



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 August 2015

Highlights

- On August 1, Selim Suleiman al-Haram, a senior member of the IS Sinai Province, was killed in a shootout with Egyptian forces in northern Sinai, Egypt.
- On August 9, nine people were arrested by Israeli authorities during a counter-terrorist operation targeting suspected Jewish militants who were suspected of involvement in recent Price Tag attacks in the West Bank.
- On August 12, authorities carried out counter-terrorist raids in 15 locations targeting Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) militants in Istanbul, Turkey. Authorities said they arrested 19 suspects in total and seized ammunition, weapons and documents about the militant organisation. Authorities also carried out a similar but separate operation in four Turkish provinces targeting IS militants.
- On August 17, a bomb exploded inside the Erawan Shrine, a popular tourist site, in Bangkok, Thailand, killing 20 people and injuring 125 others. The majority of victims were foreign tourists. Several days later, authorities made several arrests and identified Bilal Mohammed as the prime suspect. He was seen on security video footage at the scene of the attack. No group claimed responsibility for the bombing but authorities suggested it may have been connected to the Uighur militants.
- On August 18, Fadhil Ahmad al-Hayali alias Haji Mutazz, second-in-command of the IS, was killed in an US-led coalition air strike near Mosul, Iraq. Al-Hayali was travelling with operative Abu Abdullah who was also killed in the strike.
- On August 21, Ayoub El-Khazzani, 26, a lone gunman, inspired by the IS, attempted to carry out a shooting attack on a high-speed train from Amsterdam to Paris. During the attack, five passengers on the train, including two off duty US servicemen, managed to stop the attacker carry out the attack. Three people were hurt. El-Khazzani was arrested when the train was diverted to a station in northern France. On August 26, he was charged with terror-related crimes.
- On August 26, Ahmad Ibrahim al-Mughassil, 48, the leader of Hizballah al-Hijaz's military wing, was arrested in Beirut, Lebanon, where he was then extradited to Saudi Arabia for integration. US authorities claimed he was responsible for an attack on the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, which killed 19 US citizens and wounded 372 other people, in 1996.
- On August 28, Ali Shukri Amin, 17, teenager from Virginia was sentenced to 11 years for supporting the IS via social media postings, in particular Twitter and providing material support to the terrorist organization. He also admitted helping another Virginian resident Reza Niknejad, travel to Syria to join the IS.

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Europe

France

On August 21, three people were moderately injured when they successfully prevented Ayoub El-Khazzani, 26,¹ a lone gunman, inspired by the IS, carry out a shooting attack on a high-speed train from Amsterdam to Paris.² El-Khazzani 26, a Moroccan was armed with a Kalashnikov rifle and knife (some witnesses reported he had a box cutter).³ The attack occurred as the train was passing through Belgium.⁴ Three US citizens, two off-duty US servicemen identified as Alek Skarlatos and Spencer Stone heard the sound of a weapon being loaded from the toilet of the train.⁵ Together with their friend and a British and French passenger, they managed to subdue the attacker until authorities arrested him in Arras in northern France, where the train was diverted too.^{6 7} Authorities also said he had allegedly watched a jihadist video on You Tube on his phone, shortly before carrying out the shooting.⁸ El-Khazzani's lawyer denied his motivations for the attack were terror related claiming it was a criminally motivated attack. However, both French and Belgium authorities said he was known to have ties to militant groups in Europe and the IS. However, it was unclear whether he had actually been to Syria or not. French authorities said El-Khazzani had recently been placed under surveillance.⁹ He had lived in various countries within Europe prior to the incident, including Belgium and Spain, where he allegedly attended a radical mosque in Algeciras.¹⁰ On August 26, he was charged with terror-related crimes including "multiple counts of attempted murder, possession of weapons, and conspiracy."¹¹

¹ AP, "Moroccan charged with terror attack on French train", August 25, 2015

² BBC, "France train shooting: Attack 'was well prepared'", August 25, 2015

³ CNN, "France train attack: What we know about suspect Ayoub El Khazzani?", August 25, 2015

⁴ Telegraph, "France Terror Train - as it happened, 21 August 2015", August 21, 2015

⁵ AP, "American heroes honored in France", August 24, 2015

⁶ Telegraph *ibid.*

⁷ CNN, "Train shooting heroes: The men who helped avert a massacre in Europe", August 21, 2015

⁸ AP, "France train suspect watched jihadi video, prosecutor says", August 25, 2015

⁹ Reuters, "French prosecutor says train gunman had 'terrorist intent'", August 25, 2015

¹⁰ AFP, "French train attacker: extremist who moved around Europe", August 25, 2015

¹¹ AP, "Gunman in French train attack charged with terrorism", August 26, 2015

Germany

On August 4, German police, together with their counterparts in Catalonia, Spain, arrested a Moroccan national, 21, near Stuttgart.¹² He was wanted for terrorist related activities, particularly related to recruitment of potential IS militants through social media. Authorities said the suspect pretended to be an asylum seeker and was in possession of false identification documents.¹³ Authorities also said he had expressed clear intent in planning to travel to Syria to join the IS.¹⁴ According to Spanish authorities, in July 2015 the suspect evaded arrest during counter-terrorist raids in Lanzarote in the Canary Islands. During the operation, a woman was arrested charged with recruiting young Spanish women to join the IS.¹⁵

Russia

On August 11, Russian security forces launched a special counter-terrorist operation, near Grozny in Dagestan, killing four militants. Amongst those killed was Magomed Suleimanov (alias Abu Usman Gimrinsky), the leader of the Caucasian Emirate an IS linked group. Security forces seized weapons and explosives from the militants.¹⁶

United Kingdom

On August 5, renowned radical preacher and founder of the al-Muhajiroun group Anjem Choudary, 48, and his associate Mohammed Rahman, 31, were charged at the Westminster Magistrate court in London, with encouraging support for the IS via a series of online lectures.¹⁷ The men were charged under the Terrorism Act 2000 (section 12) for alleged activities between June 2014 and March 2015. They both pleaded not guilty to the alleged charges.¹⁸ According to the indictment,

¹² The Local, "Jihadist who fled Spain is arrested in Germany", August 5, 2015

¹³ DW, "German police arrest alleged IS recruiter wanted by Spain", August 5, 2015

¹⁴ La Moncloa, "Jihadist arrested in Germany after fleeing Spain following arrest of DAESH recruiter in Canary Islands", August 4, 2015

¹⁵ The local *ibid.*

¹⁶ RT, "Head of ISIS-linked jihadist group and 'right-hand man' killed in Russia", August 11, 2015

¹⁷ Guardian, "Preacher Anjem Choudary charged with encouraging support for Islamic State", August 5, 2015

¹⁸ Reuters, "Britain's most high-profile Islamist cleric charged with IS support", August 5, 2015

Choudary encouraged more than 32,000 of his social media followers to join the IS and encouraged them to wage attacks in Europe and the US.¹⁹

On August 10, a man, 27, whose identity was not made public, was arrested after police discovered weapons in his home in Birmingham. He was charged with the “commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism”.²⁰

On August 12, two adults in their 50s and their three teenage children, were arrested in Tower Hamlets in east London, charged with possessing information that could be useful to terrorists. Authorities said the family were planning to travel to Syria to join IS militants there.²¹ Authorities said that the youngest family member was actually arrested in July 2015, although the exact date was not made public.²²

Spain

On August 25, Spanish and Moroccan forces dismantled an IS cell that were planning to recruit local young men to fight in Syria and Iraq. Authorities said the network maintained close contact with each other.²³ Authorities carried out simultaneous raids in Madrid, Spain and in Fez, Casablanca, Nador, Hoceima and Driouech in Morocco. Police said 14 suspects were arrested in total.²⁴

¹⁹ BBC, “Anjem Choudary faces UK terrorism charges over Islamic State”, August 5, 2015

²⁰ Guardian, “Counter-terror police arrest man in Birmingham”, August 10, 2015

²¹ Guardian, “Five members of family held in east London on suspicion of terrorism”, August 12, 2015

²² Mail Online, “Father, mother and three daughters including UK's youngest female terror suspect are arrested in east London”, August 12, 2015

²³ Washington Post, “Islamic State cell raided in Spain and Morocco; 14 suspects arrested”, August 25, 2015

²⁴ The local, “Network of 14 suspected jihadists arrested in Morocco and Spain”, August 25, 2015

Africa

Cameroon

On August 5, two Boko Haram militants were arrested at the Minawao refugee camp in northern Cameroon. Authorities said they were disguised as female refugees and were in possession of a cache of explosives that was hidden in their luggage.²⁵

On August 4, a large group of Boko Haram militants raided Chakamari village, killing eight people and taking more than 100 people hostage.²⁶ The attackers also set fire to many of the villagers' homes. In a separate incident, another cell of Boko Haram militants fatally shot a group of fishermen in the vicinity of Lake Chad. Authorities said the fishermen were travelling to Baga town, when militants stopped their vehicle and fatally shot them. In total nine fishermen were killed. A second van of fishermen managed to escape.²⁷

On August 13, suspected Boko Haram militants killed eight people and about 100 others were kidnapped by suspected Boko Haram militants in an overnight raid that targeted Tchakarmari village near Cameroon's northern border. Authorities said the attackers had crossed over from Nigeria shortly after midnight.²⁸

