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Letter dated 6 February 2025 from the President of the Security Council acting in the absence of a Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the thirty-fifth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team pursuant to resolutions 1526 (2004) and 2253 (2015), which was submitted to the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, in accordance with paragraph (a) of annex I to resolution 2734 (2024).

I should be grateful if the attached report could be brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) **Fu** Cong
President of the Security Council acting in the absence of a Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities

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Letter dated 30 December 2024 from the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities

I have the honour to refer to paragraph (a) of annex I to resolution 2734 (2024), by which the Security Council requested the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team to submit, in writing, comprehensive, independent reports to the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, every six months.

I therefore transmit to you the Monitoring Team's thirty-fifth comprehensive report, pursuant to annex I to resolution 2734 (2024). In formulating the report, the Monitoring Team considered information it received up to 13 December 2024. I also note that the document of reference is the English original.

(*Signed*) Colin **Smith**
Coordinator
Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team

Thirty-fifth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities

Summary

Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, QDe.115, hereinafter "ISIL (Da'esh)"), Al-Qaida (QDe.004) and affiliates remained resilient and adaptable to external counter-terrorism pressure. The threat they posed remained undiminished.

The identity of the ISIL (Da'esh) leader, Abu Hafs al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, was unclear. There was growing confidence among some Member States that al-Qurashi was Abdul Qadir Mumin, the head of ISIL (Da'esh) in Somalia, but doubts continued to be expressed by other Member States.

In the Syrian Arab Republic, a coalition of armed groups seized Damascus on 8 December. Listed under the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions regime, Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS, QDe.137) played a leading role, though other listed and non-listed entities were involved. There were concerns that stockpiles of advanced weapons were unsecured and at risk of falling into the hands of terrorists. Al-Qaida and ISIL (Da'esh) in the Syrian Arab Republic were likely to try to capitalize on the current uncertainty.

The Syrian Badia continued to serve as a centre for ISIL (Da'esh) external operations planning and remained a critical region for its activities.

ISIL-Khorasan (ISIL-K, QDe.161) was assessed to pose the greatest extraregional terrorist threat. It was actively seeking to recruit from among Central Asian States.

The trend continued towards a greater focus by Al-Qaida and ISIL (Da'esh) on various regions in Africa. The number of attacks in West Africa remained high, with Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM, QDe.159) and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS, QDe.163) expanding their areas of operation.

Sayf al-Adl (QDi.001), widely believed to be the de facto global leader of Al-Qaida, published a series of articles trying to exploit the Gaza and Israel conflict. Al-Qaida maintained its ambition for external operations.

Contents

		Page
I.	Overview and evolution of the threat	5
II.	Regional developments	6
	A. Africa	6
	B. Iraq and the Levant	11
	C. Arabian Peninsula	14
	D. Europe	15
	E. Asia	16
III.	Impact assessment	19
	A. Resolutions 2199 (2015) and 2462 (2019) on the financing of terrorism	19
	B. Resolution 2347 (2017) on cultural heritage	20
	C. Resolution 2396 (2017) on foreign terrorist fighters, returnees and relocators	20
IV.	Implementation of sanctions measures	21
	A. Travel ban	21
	B. Assets freeze	22
	C. Arms embargo	22
V.	Recommendations	23
VI.	Monitoring Team activities and feedback	24
Annex		
	Listed individuals and entities linked to Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (QDe.137), as at 31 December 2024	25

I. Overview and evolution of the threat

1. ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and affiliates remained resilient and adaptable to external counter-terrorism pressure. Aided by less centralized organizational structures, the threat they posed remained undiminished. Propaganda output remained extensive, in multiple languages, often trying to exploit events in the Middle East to appeal to new recruits and attract additional resources.

2. There remained a range of views about the identity of Abu Hafs al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, the overall ISIL (Da'esh) leader (see S/2024/556, para. 49). There was growing confidence among some Member States that al-Qurashi was Abdul Qadir Mumin (Somali, not listed), the head of ISIL (Da'esh) in Somalia. If this is borne out, it may signify a deliberate pivot towards a more decentralized operational structure, further from the core conflict zone.

3. Abdallah Makki Mosleh al-Rafi'i (alias Abu Khadija, Iraqi, not listed) remained in charge of the Al-Ard al-Mubaraka and Bilad al-Rafidayn offices, covering Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic, Türkiye and the wider Levant. In Africa, only two offices were active: Al-Furqan and Al-Karrar, the latter remaining a key ISIL (Da'esh) financial hub. The Al-Siddiq office assumed oversight of the Caucasus, in addition to its previous responsibilities in Asia. Some Member States noted a transfer of functions from the ISIL (Da'esh) General Directorate of Provinces to its Delegated Committee.

4. Al-Qaida still had not formally acknowledged the death of its previous leader, Aiman al-Zawahiri (QDi.006), nor announced a successor. Saif al-Adl was widely believed to be the de facto global leader, though his reported presence in the Islamic Republic of Iran[1] limited his influence. He published a series of articles under different aliases, trying to exploit the Gaza and Israel conflict and exhorting his followers to conduct attacks around the world. Although his messaging did not appear to resonate, Al-Qaida's ambition for external operations remained high and may be increasing.

5. In the Syrian Arab Republic, a coalition of armed groups seized Damascus and overthrew the Government of the President, Bashar Al-Assad, on 8 December. HTS, listed under the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions regime, played a leading role, though other listed and non-listed entities were involved. The situation in Damascus remained stable. There were concerns that stockpiles of advanced weapons may now be unsecured and at risk of falling into the hands of terrorists. Al-Qaida and ISIL (Da'esh) in the Syrian Arab Republic were likely to try to capitalize on the current uncertainty. The Syrian Badia continued to serve as a centre for ISIL (Da'esh) external operations planning and remained a critical region for its activities.

6. In Iraq, the high tempo of the Government's counter-terrorism operations led to the death of around half of the ISIL (Da'esh) top-level leadership there. Notably, in August, the deputy *wali* of ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraq and 13 others were killed. It remained to be seen if ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraq could replenish its fighters and resources in the face of such pressure.

7. Despite efforts by the de facto authorities in Afghanistan and by regional States, ISIL-K was assessed to pose the greatest extraregional terrorist threat. In addition to attacks targeting the de facto authorities and religious and ethnic minorities in Afghanistan, its supporters conducted attacks as far away as Europe. It was actively seeking to recruit from among Central Asian States.

8. The trend continued towards a greater focus by Al-Qaida and ISIL (Da'esh) on various regions in Africa. Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujaahidin (Al-Shabaab, SOe.001) continued to pose the greater regional threat. Both JNIM and ISGS carried out a high

[1] Another Member State refutes the presence of any Al-Qaida personnel in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

tempo of attacks. They both continued steadily to expand the areas under their control. Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP, QDe.162) and Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (Boko Haram, QDe.138) remained active within the Lake Chad basin.

