



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

ICT Incident and Activists Database

PERIODIC REVIEW

Summary of Terrorist Incidents and Counter-Terrorist Operations Worldwide February 2015

Highlights

- On February 3, the Islamic State (IS) released a video of Jordanian hostage, Muath al-Kasabeh as he was burned to death while locked in a cage. Al-Kasabeh, a Jordanian pilot, was captured when his plane crashed near Raqqa, Syria, during a mission against the IS in December 2014. In response, on February 4, Jordan executed two Al-Qaeda in Iraq prisoners and launched airstrikes on IS positions in Iraq, killing 55 IS militants in Mosul, including a senior IS commander, known as the "Prince of Nineveh".
- On February 4, hundreds of Boko Haram militants attacked the town of Fotokol, Cameroon, close to the Nigerian border. The attackers moved door-to-door inside the town and attacked the residents while setting churches and mosques on fire. According to reports, 90 civilians were killed and approximately 500 others were wounded in the attack.
- On February 6, Adel Abdul Bary, 54, an Egyptian man, was sentenced in New York, USA to 25 years in US prison in connection with his role in the 1998 bombings of the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.
- On February 9, Mullah Abdul Rauf, a former Taliban commander who recently pledged his allegiance to the IS, was killed in a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) drone air strike in northern Helmand Province, Afghanistan.
- On February 10, the family of American hostage, Kayla Mueller, 26, a US aid worker, confirmed the death of their daughter. She was taken hostage in Syria by the IS in 2013.
- On February 11, a court in Antwerp, Belgium found a total of 45 members of the Sharia4Belgium group guilty of terror-related offences. Fouad Belkacem, the leader of Sharia4Belgium, was sentenced to 12 years in prison.
- On February 14–15, two people were killed and five police officers were wounded, in two separate but related shooting incidents in Copenhagen, Denmark. The attacker, later identified as Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein, was fatally shot by police following a manhunt and a firefight. El-Hussein had pledged allegiance to the IS and its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, shortly before the attacks.

- On February 15, the IS released a video showing the beheadings of 21 Egyptian Christians who had been kidnapped by on a Libyan beach. In response, on February 16, Egyptian jets bombed IS targets in their Libyan base of Derna. The airstrikes, which targeted locations and weapons stockpiles belonging to IS in Libya, killed about 50 militants.
- On February 20, two car bombs exploded the Central Hotel in Mogadishu, Somalia. The bombings were followed by heavy gunfire after attackers stormed into the building. Authorities said 25 people, including two members of parliament, were killed and 40 others were injured. Al-Shabab Al-Mujahedeen claimed responsibility for the incident.
- On February 24, three British schoolgirls, Shamima Begum, 15, Kadiza Sultana, 16, and Amira Abase, 15, were reported missing and are suspected of travelling to Syria via Turkey to join the IS.
- On February 22, Jerusalem mayor, Nir Barkat neutralized an armed militant in central Jerusalem, Israel, as he was in the midst of carrying out a stabbing. One person was injured in the incident and the attacker was arrested at the scene.
- On February 24, the IS kidnapped more than one hundred Christian Assyrians in northeast Syria.
- On February 28, a US drone attack in Yemen killed four suspected AQAP militants and injured several others in the southern province of Shabwa. The strike targeted militants traveling in two vehicles in the Bihan region of Shabwa province.
- On February 24, gunmen abducted approximately 30 Hazara travellers in Zabul Province, on the road to Kabul, Afghanistan. No group claimed responsibility but Afghan authorities suspected the IS. The Afghan government unsuccessfully attempted secure the release of the hostages through negotiations. Following this, the Afghan National Army (ANA) launched a rescue operation that reportedly killed dozens of the suspected kidnapers, including foreign fighters from Kyrgyzstan.
- On February 28, car bombs exploded at a crowded market in the town of Balad Ruz, Iraq, killing 37 people and wounding 50 others. Two suicide car bombers later attacked a checkpoint manned by Shia militia near the city of Samarra, killing 16 Shia fighters and wounding 31 others. No group claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Contents

Highlights	2
Europe	6
Belgium.....	6
Denmark.....	6
France.....	7
Germany.....	9
Spain	9
United Kingdom.....	10
Africa	12
Cameroon	12
Chad.....	13
Kenya.....	13
Libya	14
Morocco	14
Niger	15
Nigeria	15
Somalia.....	17
Tunisia	18
Middle East	19
Bahrain	19
Egypt.....	19
Iraq	20
Israel and the West Bank	21
Jordan	22
Syria.....	23
Turkey.....	24
Yemen.....	24
North America.....	24
Canada.....	24

United States	25
South America	26
Asia	26
Afghanistan.....	26
China.....	27
Indonesia	28
Malaysia	28
Pakistan	28
Philippines	29
Thailand	30
Oceania	30
Australia	30

Europe

Belgium

On February 11, a court in Antwerp found a total of 45 members of the Sharia4Belgium group guilty of terror-related offences, in what was considered Belgium's largest-ever terrorism related trial. However, only seven of those accused were present in court for the ruling as the others are believed to be in Syria, and authorities believe some may have been killed in the fighting.¹ Fouad Belkacem, the leader of Sharia4Belgium, was sentenced to 12 years in prison.² The judge said that Belkacem was responsible for the radicalization of young men to fight in Syria with Al-Qaeda linked groups including the Al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State (IS).³ The other 44 members were given sentences, some suspended, ranging between three and 15 years because the judges said that, unlike Belkacem who had remained in Belgium, they were actively involved in terrorism in Syria. Much of the prosecution case relied on the testimony of Jejoen Bontinck, 20,⁴ a member of Sharia4Belgium who received a 40-month suspended sentence, less than the four years recommended by prosecutors, after he gave evidence against his former fellow fighters.⁵

Denmark

On February 14–15, two people were killed and five police officers were wounded in two separate but related shooting incidents in Copenhagen. The first shooting took place on February 14 at a public afternoon event called "Art, Blasphemy and Freedom of Expression" at the Krudttønden Cultural Center. According to local witnesses, more than 40 rounds of ammunitions were shot by the gunman.⁶ Authorities believe that Swedish artist, Lars Vilks, who was among the speakers at the event was the main target because of his drawings of the prophet Muhammad in 2007.⁷ Vilks escaped unharmed but Finn Norgaard, 55, a Danish filmmaker, was killed as he attempted to stop the attacker

¹ BBC, "Sharia4Belgium trial: Belgian court jails members", February 11, 2015

² Al-Jazeera, "Belgium court convicts dozens on terror charges", February 11, 2015

³ AAP, "Belgian court jails Islamists on terrorism", February 12, 2015

⁴ BBC, *ibid.*

⁵ Independent, "Belgian terror group sentenced: Sharia4Belgium's 'charismatic leader' Fouad Belkacem imprisoned for 12 years", February 11, 2015

⁶ Reuters, Danish police kill 22-year-old suspected of Copenhagen shootings, February 15, 2015

⁷ See: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4674864.stm

who managed to escape.⁸ Three police agents were wounded during the attack.⁹ The second shooting took place shortly after midnight, outside the city's Great Synagogue in Krystalgade, where a bat mitzvah¹⁰ celebration was taking place. A gunman fired two 7.65 mm rounds and seven 9 mm rounds, killing Dan Uzan, a 37-year-old Jewish community member on security duty. He died from a gunshot wound to his head.¹¹ The gunman also shot and wounded two officers of the Danish Security and Intelligence Service. The gunman did not manage to enter the building and attack those attending the celebration, but he escaped and evaded arrest. A manhunt ensued, leading police to evacuate the nearby Nørreport Station where the suspect was located. After a firefight with police, the attacker was shot and killed. The attacker was later identified by police as Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein,¹² reportedly of Palestinian origin, whom police said was responsible for both attacks.¹³ Police said he had a record of violence, gang-related activities and weapons possession.¹⁴ He was known to police, having spent time in prison for criminal activity where authorities believe he became radicalized.¹⁵ It was also reported that before carrying out the attack, El-Hussein had pledged allegiance to the IS and its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Police believe he was inspired by the Charlie Hebdo attacks in January 2015 in Paris. He is not believed to have actually spent time in Syria or attended terrorist training camps.¹⁶

France

On February 3, Moussa Coulibaly,¹⁷ 30, of Malian origin, stabbed three soldiers patrolling outside a Jewish community center in Nice. None of the soldiers were seriously hurt. Authorities said the

⁸ Telegraph, "Copenhagen shootings: Denmark buries Jewish victim Dan Uzan", February 18, 2015

⁹ Guardian, "Copenhagen attacks: Danish police charge two men", February 16, 2015

¹⁰ Jewish rites of passage celebration for a girl age 12.