Chad

On August 28, 10 suspected Boko Haram militants were sentenced to death by firing squad for their alleged roles in a twin suicide bombing that killed 38 people at a police training center on June 15, 2015.²⁹ Amongst the suspects accused was Mahamat Mustapha, alias Bana Fanaye, 30, the

²⁵ IBT, "Boko Haram: Cameroon arrests two suspected terrorists disguised as female refugees", August 5, 2015

²⁶ Reuters, "Suspected Boko Haram militants kill eight, kidnap 100 in Cameroon", August 4, 2015

²⁷ AFP, "Boko Haram abducts 135, kills 8 in Cameroon raid", August 6, 2015

²⁸ Reuters, "Suspected Boko Haram militants kill eight, kidnap 100 in Cameroon", August 4, 2015

²⁹ BBC, "Chad executes 10 Boko Haram fighters over deadly attacks", August 29, 2015

suspected mastermind of the police academy attacks.³⁰ The legal proceedings took place in a secret location in a closed room trial. The announcement, was made by Chad's chief prosecutor.³¹

Kenya

On August 18, Kenyan authorities identified three Kenyan men, Abdifatah Abubakar Ahmed, Ramadhan Hamisi Kufungwa and Ahmed Iman Ali who they claimed were recruiting vulnerable Kenyan youth to Al-Shabab Al-Mujahedeen. Authorities said the recruiters operated in Kenya but resided in Somalia.³² Ahmed was suspected of operating mainly in the coastal areas of Kenya, recruiting young woman to marry Al-Shabab Al Mujihdeen fighters. He is an Al-Shabab Al-Mujihdeen commander and was suspected of involvement in the planning of the September 2013 Westgate Mall attacks in Kenya. The other two men, identified as Ramadhan Hamisi Kufungwa and Ahmed Iman Ali were both Imans of mosques in Mombasa and Nairobi. The allegedly assisted in the movement of the militant recruits and Ali had appeared in Al-Shabab Al mujahedeen recruitment videos. Authorities believe the three suspects facilitated the recruits travel to Somalia, where they attended terrorist training camps with the intent if returning to Kenya to carry out attacks.³³

On August 23, Kenyan authorities arrested two suspected Al-Shabab Al-Mujahedeen militants in Garissa County. Kenyan security forces seized large amounts of explosives and weapons during the raid.³⁴ Kenyan authorities said the militants are linked to Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen militant Mohamed Kuno who is suspected of being the mastermind of the April 2015 Garissa University attack.³⁵

Libya

³⁰ DW, "Death sentences for N'Djamena bombing suspects," August 29, 2015

³¹ France 24, "Boko Haram fighters sentenced to death over bombing in Chad's capital", August 29, 2015

³² BBC, "Kenyan police name 'al-Shabab recruiters'", August 18, 2015

³³ Reuters, "Chad sentences 10 Boko Haram members to death -source", August 28, 2015

³⁴ IBT, "Possible Al-Shabab Attack Foiled: Kenya Authorities Arrest Terrorist Suspects In Garissa Town Where Nearly 150 People Were Massacred In April" August 23, 2015

³⁵ Kenyans.co.ke., "Deadly Ammunition Recovered From Suspected Terrorists", August 24, 2015

See April 2015 ICT database report for further details on the Garissa University attack.

<http://www.ict.org.il/Article/1458/Terrorist-Incidents-and-CT-Operations-April-2015>

On August 10, a suicide car bombing killed nine people and wounded 21 others in Derna.³⁶ Authorities said the target of the attack were members of the Abu Salim Martyrs Brigade, which retook control of Derna from IS in June 2015.³⁷ The IS claimed responsibility for the attack and said the perpetrator was a Sudanese militant named Abu Jaafar al-Sudani.³⁸

On August 13, 38 people were killed in violent clashes with IS militants in Sirte. The attack occurred as following the killing of a local Islamic Salafist Imam who repelled the IS from taking over his mosque. In response to the attack on August 14, airstrikes were conducted targeting multiple IS strongholds in the town.³⁹

On August 31, minor damage was caused by a car bomb that exploded by the main offices of a venture between Italy's ENI and Libyan state oil firm NOC in Tripoli. There were no casualties and no group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed the IS.⁴⁰

Mali

On August 4, 11 soldiers were killed and one other wounded, by armed militants who attacked a security post of the Mali National Guard near Timbuktu. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) claimed responsibility for the attack.⁴¹

On August 7, 13 people were killed by militants who attacked the Byblos hotel in Sevare.⁴² Many people were taken hostage, including five UN workers, several South Africans tourists, a French national and a Ukrainian, in a siege that lasted for 24 hours.⁴³ Security Forces ended the siege after engaging in a firefight with the gunmen, resulting in the deaths of four militants and seven others

³⁶ IBT, "Latest Islamic State suicide bomb attack in Derna kills 10 people", August 10, 2015

³⁷ Abubakr Al-Gibril, who was the senior leader of the group was killed in the explosion. Violent clashes occurred between the militant groups as IS fighters assassinated Nasser Aker, a senior figure in Derna's Jihadi Shura Council, a body linked to the Abu Salim Martyrs Brigade.

³⁸ AFP, "Bomb kills nine in eastern Libya as ISIS presses on", August 10, 2015

³⁹ BBC, "Libya chaos: Islamic State battles militias in Sirte", August 13, 2015

⁴⁰ Reuters, "Car bomb damages Italy's ENI joint venture office in Libyan capital", August 31, 2015

⁴¹ The Guardian, "Eleven soldiers killed in Mali in terrorist attack on camp, government says", August 4 2015

⁴² Reuters, "At least 12 dead as Mali siege ends, some U.N. workers freed", August 8, 2015

⁴³ IBT, "Mali Terror Attack: 8 Killed in Hotel Shooting after Islamist Gunmen Take Russian Pilots Hostage", August 7, 2015

were arrested.⁴⁴ Authorities also said four Malian soldiers were killed in the attack and eight other soldiers wounded.⁴⁵ On August 11, militants linked to Mokhtar Belmokhtar claimed responsibility for the attack.⁴⁶

Nigeria

On August 11, a bomb exploded at the Sabon Gari agricultural market located in Maiduguri.⁴⁷ Authorities said approximately 50 people were killed and more than 50 others were injured, the majority were market traders. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed Boko Haram.⁴⁸

On August 27, 24 people were killed and eight others were injured with gun wounds, by suspected armed militants who targeted the village of Mafurnudi near Damboa town in Borno State. No group claimed responsibility but authorities blamed Boko Haram.⁴⁹

On August 31, suspected Boko Haram gunmen, carried out several attacks, targeting civilians in Boreo state. The militants were heavily armed and arrived on horseback. In the first attack, 68 people were killed when they were indiscriminately shot by the militants. Some residents managed to escape the attack, by running into the surrounding bushland. In the second attack that targeted a nearby village, seven people were killed, as they were praying at the local mosque and five others were wounded. Five hours later, the Imam of the nearby village of Karnuwa, was killed together with several others, including two sons. No group claimed responsibility but authorities blamed Boko Haram for all the attacks.⁵⁰

Somalia

⁴⁴ Reuters, "Gunmen kill 10 in attack on village in Mali: army spokesman", August 9, 2015

⁴⁵ BBC, "Mali hotel siege: Several killed in Sevare, four UN workers saved", August 9, 2015

⁴⁶ ENCA, "UPDATE: Islamic militants claim responsibility for Mali hotel attack", August 11, 2015

⁴⁷ Premium Times, "At least 20 killed in Borno market bomb attack", August 11, 2015

⁴⁸ Guardian, "Suspected Boko Haram bomb in Nigerian market kills about 50", August 12, 2015

⁴⁹ <http://www.starsgist.com/boko-haram-slaughters-28-in-fresh-attack-in-borno/> August 27, 2015

⁵⁰ CNN, "Boko Haram gunmen on horseback kill 79 in trio of attacks, locals say", August 31, 2015

On August 17, the military launched a counter-terrorist offensive against Al-Shabab Al-Mujihdeen militants in Ceel Hele and Ceel Goras. The military defused IEDs that were planted along the local roads. During the operation, authorities said that 18 militants were killed and six towns were captured from Al-Shabab Al-Mujihdeen militants.⁵¹

On August 22, a suicide car bomber killed more than 30 soldiers and injured 50 others in Kismayo, at a military base. Witnesses said the bomb exploded targeting recruits who were standing in line for training. Al-Shabab Al-Mujahedeen claimed responsibility for the attack but claimed more than 100 soldiers had been killed.⁵²

On August 27, Al-Shabab Al-Mujahedeen gunmen ambushed a military convoy killing 11 soldiers, including a commander and wounding 16 other soldiers in the Gedo district, near the village Tulo-Barwao.⁵³ Authorities said 32 militants were killed during the incident.⁵⁴

On August 30, several suspected Al-Shabab Al-Mujahedeen militants were arrested and charged with planning attacks in the town of Bardere.⁵⁵ Authorities conducted a large scale counter-terrorist operation after receiving an intelligence tip that militants were seeking refuge amongst civilians in the town. During the operation, authorities seized weapons and ammunition.⁵⁶