9. Member States continued to note the widespread accessibility of advanced technology, such as three-dimensional printing of weapon components, and experimentation with artificial intelligence. The use of artificial intelligence by terrorist groups might pose a particular risk in the recruitment and radicalization of young people, including through more targeted and tailored propaganda. Several Member States also noted that the average age of those being radicalized appeared to be getting lower.

II. Regional developments

A. Africa

West Africa

10. The situation in the Sahel continued trends observed previously. JNIM and ISGS remained extremely active to varying degrees, having strengthened and even expanded their areas of operation in numerous regions.

11. Notably, there was a southward advance towards the borders of the Gulf of Guinea countries and the Niger. An increasing interconnection was observed between these groups and their respective central organizations, as well as, in the case of JNIM, connections with other Al-Qaida affiliates such as Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP, QDe.129). These linkages bolstered their propaganda capabilities, which were a focus of considerable effort. As the primary driver of violence in the Sahel, JNIM exerted growing pressure on security forces, local militias and foreign auxiliaries.

12. The expansion of JNIM enabled it to extend its recruitment base beyond its traditional Fulani and Tuareg strongholds, including other ethnic groups such as the Bambara, thereby enhancing its military capacity and integrating new communities into its fold. This integration was central to its political strategy of positioning itself as a critical local actor. However, it could weaken the group's internal cohesion and raise governance challenges.

13. To this end, JNIM directed its propaganda towards defending marginalized populations and victims of abuses, frequently releasing videos highlighting security force and auxiliary abuses to legitimize its narrative. Simultaneously, it continued violent attacks along key roads to isolate strategic localities and increased pressure on capitals.

14. In northern Mali, despite security operations in urban centres, JNIM strengthened its position, in particular in rural areas not controlled by the Malian Armed Forces, often engaging in quasi-State activities. While it shared objectives with other rebel groups, opposition to authorities and resistance against ISGS, no formal agreements have been established.

15. In eastern Mali, JNIM continued to block ISGS advances. Despite an ongoing but informal truce between the two groups, JNIM actively sought to limit ISGS territorial expansion. In the west, JNIM advanced in the Kayes Region and along the south-western border with Guinea.

16. In central Mali, Wilaya Macina (not listed, formerly Katiba Macina) remained the primary JNIM fighting force and its instrument of violence. It employed a range

of tactics, including harassment attacks, the use of improvised explosive devices and large-scale assaults against security forces. The group exerted significant pressure on Dogon communities to consolidate its control over the region. Despite security efforts, Wilaya Macina maintained the capability to strike Bamako, deploy operatives to western Mali and intensify operations in central and eastern regions, extending into Burkina Faso.

17. In Burkina Faso, the situation further deteriorated. Some JNIM movements took place within 50 km of the capital. Security operations, in particular aerial operations, failed to curb them. JNIM exerted intense pressure in western regions near Mali, along southern borders with Côte d'Ivoire and, specifically, in eastern areas where the affiliated groups Ansarul Islam (not listed) and Katiba Hanifa (not listed) led numerous attacks against local militias, such as the Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland. These militias' alleged abuses against civilians further fuelled JNIM propaganda.

18. In addition, JNIM exploited its position in eastern Burkina Faso to counter ISGS expansion into the Niger, advancing into Nigerien territory and threatening the capital, Niamey. Southward, JNIM activities extended towards Benin, Ghana and Togo. While Ghana had not been subject to terrorist attacks, Benin and Togo experienced increased attacks along their northern borders. Member States highlighted concentrations of JNIM fighters in southern Burkina Faso serving as launching points for operations in the Gulf of Guinea countries where JNIM sleeper cells existed.

19. In Benin, JNIM increased pressure in the north to push towards Nigeria to energize Ansarul Muslimina fi Biladis Sudan (Ansaru, QDe.142). This collaboration could facilitate JNIM expansion into Nigeria, where it may try to exploit communal conflicts as it does in the Gulf of Guinea countries.

20. Notwithstanding its weakened state, ISGS remained resilient, leveraging Al-Furqan's propaganda to sustain its operations. Its activities slowed in Mali and Burkina Faso, but it remained focused on the Niger and Nigeria. Pressured in the tri-border area between Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger by both JNIM and counter-terrorism operations, ISGS aimed to expand further eastward. Renewed attacks north-east of Niamey signalled its intent to exploit zones free from JNIM competition. It also strengthened its logistical axis along the Ménaka-Tahoua corridor to the Nigerian border. If its expansion into Nigerian territory continues, a closer alliance with ISWAP could enhance its capabilities.

21. In north-west Nigeria, members of a group suspected to be affiliated with ISGS, locally known as the Lukarawa, re-emerged in the northern part of Kebbi and north-west Sokoto States in September. The Lukarawa initially arrived in Sokoto State from Mali in 2017 as an armed vigilante group targeting bandits within the State but were expelled by Nigerian security forces in 2022. They retreated to the Niger, where they set up a logistical hub near Birni-N'Konni and an operational base in Serma in the Tahoua Region.

22. The Lukarawa consist of over 200 fighters from Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger. They are well-equipped with small arms and light weapons, explosives and unmanned aerial vehicles for surveillance, as well as satellite communications equipment. They were assessed to have conducted several attacks, including the attack on soldiers guarding the Niger-Benin pipeline near the towns of Salkam and Tibiri in the Dosso Region of the Niger on 13 July and the attack in the village of Mera in Kebbi State on 9 November.

23. ISWAP remained the most active ISIL (Da'esh) affiliate. The group's operations were limited to Borno and Yobe States in Nigeria, the Diffa Region in the Niger and the Far North Region in Cameroon. Member States observed that ISWAP had been unable to expand operations outside these areas due to sustained national and regional

counter-terrorism pressure, insufficient finances and continued clashes with Boko Haram.

24. The ISWAP leadership remained unchanged, with several Member States reiterating that Abu Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn Ali al-Mainuki (not listed) was the head of the ISIL Al-Furqan regional office, while Abu Musab al-Barnawi (not listed) was the leader of ISWAP. One Member State suggested that al-Barnawi was also a member of the ISIL (Da'esh) Delegated Committee.

25. ISWAP remained pivotal to ISIL (Da'esh) objectives for the Sahel and West Africa regions. Its leadership had been instructed by ISIL (Da'esh) to identify, train and prepare fighters to join other ISIL (Da'esh) theatres. It was, however, unclear where the fighters would be deployed. ISWAP support for ISGS continued, with collaboration on ISIL (Da'esh) propaganda and the occasional exchange of personnel.

26. Clashes between ISWAP and Boko Haram appeared to have reached an impasse, with neither able to dislodge the other from their strongholds. Despite this, Boko Haram remained active. The group is suspected to have conducted a series of suicide attacks undertaken by female operatives in Gowza, Borno State, on 29 June. They also attacked a Chadian military base in Barkaram, Chad, on 27 October, killing 40 soldiers.