¹¹ Haaretz, "Danish Jew killed at synagogue: A guard on the pitch, a guard for his people", February 21, 2105

¹² CNN, "Who was Copenhagen gunman Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein?", February 20, 2015

¹³ Guardian, "Twin attacks in Copenhagen leave one dead, six injured", February 14, 2015

¹⁴ Reuters, "Danish police kill 22-year-old suspected of Copenhagen shootings", February 15, 2015

¹⁵ Telegraph, "Footage shows Copenhagen gunman Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein in kickboxing match", February 16, 2015

¹⁶ CNN, "Who was Copenhagen gunman Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein?", February 27, 2015

¹⁷ Authorities said he had no ties to the Hyper Cache attacker, Amedy Coulibaly, despite sharing the same last name. France was on heightened alert following the Charlie Hebdo attack. See January 2015 ICT database report for further details.

incident took place at approximately 14:00. Police said attacker charged at the soldier armed with a large knife, causing lacerations to his face and neck. Another soldier was wounded in the arm as he attempted to stop the attacker.¹⁸ Coulibaly was arrested at the scene of the attack. The soldiers were patrolling outside the Jewish community center as part of reinforced security measures introduced following the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris in January 2015.¹⁹ Authorities said the attacker was known to police, having recently been expelled from Turkey after he travelled there from the Corsican city of Ajaccio on January 28. He allegedly raised suspicions among border officials when he bought a one-way ticket to Turkey, and French intelligence asked the Turkish authorities to deport him.²⁰ A second man was also arrested and questioned in connection with planning the attack.²¹

On February 3, French police arrested seven men and a woman, ages 21 to 46, in Paris and Lyon. The suspects were accused of recruiting French fighters for jihad in Syria.²² Authorities said three of those arrested had traveled to Syria and returned to France in December 2014, though it was unclear whether they joined the IS or another group. Authorities said the cell did not appear to be involved in any particular plot or linked to any other networks already broken up in France in recent months.²³ The arrests were made as French authorities estimated that 400 French nationals have travelled to Syria and Iraq to fight alongside militant groups, and that there are approximately 900 people in France with links to recruitment cells.²⁴ Following this raid, on February 8, six additional people were arrested in Albi.²⁵ All in their 30s, they are suspected of financing Al-Qaeda linked groups in Syria and recruiting militants to travel to Syria.²⁶

On February 14, the IS released a new video threatening new attacks against France and Belgium. The nine-minute video, in Arabic and French, titled “A Message to France”, claimed that IS operatives were deployed throughout both European countries and were awaiting orders to commit additional attacks, specifically in Paris and Brussels. The video opened with recorded statements by French

¹⁸ Guardian, “French soldiers attacked in Nice while guarding Jewish community centre”, February 4, 2015

¹⁹ France 24, “French knife attack suspect says he ‘hates military, Jews’”, February 5, 2015

²⁰ BBC, “French soldiers wounded in Nice Jewish centre attack”, February 3, 2015

²¹ Guardian *ibid*.

²² BBC, ‘France Syria: Eight arrests in raids on ‘jihadists’, February 3, 2015

²³ AP, “French Police Arrest 8 Suspected In Syria Extremist Network”, February 3, 2015

²⁴ BBC. *Ibid*.

²⁵ Times of Israel, “France arrests 6 for terror recruiting”, February 8, 2015

²⁶ France 24, “French police detain six in new ‘anti-terror’ raid”, February 8, 2015

President Francois Hollande and former President Nicolas Sarkozy, followed by a message from Amedy Coulibaly, the perpetrator of the Hyper Cache attack in Paris in January 2015.²⁷ An IS flag was prominently displayed on the wall behind Coulibaly as he declared his allegiance to the IS. Following Coulibaly's message, two French-speaking IS fighters wearing military fatigues instructed Muslims throughout France to kill all non-believers.²⁸

Germany

On February 15, northern Germany's largest Carnival parade in the city of Braunschweig was cancelled due to a terrorist threat.²⁹ Braunschweig Mayor Ulrich Markurth (SPD) and parade marshal Gerhard Baller said that they cancelled the parade less than 30 minutes before it was due to start because police received an intelligence tip of an imminent jihadist attack. Police provided no details of the plot or who was responsible. Braunschweig's Carnival parade attracts around 250,000 visitors each year.³⁰

Spain

On February 24, four men suspected of belonging to an IS recruiting cell were arrested by Spanish police in Barcelona, Girona, and in the North African enclave of Melilla.³¹ The two men arrested in Melilla were allegedly the heads of a social-media campaign recruiting women to join IS in Syria. The two suspects also organized meetings in their homes to show IS-related video materials to potential recruits. The two other men arrested were sympathizers of the IS and suspected members of the cell.³² In Catalonia, authorities said that the suspects arrested included a man who had edited and distributed videos to recruit potential jihadists, as well as another militant who had identified himself as a supporter of IS living in a western society.³³

²⁷ For further details see January ICT database report

²⁸ Times of Israel, "Islamic State calls for terror attacks in France, Belgium", February 14, 2015

²⁹ BBC, "Germany: Braunschweig parade halted over terror alert", February 15, 2015

³⁰ DW, "Braunschweig Carnival parade canceled over 'Islamist' terror alert", February 15, 2015

³¹ The Guardian, 'Spanish police arrest Islamic State 'recruiters' in Melilla and Catalonia', February 17, 2015

³² The Telegraph, 'Spain breaks up online network recruiting young women for Islamic State', February 17, 2015

³³ Ibid, Guardian

United Kingdom

British authorities said they had made terrorist-related arrests almost daily throughout the month of February 2015. Metropolitan Assistant Commissioner, Mark Rowley, said that Islamist extremists were detained on a daily basis, and that IS supporters and militants present the gravest threat to the UK.³⁴

Some of the more significant cases made public included:

- On February 11, counter-terrorism police officers raided five addresses in Merseyside, northwest England, and arrested a 31-year-old man. He was detained on suspicion of being concerned in the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism.³⁵ Following this incident, two women were arrested in Walsall, in the West Midlands, for their connection to Syrian terrorism. According to British authorities, these arrests did not mean that a massive attack was imminent against Britain.³⁶
- On February 14, a man suspected of having links to the IS was arrested in Newham, east London. According to police, the suspect was collecting information needed to carry out a terrorist act. He was arrested under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act and taken to a south London police station where he was questioned.³⁷
- On February 17, a teenage boy and girl were arrested by the North West Counter Terrorism Unit on suspicion of being involved in the commission, preparation or instigation of an act of terrorism.³⁸
- On February 19, Tareena Shakil, 26, from Birmingham, was arrested at Heathrow International Airport by West Midland police as she arrived in the UK from a flight from Turkey. Shakil was held on suspicion of terrorist offences connected with a trip to Syria. She was travelling with her son who was taken into care by British authorities. Shakil is believed to have ties to the IS. It was reported that she left the UK in late 2014 before heading to Syria with her young son after apparently telling relatives she was taking a holiday to

³⁴ Telegraph, "Terror suspects arrested every day in UK as police call for extra funding to cope with ISIL threat", February 8, 2015