Tunisia

On August 19, two armed militants on a motorcycle opened fire on a group of three police officers killing one, at a beach resort in Sousse⁵⁷ (the same location as the 26 June, 2015 IS attack that targeted tourists on the beachfront⁵⁸). Authorities said the perpetrator was armed with a

⁵¹ All Africa, "Somalia: 18 Al Shabab Militants Killed in Military Operation", August 17, 2015

⁵² IBT, "Al-Shabab Kills Numerous Soldiers In Latest Somalia Attack: Report", August 22, 2015

⁵³ DW, "Dozens killed as al-Shabab militants ambush Somali government convoy" August 27, 2015

⁵⁴ Enca.com, "Dozens killed in al-Shabab troop ambush", August 27, 2015

⁵⁵ UPI, "Police arrest multiple suspected al-Shabab militants in southern Somalia" August 30, 2015

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ BBC, "Tunisian police officer killed in beach resort of Sousse", August 19, 2015

⁵⁸ See ICT database report June 2015

Kalashnikov.⁵⁹ No group claimed responsibility for the incident and police launched a manhunt for the perpetrator.⁶⁰

Middle East

Bahrain

On August 13, five people were arrested accused of perpetrating the July 28, 2015, Sitre bombing which killed two people and wounded six others outside a school.⁶¹ Authorities also said they questioned five other suspects in connection with the attack and they suspect received terrorist training and financial support from the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and Hizballah. Authorities also said that the suspects' interrogation led security forces to seize ammunition, explosives and bomb making materials from the suspects' property.⁶²

On August 28, an IED targeting security forces exploded near Karana, a predominantly Shi'ite village. One security officer was killed and four others were injured. Three civilian passersby were also wounded in the explosion.⁶³ No group claimed responsibility for the attack.⁶⁴

Egypt

On August 1, authorities said Selim Suleiman al-Haram, a senior leader of the IS in the Sinai Province was killed during a security raid by soldiers and a shootout at his home in Sheikh Zuweid town in northern Sinai.⁶⁵ The soldiers said that al-Haram, who refused to respond to their orders had attempted but failed to detonate an explosive belt before they shot him.⁶⁶ The soldiers sized a stash of weapons including two machine guns and ammunition. Authorities also said in a separate

⁵⁹ IBT, "Tunisia: Gunmen on motorbikes shoot police officer dead", August 29, 2015

⁶⁰ The Guardian, "Tunisian policeman shot dead near beach resort of Sousse" August 19, 2015

⁶¹ See July 2015 Database report

⁶² AFP, "Bahrain arrests Iran-linked terror suspects", August 13, 2015

⁶³ AFP, "Bahraini security officer killed in bomb attack", August 28, 2015

⁶⁴ Al-Jazeera, "Bahrain police officer killed in 'terrorist blast'", August 29, 2015

⁶⁵ Reuters, "Egypt says militant leader killed in shootout: army statement", August 1, 2015

⁶⁶ Haaretz, "Egypt: ISIS Offshoot Leader Killed in Shootout", August 2, 2015

incident in northern Sinai, several hours earlier 20 militants were killed and seven others were arrested. However, the militants' identities were not made public.⁶⁷

On August 10, four people, including three policemen, were wounded when a car bomb exploded under a traffic patrol post near the main law court in Cairo. Authorities said a second bomb was discovered hidden in a bag near the site of the first bomb but it was safely defused by bomb disposal experts. Ajnad Misr (Soldiers of Egypt) militants claimed responsibility for the attack.⁶⁸

On August 15, the IS claimed they had killed Tomislav Salopek, a Croatian citizen, who they took hostage in Cairo on July 22, 2015.⁶⁹ Authorities said Salopek was in Egypt as he worked for a French energy company.⁷⁰ The IS released a photograph on Twitter of Salopek who they claimed they had beheaded.⁷¹

On August 20, 30 people, including eight policemen were wounded⁷² in a car bombing near the Egyptian National Security building and courthouse in northern Cairo.⁷³ The IS claimed responsibility for the attack on twitter and said it was retribution for the execution of six militants in May 2015.⁷⁴

Iraq

During August 2015, according to the US ministry of Defense, there was “a total of 461 airstrikes against IS targets. The strikes destroyed in total: 242 tactical units; 417 fighting positions; 204 vehicles; 45 staging areas; 32 light machine guns; 50 bunkers; 140 buildings, 71 heavy machine guns; 32 mortar systems; 16 rocket rails; 29 weapons caches; one mortar cache; three mortar tubes; three homemade explosives factories; six tunnel system; one tunnel entrance; five artillery pieces; 16 VBIEDs; 20 IEDs, six anti-aircraft; two bridges; six recoilless rifles; four sniper positions;

⁶⁷ Cairo Post, “20 ‘takfiris,’ senior Sinai Province leader killed”, August 2, 2015

⁶⁸ Reuters, “Three cops wounded after blast in Egypt”, August 10, 2015

⁶⁹ BBC, “Tomislav Salopek: Croatia fears for Egypt hostage”, August 13, 2015

⁷⁰ Independent, “Isis 'executes' Croatian hostage Tomislav Salopek in Egypt after demands deadline passed”, August 12, 2015

⁷¹ Al-Jazeera, “ISIL's Egypt affiliate 'beheads Croatian hostage'”, August 12, 2015

⁷² Reuters, “Islamic State claims Cairo courthouse bombing which wounded 30”, August 20, 2015

⁷³ Washington Post, “Islamic State claims responsibility for massive car bombing in Cairo”, August 20, 2015

⁷⁴ CNN, “ISIS claims responsibility for Cairo car bomb that wounds 29”, August 20, 2015 and see ICT database report May 2015

one command and control center; two homemade explosive caches, two checkpoints; one drone; two observation posts; six rockets; and five airstrikes that damaged terrain denying tactical advantage.” The airstrikes were carried out as part of “Operation Inherent Resolve”- a counter-terrorist offensive to counter the IS in Iraq and Syria.⁷⁵

Some of the significant air strikes included, amongst others:

- On August 3, 21 airstrikes were conducted throughout Iraq targeting IS tactical units, buildings, vehicles, weapons checkpoints, fighting positions and more. The strikes were carried out in and around Huwayjah, Fallujah, Haditha, Makhmur, Mosul, Ramadi, Sinjar and Tal Afar.⁷⁶
- On August 8, several US-led coalition strikes targeted and destroyed IS positions near Erbil. Authorities said that drones destroyed seven IS vehicles, a mortar position, a vehicle with a mobile artillery shell.⁷⁷ Additionally, US led coalition strikes conducted 10 airstrikes targeting IS positions in and around Baghdad, Beiji, Fallujah, Habbaniyah, Haditha, Mosul, Ramadi, and Sinjar. The targets destroyed included amongst others: weapons and heavy machinery, two IS tactical units, three vehicles, nine fighting positions and IS staging areas.⁷⁸
- On August 18, a US-led coalition drone strike near Mosul, Iraq, killed Haji Mutazz, IS second-in-command who was the IS operations leader in Iraq and the IS operational planner.⁷⁹ US authorities said Mutazz was directly responsible for transferring weapons, vehicles and militants within Iraq and Syria.⁸⁰
- On 25 August, US-led coalition airstrikes conducted 31 airstrikes in Iraq. Amongst the targets destroyed were weapons, buildings, mortar systems, vehicles, tactical units and fighting positions. In Tuz, 12 airstrikes were conducted destroying 57 fighting positions, hit six

⁷⁵ http://www.defense.gov/News/Special-Reports/0814_Inherent-Resolve

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ NYTimes, “U.S. Jets and Drones Attack Militants in Iraq, Hoping to Stop Advance”, August 8, 2015

⁷⁸ <http://www.centcom.mil/en/news/articles/aug-9-military-airstrikes-continue-against-isil-terrorists-in-syria-and-ira>

⁷⁹ RT, “ISIS' no. 2 killed in US military air strike on August 18 – White House”, August 22, 2015

⁸⁰ ABC news, “ Islamic State second-in-command, Hajji Mutazz, killed in air strike, White House confirms”, August 22, 2015

staging areas and destroyed IS three vehicles. Additional air strikes took place near and around Baghdadi, Beiji, Fallujah, Kisik, Mosul, Sinjar, Tal Afar, and Sultan Abdallah.⁸¹

Other significant incidents in Iraq during August 2015 included:

On August 10, a car bomb exploded at an outdoor market in Baquba. It was reported that 51 people were killed and at least 80 were injured.⁸² Separately, seven people were killed and 25 others were injured at a checkpoint manned by the army and Hashid Shaabi Shite volunteers who are fighting against the IS. The IS claimed responsibility for both incidents.⁸³

On August 13, a truck bomb exploded in the Jameela food market of Baghdad killing at least 67 people and wounding 152 others.⁸⁴ The IS claimed responsibility for the attack.⁸⁵ Authorities said the bomb hidden in a refrigerator truck parked inside the market.⁸⁶

On August 15, a car bomb exploded in a car dealership killing at least 24 people and injuring 35 others in the Sadr City neighborhood of Baghdad.⁸⁷ Two other bombings also occurred later in the day: one in Taji and another in Madean. In Taji, two people were killed and seven others were wounded by a car bomb. In Madean seven people were killed when a bomb planted on a commercial area detonated. The IS claimed responsibility for the Madean and the Taji attacks but not for the dealership car bomb.⁸⁸