27. Within the different Boko Haram factions, the Aliyu Ngulde group (not listed) made efforts to establish an agreement with the Bakura Modou group (not listed) for collaboration within the Lake Chad region. The Adamu Yunusa (alias Adamu Sadiqu) faction of Boko Haram, which had previously operated near Gwagwada in Kaduna State and Munya in Niger State, was dislodged from these areas following increased security operations as well as clashes with bandits led by Dogo Gide. They were assessed to have dispersed towards Birnin Gwari in Kaduna State, Tsafe in Zamfra State and Dan Musa in Katsina State, Nigeria.

Central and Southern Africa

28. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Member States assessed that despite the successes of Operation Shujaa, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF, CDe.001) remained resilient with 800 to 1,300 adult male fighters. Since July, ADF had conducted 120 attacks, killing 300 civilians, with a gradual decrease in deaths in recent months.

29. The ADF leadership was located in the Mambasa and Irumu territories in Ituri Province, under the command of Seka Baluku (alias Musa Baluku, CDi.036) and Mzee Meya, and in Beni and Lubero in North Kivu Province, under the command of Ahmad Mahmood Hassan (alias Abwakasi, CDi.040). Abwakasi's group was responsible for recent massacres and played a significant role in furthering ISIL (Da'esh) propaganda, with most claims stemming from attacks in his area of operation.

30. Joint forces of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) and the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces (UPDF) killed over 120 ADF fighters and captured 80. In August, Amigo Kibirige, a veteran ADF commander responsible for a significant number of deaths was killed in a joint operation. On 8 July, the senior ADF commander Abdallah Litofe, alias Toyo, aide-de-camp of the ADF leader Baluku, surrendered with four escorts, all of whom lived in Baluku's camp.

31. Abubakar Swalleh, a key ADF financier, was arrested in Zambia and extradited to Uganda. On 8 July, he was charged with "terrorism financing" and "rendering support to a terrorist organization". Member States noted that he had facilitated the transfer of funds that may have been used for the triple suicide bombings in Kampala on 16 November 2021.

32. In Cabo Delgado Province, Mozambique, regional Member States estimated that Ahl al-Sunna wal Jama‘a (ASWJ, not listed) had between 200 and 300 adult male fighters. Since June, ASWJ had maintained a strong presence along the Cabo Delgado coast between Mucojo and Quiterajo and in the Catupa forest, launching small-scale attacks, albeit more sporadically, resulting in few civilian deaths.

33. Member States reported that in July and August the Rwandan Defence Force had launched heavy aerial bombardments of Macomia, leading to notable ASWJ casualties. Rwandan combat helicopters also targeted the ASWJ stronghold of Mucojo, along the coast and in the Catupa forest. Notwithstanding, ASWJ fighters continued small-scale attacks throughout their strongholds. In September, aerial bombardments targeted ASWJ bases near the Messalo River with the aim of driving fighters from their bases in the Catupa forest, Mucojo and Quiterajo.

34. Member States indicated that ASWJ was being led by Ulanga, also known as Abu Zainabo, a Tanzanian national, serving as spiritual leader, while Faridi Suleiman Haruni, also known as Faride Suleimane Arune, served as operational leader.

35. Member States reported that food insecurity was a pressing issue for ASWJ. Hunger was rife and access to food had become critical. Since July, Member States reported that ASWJ fighters had aggressively launched food raids in search of supplies, appearing malnourished. The group’s excessive looting coupled with the reality in their camps did not indicate cash flows or material support to fighters, assessed by Member States to be a sign of local funding that was mostly self-generated.

East Africa

36. Member States assessed that Abdul Qadir Mumin (not listed) remained the head of ISIL (Da’esh) in Somalia and the Al-Karrar office. Mumin operated from strongholds in Buur Dhexaad, a strategic base secured by natural caves and defensive structures safe from aerial and ground offensives. The base also served as a command centre for the group’s operations and hosted senior leadership.

37. In 2024, ISIL (Da’esh) in Somalia experienced a rapid growth in foreign terrorist fighters, which nearly doubled the size of the group. Recruitment campaigns targeted regional Member States and Yemen, attempting to integrate foreign terrorist fighters into structured hierarchies. Despite its initial success in recruitment, Member States reported that the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters had slowed due to difficulties in integrating fighters into narrow clan-based structures, cultural barriers and the severity of conditions, leading to sustained defections, which limited the group’s expansion. Member States also reported a number of arrests in originating or transit countries.

38. Since surviving an air strike on 31 May, Mumin had taken measures to limit the group’s exposure to unnecessary external attention, refocusing efforts on securing financial sustainability through enhanced extortion in its strongholds. Revenue was allocated to strengthening operational capacity, the procurement of advanced weaponry, and investments in unmanned aerial vehicles. The operational capabilities of ISIL (Da’esh) in Somalia had evolved, marked by advancements in weapons and technology. The group employed unmanned aerial vehicles for reconnaissance and limited explosive deployment, with recent tests conducted in the Tuurmasaale and Toga Jeceeleed areas. It is assessed that the programme was aimed at building suicide unmanned aerial vehicles.

39. Member States noted that the strength and status of Al-Shabaab remained unchanged. The group targeted the Federal Government of Somalia and African Union Transition Mission in Somalia forces and conducted incursions into neighbouring countries and piracy operations along the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia.

40. Al-Shabaab was observed to have a developing relationship with the Houthis that was described as transactional or opportunistic, and not ideological. One Member State reported that Al-Shabaab held at least two meetings in Somalia with Houthi representatives in July and September, in which they requested advanced weapons and training. In return, Al-Shabaab was to increase piracy activities within the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia, targeting cargo ships and disrupting vessel movement as well as collecting ransom from the captured vessels. During this period, Al-Shabaab was reported to have received some small arms and light weapons and technical expertise from the Houthis.

41. The flow of weapons from Yemen to Al-Shabaab-controlled areas in Somalia continued. Between June to September, Al-Shabaab received assorted arms, ammunition and explosives through the ports of Marka and Baraawe in Shabelle Hoose. Some of the weapons remained within Shabelle Hoose and others were dispatched to the Bay Region. The weapons were assessed to have been used in attacks against African Union Transition Mission in Somalia camps in Shabelle Hoose in September and November.

42. Estimates of Al-Shabaab annual revenues increased, with Member States reporting amounts between $100 million and $200 million. Al-Shabaab relied on its traditional sources of income, including the issuance of vehicle licence plates and registration in areas under its control. Member States noted that Al-Shabaab may have generated fewer funds from Mogadishu due to increased fiscal vigilance by the Federal Government of Somalia and the requirement for business premises within Mogadishu to install closed-circuit television cameras. This, however, did not affect its capacity to collect revenues elsewhere. Al-Shabaab was estimated to spend about 70 per cent of revenues generated on operations and approximately 30 per cent on investments.

North Africa

43. ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and their affiliates significantly weakened across North Africa, with remnants confined to isolated areas. Specific regions continued to face distinct threats, requiring ongoing counter-terrorism pressure.