³⁵ Guardian, "Terror suspect arrested in Merseyside after series of raids", February 11, 2015

³⁶ Reuters, 'British police arrest man, two women, on suspicion of terrorism', February 11 2015

³⁷ The Guardian, 'British anti-terror police arrest suspect 'with links to ISIS'', February 15 2015

³⁸ Telegraph, "Anti-terror police arrest boy and girl of 16", February 17, 2015

Spain.³⁹

- On February 25, a 22-year-old man was arrested by anti-terrorism officers in north London on suspicion of funding individuals fighting in Syria. Police said they were searching two addresses in north London.⁴⁰
- On February 5, it was reported that four bombs were planted in Northern Ireland. In the first incident, a bomb exploded under a car in Belfast but there were no casualties. The incident led to the evacuation of homes in the vicinity of the attack. In a separate but related incident, part of a major train line was also suspended and several suspicious objects were discovered in separate places in Belfast. Separately, police said they had been made aware of suspicious activity around a railway crossing in Lurgan. All services on the railway line between Belfast and Dublin were suspended.⁴¹ Police also discovered and safely defused a pipe bomb in Belfast the previous day. No group claimed responsibility for any of the incidents and authorities suspected IRA dissident militants.⁴²
- On February 12, authorities in Northern Ireland said they foiled a plot by IRA dissident militants to target the transport system in Northern Ireland following the discovery of secret recordings of alleged Continuity IRA terror plot meetings that revealed plans to attack Northern Ireland's transport infrastructure. Authorities said the meetings were held by alleged key members of the Continuity IRA's leadership. Twelve men were arrested; charges brought against seven of them and the other five were released pending reports. A total of nine meetings were recorded with each of the suspects said to have been present on at least one occasion. According to the prosecution, topics discussed during the meetings included membership in an outlawed organization, weapons procurement and training, terrorist funding and plans to commit acts of terrorism.⁴³
- On February 24, three British schoolgirls identified as Shamima Begum, 15, Kadiza Sultana,

³⁹ Telegraph, "British mother 'who fled to join ISIL arrested at Heathrow'", February 19, 2015

⁴⁰ Telegraph, "Man arrested on suspicion of Syrian terror funding", February 25, 2015

⁴¹ <http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2015/02/05/breaking-two-bombs-reports-in-northern-ireland-homes-evacuated/>

⁴² BBC, "Belfast under-car pipe bombs: PSNI investigating possible link", February 5, 2015

⁴³ Belfast Telegraph, "IRA 'plotted terrorist attacks on Northern Ireland's transport infrastructure', court hears", February 15, 2015

16, and Amira Abase, 15, were reported missing and authorities suspect that they travelled to Syria via Turkey to join the IS. Authorities believe they crossed into the town of Tal Abyad after travelling to Turkey from Gatwick Airport on February 17, after telling their parents they were going out for the day.⁴⁴ Little is known about the girls' whereabouts but authorities said that several days before they left for Turkey, one of the girls allegedly contacted a young Scottish woman identified as Aqsa Mahmood, who had left her home to travel to Syria in 2013. Mahmood is believed to have recruited the teenagers via social media. She had posted tips for girls and young women wanting to travel to Syria to marry jihadist militants as she did. Authorities said her blog had links to advice posted by another jihad supporter, which recommends that those traveling to Syria seek to pack the essentials since they may need to move often and at short notice while remaining inconspicuous.⁴⁵

Africa

Cameroon

On February 4, hundreds of Boko Haram militants attacked the town of Fotokol near the Nigerian border. Witnesses claimed that approximately 800 Boko Haram militants attacked the residents' homes, and set churches and mosques on fire. They also looted property and livestock.⁴⁶ According to reports, approximately 100 civilians were killed and approximately 500 others were wounded in the attack. Authorities also reported that six Cameroon soldiers were killed in the attack.⁴⁷

On February 9, Boko Haram militants hijacked a bus in northern Cameroon and abducted 20 people. Authorities said the bus was seized near the border area of Koza and driven towards the Nigerian border. In a related incident, several Boko Haram fighters were killed and around 10 Cameroonian soldiers were injured as militants attacked Kerawa. A separate group of fighters reportedly attacked the nearby town of Kolofata, looting food and livestock. The attacks in Cameroon follow a series of assaults on the border towns of Bosso and Diffa in Niger. Boko Haram militants targeted a prison in Diffa but were repelled by soldiers from Niger and Chad. Diffa was also targeted by a car bomb that

⁴⁴ BBC, "Missing teenagers have crossed into Syria, Met Police say", February 24, 2015

⁴⁵ CNN, "UK girls' list for Syria trip: Makeup, bras, epilator", March 10, 2015

⁴⁶ The Guardian, "Boko Haram kills 90 civilians and wounds 500 in Cameroon attacks", February 5, 2015

⁴⁷ IBT, "Over 100 feared dead' as Boko Haram attack Cameroon border town of Fotokol", February 4, 2015

exploded near a market, killing one person and injuring 15 others.⁴⁸

Chad

On February 13, Nigerian Boko Haram militants killed 10 people during a cross-border attack in Ngouboua. This was the first time that Boko Haram had carried out an attack in Chad.⁴⁹ Authorities said approximately 30 militants crossed lake from Nigeria's Baga in large canoes and set ablaze nearly two-thirds of Ngouboua, located about 20km east of the Nigerian border. Chadian military carried out airstrikes against the militants, destroying their vessels.⁵⁰

On February 21, Boko Haram militants killed seven soldiers in an overnight attack on the island of Karamga in Lake Chad. Authorities said 14 Boko Haram militants were also killed in the attack.⁵¹ The Lake Chad area is thought to serve as a hideout for Boko Haram militants. Authorities reported that the militants were armed with heavy weapons and machine gun fire. Niger security sources said several Boko Haram members were killed in the fighting.⁵²

Kenya

On February 7, George Muchai, a Kenyan MP and three of his aides were shot at close range as they were returning home after meeting family members in Nairobi. The attack was carried out by masked men with assault rifles. Authorities said the militants stole a briefcase and two pistols from the bodyguards.⁵³ No group claimed responsibility but authorities blamed Al-Shabab al-Mujahideen.⁵⁴

On February 16, four suspects believed to be supporters of the Mombasa Republican Council MRC55, were arrested in Mobassa, suspected of plotting an imminent attack on tourist areas in the city. Authorities said two men and two women were arrested in a raid on a house on the edge of the port

⁴⁸ BBC, "Nigeria's Boko Haram 'kidnaps 20' in Cameroon bus hijacking", February 9, 2015

⁴⁹ DW, "Boko Haram fighters launch first attack inside Chad", February 13, 2015

⁵⁰ BBC, "Nigeria's Boko Haram militants attack Chad for first time", February 13, 2015

⁵¹ AP, "Boko Haram kills 7 Niger soldiers in attack on island in Lake Chad, military official says", February 21, 2015

⁵² Reuters, "Boko Haram attacks island on Niger side of Lake Chad", February 21, 2015

⁵³ Al-Jazeera, "Kenya MP shot dead in Nairobi", February 7, 2015

⁵⁴ BBC, "Kenya MP shot dead in 'well planned' attack in Nairobi", February 7, 2015

⁵⁵ The MRC is not an Islamist group. It accuses Nairobi authorities of marginalizing the indigenous people along Kenya's volatile coast. It is considered an illegal group by the government.

city of Mombasa where police recovered machetes, blades, separatist flags (as well as sachets of heroin).⁵⁶

Libya

On February 4, unidentified gunmen stormed the Al-Mabrook oilfield in central Libya. The oilfield is run by National Oil Corp NOC and France's Total and was closed when the Es Sider oil port was shut down in December 2014 due to violent clashes. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.⁵⁷

On February 20, three Egyptian engineers working for a French company in Libya were kidnapped on their way to Sabha in the southeast. Egypt's foreign ministry later confirmed the abduction and said that it contacted Libyan authorities to identify the group behind the incident. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.⁵⁸