On August 16, 15 Iraqi soldiers were killed and least 15 others were injured in a suicide attack against government checkpoints in Fallujah.⁸⁹ Authorities said the militants purposefully drove

⁸¹<http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/614813/airstrikes-continue-against-isil-terrorists-in-syria-iraq>

⁸² Reuters, "Islamic State claims Iraq car bombs that kill nearly 60", August 10, 2015

⁸³ Reuters, "Islamic State claims Iraq car bombs that kill nearly 60", August 10, 2015

⁸⁴ AP, "Baghdad truck bombing kills 62; Islamic State claims responsibility", August 13, 2015

⁸⁵ Merced Sun-Star, "Truck Bomb at Baghdad market kills 67; Islamic State claims blast", August 13, 2015

⁸⁶ The Independent, "Baghdad truck bomb: More than 60 dead after explosion in busy Iraqi marketplace", August 13, 2015

⁸⁷ RTE News, "Bombings across Baghdad kill 24", August 15, 2015

⁸⁸ BBC, "Iraqi capital sees fresh round of deadly bombings", August 15, 2015

⁸⁹ Al Jazeera, "Deadly ISIL attacks in Iraq's Fallujah and Baiji", August 16, 2015

military bomb-wired vehicles towards the checkpoint detonating the trucks. The IS claimed responsibility for the attack.⁹⁰

Israel and the West Bank

During August 2015, according to the Israel Security Service (Shin Bet) there were more than 50 attacks carried out by Palestinian militants against Israeli security forces and citizens. Some of the significant incidents included:

- On August 3, an Israeli car travelling in East Jerusalem was hit by a Molotov cocktail, seriously injuring an Israeli woman, 27 and two other Israeli civilians were lightly wounded. Authorities said the woman and her husband managed to exit the car, which then proceeded to roll down a hill injuring the second victim. A third victim, was burned when he attempted to extinguish the car that had set alight. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.⁹¹ On August 23, nine East Jerusalem residents were arrested in connection with the attack.⁹²
- On August 6, a Palestinian carried out a vehicular attack targeting IDF soldiers at a hitchhiking post near Shiloh in the West Bank. Three soldiers were wounded and two of them were in serious condition.⁹³ The perpetrator of the attack was fatally shot.⁹⁴ Authorities said the attack was not planned but rather the attacker noticed the soldiers as he was driving north. He changed direction and charged his vehicle into them. Authorities said the attack may have been motivated as a revenge attack for the Duma attack, where a Palestinian family were killed in a fire bombing in July 2015. This attack occurred not far from Duma.⁹⁵ Although there was no direct claim of responsibility for the attack, both Hamas and Islamic Jihad praised the actions of the Palestinian individual. Additionally, on

⁹⁰ AFP, "ISIS says American suicide bomber carried out Iraq attack", August 19, 2015

⁹¹ Times of Israel, "Three hurt in Jerusalem firebombing attack", August 3, 2015

⁹² Haaretz. 'Nine Jerusalem Residents Arrested for Firebomb Attack'. August 23, 2015

⁹³ Times of Israel, "3 soldiers hurt in car-ramming attack in West Bank", August 6, 2015

⁹⁴ MFA, "Car attack in West Bank injures three", August 6, 2015

⁹⁵ Ynet, "Three IDF soldiers wounded in vehicular attack", August 9, 2015

Also for information on the Duma attack, See July ICT Database report

August 6, a suspected Palestinian attacker who was not identified, threw a Molotov cocktail at an Israeli vehicle in east Jerusalem, injuring two people.⁹⁶

- On August 9, an Israeli civilian, 26, was stabbed in his upper body and moderately injured by a Palestinian militant, at a gas station close to Ofer Junction on Highway 443, which connects Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem.⁹⁷ The attacker was shot and wounded by IDF soldiers at the scene.⁹⁸ The attacker was later identified as Nasim Yusef Gomhur, a resident of the West Bank. Authorities believe he approached the garage via Beit Horon settlement, located nearby.⁹⁹ Additionally, in a separate attack, a teenage male Palestinian, 16, who was later identified as Rafik Kamal al-Taj, targeted security forces who were doing a routine security check at the Beita Junction in the West Bank. One border police officer was stabbed in the neck and moderately wounded. The attacker was shot by the officers and later succumbed to his wounds.¹⁰⁰
- On August 17, a Palestinian man identified as Muhammad Bassam Abu-Amsha el Atrache, 25, stabbed a Border police officer in Tapuah junction in the West Bank.¹⁰¹ The suspect claimed that he was unwell and approached the soldiers for water. He was ordered to stop but he continued to approach and stabbed one of the officers, lightly wounding him. The officers shot the suspect and he later succumbed to his wounds.¹⁰²
- On August 26, a male Palestinian attacker stabbed and injured an Israeli Border Police officer outside the Damascus Gate in Jerusalem. Border police officers, who were at the scene, arrested the attacker. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.¹⁰³

Other significant incidents included:

⁹⁶ Jpost, "Palestinian strikes three IDF soldiers with vehicle in West Bank terror attack", August 6, 2015

⁹⁷ JPost, 'Stabbing attack on highway 443, terrorist shot', August 9, 2015

⁹⁸ AP, "Israel arrests Swedish citizen charged with spying for Lebanese Hezbollah", August 9, 2015

⁹⁹ Haaretz, "IDF Soldier Lightly Wounded in Stabbing Attack in West Bank", August 15, 2015

¹⁰⁰ Times of Israel, "In second attack Saturday, Israeli policeman stabbed in West Bank", August , 2015

¹⁰¹ Times of Israel, "Border police officer stabbed in West Bank, attacker killed", August 17, 2015

¹⁰² The Jerusalem Post, "Terrorist killed in attempted stabbing attack against Border Police officer", August 17, 2015

¹⁰³ The Times of Israel, "Policeman stabbed outside Jerusalem's Old City", August 26, 2015

On August 4, Meir Ettinger and Eviatar Slonim, two suspected members of the Hilltop youth, were issued a six-month administrative arrest order by Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon, which enables a person's arrest without being told what he is suspected of or what evidence there is against him.¹⁰⁴ Following this on August 9, nine people were arrested by Israeli authorities during a counter-terrorist operation targeting suspected Jewish militants. Two of the suspects were arrested at the Adei Ad outpost in the northern West Bank and seven others were arrested in Baladim in the northern West Bank near the Kochav Hashachar settlement.¹⁰⁵ Authorities said the arrests were carried out in connection to investigations regarding the Duma attacks in July 2015 that killed almost an entire Palestinian family.¹⁰⁶

On August 9, in an unrelated incident, Israeli security Agency (Shin Bet) announced that in July 2015, Hassan Khalil Hizran, 54, was indicted with spying on behalf of Hizballah. He was arrested at Ben Gurion Airport. During interrogation, Hizran, who is a Swedish national, allegedly confessed to gathering intelligence about the IDF, including information about the location of military bases and the amount of ammunition including tanks and weapons. He was also ordered to gather intelligence about the security operations at Ben Gurion Airport. According to the Shin Bet, in 2009 Hizran was recruited by Hizballah. In 2011 and 2013, he allegedly travelled to Lebanon with his family, to meet his handler, where he received instructions to carry out missions on behalf of Hizballah and recruit Israeli citizens. He claimed to have been paid \$3100 for work.¹⁰⁷

On August 20, four mortars landed in the Golan Heights, fired allegedly from Syria. There was no claim of responsibility but the IDF blamed Islamic Jihad militants. In response the IDF launched air strikes on Syrian positions.¹⁰⁸ On August 21, an early morning IAF strike targeted a

¹⁰⁴ Ynet, "Shin Bet arrests Kahane's grandson, online incitement continues", August 4, 2015

¹⁰⁵ Haaretz, "Nine Arrested in Crackdown on Suspected Jewish Terrorists", August 9, 2015

¹⁰⁶ See July Database report.