44. In Tunisia, the threat remained low due to successful counter-terrorism efforts. Jund al-Khilafah (not listed, JAK, fewer than 12), and remnants of the Ibn Nafi Brigade (not listed, fewer than three dozen fighters) were confined to mountainous regions near the Algerian border with minimal operational capabilities. Tunisian security forces monitored the Libya-Tunisia border at Ra's Judayr to prevent the return of foreign terrorist fighters, who could exploit irregular migration routes to Europe. Despite recent successes, such as the arrest of the JAK leader Mahmud al Salami, the potential resurgence of sleeper cells and returning foreign terrorist fighters remained a concern.

45. In Algeria, the security situation remained stable, with minimal terrorist activity. Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM, QDe.014) continued to decline but maintained the ability to use improvised explosive devices against security forces. Porous borders with Libya, Mali and the Niger complicated the threat landscape, fostering sympathizer cells.

46. Vigilant against evolving threats, Moroccan security services confronted lone actors targeting public figures and security facilities, as well as extremists engaging in online bomb-making. In 2024, five terrorist cells were dismantled and 23 individuals arrested, successfully preventing attacks.

47. ISIL-Libya (QDe.165) was significantly weakened, with operational capabilities limited and no major attacks reported since February 2023. Consisting of 100 to 200 fighters dispersed in small cells across the Fezzan region of southern Libya, it focused

on logistical activities such as financing, arms trafficking and transporting fighters to ISIL (Da'esh) affiliates in the Sahel. ISIL-Libya was also involved in criminal activities, including smuggling weapons, drugs and fuel, and exploiting gold mining. Recruitment efforts targeted nationals from neighbouring countries, often via encrypted communication platforms. In October, Libyan services apprehended two Syrian nationals who had transferred funds to ISIL (Da'esh) in the Syrian Arab Republic to facilitate the movement of fighters from there to Mali through Libya.

48. Both ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida continued to exploit Libya as a transit corridor for fighters, arms, funds and illicit trade in resources, posing a persistent threat. Al-Qaida in Libya was active in the south-west, leveraging tribal connections to maintain logistical and financial platforms, in particular to support Sahel-based affiliates. In July, a cell led by a Libyan operative linked to JNIM, responsible for supplying satellite communication systems and wireless devices, was dismantled. Unlike ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida has integrated more effectively into local tribes, enabling greater outreach and influence.

49. Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (ABM, not listed) was significantly weakened by Egyptian counter-terrorism efforts. Its operational capabilities were confined to the Sinai Peninsula, and it sought to rebuild while avoiding direct clashes with security forces. Increased troop deployments, tribal reconciliation initiatives led by the Egyptian military and disrupted smuggling routes further strained the group, leading to defections and severe resource shortages, including trading ammunition for food.

B. Iraq and the Levant

50. The Syrian Arab Republic experienced unprecedented shifts in the threat landscape, with potentially serious regional implications. At the end of the reporting period, the situation remained fluid and uncertain. HTS,[2] which originated from Al-Qaida, emerged as the dominant group in the Syrian Arab Republic. Following an 11-day military offensive, HTS led a coalition to overthrow the President and Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and seized the capital, Damascus, on 8 December. Multiple Al-Qaida affiliates, such as AQAP, AQIM, JNIM, Al-Shabaab and Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP, QDe.132), as well as the de facto Taliban authorities, published congratulatory messages for HTS.

51. The HTS offensive was led by its leader, Ahmad Hussein al-Sharaa (listed as Abu Mohammed al-Jawlani (QDi.317)). It allowed HTS to become the shadow authority in most of the Syrian Arab Republic. The offensive comprised armed factions as well as a coalition of alliances, some merely collaborating with HTS to achieve a common end. One Member State noted that the main forces in Damascus were from the south of the country, and not formal HTS affiliates. Member States raised concerns regarding multiple arms depots acquired during the offensive and the potential transfer of advanced weapons to terrorists.

52. Member States had a range of views on the strength of HTS, though most estimated 25,000 to 30,000 fighters, bolstered by significant numbers of recruits from prisons in Aleppo and Hama. While its leadership promoted a nationalist agenda, nearly half the HTS forces were reportedly aligned with Al-Qaida ideology, in particular within factions such as Ansar al-Tawhid, Ahrar al-Sham, the Nour al-Din al-Zanki movement (not listed) and Ansar al-Islam (QDe.098); many were known to employ violent tactics against civilians and minorities. Member States noted high mobility between factions driven by mutual interests. Some Member States also

[2] Listed as Al-Nusrah Front for the People of the Levant.

characterized al-Jawlani's leadership approach as ideologically opportunistic, exposing a tendency to manipulate the narrative to maintain relevance and authority.

53. HTS also harboured other terrorist groups composed mainly of contingents of foreign terrorist fighters, such as the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM/TIP, QDe.088), Khatiba al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (KTJ, QDe.168), Khatiba Imam al-Bukhari (KIB, QDe.158) (from Central Asia), Katibat al-Ghoraba (French-speaking fighters led by Oumar Diaby (QDi.342)) and Ajnad al-Qawqaz (from North Caucasus), in addition to other nationalities. Some of these factions may challenge the nationalist focus of HTS. Member States also noted the harsh governance system used by HTS to rule areas in Idlib in the past with the use of arbitrary arrests (see S/2023/95, para. 46). In total, 40 individuals, groups or entities listed on the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions list were linked in their designation with HTS (see annex).*

54. Hurras al-Din (HAD, not listed), the other Al-Qaida affiliate in the Syrian Arab Republic, did not participate in the HTS-led offensive but maintained cooperation with Ansar al-Islam (see S/2024/92, para. 57). A few Member States noted occasional opportunistic collaboration between HTS and HAD but no systemic partnership, and HTS had in the past arrested some HAD members. HAD consists of 1,500 to 2,000 fighters, including locals and foreign terrorist fighters known for their combat experience and extreme ideology. The group faced leadership losses, including the death of Abu-Abd al-Rahman al-Makki in August, the third most important figure after the leaders Samir Hijazi and Sami al-Aridi (both not listed). HAD adhered more to a global than a local Syrian agenda and maintained external operations aspirations.

55. To achieve military advances, HTS relied on its "Al-Shaheen Brigade" to produce and deploy advanced unmanned aerial vehicles, capitalizing on government forces' inability to counter these tactics. The brigade, reportedly comprising 300 to 350 members, modified commercial unmanned aerial vehicles into weapons capable of delivering explosives to target sensitive sites, as well as advanced unmanned aerial vehicles equipped with screens and cameras for surveillance. These included repurposed-captured and custom-developed unmanned aerial vehicles. One Member State noted that some were locally manufactured in an HTS-operated facility in Idlib. This showed a significant improvement in HTS unmanned aerial vehicle capabilities. Previously, several Member States assessed that the attack on the military graduation ceremony in Homs in October 2023, which resulted in over 100 casualties, was conducted by HTS (ibid., para. 55).

