 44 people were killed and 166 injured when two suicide car bombs exploded in close succession at approximately 10:15 outside the State Security Directorate and a regional military office in Damascus in the Kfar Sousa district. Gunfire was heard immediately following the explosion. The impact of the bombs caused windows to break in a neighborhood more than 15 kilometers away.³⁹ The attacks occurred a day after Arab League observers arrived in Syria to monitor whether the government was complying with a peace agreement that ordered all troops to withdraw from the streets, with the aim of ending the uprising. The Syrian Foreign Ministry said that they had received an intelligence tip two days prior to the attack from Lebanon that several militants entered the country through the town of Ersal near Baalbek.⁴⁰ No group claimed responsibility but the government blamed al-Qa’ida. Syrian activists claimed that the government itself was responsible for staging the attacks to mount further crackdowns against the nine-month uprising against President Bashar al-Assad however this claim was not verified.⁴¹

Yemen

Six wanted al-Qa’ida militants were arrested on 13 December while allegedly planning attacks on senior government officials as well as Arab and other foreign diplomatic missions.

³⁶ AP, “Gaza official: Israeli airstrike kills 1 civilian”, 9 December 2011;

³⁷ Jerusalem Post, “Jerusalem mosque set alight in suspected ‘price tag’ attack”, 13 December 2011;

³⁸ Haaretz, “Jerusalem mosque set alight in suspected ‘price tag’ attack”, 14 December 2011;

³⁹ WSJ, “Bombs Raise Stakes in Syria”, 23 December 2011;

⁴⁰ BBC, “Syria officials: Twin bombings in Damascus kill 30”, 23 December 2011;

⁴¹ WSJ, “Bombs Raise Stakes in Syria”, 23 December 2011;



Police also seized explosives meant for the attacks.⁴² Amongst those arrested was Musaed Mohammed Ahmed al-Barbari, the leader of the cell. He was suspected of leading the militant group that attacked Sanaa airport in 2009.⁴³

SOUTH AMERICA

Colombia

A truck bomb exploded on 6 December outside a police station in La Guajira, Maicao. The exact casualty figures were unclear as media reports varied, but authorities said that two people, including a child, were killed and 18 injured. The explosion destroyed the police station and several buildings, including some shops, within a radius of 150 meters. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.⁴⁴ Colombian authorities offered \$29,000 for information about the attack's perpetrators.⁴⁵

NORTH AMERICA

USA

On 1 December 2011, Mohammad Younis, 44, received a \$2,000 fine and sentenced to three years on probation. He pleaded guilty to charges that he arranged an illegal transfer of \$7,000 to Faisal Shazad, the perpetrator of the failed attack on 1 May 2010 in Times Square, New York. Younis had faced a maximum sentence of five years in prison.⁴⁶ Authorities believe that when the Times Square attack was in the planning stages, Younis' brother, who was based in Pakistan, sent him \$7000 in cash that he then delivered to Faisal Shazad at a Long Island railroad station on 10 April 2010. However Younis was unaware of Shazad's plot. The exchange was part of an informal money-transfer business known as hawala, which relies on hawaladars (brokers) and bypasses the usual banking channels.⁴⁷ Prosecutors in the

⁴² AP, "Yemeni police arrest 6 al-Qaida militants said planning attacks on officials, foreign missions", 13 December 2011;

⁴³ Reuters, "Yemen arrests 6 al Qaeda members for attack plans", 6 December 2011;

⁴⁴ CR, "North Colombia bomb attack kills at least 1, injures 18 ", 6 December 2011;

⁴⁵ AP, "Car bomb kills 2, injures 10 in Colombia", 7 December 2011;

⁴⁶ CNN, "Financial agent of failed Times Square bomber sentenced", 1 December 2011;

⁴⁷ New York Times, "Charges of Getting Cash to Failed Times Sq. Bomber", 15 September 2010;



case had argued that a potential sentence of up to six months would be appropriate to deter money transmissions that could fund terrorism.⁴⁸