¹⁰⁷ Haaretz, "Israel Indicts Swedish National Suspected of Working for Hezbollah", August 9, 2015

¹⁰⁸ Times of Israel, "IDF strikes cell in Syria that shot Thursday's rockets into Israel; six said killed", August 21, 2015

vehicle belong to Islamic Jihad militants who the IDF say was responsible for the rocket fire the previous day. Six militants were killed.¹⁰⁹

On August 25, Israeli authorities announced they foiled attack by Islamic Jihad militants to attack Joseph's tomb in Nablus in the West Bank. Authorities arrested four Islamic Jihad militants who during interrogation admitted the plot.¹¹⁰ Israeli authorities identified the militants as: Nisim Muhamad Ramdan Rashid Damiri, who was allegedly going to carry out the attack supported by Muhamad Mufak Rafik Damiri, Yasir Gaudet Abed Zaruri, and Aduen Padel Hassan Nazel. Authorities believe an Islamic Jihad operative named Rafat Mohamed Darwish, directed the attack from the Gaza strip and provided the operational capabilities to the West Bank cell, including funding and weapons.¹¹¹ Israeli authorities believe the suspects were planning to detonate explosive devices targeting worshippers visiting the tomb.¹¹²

Kuwait

On August 13, authorities in Kuwait arrested three suspected Hizballah militants and uncovered a massive cache of weapons in Abdali and two undisclosed locations.¹¹³ According to authorities the cache comprised: "144 Kilograms of TNT explosives; 19 tons of ammunition; more than 200 RPGs and hand grenades; 68 guns, and detonators". Authorities claimed the weapons originated in Iraq.¹¹⁴ The suspects admitted being part of a Hizballah network recruited to smuggle weapons and scout information about commercial shipping activities in Kuwait. Three other suspects were also allegedly involved and a manhunt was launched to arrest them.¹¹⁵

Lebanon

¹⁰⁹ Ynet, "IAF strikes in Syria, kills rocket launchers", August 21, 2015

¹¹⁰ Ynet News, "Shin Bet arrests terror cell that targeted Joseph's Tomb", August 25, 2015

¹¹¹ I24 News, "Islamic Jihad arrests for plot to attack Jewish worshippers at Joseph's Tomb", August 25, 2015

¹¹² Newsweek, "Israel foils Terror Attack on Joseph's Tomb", August 25, 2015

¹¹³ AFP, "Kuwait breaks up 'terror' cell: Ministry", August 13, 2015

¹¹⁴ Al-Jazeera, "Kuwait uncovers 'terror' cell's giant arms cache", August 17, 2015

¹¹⁵ Times of Israel, "Kuwait busts terror cell with reported Hezbollah, Iran ties", August 17, 2015

On August 15, Ahmad al-Assir, a Lebanese fugitive cleric was arrested at Beirut international airport. He was charged with terror-related crimes by Lebanese authorities.¹¹⁶ Since 2013, al-Assir had evaded arrest following an incident on June 24 2013, in which one of his followers was in possession of an unauthorized weapons at a military checkpoint near Sidon.¹¹⁷ Clashes erupted between the military and al-Assir, and his followers when they opened fire on a military checkpoint near Sidon. Authorities also seized weapons including rocket launchers in al-Assir's possession. Authorities said he was attempting to escape from Lebanon to Egypt and had disguised his appearance in order to avoid arrest.¹¹⁸

On August 26, Ahmad Ibrahim al-Mughassil, 48, was arrested in Beirut as a result of a join counter-terrorist operation between Saudi intelligence and Lebanese security. Al-Mughassil was wanted by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation, for his role in the 1996 attack of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia.¹¹⁹ The attack killed 19 Americans, and wounded 372 other people. The towers were used as the lodging for the US Air Force personnel during the Gulf war.¹²⁰ He was extradited to Saudi Arabia for integration.¹²¹

Saudi Arabia

On August 6, 15 people were killed and three others injured when a suicide bomber detonated an explosive vest inside a Saudi mosque in Abha.¹²² The victims were mainly members of the security forces, who were praying in the mosque at the time of the attack.¹²³ The IS claimed responsibility for the attack.¹²⁴

¹¹⁶ Al Arabiya, "Lebanon charges radical Islamist with 'terrorism'", August 26, 2015

¹¹⁷ BBC, "Lebanon arrests wanted militant cleric Ahmad al-Assir", August 15, 2015

¹¹⁸ ABC, "Lebanon arrests fugitive cleric Ahmad al-Assir who was trying to flee the country: security sources", August 15, 2015

¹¹⁹ The attack was carried out by militants that parked a fuel tanker truck next to the building, and then it was remotely detonated.

¹²⁰ AFP, "Suspect arrested in 1996 Saudi bombing that killed 19 US airmen", August 26, 2015

¹²¹ AP, "Saudi arrested in 1996 bombing that killed 19 Americans", August 26, 2015

¹²² The Guardian. "Islamic State claims suicide bombing at Saudi Arabian mosque", August 6, 2015

¹²³ Reuters, "Suicide bomber kills 15 in Saudi security site mosque", August 6, 2015

¹²⁴ BBC, "Islamic State group claims Saudi mosque suicide blast", August 6, 2015

On August 20, two Chadian citizens identified as Isa Barkaj and Isaac Shakila were executed in Mecca by public beheading.¹²⁵ They were charged and convicted of membership of a Saudi Al-Qaeda linked cell, the killing Laurent Barbot, a French citizen in Jeddah on September 24, 2004, and plotting to assassinate Saudi officials and opening fire on a vehicle belonging to a foreign diplomat.¹²⁶

Syria

According to the US Department of Defense, during August 2015, there was a total of “204 airstrikes against IS targets which destroyed: 137 tactical units; 149 fighting positions; 87 vehicles; 24 buildings; six staging areas, four heavy machine guns; six mortar systems; two tunnel systems, 40 bunkers; one artillery piece; one VBIED; three anti-aircraft; two bridges; four rifles; one command and control center; one weapon cache; three checkpoints and one rocket.” The airstrikes were carried out as part of “Operation Inherent Resolve”- a counter-terrorist offensive to counter the IS in Iraq and Syria. ¹²⁷

Some of the significant airstrikes included:

- On August 2, coalition forces conducted eight airstrikes against IS targets in and around Al Hasakah, Ar Raqqa, and Kobani. Amongst the targets hit and destroyed were: six tactical units, three fighting positions, two vehicles, two mortar systems, four bunkers, an IS resupply vehicle and an excavator.¹²⁸
- On August 5, 11 airstrikes were conducted by coalition military forces in and around Al Hasakah, where seven airstrikes destroyed five IS tactical units and destroyed 11 IS fighting positions, three IS motorcycles and two IS bunkers. Two airstrikes were conducted in the vicinity of Aleppo which destroyed three IS fighting positions, two tactical units and an IS building. Additionally, one airstrike was conducted near Ar Raqqa, which destroyed a

¹²⁵ AFP, “Saudi Arabia executes two Chadian terrorists”, August 20, 2015

¹²⁶ Voice of America, “Saudi Arabia executes 2 Chadians for Al-Qaida killings”, August 20, 2015

¹²⁷ http://www.defense.gov/News/Special-Reports/0814_Inherent-Resolve

¹²⁸ Ibid.

tactical unit, four IS buildings and a checkpoint and finally in and around Kobani, one airstrike hit an IS tactical unit and destroyed an IS fighting position.¹²⁹

- On August 9, coalition military forces conducted eight airstrikes in the vicinity of Al Hasakah, Ar Raqqa and close to Tal Abyad. IS targets that were destroyed included eight IS tactical units, four fighting positions, three bunkers, two structures, a vehicle, an excavator and a truck.¹³⁰
- On August 12, US-led coalition military forces conducted 12 airstrikes near Abu Kamal, where two airstrikes destroyed an IS front end loader and an IS bridge; close to Al Hasakah, where five airstrikes struck one large and two small ISIL tactical units and destroyed eight IS fighting positions and an IS vehicle; near Aleppo, three airstrikes struck an IS staging facility and destroyed four IS fighting positions, two IS trench lines and an IS bunker and near Kobani, where two airstrikes struck two IS tactical units and destroyed seven IS fighting positions and an IS motorcycle.¹³¹
- On August 21, an airstrike killed three militants including British jihadist Ruhul Amin, 26, in Raqqa.¹³² British authorities said the strike was carried out by a remotely piloted aircraft and targeted the militants as they were travelling in a vehicle.¹³³
- On August 22, US-led coalition military forces conducted nine airstrikes targeting IS militants in and around Al Hasakah, Al Hawl, Ar Raqqa, Ayn Isa, and Washiyah. IS targets that were hit and destroyed included two tactical units, three excavators, three structures, an armored truck and four IS bunkers.¹³⁴
- On August 24, Junaid Hussain, (alias Abu Hussain al-Britani) 21 from Birmingham, UK, was killed in a drone strike in Raqqa.¹³⁵ He was a central IS figure responsible for IS recruitment via social media and he was also accused of hacking names and personal information of military personnel by hacking into military networks. He was previously convicted in the UK

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² The Economist, "Britain's jihadi kill list", September 12, 2015

¹³³ BBC, "Islamic State conflict: Two Britons killed in RAF Syria strike", September 12, 2015

¹³⁴ http://www.defense.gov/News/Special-Reports/0814_Inherent-Resolve

¹³⁵ Fox News, "US drone strike in Syria reportedly kills top ISIS online recruiter", August 28, 2015

with hacking personal information from former Prime Minister Tony Blair.¹³⁶ According to both UK and US authorities, Hussain was responsible for inspiring militants online to carry out attacks and he allegedly provided support to the perpetrators of the May 2015 attack in Garland, Texas. In June 2015, authorities linked him to a foiled bomb plot to attack the Armed Forces Day parade in South London.¹³⁷

- On August 30, airstrikes were conducted near Al Hasakah, which destroyed a mortar system an air defense artillery system and tactical units. In and around Washiyah an airstrike targeted and destroyed a staging area and near Al Hawl, an IS excavator was destroyed.¹³⁸

Also in Syria during August 2015:

On August 16, at least 96 people were killed and 200 others injured by Syrian government airstrikes that targeted a marketplace in Duoma, near Damascus. The airstrike was conducted using Syrian fighter jets.¹³⁹ The strikes took place during rush hour when the market was filled with civilians.¹⁴⁰ At least two bombs fell in the marketplace, the second falling as rescuers rushed to help the victims of the first bomb.¹⁴¹