56. Two Member States reported that ETIM/TIP maintained the majority of its forces in the Syrian Arab Republic and its headquarters in Afghanistan. In the reporting period, ETIM/TIP maintained its profile and strength, ranging between 800 and 3,000 combatants in the Syrian Arab Republic, with potential to increase as a result of the HTS military offensive and its control of Damascus. These gains could increase its ability to recruit, including in Central Asia. Despite its overall emir Abdul Haq (QDi.268) residing in Kabul, he remained firmly in control of the Syrian faction of ETIM/TIP. The two previously promoted ETIM/TIP deputies (see S/2024/556, para. 55) had established working relationships with the local leader, Kaiwusair (not listed). One Member State noted that Haq directed the frequent movement of fighters between Afghanistan and the Middle East, though another Member State said that there was no evidence of travel between Afghanistan and the Syrian Arab Republic.

57. In the eastern part of the Syrian Arab Republic, Member States emphasized the risks associated with a reduction in counter-terrorism pressure and the fragmentation of various HTS-led factions and allied opposition groups, and the potential clashes with other forces, in particular the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). This could enable ISIL (Da'esh) to regroup further, especially along the Iraqi border, with the

* Circulated in the language of submission only.

Syrian Arab Republic potentially becoming a renewed hub for foreign terrorist recruitment. Even when counter-terrorism pressure was sustained, ISIL (Da'esh) showed a determination to grow and the ability to surge attacks, with reportedly more than 400 operations in the Syrian Arab Republic in 2024. The ISIL (Da'esh) combined strength in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic was 1,500 to 3,000 fighters, most of them, including key leaders, in the Syrian Arab Republic.

58. The Syrian Badia served as a centre for external operations planning and remained a critical region for ISIL (Da'esh) activities, with approximately 300 fighters. Multiple coalition air strikes disrupted the group's activities, killing more than 160 fighters. One Member State reported that this included Abu Ali al-Shishani, a key operator linking Badia with networks in Europe.

59. Member States remained concerned over the fate of the thousands of ISIL (Da'esh)-affiliated individuals held in camps and prisons that may now be less well secured. After HTS launched its offensive, an ISIL (Da'esh) operative infiltrated the Hawl camp on 30 November. He replaced ISIL (Da'esh) members there with teenage boys, allowing experienced fighters to escape to the Badia. He also reactivated the Ansar al-Afifat Brigade that included women, tasked with intelligence-gathering, training young people for operations, recruiting and managing funds.

60. In the east of the Syrian Arab Republic, ISIL (Da'esh) operations against SDF continued, many targeting fuel trucks in Dayr al-Zawr Governorate to raise money by extorting oil traders. The group also conducted attacks using more sophisticated methods, including vehicles and person-borne improvised explosive devices. ISIL (Da'esh) maintained access to resources and the capacity to transfer such devices undetected and was expected to try to exploit the evolving situation to regain control over areas in the Syrian desert along the main road connecting Homs and Dayr al-Zawr.

61. Member States also highlighted the attempted exploitation by ISIL (Da'esh) of the regional conflict in Gaza and Israel for recruitment and attacks. Attempted plots were inspired by ISIL (Da'esh) propaganda, including foiled attacks in Türkiye aimed at officials, places of worship and embassies.

62. Abdallah Makki Mosleh al-Rafi'i (alias Abu Khadija al-Iraqi, not listed) remained one of the top leaders within ISIL (Da'esh). Several Member States assessed him as fulfilling multiple functions, including Head of the General Directorate of Provinces and the Delegated Committee. He was assessed to be in Anbar Governorate, Iraq.

63. Also in Iraq, counter-terrorism efforts by Iraqi forces weakened the ISIL (Da'esh) structure, though the group maintained the ability to operate and replace field commanders. During the reporting period, ISIL (Da'esh) lost 9 out of 17 of its leaders for administration and Iraqi subprovinces. ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraq remained led by Jasim Khalaf al-Mazroui (alias Abu Abdulqader, not listed).

64. On 29 August, a joint Iraqi-coalition operation in Rutbah, western Anbar, significantly affected the group. It targeted four ISIL (Da'esh) safe houses, logistical and explosive manufacturing bases, and killed 14 leaders, including the deputy *wali* of Iraq, Ahmed Hamid Hussein al-I'thawi. He had a critical role in facilitating Abu Khadija's communication with Abdul Qadir Mumin in Somalia. This role was subsequently assumed by Abdul Ghani (not listed), responsible for managing ISIL (Da'esh) funds and fighters in Iraq.

65. Following this operation, ISIL (Da'esh) granted field leaders in Iraq more autonomy for limited attacks and restricted communication with senior leaders to urgent issues via vetted messengers. It relocated key cells and leaders and intensified security protocols by restricting communication and avoiding the use of electronic devices near critical areas.

66. ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraq continued to pose threats through sleeper cells capable of hit-and-run operations (mostly in rural areas around Kirkuk and Anbar), forcing locals to collaborate, maintaining media platforms and fundraising via organized crime.

C. Arabian Peninsula

67. Since assuming leadership of AQAP in March 2024, Saad ben Atef al-Awlaki (Yemeni, not listed) consolidated control of the group. Leveraging strong tribal bonds, he repaired ties with communities, notably in Abyan and Shabwah Governorates, and reintegrated his predecessor Khaled Batarfi's supporters. The approximate strength of AQAP of 2,000 to 3,000 fighters included skilled explosives experts and unmanned aerial vehicle operators.

68. AQAP operations were primarily focused within Yemen, but it maintained aspirations for external operations, including maritime operations in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. The group's plan included establishing control over strategic infrastructure, with a few Member States noting its repositioning in areas near the southern coast.

69. During the reporting period, AQAP executed over 40 attacks, targeting security forces in Abyan and Shabwah, using light weapons, explosives, locally assembled unmanned aerial vehicles and sniper rifles with thermal imaging cameras. The suicide bombing in Abyan on 16 August targeting forces loyal to the internationally recognized Government, killing 16 soldiers and injuring others, potentially signalled a return by al-Awlaki to suicide attacks against hardened targets.

70. Member States reported that al-Awlaki likely retained communication with Sayf al-Adl, notwithstanding the death in March 2024 of Khaled Zidane, the son of Sayf al-Adl and the AQAP link to Al-Qaida's core leadership. Al-Awlaki also maintained close ties with the AQAP veterans Ibrahim al-Qosi (alias Khubayb al-Sudani, Sudanese) and Ibrahim al-Banna (Egyptian) (both not listed), linked to Sayf al-Adl, and key Shura figures. Member States noted that al-Awlaki maintained the pragmatic agreement with the Houthis that had lasted for the past three years, which was described as opportunistic and transactional. This agreement included mutual non-aggression, prisoner exchanges and the movement of weapons.