On 1 December, Nima Yusuf, 25, pleaded guilty to assisting four men from Minnesota who are accused of joining al-Shabbab. Yusuf admitted that she assisted Mohammed Abdullahi Hassan, Abdisalan Hussein, Cabdulaahi Ahmed Faarax, and Abdiweli YassinIsse to provide material support to al-Shabbab. She entered this agreement with the men with the full knowledge that al-Shabaab is a designated terrorist organization. On two occasions prior to her guilty plea, Yusuf had been interviewed by agents from the FBI and department of homeland security. On both occasions she denied she had sent the money but later admitted that she had provided false information to the agents. Yusuf said that between February 2010 and November 2010, she sent approximately \$1450 to the men.⁴⁹ The men were charged separately in a federal grand jury indictment in Minnesota for conspiring to provide material support to al-Shabaab. Faarax was also charged with recruiting young men to fight with the militants. She faced a potential maximum sentence of 15 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.⁵⁰

The US State Department named Saleh al-Qarawi as a specially designated global terrorist on 15 December. Al-Qarawi is a senior leader of the Abdullah Azzam Brigades, which reportedly claimed responsibility for the 28 July 2010, bombing of a Japanese oil tanker, as well as firing several rockets from Lebanon into Israel since 2009.⁵¹ Al-Qarawi also fought with the late Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, former head of al-Qa'ida in Iraq against US forces in Fallujah. Due to the designation, all of al-Qarawi's property interests became subject to US jurisdiction and US citizens are prohibited from engaging in transactions with him or for his benefit. Al-Qarawi, a Saudi citizen, is also currently wanted for extradition by the government of Saudi Arabia for participating in extremist activities abroad. He was also the subject of an Interpol Orange Notice issued on 25 March 2009 for terror-related activities.⁵²

On 17 December 2011, US Drug Enforcement Administration agents raided an Oklahoma car dealership that was suspected of being part of a large network that used the profits to fund Hizballah. Authorities believe the profits from the business provided Hizballah with

⁴⁸ AP, "Broker for Would-be Times Square Bomber Sentenced", 2 December 2011;

⁴⁹ FBI, "San Diego Woman Pleads Guilty of Support to Al-Shabaab", 1 December 2011;

⁵⁰ NBC, "Woman Admits Aiding Terrorists", 1 December 2011;

⁵¹ UPI, "U.S. designates Saudi, Spaniard terrorists", 15 December 2011;

⁵² US Department of State, "Terrorist Designation of Saleh al-Qarawi", 15 December 2011;



weapons, terrorist training, and recruiting. The US government claimed that Lebanese financial institutions wired more than \$300 million into the US as part of the money laundering scheme between January 2007 and early 2011.⁵³ Cash from their sales was allegedly smuggled to Lebanon via West Africa together with funds from Colombian and Mexican cartels. Prosecutors were seeking \$480m in penalties from the three institutions claiming this was equivalent to the total amount of money laundered. Prosecutors also sought to freeze and seize the assets of the companies, along with the 30 US car dealers and a US shipping company, which were accused of facilitating the crime.⁵⁴ Zakariya Boyd, 22, was sentenced on 20 December, to nine years in prison and his brother Dylan, 25, to eight years. Each had pleaded guilty to conspiracy to provide support to terrorists, which carried a maximum of 15 years in prison and \$250,000 fine. Both received lesser sentences after cooperating with prosecutors, including credit for the jail time already served since their arrests in July 2009. According to prosecutors, the brothers were part of a group of eight men who raised money, stored weapons, and trained for jihadist attacks against US military targets. The men's father had turned their family home into a base camp to carry out jihad. Both men expressed their regret for assisting their father and supporting his extremist views.⁵⁵

Oytun Ayse Mihalik, 39, of La Palma, was charged on 22 December, with sending money to Pakistan to help fund terrorist attacks against US military personnel. She faced up to 53 years in prison if found guilty.⁵⁶ Mihalik was accused of sending \$2,050 in three wire transfers to a person in Pakistan over a period of three weeks in late 2010 and early 2011. Mihalik was originally questioned on 8 August 2011 by Federal authorities who claimed that she lied to agents, saying she had never used an alias to send money via Western Union to a person overseas. She has been in US custody since 27 August 2011, when she was arrested at Los Angeles International Airport where she was preparing to board a flight to Turkey. If found guilty she faced 15 years in prison for providing material support to terrorists and an

⁵³ AP via Fox News, "DEA Raids Car Dealership with Alleged Ties to Terrorist Group Hezbollah", 18 December 2011;

⁵⁴ BBC, "US sues Lebanese firms for 'laundering Hezbollah funds'", 16 December 2011;

⁵⁵ AP, "Brothers sentenced for roles in NC terror plot", 20 December 2011;