On August 19, 11 people were killed and 29 others were killed by an IS suicide truck bomber who detonated outside the offices of the main Kurdish security agency in Qamishli located near the Turkish border in northern Syria.¹⁴² The IS released a statement identifying the suicide bomber as Abu Mohamed al-Ansari. They also claimed that the attack was carried out using a water tanker that was rigged with explosives and the target of the attack was the Asayish base.¹⁴³ Also on August 19, in a separate attack, Khalid al-Asaad, 83, a retired chief of antiquities of Palmyra was publicly

¹³⁶ NYTimes, "Junaid Hussain, ISIS Recruiter, Reported Killed in Airstrike", August 27, 2015

¹³⁷ CNN, "Prominent ISIS recruiter killed in airstrike", August 28, 2015 Also see May 2015 ICT database report

<http://www.ict.org.il/Article/1472/Terrorist-Incidents-and-CT-Operations-May-2015>

¹³⁸ Reuters, "Islamic State targeted in 22 airstrikes in Iraq, Syria: U.S. Military", August 30, 2015

¹³⁹ BBC, "Syria conflict: Marketplace air strikes kill 80" August 16, 2015 also

¹⁴⁰ Guardian, "Syria bombs Damascus suburb a day after deadly air strikes on marketplace", August 17, 2015

¹⁴¹ AP, "Syrian government air strikes on market kill at least 82 people", August 16, 2015

¹⁴² AFP, "Suicide bomber kills 16 in northeast Syria", August 19, 2015

¹⁴³ Reuters, "Suicide truck bomb targets Kurdish security agency in Syria", August 19, 2015

beheaded by IS militants.¹⁴⁴ IS supporters posted online images of al-Assad's body with his severed head underneath it.¹⁴⁵

Yemen

On August 3, unidentified gunmen attacked the International Committee of the Red Cross headquarters in Aden. The attackers escaped with cash, equipment, and vehicles. Staff members were held at gunpoint but no injuries were reported. No group claimed responsibility for the incident.¹⁴⁶

On August 12, a suspected US airstrike killed five AQAP militants who were travelling in a vehicle along the coastal road towards Mukallah. No additional details were made public and the identities of the dead militants were not revealed.¹⁴⁷

On August 18, an airstrike was conducted by Saudi-led coalition targeting Hodeida port. Authorities said amongst the targets destroyed were cranes and warehouses. The port is an important center for humanitarian supplies.¹⁴⁸

On August 20, a bomb exploded by the offices of local Governor Nayef al-Bakri office in Aden killing four people and wounded 10 others. He was however, unharmed in the attack.¹⁴⁹ No group claimed responsibility for the attack.¹⁵⁰

On August 22, a bomb exploded at the headquarters of the Aden secret police building. The offices were seriously damaged but there were no casualties. No group claimed responsibility but authorities blamed AQAP militants for carrying out the attack.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁴ The New York Times, "Syrian Expert Who Shielded Palmyra Antiquities Meets a Grisly Death at ISIS' hands", August 19, 2015

¹⁴⁵ BBC, "Syrian archaeologist 'killed in Palmyra' by IS militants", August 19, 2015

¹⁴⁶ Reuters, "Gunmen storm ICRC office in Yemeni city of Aden", August 25, 2015

¹⁴⁷ Reuters, "Suspected U.S. drone strike kills five al Qaeda militants in Yemen", August 12, 2015

¹⁴⁸ Reuters, "Arab coalition bombs Yemen's Hodeidah port", August 18, 2015

¹⁴⁹ AFP, "Bomb hits governor's office in Yemen's Aden, four dead", August 20, 2015

¹⁵⁰ Reuters, "Deadly blasts hit Yemen's Aden and Hadramout, EU criticizes port attacks", August 20, 2015

¹⁵¹ AFP, "Qaeda blamed as Aden police base bombed", August 22, 2015

On August 24, Robert Douglas Semple, a British oil engineer, 64 was freed from captivity by United Arab Emirates forces during a special counter-terrorist operation. Authorities did not make public the exact location where he was located. He was reportedly in good health.¹⁵² He was kidnapped by AQAP militants in Aden in February 2014.¹⁵³

On August 30, Saudi warplanes targeted and destroyed a bottling plant in Hajjah province killing more than 30 civilians.¹⁵⁴ The Saudi led coalition, mostly made up of gulf states, denied targeting a bottling plant saying they had struck a factory used for making bombs for Houthi rebels. Coalition authorities said the strike targeted an area where Houthi rebels were making explosives and hit military training camps and not civilians.¹⁵⁵

North America

USA

On August 11, authorities arrested Jaelyn Delshaun Young, 20 and Muhammad Oda Dakhalla, 22 at the Golden Triangle Regional Airport in Columbus, Mississippi as a result of an FBI sting operation. The pair were allegedly for planning to travel to Syria under the pretense they were going to Syria for their honeymoon.¹⁵⁶ However, authorities said they were planning to join IS militants there.¹⁵⁷ Both suspects had been in contact via social media with an undercover FBI agent for several months, where they had displayed support for the IS and shown signs of radicalization.¹⁵⁸ The pair, who had no prior criminal convictions and were not previously known to authorities, were indicted for conspiring and planning to support a terrorist organization and according to official court

¹⁵² Al-Jazeera, "UAE troops free British hostage from al-Qaeda in Yemen", August 23, 2015

¹⁵³ CNN, "Report: UAE forces free British hostage from al Qaeda in Yemen", August 24, 2015

¹⁵⁴ BBC, "Yemen air strike kills 31 in Hajjah province", August 30, 2015

¹⁵⁵ Reuters, "Saudi-led coalition air strike kills 36 Yemeni civilians: residents", August 30, 2015

¹⁵⁶ AP, "Families of alleged ISIS honeymooners stunned", August 11, 2015

¹⁵⁷ CNN, "Feds: Mississippi couple planned honeymoon to join ISIS in Syria", August 12, 2015

¹⁵⁸ Reuters, "Mississippi couple accused of planning to join Islamic State", August 11, 2015

documents.¹⁵⁹ The FBI agent said the suspects both confessed their plans after their arrest. If convicted, the pair faces a fine of \$250,000 and up to 20 years in prison.¹⁶⁰

On August 12, Lawal Olaniyi Babafemi¹⁶¹, 35, was sentenced in a US federal court in Brooklyn to 22 years in prison after pleading guilty in April 2014, to providing material support to al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).¹⁶² Babafemi had ties with foreign AQAP militants, including the late Samir Khan, who encouraged him to edit and write articles for Inspire magazine, which Khan was previously responsible for. Babafemi received \$9,000 from the AQAP to recruit English speakers from Nigeria. Authorities also claimed that Babefemi had received weapons training in Yemen. According to the court indictment he also had ties to the late Anwar al-Awlaki.¹⁶³ Babefemi, who is a Nigerian citizen, was previously extradited from Nigeria in 2013 after being arrested several times two years earlier on local terrorism charges.¹⁶⁴

On August 28, Ali Shukri Amin, 17, from Virginia was sentenced to 11 years for supporting the IS via social media postings in particular Twitter and providing material support to the terrorist organization.¹⁶⁵ He also helped another teenager to travel to Syria, via Turkey to join the terrorist group. In June 2015 he pleaded guilty in federal court to terror-related charges related to using social media to incite others to join the IS. He also admitted to helping another Virginian resident Reza Niknejad, travel to Syria to join the IS.¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁹ <http://www.justice.gov/opa/file/705906/download>

¹⁶⁰ AP. Ibid

¹⁶¹ Vanguard, "Nigerian, Lawal Babafemi, jailed 22 years in US for Al-Qaeda support", August 13, 2015

¹⁶² New York Times, "22-Year Term for Nigerian Who Joined Al Qaeda and Then Denounced It", August 12, 2015

¹⁶³ <https://www.fbi.gov/newyork/press-releases/2015/terrorist-sentenced-to-22-years-for-providing-material-support-to-al-qaeda-in-the-arabian-peninsula>

¹⁶⁴ <https://www.fbi.gov/newyork/press-releases/2014/al-qaeda-in-the-arabian-peninsula-operative-pleads-guilty-in-brooklyn-federal-court>

¹⁶⁵ IBT, "Who Is Ali Shukri Amin? Virginia ISIS Teenager Behind Pro-Islamic State Twitter Sentenced To 11 Years In Prison", August 28, 2015

¹⁶⁶ VOA news, "US teen Jailed for 11 Years for Supporting IS", August 28, 2015

Asia

Afghanistan

On August 7-10, a series of attacks, attributed to the Taliban, targeted security forces in Kabul, killing more than 50 people and wounding more than 200 others.¹⁶⁷ In one attack, 20 people were killed and 27 others were injured by a suicide bomber, who was disguised in police uniform targeted the main police academy in Kabul.¹⁶⁸ Witnesses claimed the bomber mingled amongst police recruits who were in line waiting to be searched before entering the academy. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack.¹⁶⁹ Separately, approximately two hours later, a suicide car bomber exploded at the gates of Camp Integrity, a US Special Forces military base located near Kabul airport.¹⁷⁰ Authorities said in this attack, one international force member and eight Afghan contractors were killed. Severe damage was caused to the base.¹⁷¹ In addition, a suicide bomber killed 29 people, including four commanders of a pro-government militia and injured 15 other civilians in Kunduz. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack.¹⁷² On August 10, five people were killed and 16 others were injured in a suicide bombing attack at Kabul's airport checkpoint.¹⁷³ According to Afghan authorities, a car first ran into a checkpoint before explosion.¹⁷⁴ The Taliban claimed responsibility and declared that the target was a group of foreigners. Officials reported that the victims were civilians and a police officer.¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁷ New York Times, "Waves of Suicide Attacks Shake Kabul on Its Deadliest Day of 2015", August 7, 2015