On February 15, the IS released a video showing the beheadings of 21 Egyptian Christians who had been kidnapped by on a Libyan beach.⁵⁹ The video showed an apparent mass execution with jihadists clothed in black standing behind each of the victims, who are all are dressed in orange jumpsuits with their hands cuffed behind them. The victims are seen pushed to the ground and beheaded.⁶⁰ In response, on February 16, Egyptian jets bombed IS targets in their Libyan base of Derna located in eastern Libya close to the Egyptian border. The airstrikes targeted locations and weapons stockpiles belonging to IS in Libya, killed about 50 militants and were conducted in coordination with the internationally-recognized Libyan government, which set up in the city of Tobruk after losing control of Tripoli.⁶¹

Morocco

On February 17, a former Spanish soldier, identified only by his initials, "J.F", was sentenced to eight

⁵⁶ <http://www.enca.com/africa/east-africa/kenya-police-arrest-four-terror-suspects>

⁵⁷ Reuters, "Gunmen storm Libya's al-Mabrook oilfield", February 4, 2015

⁵⁸ Cairo post, "3 Egyptian engineers allegedly kidnapped in Libya", February 21, 2015

⁵⁹ 21 Egyptian Christians were kidnapped in the Libyan coastal city of Sirte in two separate incidents in December and January. Officials said all of them had been killed. Independent, "ISIS beheading of Coptic Christians on Libyan beach brings Islamists to the doorstep of Europe", February 16, 2015

⁶⁰ BBC, "Islamic State: Egyptian Christians held in Libya 'killed'", February 15, 2015

⁶¹ Guardian, "Egyptian air strikes in Libya kill dozens of Isis militants", February 16, 2015

years in jail on charges of leading an Islamist network that was plotting terror attacks. Seventeen other members of the group, all believed to be Moroccans, were sentenced to between two and ten years in prison on a variety of charges. No further details emerged from the trial and it was not clear if this cell was affiliated with any particular Islamist group.⁶²

Niger

On February 6, Boko Haram militants attacked Bosso after crossing into Niger from neighboring Nigeria, in what authorities said was the first major Boko Haram incursion into Niger.⁶³ The attack took place in the early morning hours and witnesses said the militants were heavily armed. The Nigerian military successfully repelled the attacks with the aid of Chadian troops that have been stationed in Bosso since February 2, 2015. The Chadian air force also played a supporting role in the clashes. Authorities said 109 Boko Haram militants were killed in the incident.⁶⁴ The Nigerian military said four soldiers were killed and 17 others were wounded, and a civilian was also among the casualties.⁶⁵

On February 9, Boko Haram militants raided a prison in Diffa and detonated a car bomb in the town. Authorities said five people were killed and five others were injured in the incident.⁶⁶

Nigeria

It should be noted that during February 2015, Boko Haram militants intensified their attacks near Lake Chad, a crossroads between Nigeria, Chad, and Niger. The escalating crisis prompted Nigeria to postpone its February 14 presidential election.

On February 1, a suspected Boko Haram suicide bomber killed eight people at the residence of a politician in Potiskum. Another suicide bomber killed five people outside a mosque in Gombe.⁶⁷ In a separate incident, the Nigerian military repelled a multi-pronged attack by Boko Haram militants that

⁶² Reuters, "Moroccan court jails former Spanish soldier, 17 others on terror charges", February 20, 2015

⁶³ BBC, "Boko Haram launches first attack in Niger", February 7, 2015

⁶⁴ IBT, "Boko Haram Attacks Niger Border Town Bosso In Second Military Assault Outside Nigeria", February 6, 2015

⁶⁵ AFP, "109 Boko Haram fighters dead' after first attack on Niger", February 6, 2015

⁶⁶ ABC News, "Boko Haram militants bomb town, kidnap bus passengers during attacks in Cameroon, Niger", February 10, 2015

⁶⁷ CBC news, "Boko Haram continues assault on Nigerian city of Maiduguri", February 1, 2015

attacked Maiduguri from all four roads that lead to the city. Authorities said several civilians were killed by grenades and mortar shells on the ground. The military said hundreds of militants were killed and many weapons were recovered, including artillery guns and rocket-propelled grenades.⁶⁸

On February 2, a female suicide bomber detonated her explosives in Gombe, killing one civilian and injuring 18 others.⁶⁹ The attack occurred several minutes after the President of Nigeria attended an election rally. He was not injured in the incident. No group claimed responsibility but authorities blamed Boko Haram.⁷⁰

On February 4, Chadian soldiers successfully defeated Boko Haram militants, killing 200 of them while losing nine of their own soldiers in the operation.⁷¹

On February 12, West African Allied Forces, led by Nigeria and supported by Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, launched a counter-terrorist operation in the Sambisa Forest in Borno State, a stronghold of Boko Haram, killing many Boko Haram militants.⁷²

On February 15, a teenage suicide bomber killed 16 people and wounded 30 others at a crowded bus station in Damaturu, the capital of Yobe State. No group claimed responsibility but authorities blamed Boko Haram.⁷³

On February 22, a female suicide bomber detonated at a security checkpoint outside a market in Potiskum, killing five people and wounding 19 others. Authorities believe the suicide bomber was a girl as young as seven-years-old. Authorities said suspicious security guards and vigilantes tried to prevent the girl from entering the market but she donated her explosives during a security search.⁷⁴ No group claimed responsibility but authorities blamed Boko Haram.⁷⁵

On February 24, two suicide bombers killed 27 people at bus stations in Potiskum and Kano. Authorities said a suicide bomber detonated as she boarded a bus in Potiskum, killing 17 people, and a second attack took place in Kano hours later, killing 10 people. No group claimed responsibility but

⁶⁸ CTV News, "Islamic extremists attack Nigerian city of Maiduguri from 4 fronts", February 1, 2015

⁶⁹ BBC, "Suicide bomber hits Nigerian presidential rally", February 2, 2015

⁷⁰ BBC, "Nigeria elections: Blast hits presidential rally in Gombe", February 2, 2015

⁷¹ NY Times, "Chad Retakes Nigerian Town From Militant Group Boko Haram", February 4, 2015

⁷² Reuters, "Niger forces killed 260 Boko Haram militants since Feb. 6 : spokesman", February 12, 2015

⁷³ Guardian, "Teenage suicide bomber kills at least 16 at Nigerian bus station", February 15, 2015

⁷⁴ Guardian, "'Seven-year-old girl' kills herself and five others in Nigeria suicide bombing", February 22, 2015

⁷⁵ Al Jazeera, "Several killed in suicide bombing attack in Nigeria", February 22, 2015

authorities blamed Boko Haram.⁷⁶ Also on February 24, Boko Haram militants disguised in women's clothing were arrested in Baga. Authorities said they discovered the militants were armed with weapons and explosives.⁷⁷

On February 26, 18 people were killed when a suicide bomber detonated at a crowded bus station in Biu.⁷⁸ A second suicide bomber was shot by authorities before he was able to detonate his explosives. In Jos, a suicide bomber also killed 17 people. No group claimed responsibility for either bombing but Boko Haram was suspected.⁷⁹

On February 28, two female suicide bombers killed four civilians near Damaturu. According to witnesses, the two women tried to board the bus in the village of Ngamdu, 40 kilometers from Damaturu. The driver said the woman said they wanted to go to Damaturu and, upon entering the bus, they detonated an explosive vest. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed Boko Haram.⁸⁰

Somalia

On February 14, a raid carried out by armed forces of the semi-autonomous region of Puntland, Somalia, killed 16 Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen militants and wounded 26 others. The raid targeted a militant hideout in the village of Madarshoon. Two Puntland soldiers were killed and six others were wounded during the incident.⁸¹

On February 20, the Central Hotel in central Mogadishu was targeted by two car bomb explosions, followed by heavy gunfire after attackers stormed into the building. As a result of the attack, 25 people, including two members of parliament, were killed and 40 others were injured.⁸² Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen claimed responsibility for the attack.⁸³