⁵⁶ AP, "California woman charged with sending money to Pakistan to help fund attacks on US military", 22 December 2011;



eight year sentence for the charge of making a false statement in a matter involving international terrorism. A trial was scheduled for February 2012.⁵⁷

ASIA

Afghanistan

On 2 December, 84 people were wounded and one killed when a suicide bomber attempted to drive an explosive laden truck into a small American military base in Mohammad Agha District, Logar Province. The attacker detonated his explosives at the gates of the base after failing to enter the base. Officials said the attack took place at approximately 0800 and destroyed a medical clinic and two other buildings that were clustered near the gates of the base. Zabiullah Mujahid, a spokesman for the Taliban, claimed responsibility for the attack.⁵⁸ He said on a message posted on social network Twitter that this was a “martyr attack” and had flattened a “US invaders military base”.⁵⁹

A series of coordinated attacks on 6 December, that targeted Shiite pilgrims in Afghanistan, killed 60 people and wounded 160 others. Several days after the attack, President Karzai said the death toll had risen to 80.⁶⁰ The first attack took place at approximately 12:00, when a suicide bomber detonated his explosives outside the Abul Fazal Abbas shrine in Kabul. That attack killed 55 people and injured 134. Simultaneously, four people were killed and 16 injured when a bomb on a bicycle exploded near a gathering of Shiites in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif. Another nearby bomb intended to also target the procession was found and defused. The attacks occurred on the Shiite holy day of Ashura, which commemorates the anniversary of the 7th century martyrdom of Imam Hussein, a grandson of the prophet Muhammad.⁶¹ According to an Afghan intelligence official, the suicide bomber arrived in Kabul with a group of Shiite pilgrims from Logar province, just south of the capital. He attacked as the mosque was full to its capacity.⁶² The Taliban denied any role in the attacks. A spokesman for Pakistani militant group Lashkar-i-Jhangvi claimed responsibility via a

⁵⁷ CNN, “California woman indicted on charges of giving money to terrorists”, 22 December 2011;

⁵⁸ The New York Times, “Fatal Suicide Attack Outside U.S. Base in Afghanistan”, 2 December 2011;

⁵⁹ Telegraph, “Suicide bomb attack on Afghan Nato base”, 2 December 2011;

⁶⁰ AP, “Afghanistan’s President Says Death Toll From Shrine Blast Has Risen to at Least”, 11 December 2011;

⁶¹ LA Times, “Two Afghanistan bombings aimed at Shiites kill at least 59 people”, 7 December 2011;

⁶² Washington Post, “Pakistan-based group claims role in deadly blast in Kabul”, 7 December 2011;



message to the media, although the claim was not verified. If the claim was confirmed it would mark the first time that the group had carried out a major attack in Afghanistan.⁶³

On 25 December, 22 people were killed and 50 injured when a suicide bomber detonated his explosives at a funeral of a government official in Taloqan.⁶⁴ Authorities suspect that Abdul Mutalib Baig, a member of parliament, who was killed in the attack, was the main target. He was a prominent commander of forces who fought against the Taliban in the 1990s, during Afghanistan's civil war.⁶⁵ No group claimed responsibility for the attack, but some authorities suspected the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)⁶⁶ whilst other authorities blamed the Taliban.⁶⁷

Pakistan

On 1 December, Ayman al-Zawahri claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of Warren Weinstein, 70, a Jewish-American development expert. Weinstein had been kidnapped in Lahore, Pakistan on 13 August 2011.⁶⁸ Weinstein headed the Pakistan office for consulting firm J.E. Austin Associates, Inc. The company was working on US Agency for International Development (USAID) projects.⁶⁹ Initially it was believed he was kidnapped by criminals and then passed onto al-Qa'ida but some authorities believed he was being held by Pakistani Taliban and was in the custody of militants led by Commander Tariq Afridi, operating in Darra Adamkhel. In a 31 minute audio recording released on the internet, Al-Zawahri said the kidnapping was in retaliation for the death of Jamal Ibrahim Ashtawi al-Misrati, alias Attiyatullah, a Libyan senior al-Qa'ida leader killed in a US air strike on 23 August 2011. Zawahri also demanded the release of high-profile militants Ramzi Yousef and Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman.⁷⁰ He also demanded an end to air strikes by the United States and its allies against militants in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen and Somalia and Gaza.⁷¹

⁶³ AP, "Rare Attacks On Afghan Shiites Kill 60", 6 December 2011;