71. The group continued to develop its unmanned aerial vehicle capabilities, though the death of Hamza al-Mashdali in June 2024, a key figure in the development of such vehicles, and supply challenges reduced usage. AQAP maintained ties with Al-Shabaab in Somalia, exchanging weapons and fighters. One Member State noted the launch by AQAP of a communication application enabling exclusive messaging with Al-Shabaab, which reportedly sent over a dozen operatives to AQAP to acquire operational expertise and knowledge, including in unmanned aerial vehicle technology.

72. The media arm of AQAP, considered by many to be Al-Qaida's strongest, exploited conflicts, including the Gaza and Israel conflict, to recruit and incite lone actors to conduct attacks. It launched a donation campaign through cryptocurrencies claiming to support Palestinians. It also published materials praising aligned groups in the Syrian Arab Republic, congratulating HTS for its military success and eulogizing HAD for a leadership loss. Several Member States noted the growing focus of AQAP on video games to influence children and young people.

73. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Yemen (ISIL-Yemen, QDe.166) remained weakened, with only 100 to 150 fighters notwithstanding logistical and financial ties with ISIL (Da'esh) in Somalia. ISIL-Yemen retained an experienced media and propaganda wing. One Member State noted that ISIL-Yemen was instrumental in advocating for the new ISIL (Da'esh) overall leader to be located outside the Iraqi-Syrian theatre.

74. In Oman, three self-radicalized brothers (Omani) opened fire on 15 July near a Shiite mosque during a religious ceremony in Muscat. Although ISIL (Da'esh) claimed the attack, the perpetrators acted on their own with no apparent direction from the group. Other regional Member States reported foiled attacks by individuals incited by ISIL (Da'esh) publications, in particular related to the Gaza-Israel conflict.

D. Europe

75. Regional States assessed ISIL-K as the most significant external terrorist threat to Europe. The increasing frequency of foiled plots underscored the group's determination and capacity to conduct attacks of high lethality on European soil, primarily against soft targets and large crowds.

76. The ISIL-K threat was augmented by a robust online propaganda apparatus and facilitated by remote logistical networks using the Russian language common to Central Asian States and North Caucasus regions of the Russian Federation. Recent arrests evidenced the presence in Europe of numerous sympathizers from the Central Asian and North Caucasus diaspora with legal resident status who facilitated the relocation of ISIL-K operatives in the Schengen area and provided financial and logistical support to conduct opportunistic actions. In July, a joint operation in Austria, Belgium and Germany resulted in the arrest of 19 Chechen and Tajik ISIL-K members involved in financial activities and the planning of an attack.

77. Radicalized individuals were often younger, some being minors, with direct or indirect connections with ISIL (Da'esh) through online encrypted messaging platforms. In August, Austrian security services arrested a 19-year-old Austrian of North Macedonian origin linked with ISIL (Da'esh) operatives and suspected of planning an attack during a Taylor Swift concert in Vienna. In July, French security services arrested an 18-year-old Chechen planning to attack an Olympic Games football match in Saint-Étienne, who was connected to an ISIL (Da'esh) Chechen member operating in the Syrian Badia.

78. During 2024, security forces in various European countries conducted coordinated operations, resulting in the dismantling of four terrorist cells made up of more than 25 minors connected online in the same virtual groups, who were in the final stages of preparing to execute simultaneous attacks in several European cities.

79. Despite limited ISIL (Da'esh) involvement with Palestinian issues, the attack in Solingen, Germany, on 23 August brought renewed concerns about a wave of ISIL (Da'esh)-linked violence in Europe driven by the Gaza and Israel conflict. It acted as a catalyst for radicalizing highly vulnerable young individuals, indifferent to doctrinal or theoretical narratives and primarily motivated by violence, heavily promoted via online platforms and amplified by social media algorithms.

80. ISIL (Da'esh) continued to try to exploit Türkiye as a logistical and facilitation hub for its financial and operational activities in Europe. Turkish security forces maintained intense counter-terrorism pressure, with successful operations resulting in the arrest in September of Viskhan Soltamatov (Chechen, not listed). Reportedly the mastermind of the attack against the Santa Maria church in Istanbul in January 2024, Soltamatov acted in coordination with the mid-level leadership of ISIL (Da'esh) in the Syrian Arab Republic, in the Syrian Badia region, under the instruction of Abu Ali al-Shishani (see para. 58). In October, Turkish security services dismantled a network present in Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir suspected of providing operational and financial support to ISIL (Da'esh).

81. Investigations illustrated the interconnected nature of ISIL (Da'esh) facilitation between Europe and North Africa. In November, the Intelligence General Directorate

of the Spanish National Police, in collaboration with the Moroccan General Directorate for Territorial Surveillance, arrested nine individuals, some already convicted for terrorist offences and with previous combat experience, who had planned to conduct an attack in Ceuta, Spain, and travel to ISIL (Da'esh)-controlled areas in the Sahel and Somalia. The cell had connections with a network of North African facilitators operating in these areas.

E. Asia

Central and South Asia

82. With over two dozen terrorist groups operating in Afghanistan, Member States assessed the security threat emanating from the country as a continuing driver of instability in the region and beyond. Despite the loss of territory and attrition among senior and mid-tier leadership figures, the presence of terrorist organizations in Afghanistan posed a serious challenge to the stability of the country, as well as to the security of Central Asian and other neighbouring States.

83. Notwithstanding the measures taken by the Taliban to counter ISIL-K, the group represented the most serious threat to the de facto authorities, ethnic and religious minorities, the United Nations, foreign nationals and international representatives in Afghanistan. The sustained presence of ISIL-K and its activity in the country reflected the group's ideological commitment to its own brand, portraying itself as advancing the wider Khorasan, its ability to leverage relationships with particular communities and the Taliban's ineffective efforts to eliminate it.

84. The killing of the acting Minister of Refugees and Repatriation, Khalil Ahmed Haqqani (TAi.150), in a suicide bombing on 11 December, claimed by ISIL-K, marked the highest-profile casualty within the de facto Cabinet since the Taliban takeover. It evidenced the deliberate attempt by ISIL-K to create a false sense of security by temporarily reducing the number of high-impact attacks inside Afghanistan to undermine the Taliban's credibility in providing security.

85. ISIL-K benefited from the Taliban's inability to protect itself against infiltration and corruption among its own ranks, despite raids conducted to arrest disloyal officials. Following the attack on 17 May against foreign tourists in Bamyan, one Member State subsequently reported the involvement of a notorious ethnic Tajik commander, Mawlawi Nik Mohammad Aizaifa, head of the Taliban General Directorate of Intelligence in Bamyan Province.

86. The status and strength of ISIL-K remained unchanged (see S/2024/556, para. 74), with the ISIL-K deputy, Mawlawi Rajab (QDi.434), playing a more prominent role in high-impact operations inside Afghanistan, including suicide bomber attacks. One Member State noted his location in Kunar Province, with frequent travel to Parwan and Kapisa Provinces. Relations with the ISIL (Da'esh) core were maintained through the regional Al-Siddiq office, headed by Tamim Ansar Al-Kurdi (not listed) (ibid., para. 75). The ISIL (Da'esh) leadership recently informed Al-Kurdi that the Caucasus province would also depend on the Al-Siddiq office.