On February 22, Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen threatened to launch major attacks on European shopping

⁷⁶ BBC, "Nigeria suicide bombers target Potiskum and Kano buses", February 24, 2015

⁷⁷ All Africa, "Nigeria: Terrorists Disguise As Women in Baga - DHQ", February 24, 2015

⁷⁸ CNN, "Suicide blast, twin explosions kill 35 in Nigeria", February 27, 2015

⁷⁹ BBC, "Nigeria Boko Haram: Many killed in bus station bombing" February 26, 2015

⁸⁰ AFP, "Suicide bomber hits Nigerian presidential rally", February 28, 2015

⁸¹ Horseed News, 'Somalia: Puntland forces kill 16 'militants' in raid', February 15, 2015

⁸² Al-Jazeera, "Al-Shabab stages deadly attack on Somalia luxury hotel", February 20, 2015

⁸³ BBC, "Somali capital Mogadishu hit by double explosions at hotel", February 20, 2015

centers. A video released by the group called on its followers to “hasten to heaven” by attacking some of the country’s busiest shopping areas. It also threatened venues in America and Canada as well as “Jewish-owned” centers. The video, which lasted more than an hour, featured a militant dressed in army fatigues and his face covered who threatened specifically to target Oxford Street and the two Westfield shopping centers in London, and included their coordinates, adding: “What would be the implications of such an attack, one can only imagine and all it takes is a man with firm determination, of which our Muslim ummah (community) has plenty of.”⁸⁴

Tunisia

On February 7, Tunisian police arrested 32 suspected Islamist militants across the country. Some of the suspects had reportedly already travelled to Syria and returned. According to the police, they planned to execute mass attacks against several cities in Tunisia.⁸⁵

On February 18, approximately 20 Al-Qaeda-linked Islamist militants attacked a checkpoint in Tunisia's central Kasserine region, killing four police officers and stealing their weapons. Okba Ibn Nafaa, a small brigade of fighters operating in mountains along the Algerian border, claimed responsibility for the attack. Local radio reported that a separate groups of militants had raided houses near Kef, also near the Algerian frontier, holding residents at gunpoint to steal food and supplies before fleeing into the mountains.⁸⁶

On February 24, Tunisia arrested approximately 100 suspected Islamist militants with ties to the IS. Security forces uncovered a militant cell in the city of Hammam Ghzaz that was preparing explosives to use in attacks on security buildings. The Interior Ministry said the cell had in its possession instructions for making explosives and a picture of IS leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Telegraph, “Al-Shabaab calls for attacks on Oxford Street and Westfield centres in new terror threat”, February 22, 2015

⁸⁵ Reuters, “Tunisia arrests 32 militant Islamists planning 'spectacular' attacks”, February 7, 2015

⁸⁶ Reuters, “Tunisia militants kill four police in checkpoint attack”, February 18, 2015

⁸⁷ Reuters, “Tunisia arrests about 100 militant suspects, signs of Islamic State influence”, February 2015

Middle East

Bahrain

On February 23, a homemade bomb hidden inside a Bahraini village mosque exploded after a suspect apprehended by police led authorities to it. There were no casualties but major damage was caused to the building. In a separate incident on the same day, seven people were arrested and charged with plotting to attack Bahraini security forces.⁸⁸

Egypt

On February 3, a man was killed when a bomb exploded in Alexandria hours after two devices were discovered at Cairo Airport and another detonated in central Cairo. However, there were no casualties in these explosions and it was unclear whether they were carried out by the same militant group. A bomb exploded in front of Alexandria's Mabaret Al-Asafra Hospital, killing a 27-year-old man and wounding three others. Earlier, Cairo airport authorities tightened security after finding two unexploded bombs near the arrivals hall. Security officials were reviewing video footage to try to determine who planted them. State news agency MENA quoted Cairo security chief Khaled Youssef as saying a device that detonated in central Cairo was a sound bomb and that there were no casualties.⁸⁹

On February 14, it was reported that Egyptian authorities had foiled two attempted suicide bombing attacks on a police station in the town of Sheikh Zuweyid. The attempted attack wounded two police officers. Police said that guards in the police station's towers fired at the cars, which exploded before reaching the building. They say the explosion shattered windows and damaged parts of the police station and some surrounding houses.⁹⁰

On February 15, Egypt bombed IS targets in Libya, hours after militants released a video showing the apparent beheadings of 21 Egyptian Christians. State TV said the dawn strikes targeted camps, training sites and weapons storage areas. A second wave of strikes was reported hours later. Libyan officials said Egypt hit targets in the militant-held city of Derna.⁹¹ (For more details see the Libya

⁸⁸ Reuters, "Bomb damages Bahrain mosque as police detain terrorist cell", February 23, 2015

⁸⁹ Reuters, "Blast kills one in Alexandria, bombs found at Cairo airport", February 3, 2015

⁹⁰ AP, "Police say they thwart 2 suicide car bomb attacks in Egypt", February 14, 2015

⁹¹ BBC, "Egypt bombs IS in Libya after beheadings video", February 16, 2015

section above.)

Iraq

On February 7, a series of bombings in and around Baghdad killed 37 people and wounded 86 others. The worst attack happened in the New Baghdad section of the city followed by a second one in central Baghdad's popular Shorja market. Police said the two devices detonated 25 meters apart from one another. Another bomb exploded at the Abu Cheer market on a Shi'ite block in southwestern Baghdad. There was no claim of responsibility for the attacks.⁹²

On February 9, a suicide bomber detonated an explosive vest in a Shi'ite part of Baghdad, killing 18 people and wounding dozens more in Kadhamiyah.⁹³ A few hours later, a bomb exploded in a commercial area in the suburb of Husseinayah, killing four civilians and wounding nine others. There was no claim of responsibility for the attacks.⁹⁴

On February 11, 31 people were killed during several clashes and attacks attributed to the IS. Suicide bombers targeted Shi'ite militiamen and civilians, killing 12 of them near Tikrit. Mortar shells were also fired against Shi'ite areas of Baghdad, killing seven people, while a bomb detonated in Baghdad, killing two civilians. Several hours later, a car bomb killed seven others. No group claimed responsibility for the attacks.⁹⁵

On February 13, approximately 25 IS militants attacked a US air base near the town of Al Baghdadi. The first group of militants detonated suicide vests, while other fighters followed. According to Pentagon spokesman, Rear Admiral Kirby, no US soldiers were wounded and most of the IS attackers were killed by the US military.⁹⁶

On February 21, the US Air Force conducted six air strikes against positions held by the IS in Kobane, Syria and in the region of Mosul, Iraq. The strikes destroyed buildings, military positions, boats and vehicles, according to the US military.⁹⁷

⁹² Times of Israel, "Baghdad bombings kill 37, wound 86, Iraqi officials say", February 7, 2015.