⁶⁴ BBC, "Deadly suicide attack on Afghanistan funeral in Takhar", 25 December 2011;

⁶⁵ Washington Post, "Afghan lawmaker who fought Taliban is among 20 killed in funeral bombing", 25 December 2011;

⁶⁶ BBC, "Deadly suicide attack on Afghanistan funeral in Takhar", 25 December 2011;

⁶⁷ Washington Post, "Afghan lawmaker who fought Taliban is among 20 killed in funeral bombing", 25 December 2011;

⁶⁸ BBC, "Al-Qaeda says it kidnapped Warren Weinstein in Pakistan", 1 December 2011;

⁶⁹ CSM Monitor, "Al Qaeda claims kidnapping of American Warren Weinstein", 1 December 2011;

⁷⁰ MSNBC, "Concern grows for American kidnapped in Pakistan", 2 December 2011;

⁷¹ Reuters, "Al-Qa'ida says it kidnapped American in Pakistan", 2 December 2011;



On 28 December, Nasir al Wahishi, 32, a Yemeni national who had links to Osama bin Laden, was killed in a US drone attack at the Ghulam Khan sub-district of North Waristan.⁷² Authorities believed that Wahishi had served as personal assistant to bin Laden until 2000.⁷³ In 2003, he was arrested in Iran and extradited to Yemen. He was among 23 Yemeni captives who escaped from maximum security prison in Sana'a, in 2006 and had been at large since then.⁷⁴

Philippines

On 5 December 2011, Warren Rodwell, 53, was kidnapped from his house in a village near the seaside town of Ipil on restive Mindanao Island by several gunmen. The kidnappers escaped with Rodwell from the Island using speedboats. They offered an initial ransom of about \$22,600.⁷⁵ Authorities found blood marks, as well as a pistol and a bullet casing at the scene of the kidnapping. They believe that Rodwell resisted the attackers, and was either shot or shot someone else in the process. No group claimed responsibility for the incident however authorities suspect Abu Sayyaf.⁷⁶ Authorities suspect that Rodwell is being held by Abu Sayaf commander Puruji Indama, who is suspected of numerous kidnappings-for-ransom and terrorist attacks in the Philippines.⁷⁷ The Australian Government issued a travel warning for parts of the Philippines following the kidnapping.⁷⁸

On 10 December 2011, Kevin Lunsman, an American teenager, 14, escaped from captivity by Abu Sayaf militants in the Philippines. Authorities said it was not fully clear whether the boy escaped or was freed by his captors. He was kidnapped with his mother and cousin in July 2011, whilst on a family vacation. His mother, Gerfa Yeatts Lunsman, was freed in October 2011 and his Filipino cousin escaped in November 2011. They are believed to have been taken by militants from the Abu Sayyaf Islamic group, but there was no public claim of responsibility. It was also unclear whether any ransom has been paid.⁷⁹ The boy said he had been planning his escape for a few weeks and managed to seize an opportunity when he

⁷² PTI, "Osama's top aide killed in drone strike", 3 January 2011;

⁷³ IndianExpress.com, "Nasir al-Wahishi, top Osama aide, killed in US strike", 3 January 2011;

⁷⁴ PTI, "Osama's top aide killed in drone strike", 3 January 2011;

⁷⁵ AAP, "Ransom demanded for kidnapped Australian Warren Richard Rodwell in Philippines", 1 January 2012;

⁷⁶ ABC News, "Philippines forces hunt for kidnapped Australian", 06 December 2011;

⁷⁷ Sydney Morning Herald, "Kidnapped Australian in hands of commander linked to beheadings", 19 December 2011;

⁷⁸ The Australian, "Australia issues travel warning as search for kidnapped man in Philippines goes on", 9 December 2011;

⁷⁹ BBC, "Abducted US teenager Kevin Lunsman 'free' in Philippines", 10 December 2011;



told his captors he was going to a river for a bath.⁸⁰ He then escaped and walked through the jungle for two days surviving on sweets and coconut.⁸¹ He was rescued by local villagers who passed him onto the authorities, where he was later flown to Manila and reunited with his family at the US embassy.⁸²

⁸⁰ AP, "US hostage boy escapes in Philippines jungle", 11 December 2011;

⁸¹ CNN, "Kidnapped 14-year-old Filipino-American is free", 12 December 2011;

⁸² AP, "US hostage boy escapes in Philippines jungle", 11 December 2011.