87. ISIL-K continued to build its capabilities to threaten Central Asian countries from northern Afghanistan. Previous terrorist attacks in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation indicated the focus of ISIL (Da'esh) in the region and beyond. The group consolidated its support base while seeking to capitalize on the growing dissatisfaction among ethnic Tajiks against Taliban rule in northern provinces. The number of ISIL-K sympathizers and supporters in Badakhshan and Kunduz Provinces increased significantly. Despite Taliban pressure against ISIL-K, in particular in Helmand and Kandahar Provinces, farmers affected by the poppy cultivation ban reportedly provided shelter for ISIL-K fighters in retaliation.

88. ISIL-K maintained a presence across the region, while Afghanistan remained the main hub for its recruitment and facilitation. The group prioritized the movement of fighters into the country. Central Asians, mostly Tajik nationals, were recruited and used in this process. Principal routes to Afghanistan for new recruits include travel through Van Province in Türkiye, and Orumiyeh, Mashhad and Zahedan in the Islamic Republic of Iran, to enter Herat and Nimroz Provinces in Afghanistan. The recruits received training near the Yawan district of Badakhshan Province, where a camp for fighters and suicide bombers was located. Training camps with Arab instructors were present in Kunar and Nuristan Provinces. Abu Ahmad al-Madani (Iraqi, not listed) led the external operations branch in north-east Afghanistan.

89. ISIL-K suffered a significant setback in the summer, when Pakistani security forces foiled an attempt by its external operations branch to establish itself inside Pakistan, resulting in the arrest of high-profile operatives. These included Adil Panjsheri (Afghan, not listed), Abu Munzir (Tajik, not listed) and Kaka Younis (Uzbek, not listed), who were central figures in the recruitment, travel and funding of fighters and suicide bombers, including those involved in the attacks in Kerman, Islamic Republic of Iran, and Moscow. One Member State reported that Tariq Tajiki (Afghan, not listed), a key member of the branch and the mastermind of the Kerman attack, remained in Afghanistan. To avoid detection and minimize arrests, the ISIL-K leadership replaced electronic and Internet-based communications in favour of old-fashioned methods through a network of couriers to deliver instructions and conduct in-person meetings.

90. ISIL (Da'esh) was unable to mount large-scale attacks in India. However, its handlers tried to incite lone actor attacks through India-based supporters. The pro-ISIL (Da'esh) Al-Jauhar Media continued to spread anti-India propaganda through its publication *Serat ul-Haq*.

91. The status and strength of Al-Qaida in Afghanistan remained unchanged (see S/2024/556, para. 79). The group sought to strengthen cooperation with regional terrorist organizations of non-Afghan origin that operate in the country (TTP, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU, QDe.010), ETIM/TIP and Jamaat Ansarullah (not listed)) to expand its presence in neighbouring countries. Member States judged Sayf al-Adl's strategy to reorganize Al-Qaida's presence in Afghanistan and reactivate sleeper cells in Iraq, Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Europe to be indicative of the group's longer-term intent to carry out external operations. Abu Hassan al-Waili deployed Hyas Masi Ullah (not listed) to Kunar Province to manage Al-Qaida finances from the Islamic Republic of Iran into Afghanistan.

92. The Taliban maintained a permissive environment allowing Al-Qaida to consolidate, with the presence of safe houses and training camps scattered across Afghanistan. The de facto authorities continued to be sensitive to the profile of Al-Qaida personnel in the country. Low-profile members resided with their families under the protection of the Taliban intelligence service (General Directorate of Intelligence) in Kabul neighbourhoods (e.g. Qala-e-Fatullah, Shar-e-Naw and Wazir Akbar Khan), while senior leaders were placed in rural areas outside Kabul (such as the distant village of Bulghuli in Sar-e Pul Province), Kunar, Ghazni, Logar and Wardak Provinces. Some Member States noted that Hamza al Ghamdi (not listed) was in the highly secured Shashdarak area in Kabul with his family. The Taliban moved Abu Ikhlas Al-Masri (not listed) to a highly secure compound in the Afshar neighbourhood in Kabul, which served as a training centre for Taliban forces.

93. The status and strength of TTP in Afghanistan had not changed (ibid., para. 81). The ambition and scale of its attacks on Pakistan, though, had significantly increased, with over 600 attacks during the reporting period, including from Afghan territory. The Taliban continued to provide TTP with logistical and operational space and

financial support, with one Member State noting that the family of Noor Wali Masoud (QDi.427) received a monthly payment of 3 million Afghanis (roughly $43,000). TTP established new training centres in Kunar, Nangarhar, Khost and Paktika (Barmal) Provinces while enhancing recruitment within TTP cadres, including from the Afghan Taliban.

94. There was increased collaboration between TTP, the Afghan Taliban and Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS, not listed), conducting attacks under the banner of Tehrik-e Jihad Pakistan (TJP, not listed). Greater facilitation among these groups and TTP in terms of the provision of suicide bombers and fighters and ideological guidance might transform the latter into an extraregional threat and an umbrella organization for other terrorist groups operating in the region.

95. Estimates of ETIM/TIP strength in Afghanistan ranged from a few dozen to 500 fighters. Some Member States reported that ETIM/TIP maintained ties with TTP, IMU and Jamaat Ansarullah, sharing local headquarters and training camps in Balkh, Badakhshan, Kunduz, Kabul and Baghlan Provinces, further strengthening its regional connections and influence. This stemmed from pressure by the Afghan Taliban (ibid., para. 84). ISIL-K tried to recruit members of Al-Qaida-affiliated groups, including ETIM/TIP, through a range of economic incentives. As ISIL-K accelerated its expansion to northern areas of Afghanistan, the Taliban mobilized terrorist groups such as ETIM/TIP, IMU and Jamaat Ansarullah to fight them.

96. The Baluchistan Liberation Army (not listed) claimed that the Majeed Brigade (MB, not listed) carried out several high-casualty attacks in the reporting period. MB included women in its ranks and operated across the southern region of Pakistan, including Awaran, Panjgur and Dalbandin. Two Member States reported that MB maintained connections with TTP, ISIL-K and ETIM/TIP, including collaborating with the latter in its operational bases in Afghanistan. Some other Member States assessed that there was insufficient information that MB met the criteria to be listed under the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions regime.

97. Jamaat Ansarullah had training camps in Khost Province with Al-Qaida engineers and weapons instructors, and a special military centre in the Kalafgan district of Takhar Province to train Central Asian and Arab fighters. The group created the "Ansar" unit in the Imam Sahib district of Kunduz Province to infiltrate border areas. The Taliban deployed a suicide bomber unit from the Lashkar-e Mansouri Martyrdom Battalion in Fayz Abad, Badakhshan Province, with Jamaat Ansarullah and Al-Qaida fighters to use them in operations against the anti-Taliban resistance fronts.