⁹³ BBC, "Baghdad suicide bomb attack kills at least 15", February 9, 2015

⁹⁴ AP, "Suicide attack, bombing kill at least 22 in Iraq's capital", February 9, 2015

⁹⁵ AP, "Iraq: Clashes, attacks kill at least 31 people", February 11, 2015

⁹⁶ The Independent, "Isis suicide bombers attack Iraqi air base with over 300 US Marines and detonate vests", February 14, 2015

⁹⁷ The Guardian, "Isis targets in Iraq and Syria hit by six US-led air strikes since Friday", February 21, 2015

On February 24, several bombs were detonated in Baghdad, targeting civilian infrastructure. The first bomb was detonated in a commercial area and a second bomb exploded a few minutes later in the same zone when people gathered near the first explosion. The attack killed 24 people, including three policemen. A few hours earlier, five bombings occurred in the northern and southern neighborhoods of Baghdad, killing 12 other civilians. No group claimed responsibility but authorities blamed the IS.⁹⁸

On February 25, 100 Sunni Muslim tribesmen were abducted by IS militants near the city of Tikrit. Iraqi soldiers and pro-government Shi'ite militias amassed for days in preparation for an attack on IS strongholds along the Tigris River to the north and south of Tikrit. Witnesses said the militants had blocked three main entrances to the south, west and north of Tikrit with 4-meter concrete blast walls. They also covered a bridge across the Tigris with about 1 meter of sand in the hope of absorbing the impact of bombs.⁹⁹

On February 27 and 28, US-led Coalition forces conducted 11 air strikes in Iraq and nine in Syria against the IS. The strikes in Syria took place near the city of Kobane, in order to help the Kurdish defenders of the city. The strikes in Iraq were aimed against IS positions near the cities of Al-Asad and Mosul, reportedly in an effort to prepare a future Iraqi push towards the city.¹⁰⁰ Also on February 28, 37 people were killed and 50 others were injured when car bombs exploded at a crowded market in the town of Balad Ruz. Two suicide car bombers later attacked a checkpoint manned by Shia militia near the city of Samarra, killing 16 Shia fighters and wounding 31 others. No group claimed responsibility for the attacks.¹⁰¹

Israel and the West Bank

On February 11, indictments were filed against Mahmed Bechar, Ahmed Zaidi and Awad Zaidi in the Beer-Sheva District Court, for taking part in security related crimes. Israeli authorities claimed that the men had attempted to smuggle weapons into the Gaza Strip from the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt in January 2015, and that the IDF had intercepted the attack. However, the case was only made public once the indictments were filed. The suspects were arrested and confessed to IDF and Israel's

⁹⁸ Reuters, "Wave of bombings in Baghdad kills 37 people", February 24 2015

⁹⁹ LWJ, "Islamic State seize 100 Iraqi tribesmen before battle for Tikrit", February 25, 2015

¹⁰⁰ The Guardian, "US-led task force launches 20 air strikes in continued attacks on Isis", February 28, 2015

¹⁰¹ Guardian, "Iraq bombs kill dozens in attacks north of Baghdad", February 28, 2015

Security Agency (Shin bet) interrogators that the shipment was intended for Hamas. The three revealed detailed information on previous weapon smuggling operations during their questioning. They further exposed Hamas' plans to utilize fishermen as smugglers for future illicit operations from the Sinai Peninsula. Authorities said the three boatmen were trying to smuggle liquid fiberglass, which is used to manufacture rockets and mortars.¹⁰²

On February 22, Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat¹⁰³ stopped a militant armed with a knife from carrying out a large-scale attack. Barkat said in a statement to the media that he had been on his way to the office for a meeting when he noticed a commotion in central Jerusalem. He exited his car with his bodyguard, approaching the scene and noticed a terrorist with a knife in his hand who had stabbed a civilian. Barkat tackled the militant to the ground and the suspect was arrested. No group claimed responsibility.¹⁰⁴

Jordan

On February 3, the IS released a video of Jordanian hostage Muath al-Kasabeh as he was burned to death while locked in a cage.¹⁰⁵ Jordan confirmed his death. Al-Kasabeh was captured when his plane came down near Raqqa, Syria, during a mission against the IS in December.¹⁰⁶ The 22-minute film included a sequence showing the Jordanian pilot walking at gunpoint among rubble apparently caused by coalition air strikes that targeted jihadists. In response, on February 4, Jordan executed two of its Al-Qaeda in Iraq prisoners, including Sajida al-Rishawi, an AQI failed suicide bomber that the IS wanted released in the proposed prisoner swap to free Al-Kasabeh. Jordan also launched airstrikes on IS positions in Iraq, killing 55 IS militants in Mosul, including a senior IS commander known as the "Prince of Nineveh". Jordanian F-16s continued an elevated airstrike campaign against

¹⁰² <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Pages/Hamas-terror-shipment-intercepted-11-Feb-2015.aspx>

¹⁰³ Nir Barkat, 55, served as an officer in the IDF paratroopers' brigade. A former high-tech entrepreneur, he was elected as Israel's mayor of Jerusalem in 2008.

¹⁰⁴ Times of Israel, "PM praises Jerusalem mayor for neutralizing stabber", February 22, 2015
Jpost, "WATCH: Jerusalem mayor tackles Arab terrorist seconds after suspect stabs Jewish man", February 22, 2015

¹⁰⁵ BBC, "Jordan pilot hostage Moaz al-Kasabeh burned alive", February 3, 2015

¹⁰⁶ See ICT Database report for December 2014 <http://www.ict.org.il/Article/1378/Summary-of-Terrorist-Incidents-and-CT-Operations-December-2014>

the IS, targeting IS strongholds in Ar-Raqqah, Syria.¹⁰⁷

Syria

On February 1, a bomb exploded on a bus travelling in Damascus, killing nine people. Police said the bomb originated from a package left inside the bus on the floor. Officers said they diffused another 5-kg. explosive found later in the bus's rear section. The Al-Nusra Front claimed responsibility for the attack.¹⁰⁸

On February 4, a rocket attack wounded eight people in Damascus. According to local witnesses, 30 rockets targeted the Old City and four other areas of Damascus. The attack was claimed on Twitter by a group known as the Islam Army, located in the nearby region of Goutha. This group had previously fired 38 rockets against Damascus in January 2015, killing seven people.¹⁰⁹

On February 10, the family of American hostage, Kayla Mueller, confirmed the death of their daughter who had been taken hostage by IS militants. Four days earlier, on February 6, the IS declared that a Jordanian air strike had killed Mueller while she was alone in a building located in the town of Raqqah, Syria. This claim was denied by the US and Pentagon Spokesman, Rear Admiral John Kirby, who declared that the IS had killed the hostage. Kayla Mueller was a humanitarian worker in Syria and had been taken hostage in 2013 by IS militants. She was the fourth American hostage killed by IS.¹¹⁰

On February 24, IS militants allegedly kidnapped approximately 150 Assyrian Christians near the town of Tal Tamer in the Al Hasakah countryside in Syria.¹¹¹ The IS reportedly captured the women, children and elderly of several villages, while 700 families managed to escape. It was also confirmed that at least two residents of the village of Ghisb were executed by the IS for their participation to the Kurdish war effort against the organization.¹¹² A Syrian Christian group later declared that more than 150 persons were missing.¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ IBT, "After Jordanian Pilot Burned Alive, Jordan Launches Airstrikes Against ISIS, Kills 55 In Iraq Including Top Commander 'Prince Of Nineveh'", February 4, 2015

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Reuters, "Rocket attack on Damascus wounds eight -state media", February 4, 2015

¹¹⁰ CBS, "American ISIS hostage is dead, family confirms", February 10, 2015

¹¹¹ <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/02/islamic-state-kidnaps-around-90-assyrian-christians-in-syria.php>

¹¹² <http://www.dw.de/why-islamic-state-is-terrorizing-christians/a-18286141>

¹¹³ Reuters, "Islamic State in Syria abducts at least 150 Christians", February 24, 2015

Turkey

On February 4, Turkish authorities arrested Musa Goktas in the town of Gaziantep while he was returning from Syria, suspected of having ties to the IS.¹¹⁴ According to the Turkish newspaper Radikal, Goktas had travelled to Syria with his twin sons and then returned to Turkey in order to bring his wife to Syria and sell his house. Authorities said an arrest warrant had been issued for him after his wife told the police that her husband allegedly kidnapped their sons and forced them to join the IS.¹¹⁵

Yemen

On February 12, Ansar Al Sharia militants stormed a military base located in the southern Yemen region of Shabwa.¹¹⁶ The attack began at 04:00 when the gates were breached as a result of suicide bombings. Three soldiers and four militants were killed. The militants seized the camp of the 19th Infantry Brigade in Baihan. Ansar al-Sharia claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement on Twitter, accusing troops at the camp of having links to the Shi'ite Houthi militia controlling the capital.¹¹⁷