¹⁶⁸ NBC, "Afghanistan Violence: Deadly Truck Bomb Leaves Crater in Heart of Kabul", August 7, 2015

¹⁶⁹ Al-Jazeera, "Dozens killed in multiple attacks across Kabul", August 8, 2015

¹⁷⁰ Reuters, "Attacks on army, police and U.S. special forces kill 50 in Kabul", August 8, 2015

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² BBC, "Afghanistan: Taliban attack in Kunduz kills 29", August 9, 2015

¹⁷³ Reuters, "Car bomb kills five in Kabul, Afghan leader warns Pakistan", August 10, 2015

¹⁷⁴ BBC, "Afghanistan: Taliban suicide bomb attack near Kabul airport", August 10, 2015

¹⁷⁵ Reuters, *ibid.*

On August 22, 12 people, including three US citizens, were killed and more than 100 others were wounded in a suicide car bombing near a private hospital in Kabul. Authorities said a Toyota sedan was used in the attack.¹⁷⁶ Authorities said the target of the attack was a NATO convoy and at least one of the armored cars was destroyed by the explosion.¹⁷⁷ The Taliban denied any implication in the attack. No group claimed responsibility in the attack.¹⁷⁸

On August 27, Afghan and US led coalition forces conducted airstrikes targeted Taliban militants in Musa Qala area of Helmand province, a Taliban stronghold. Authorities also said clashes between security forces and Taliban militants in the area, killed 30 security forces and injured 60 others. Some were reported missing. It was unclear how many militants were killed.¹⁷⁹

Bangladesh

On August 7, Niloy Chakrabarti (who used the alias Niloy Neel) an atheist and secular blogger who wrote actively about the dangers of extremism and fundamentalism on social media, was killed by a group of six suspected Islamist militants in his home in Dhaka. His wife was home when the attack occurred, but was held up in a separate room. Authorities said the militants, were armed with machetes and hacked Neel to death.¹⁸⁰ Authorities said the militants entered Neel's home under the pretense they were interested in renting an apartment from him.¹⁸¹ During 2015, three other bloggers were killed by Islamist militants in Bangladesh and authorities believe the attacks were linked.¹⁸² Authorities claimed that in 2014, a group calling itself the "Defenders of Islam in Bangladesh" published a list of more than 80 secular bloggers who they threatened to kill due to their anti-Islam views. An al-Qaeda linked network calling themselves Ansar al-Islam Bangladesh claimed

¹⁷⁶ Al-Jazeera, "Deadly blast hits Afghan capital Kabul", August 22, 2015

¹⁷⁷ The Guardian, "Deadly suicide bomb attack on NATO convoy in Kabul", August 22, 2015

¹⁷⁸ CBS news, "Afghan suicide car bombing kills American contractors", August 22, 2015

¹⁷⁹ NBC news, "U.S. Warplanes Bomb Musa Qala, Afghan District Besieged by Taliban", August 27, 2015

¹⁸⁰ CNN, "Bangladeshi blogger Niloy Neel hacked to death in latest attack", August 7, 2015

¹⁸¹ BBC, "Bangladesh blogger Niloy Neel hacked to death in Dhaka", August 7, 2015

¹⁸² On May 12, 2015 Ananta Bijoy Das a secular blogger was killed by in Sylhet by armed militants with machetes. On March 30, 2015 blogger Washiqur Rahman, was killed in Dhaka and Blogger Avijit Roy was killed in Dhaka in February 26, 2015.

responsibility for the attack.¹⁸³ It is believed the group has ties to Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS). The group had also previously claimed responsibility for the other attacks on bloggers.¹⁸⁴ On August 14, two suspects were arrested in connection with the attack.¹⁸⁵

Pakistan

On August 2, Umar Lateef, a senior Al-Qaeda commander was killed by security forces during a counter-terrorist operation that targeted his hideout in Chagrai, Baluchistan.¹⁸⁶ His wife, who authorities said led a female network linked to Al-Qaeda in south Punjab and Baluchistan, and their two daughters were detained for questioning. His brother, who was also a known militant escaped avoiding arrest. Punjab authorities had placed a bounty of two million rupees for Lateef and half a million rupees for his wife. Authorities claimed Lateef was responsible for the operational activities of an Al-Qaeda network in Afghanistan, Baluchistan and south Punjab.¹⁸⁷

On August 16, approximately 20 people were killed including Shuja khazada, the Punjab home minister and more than 240 others were injured, when two suicide bombers targeted his offices in Shadikhan in Attock province.¹⁸⁸ One of the attackers detonated at the gates of the offices and the other managed to enter and detonate, as Khazada was hosting the Jirga conference, in which approximately 100 people were attending. The explosion caused major damage to the buildings, causing the roof to collapse.¹⁸⁹ According to preliminary investigations, authorities said one of the suicide bombers entered Khazada's office during the event, and after meeting him, detonated a 4.5 kg suicide vest. The second explosion, was more powerful than the first and authorities believe the bomber detonated an explosive vest containing 10kg of explosives outside the offices, but this

¹⁸³ Al-Jazeera, "Fourth secular Bangladesh blogger hacked to death", August 7, 2015

¹⁸⁴ CNN *ibid*.

¹⁸⁵ BBC, "Two arrested over Bangladesh blogger Niloy Neel killing", August 14, 2015

¹⁸⁶ IHT, "Taken out: Al Qaeda's local kingpin killed in Chagai raid", August 3, 2015

¹⁸⁷ AFP, "Pakistan claims killing of major al-Qaeda commander in country", August 2, 2015

¹⁸⁸ Los Angeles Times, "Pakistani counter terrorism official killed in suicide blast", August 16, 2015

¹⁸⁹ Dawn, "Punjab home minister Shuja Khazada killed in terror attack", August 17, 2015

caused the roof of the building to collapse trapping many people under the debris.¹⁹⁰ Lashkar-e-Islam militants claimed responsibility for the attack.¹⁹¹

On August 19, Abdul Ahad, leader of an Al-Qaeda network in Karachi and Mohammad Saleh, his accomplice, were killed in a shootout with security forces in the Gulshan-i-Iqbal neighborhood of the city. An intelligence officer was also killed.¹⁹² Authorities raided the militants' apartment and seized documents, Compact disks, phones and weapons. Five people were arrested in connection to assisting the militants acquire the residential address.¹⁹³

Thailand

On August 17, 20 people were killed and more than 120 others injured when a pipe bomb, containing three kilograms of TNT explosives, detonated at the Erawan Shrine, a popular tourist site in central Bangkok.¹⁹⁴ Authorities said the bomb was placed in the grounds of the shrine under a bench.¹⁹⁵ The following day, on August 18, a second bomb exploded in Bangkok, but there were no casualties and no group claimed responsibility. Authorities, did however, say that the explosives were similar to those used in the earlier attack.¹⁹⁶ On August 19, authorities said they had identified a young male suspect, wearing a yellow t-shirt and jeans, dressed similar to other tourists, as the possible prime suspect. He was later identified as Bilal Mohammed.¹⁹⁷ He was seen on video footage leaving a black rucksack beside a bench at the shrine. He is then seen leaving the area on a motorcycle taxi minutes before the explosion occurred.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁰ Daily Pakistan, "15 kg explosives used in attack on Shuja Khanzada", August 18, 2015

¹⁹¹ The Guardian, "Suicide attack in Pakistan kills Punjab home minister and at least eight others", August 16, 2015

¹⁹² The Nation, "Karachi-based Al-Qaeda commander killed", August 19, 2015

¹⁹³ Dawn, "Al Qaeda's Karachi chief, accomplice shot dead", August 19, 2015

¹⁹⁴ BBC, "Bangkok bomb: CCTV video shows man leave backpack", August 19, 2015

¹⁹⁵ NYTimes, "Bangkok Bomb Attack at Popular Shrine Kills at Least 20", August 17, 2015

¹⁹⁶ BBC, "Bangkok bomb: Has the case been solved?", October 5, 2015

¹⁹⁷ In September 2015 he admitted to being part of a cell that carried out the attack.

See: BBC, "Bangkok bomb: Has the case been solved?", October 5, 2015

¹⁹⁸ Reuters, "Thai Police struggle to track suspect; 'new bomb' false alarm", August 24, 2015.