On February 28, a US drone strike in Yemen killed four suspected AQAP militants and injured several others in the southern province of Shabwa. The strike targeted militants traveling in two vehicles in the Bihan region of Shabwa Province.¹¹⁸

North America

Canada

On February 3, three men from Ottawa were charged by the RCMP Integrated National Security Enforcement Team with taking part in activities related to financial and ideological support of the

¹¹⁴ Al Arabiya, "Turkey arrests 'first Turkish ISIS suspect'", February 4, 2015

¹¹⁵ AFP, "Turkey arrests 'first Turkish ISIS suspect'", February 4, 2015

¹¹⁶ Daily Times, "Al Qaeda-linked group says seized army base in south Yemen", February 13, 2015

¹¹⁷ Reuters, 'Al Qaeda-linked group says seized army base in south Yemen', February 13 2015

The Long War Journal, 'AQAP seizes Yemeni military base in Shabwa', February 12 2015

¹¹⁸ Reuters, "U.S. drone attack in Yemen kills four suspected al Qaeda militants: security sources", February 28, 2015

IS.¹¹⁹ The charges against Awso Peshdary, John (Yahya) Maguire and Khadar Khalib included: conspiracy to facilitate a terrorist act; knowingly participating in the activities of a terrorist group and counselling a person to knowingly participate in a terrorist activity. Peshdary, 25, was taken into custody in Ottawa. Maguire, 24, and Khalib, 23, were charged in absentia.¹²⁰ The police investigation, dubbed "Project Servant", began in December 2012, the month Maguire left Canada to participate in the civil war in Syria, and culminated on January 21, 2015.

United States

On February 5, Abdinassir Mohamud Ibrahim, 43, a citizen of Somalia, was sentenced to 15 years in federal prison for conspiring to provide material support to Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, and for making a false statement in an immigration matter. He had pleaded guilty to both counts on July 31, 2014. Ibrahim admitted that between May 18, 2010 and January 31, 2014, he knowingly conspired to provide material support and resources, specifically sending emails enlisting support for Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen and admitted to making a cash payment to a known member of Al-Shabab for the benefit of the organization. Ibrahim knew at the time that Al-Shabab was designated by the US as a foreign terrorist organization. Ibrahim also pleaded guilty to making a false statement in an immigration matter.¹²¹

On February 6, Adel Abdul Bary, 54, an Egyptian man, was sentenced in New York to 25 years in US prison for his role in the 1998 bombings of the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania that killed 224 people. In addition to jail time, Bary was ordered to pay nearly \$34 million, including \$7.5 million in restitution to victim's families.¹²² Bary had pleaded guilty in September 2014 to three counts, including conspiring to murder US citizens abroad, as part of a deal that limited his maximum sentence to 25 years. Bary was extradited from the UK to the US in 2012 following a protracted legal battle.¹²³

On February 25, Abdurasul Hasanovich Juraboev, Akhror Saidakhmetov and Abror Habibov were

¹¹⁹ CBC, "Terrorism-related charges laid against Ottawa men with alleged ISIS ties", February 3, 2015

¹²⁰ Globe and Mail, "RCMP charge three Ottawa men in terrorism investigation", February 3, 2015

¹²¹ Washington Times, "Egyptian gets 25 years in prison for U.S. Embassy bombings", February 2015

¹²² For details about the African bombings see:

<http://edition.cnn.com/2013/10/06/world/africa/africa-embassy-bombings-fast-facts/>

¹²³ Reuters, "Egyptian man gets 25 years in U.S. prison in embassy bombing case", February 6, 2015

arrested and charged with attempt and conspiracy to provide material support to the IS. Authorities alleged that Juraboev first came to the attention of law enforcement in August 2014 after he made a posting on an Uzbek-language Web site that spread IS ideology. The investigation subsequently revealed that Juraboev and Saidakhmetov had devised a plan to travel to Turkey and then to Syria for the purpose of waging jihad on behalf of the IS. Saidakhmetov, a resident of Brooklyn and a citizen of Kazakhstan, was arrested at John F. Kennedy International Airport, where he was attempting to board a flight to Istanbul, Turkey. Juraboev had previously purchased a plane ticket to travel from New York to Istanbul and was scheduled to leave the in March 2015. Habibov helped fund Saidakhmetov's efforts to join the IS.¹²⁴ Federal prosecutors in Brooklyn said the suspects were plotting to hijack a commercial plane, set off a bomb in New York City, kill FBI agents and police officers, and that one of the men allegedly offered to assassinate President Obama. Habibov, who is from Uzbekistan, was arrested in Jacksonville, Florida, while Juraboev, who is also from Uzbekistan, was apprehended in Brooklyn.¹²⁵

South America

There were no incidents this month in South America.

Asia

Afghanistan

On February 9, Mullah Abdul Rauf, a former Taliban commander who recently pledged his allegiance to the IS, was killed in a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) drone air strike in northern Helmand Province.¹²⁶ Authorities said a car carrying up to six people, including his brother-in-law, was destroyed while crossing the desert. The car was loaded with ammunition and exploded.¹²⁷

On February 17, Taliban suicide bombers wearing police uniforms attacked a police station in Pul-i-

¹²⁴ FBI, "Three Brooklyn Residents Charged with Attempt and Conspiracy to Provide Material Support to ISIL ", February 25, 2015

¹²⁵ Mailonline, "Pictured: Three Brooklyn men arrested for 'trying to join ISIS, plotting terror attack on New York and offering to assassinate Obama'", February 25,2015

¹²⁶ Washington Times, "Mullah Abdul Rauf, former Gitmo detainee, killed by drone in Afghanistan", February 9, 2015

¹²⁷ BBC, "Afghanistan drone strike 'kills IS Commander Abdul Rauf'", February 9, 2015.

Alam, killing 20 people, including two civilians, and wounding eight others. Authorities said the attack began when a suicide bomber detonated at the gate of the police headquarters and then a second suicide bomber detonated at a security checkpoint inside the compound. Other suicide bombers targeted police officers who were gathered for lunch in a dining hall on the complex. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack.¹²⁸ Also on February 17, a magnetic bomb attached to a vehicle, exploded in Kabul, wounding one person. No group claimed responsibility but authorities blamed the Taliban.¹²⁹

On February 24, Afghan authorities together with their Chinese counterparts, arrested 15 Muslim Uighur militants - three in Kabul, and then 12 in the eastern province of Kunar, bordering Pakistan.¹³⁰ Also on February 24, gunmen abducted approximately 30 Hazara travelers in Zabul Province, on the road to Kabul. Eyewitnesses reported that gunmen wearing masks and black clothes forced a convoy of two buses to stop in Zabul, on the road between Kandahar and Kabul. The gunmen took money and phones from the Hazara men before driving them away. The gunmen left behind women and children. The passengers had travelled from Iran, via the western Afghan city of Herat.¹³¹ No group claimed responsibility but Afghan authorities suspected the IS. The Afghan government unsuccessfully attempted to secure the release of the hostages through negotiations. Following this, the Afghan National Army (ANA) launched a rescue operation that reportedly killed dozens of the suspected kidnappers, including foreign fighters from Kyrgyzstan.¹³²

On February 25, a suicide car bomber targeted a NATO convoy in Kabul, killing one person and injuring one other. Authorities said the suicide bomber drove a Toyota Corolla into the NATO convoy. The NATO-led coalition confirmed that one person died in an attack on a coalition convoy but did not provide further details. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack in a Twitter post.¹³³

China

On February 20, nine Uighur militants who attacked police in the town of Yaqaeriq in Bay County

¹²⁸ Al-Jazeera, "Taliban bombers attack Afghan police station, killing 20", February 17, 2015

¹²⁹ Reuters, "Bomb hits vehicle in Afghan capital, wounds one - police", February 17, 2015

¹³⁰ The diplomat, "Afghanistan Transfers Captured Uyghur Militants to China", February 24, 2015

¹³¹ BBC, "Afghanistan kidnap: Gunmen seize 30 Hazara men in Zabul", February 24, 2015

¹³² Long war journal, "Mapping the emergence of the Islamic State in Afghanistan", March 5, 2015

¹³³ NBC News, "Afghanistan Attack: Suicide Bomber Attacks NATO Convoy in Kabul", February 26, 2015

were shot to death by police. During the incident, four policemen were wounded and four civilians were killed. Police were carrying out house-to-house searches looking for militants when they came under attack by the Uighur cell. Police said that two of the assailants, Azadem Nur and Abliz Abla, escaped with a firearm.¹³⁴

Indonesia

On February 13, Indonesian police arrested four terrorist suspects believed to have been responsible for the Kunming train attack that occurred in China in March 2014.¹³⁵ Three other suspects evaded arrest and police believe they fled into the jungle while two others escaped to Malaysia. The suspects, believed to be from the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, fled to Indonesia after plotting the attack.¹³⁶

Malaysia

On February 8, Malaysian authorities said they had deported an alleged commander of an unnamed Islamic terrorist group that operated in Syria and Iraq between 2012 and 2014. The unnamed suspect, 45, was sent back to his home country where he is wanted for his involvement in terrorist activities. He had arrived in Kuala Lumpur in mid-January and was arrested by counter-terrorism police officers on January 31. Police did not elaborate on what the suspect might have been doing in Malaysia but a source said that a large amount of money had been seized from the suspect when police raided his hotel room in the tourist district of Bukit Bintang.¹³⁷

Pakistan

On February 4, at least 25 militants were killed in air strikes in the Sanzila area of South Waziristan and Tirah in Khyber as part of a major offensive against the TTP and other insurgent groups. Seven

¹³⁴ <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/aksu-02202015214715.html>

¹³⁵ See ICT March 2014 report. <http://www.ict.org.il/Article/1153/Summary-of-Terrorist-Incidents-and-CT-Operations-March-2014>

¹³⁶ The Jakarta Post, "Kunming terrorist attack suspects nabbed in Indonesia", February 13, 2015

¹³⁷ China Daily, "Kunming terrorist attack suspects nabbed in Indonesia", February 13, 2015

militant hideouts were destroyed. The strikes took place in the Sanzila area of South Waziristan.¹³⁸ On February 13, 20 Shi'ite worshipers were killed and 40 others were injured when TTP gunmen armed with grenades attacked a mosque in Peshawar. Authorities said three attackers carried out the attack: one was killed in a firefight with security guards, the other was killed when he detonated a suicide vest and the third militant was arrested. According to witnesses, all three militants were wearing suicide belts. The TTP claimed responsibility for the attack.¹³⁹ On February 13, at least 22 people were killed and 50 others were injured during a gun and bomb attack at an Imambargah (congregation hall) in Peshawar's Hayatabad area when suicide attackers and gunmen, dressed in police uniforms, attacked worshippers offering Friday prayers.¹⁴⁰ On February 17, eight people were killed and 19 others were injured when a suicide bomber on foot ran towards the gate of one of the main police buildings in Lahore and detonated his explosive belt after failing to enter the police complex.¹⁴¹ The Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan Jamaatul Ahrar (TTP-JA), a Taliban splinter group, claimed responsibility for the attack, which a spokesman said was a response to recent executions of some of their members by the Islamabad government.¹⁴²

Philippines

On February 5, Philippine authorities confirmed that that DNA evidence proved that Malaysian bomb maker, Zulkifli bin Hir (alias Marwan), was killed on January 24, 2015 by elite Special Action Force (SAF) police during a 12-hour firefight in the southern province of Maguindanao.¹⁴³ On February 16, approximately 50 New People's Army (NPA) militants attacked a police station in Davao, Philippines. According to local reports, the militants were armed, and used trucks and vans to attack the station that was occupied by soldiers of an infantry brigade. A landmine exploded, killing three soldiers and injuring another. Another soldier was killed when he crossed through an NPA

¹³⁸ AFP, "At least 25 militants killed in air strikes near Afghan border", February 4, 2015

¹³⁹ BBC News, "Pakistani Taliban attack Shia mosque in Peshawar", February 13, 2015

¹⁴⁰ Dawn, "21 killed as Taliban storm Peshawar imambargah", February 14, 2015

¹⁴¹ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/839666/blast-heard-in-lahore-near-police-lines-in-qila-gujar-singh-area/>

¹⁴² Guardian, "Pakistan Taliban suicide bombing in Lahore leaves several dead", February 17, 2015

¹⁴³ For further details of the incident see January 2015 ICT database report and see: CNN, "Man killed in Philippines raid was wanted terror suspect Marwan, DNA indicates", February 5, 2015

checkpoint.¹⁴⁴

On February 25, the Philippine military launched an armed assault against Abu Sayyaf militants in the southern province of Sulu. The fighting took place near Patikul town on Jolo, a stronghold of the Abu Sayyaf. According to a military spokesman, the operation was supported by helicopters and artillery fire. The assault led to the retreat of the militants. Authorities said five militants and two soldiers were killed, and nine others were wounded.¹⁴⁵

Thailand

On February 2, two steel pipe bombs exploded outside a luxury shopping mall in Bangkok, injuring one person. Authorities said the bombs were hidden behind electric controls on the elevated walkway and were set on timers to explode at about 20:00 local time, the busiest time for shopping and dining out in the area. Authorities said no group had claimed responsibility for the incident and the motives behind the attack were unclear.¹⁴⁶ Following this, on February 5, a 25 kg gas-cylinder bomb exploded in Chanae District, Narathiwat Province, as a police convoy was passing by. All the officers escaped unhurt. No group claimed responsibility for the incident.¹⁴⁷

On February 23, a car bomb wounded 13 people, including two soldiers, and seriously damaged buildings in Narathiwat Province. Two other bombs were defused by police. Suspected militants also threw a pipe bomb at a restaurant 50 meters from the first explosion, but the improvised device did not explode and was safely defused. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.¹⁴⁸

Oceania

Australia

On February 10, Omar Al-Kutobi, 24, and Mohammad Kiad, 25, were arrested and charged with planning to carry out an imminent attack in Fairfield, New South Wales.¹⁴⁹ Police received an

¹⁴⁴ The Philippines Star, 'NPA raids Davao police station; 5 dead', February 17, 2015

¹⁴⁵ MSN, "Seven dead as Philippine soldiers battle Islamic militants", February 25, 2015

¹⁴⁶ BBC, "Police probe blasts at Bangkok shopping centre", February 2, 2015

¹⁴⁷ The Bangkok Times, "Police survive Narathiwat bomb attack", February 5, 2015

¹⁴⁸ AP, "Car bomb hits insurgency-plagued southern Thailand; 13 hurt", February 20, 2015

¹⁴⁹ BBC, "Two terror suspects arrested in Sydney", February 11, 2015

intelligence tip that the men were plotting an attack and they were placed under urgent surveillance. At 15:00 local time, the men bought a hunting knife from a military supplies shop in Fairfield. It was then the counter-terrorism team decided to intervene and raid the property.¹⁵⁰ The men's residence, a vehicle and places of work were searched. Authorities discovered a machete, a hunting knife, a homemade IS flag and a video in which the men talked about carrying out an attack.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ The Jerusalem Post, "Australian police thwart said imminent ISIS-linked terror attack", February 11, 2015

¹⁵¹ ABC, "Terrorism raid: Suspect in alleged Islamic State-linked plot filmed kneeling before IS flag, police say", February 11, 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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The ICT Incidents and Activists Database is a comprehensive survey of Open Sources of Intelligence (OSINT). The ICT's Database is one of the most all-encompassing non-governmental resources on terrorist incidents in the world. Based on comprehensive and integrated information compiled since 1975, the database records over 35,000 incidents, including successful terrorist attacks, foiled attacks, and counter-terror operations, along with background and follow-up information. All for retrieving data in an intuitive manner.

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