On 22 August, authorities announced they believe the attack was carried out by a local militant network, as additional security video footage showed a second male suspect, throwing a bag into a canal 30 minutes before the explosion occurred on August 18.¹⁹⁹ Following this on August 29, a male suspect was arrested, carrying a false Turkish passport. When authorities searched his apartment located on the outskirts of Bangkok, they discovered explosives and bomb making materials. This led the authorities, to a second apartment, where a Thai Muslim woman and her Turkish husband, who were residents of Turkey, were also named as suspects. Explosives were discovered in their apartment.²⁰⁰ Additionally, another suspect was arrested on the Thai border with Cambodia in possession of a backpack containing the same distinctive yellow T-shirt that the alleged bomber was seen wearing in the security footage.²⁰¹ On August 31, Thai authorities offered a reward of 3m Thai baht (\$82,000) for information that could lead to further arrests.²⁰² No group claimed responsibility for the attack although some authorities suspected Uigher militants may be responsible.²⁰³

Turkey

On August 2, a PKK suicide bomber driving a tractor killed 11 Turkish soldiers and wounded 31 others at a military police station in Agri province. Authorities said the tractor contained two tons of explosives that were detonated by a suicide bomber.²⁰⁴

On August 4, an explosion stopped the flow of gas along pipeline on the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (South Caucasus) pipeline in Kars. There were no casualties and no group claimed responsibility for the attack.²⁰⁵ Also on August 4, in a separate incident, an explosion occurred on the Shah-Deniz Pipeline near the border with Georgia. The pipeline transports natural gas from Azerbaijan to

¹⁹⁹ BBC *ibid.*

²⁰⁰ BBC, "Bangkok bomb: Thai police charge man 'linked to Erawan blast' ", August 30, 2015.

²⁰¹ Diplomat, "Exclusive: Who's Really Behind Thailand's Erawan Shrine Bomb Blast?", September 4, 2015

²⁰² AP, "Thai police award themselves \$84K for arrest of bomb suspect", August 31, 2015

²⁰³ Diplomat *ibid.*

²⁰⁴ BBC, "Turkish troops killed in 'Kurdish PKK suicide blast'", August 2, 2015

²⁰⁵ Reuters, "PKK attacks Turkey's halted Shah Deniz gas pipeline", August 4, 2015

Turkey. Authorities said gas flow was not halted as it was already stopped for maintenance. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.²⁰⁶

On August 5, authorities carried out counter-terrorist raids targeting PKK militants, arresting more than 50 militants. Authorities said amongst the targets of the raid was the offices of the Ronahi Democratic and Libertarian Student Association, which allegedly held activities on behalf of the PKK.²⁰⁷

On August 10, nine people were killed in a series of separate attacks carried out by suspected PKK militants who targeted security forces and the US consulate in Istanbul and Sirnak province in east Turkey.²⁰⁸ In the first attack, a policeman was killed and 10 other people, including three police officers, were injured when a suspected PKK suicide car bomber detonated outside the Sultanbeyli district police station in Istanbul. Shortly after, a police officer was killed and two militants were killed in a firefight between the security forces and militants. Authorities said the slain police officer was part of the bomb disposal unit, who was investigating the attack.²⁰⁹ Also two female gunmen, armed with a rifle and other ammunition, attacked the US consulate in Istanbul.²¹⁰ One of the attackers was shot by security forces and detained. The other escaped. The Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C) claimed responsibility for this attack and said Hatice Asik had carried out the attack. The US consulate closed temporarily following the attack.²¹¹ Additionally, four police officers were killed by a roadside bomb in Sirnak province, and a soldier was killed when gunmen fired on a military helicopter.²¹²

On August 19, two suspects were arrested following a shootout at the Dolmabahce Palace in Istanbul.²¹³ The militants attempted to launch an armed assault but were stopped by police who

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Hurriyet, "Dozens detained in anti-PKK raids across Turkey amid upsurge in violence", August 5, 2015

²⁰⁸ CNN, "Trio of attacks in Turkey target police, U.S. Consulate", August 11, 2015

²⁰⁹ BBC, "Turkey attacks: Deadly violence in Istanbul and Sirnak", August 10, 2015

²¹⁰ Reuters, "U.S. consulate in Turkey targeted as wave of attacks kills 9", August 10, 2015

²¹¹ BBC, "Turkey attacks: Deadly violence in Istanbul and Sirnak", August 10, 2015

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Express, "Turkey terror alert after explosion and gunfire at Istanbul tourist attraction", August 19, 2015

seized the weapons, which included two hand grenades, an automatic rifle, a gun and ammunition. One policeman was reported to have been lightly wounded.²¹⁴ Also on August 19, eight soldiers were killed and seven others were injured by suspected PKK militants who detonated a roadside bomb which exploded in Siirt.²¹⁵

On August 25, an explosion occurred on the Turkish natural gas pipeline near Sarıkamış, Turkey.²¹⁶ However, it did not stop the supply as flow had already been halted for maintenance.²¹⁷ It was reported that approximately 20 militants were involved in carrying out the attack and they attacked from two directions.²¹⁸ Turkish authorities said in response to the attacks, additional security would be implemented along the pipeline, including horse-back patrols and installing thermal cameras along key points of the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline, primarily from Silopi to Ceyhan.²¹⁹

Oceania

Australia

On August 20, the Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott announced that counter-terrorist officers with the support of immigration officers, intercepted a group of male jihadists at Sydney International Airport. The men were allegedly planning to join the IS in Syria and Iraq.²²⁰ Authorities did not identify the suspects but said they were Australian nationals in their 20s and early 30s.²²¹ The arrests were made on two occasions but authorities said they were part of the same cell. In the first incident, five people were arrested as they were about to board a flight to the Middle East.

²¹⁴ Times of Israel, “8 Turkish soldiers killed in PKK attack”, August 19, 2015

²¹⁵ Reuters, “Eight Turkish soldiers killed in deadliest PKK attack”, August 19, 2015

²¹⁶ [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=44404&no_cache=1#.VIYY0L8nItM](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=44404&no_cache=1#.VIYY0L8nItM)

²¹⁷ Reuters, “Shah Deniz gas pipeline flow halted by explosion in Turkey: officials”, August 25, 2015

²¹⁸ TRT World, “PKK attacks natural gas pipeline in Turkey's Kars Province”, August 25, 2015

²¹⁹ Reuters, “Turkey to boost security for energy infrastructure as PKK attacks rise”, August 6, 2015

²²⁰ ABC, “Islamic State: Seven more Australians stopped from joining Middle East terrorist groups: Abbott”, August 20, 2015

²²¹ Guardian, “Abbott highlights terrorism fears after Middle East-bound group stopped in Sydney”, August 20, 2015

Two others were arrested separately.²²² Authorities also said when the men were questioned, searches of the luggage revealed large amounts of cash, amounting 10,000 Australian dollars.²²³

Attacks on Energy facilities

During August 2015, suspected PKK militants targeted gas pipelines in Eastern Turkey, halting the flow and causing damage, although there were no casualties. The first incident took place on August 4, when an explosion stopped the flow of gas along pipeline on the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (South Caucasus) pipeline in Kars. There were no casualties and no group claimed responsibility for the attack.²²⁴ Also on August 4, in a separate incident, an explosion occurred on the Shah-Deniz Pipeline near the border with Georgia. The pipeline transports natural gas from Azerbaijan to Turkey. Authorities said gas flow was not halted as it was already stopped for maintenance. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.²²⁵ Another incident occurred on August 25, when an explosion occurred on the Turkish natural gas pipeline near Sarikamış, Turkey.²²⁶ However, it did not stop the supply as flow had already been halted for maintenance.²²⁷ It was reported that approximately 20 militants were involved in carrying out the attack and they attacked from two directions.²²⁸ Turkish authorities said in response to the attacks, additional security would be implemented along the pipeline, including horse-back patrols and installing thermal cameras along key points of the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline, primarily from Silopi to Ceyhan.²²⁹

On August 31, a car bomb targeted the headquarters of an oil and gas joint venture between Italy's ENI and Libyan state oil firm NOC, in Tripoli, Libya. The bomb caused damaged to the buildings and some cars. There were no casualties. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed the IS.²³⁰

²²² Mailonline, "Seven young would-be jihadists captured at Sydney airport while trying to fly to the Middle East to join ISIS terrorists", August 2015

²²³ Guardian. *ibid.*

²²⁴ Reuters, "PKK attacks Turkey's halted Shah Deniz gas pipeline", August 4, 2015

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=44404&no_cache=1#.VIYY0L8nItM](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=44404&no_cache=1#.VIYY0L8nItM)

²²⁷ Reuters, "Shah Deniz gas pipeline flow halted by explosion in Turkey: officials", August 25, 2015

²²⁸ TRT World, "PKK attacks natural gas pipeline in Turkey's Kars Province", August 25, 2015

²²⁹ Reuters, "Turkey to boost security for energy infrastructure as PKK attacks rise", August 6, 2015

²³⁰ Reuters, "Shah Deniz gas pipeline flow halted by explosion in Turkey: officials", August 25, 2015

ABOUT THE ICT

Founded in 1996, the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) is one of the leading academic institutes for counter-terrorism in the world, facilitating international cooperation in the global struggle against terrorism. ICT is an independent think tank providing expertise in terrorism, counter-terrorism, homeland security, threat vulnerability and risk assessment, intelligence analysis and national security and defense policy. ICT is a non-profit organization located at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC), Herzliya, Israel which relies exclusively on private donations and revenue from events, projects and programs.

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