South-east Asia

98. The terrorist threat level in South-east Asia remained low but persistent. The drivers of terrorism in the region primarily relate to local agendas and grievances rather than global Al-Qaida or ISIL (Da'esh) ideology. An increase in online self-radicalization among young people was noted, with the age getting younger and the gestation period shorter from radicalization to activation.

99. ISIL South-East Asia (ISIL-SEA, QDe.169, alias Islamic State East Asia Division), the primary terrorist threat in the region, had less than 100 fighters remaining in the southern Philippines, where activities were marginal beyond surrenders of low-level members. Filipino security services effectively contained the threat, but concerns persist that a focus on other regional security challenges could divert resources, permitting resurgence. No replacement for the ISIL-SEA leader, Abu Zacharia, killed in Marawi in June 2023, had been announced. Abu Turaife (not listed) was assessed to remain the leader of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters faction (BIFF, not listed). While BIFF conducted several attacks, 90 of its members surrendered and others were arrested, further weakening its capacity. Also in the

Philippines, the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG, QDe.001) was significantly weakened, with the remaining forces in Sulu Province characterized more as a criminal group.

100. In Indonesia, leaders of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI, QDe.092) declared on 30 June the dissolution of the organization. Significant outreach efforts urged followers to surrender weapons; a majority of the 6,000 JI members reportedly supported the decision. While disgruntled individuals could join regional splinter groups, most Member States assessed that the initiative was genuine but cautioned that it would take some time to effectuate the decision.

101. Counter-terrorism pressure remained strong. In August, an improvised explosive device attack against churches was thwarted, with 17 individuals accused of having explosives and ISIL (Da'esh) teaching materials and spreading threats on social networks against Pope Francis during his visit in September. The repatriation of Indonesian citizens from camps in the Syrian Arab Republic, estimated at between 700 and 800 individuals, as well as radicalization in prisons and recidivism, represent a potential longer-term threat.

III. Impact assessment

A. Resolutions 2199 (2015) and 2462 (2019) on the financing of terrorism

102. Al-Qaida, ISIL (Da'esh) and affiliates retained access to revenue streams, notwithstanding sustained counter-terrorism pressure.

103. The ISIL (Da'esh) core retained access to cash reserves in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, but the estimated amount was reduced to approximately $10 million. While some regional offices reportedly had about $2 million in reserves, the ISIL (Da'esh) directive to affiliates was to become self-reliant, using their own revenue sources. The loss of reserves and the ability to generate funds in traditional ISIL (Da'esh) strongholds in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic contrasted with the rise of its African subsidiaries, mainly those in Somalia and the Sahel.

104. Traditional methods of fundraising such as kidnapping for ransom, extortion, taxation of local communities, exploitation of natural resources and theft constituted significant portions of ISIL (Da'esh) revenues, but affiliates also received funding from zakat, wealthy donors and business owners. Terrorist groups continued to be adaptive and opportunistic in taking advantage of local resources and collaboration with organized criminal networks or the use of their tactics. For example, a smuggling network linked to ISIL (Da'esh) played a key role in human smuggling operations, providing administrative and logistical assistance to ISIL (Da'esh) members in Türkiye, under the guidance of the ISIL (Da'esh) facilitator Adam Khamirzaev (not listed).

105. Member States noted that in the Lake Chad basin cattle rustling remained a prevalent method of generating revenue, with some of the stolen livestock sold in local markets. Boko Haram was reported to collect zakat of 4 to 5 cows for every 120, while herders were charged between 5,000 to 30,000 naira per herd of cattle and 2,000 to 10,000 naira per herd of sheep or goats to access grazing land. These charges were not fixed and could be adjusted depending on the need for funds. Boko Haram was also reported to have ventured into selling scrap metal – a ton of iron scrap metal sold for 450,000 naira, while aluminium scrap sold for 650,000 naira per ton. In addition, Member States noted the use of currency exchange businesses by terrorist groups in the region to launder funds.

106. In southern Somalia, Member States reported that Al-Shabaab imposed zakat taxes on herders, demanding 1 camel for every 20 owned. Wholesale shops were taxed

$120 to $160 monthly, retail shops $60 to $100 and small trucks $180 in order to pass Al-Shabaab checkpoints, while large trucks paid $260. Clan elders were required to contribute $15,000 to $20,000 monthly. Meanwhile, ISIL (Da'esh) in Somalia focused on extortion, generating revenue by taxing businesses in ports such as Bossaso and Mogadishu.

107. AQAP continued to face financial difficulties, with salaries being delayed. While primarily relying on kidnapping for ransom, AQAP diversified its funding sources through commercial ventures such as real estate and car trading, as well as weapon trafficking and counterfeiting.

108. In Iraq, ISIL (Da'esh) became increasingly reliant on organized crime tactics, targeting factory owners and shepherds in remote areas, demanding payments such as $400 for every 100 cattle owned.

109. ISIL-K shifted away from generating revenue by abduction and extortion to fundraising through donations, predominantly using cryptocurrencies (ibid., para. 96) for transfers in the tens of thousands of dollars. ISIL-K received funding through the al-Siddiq office; Qari Rafi Ullah (Afghan, not listed) managed ISIL-K finances in Afghanistan. The same Quick Response (QR) Codes and virtual addresses were used repeatedly, indicating the degree of confidence and ease of use ISIL-K had with cryptocurrencies.

110. Member States considered anonymity-enhancing cryptocurrencies to represent the most significant challenge in countering the financing of terrorism. Some Member States cracked down on cryptocurrency transactions. In 2024, Türkiye conducted operations resulting in the arrest of more than 80 individuals and the seizure of more than $680,000, including cold virtual wallets.

B. Resolution 2347 (2017) on cultural heritage

111. No specific incidents were reported during the period. It was unclear whether ISIL (Da'esh) retained access to cached cultural artefacts in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, from which it might seek to generate revenue in the future. Nevertheless, Member States noted that terrorist groups might continue to exploit cultural heritage not only by selling it but also by collecting "taxes" in return for granting permission for excavation.

C. Resolution 2396 (2017) on foreign terrorist fighters, returnees and relocators

112. Member States continued to observe a steady movement of foreign terrorist fighters to join terrorist groups around the world. No single theatre attracted most fighters. There continued to be reports of a small but steady flow of foreign terrorist fighters to Afghanistan, principally from Central Asia and the Middle East. One Member State estimated that 25 to 30 fighters from the Middle East had travelled to join Al-Qaida Katiba Umer Farooq in Kunar Province, Afghanistan.

113. Almost half of the strength of ISIL (Da'esh) in Somalia was reported to be provided by foreign terrorist fighters from a range of countries. Meanwhile, Al-Shabaab no longer appeared to be prioritizing the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters, though some played key roles within the organization. The use of foreign terrorist fighters can bolster capabilities, but also present groups with logistical challenges: one Member State noted that they often had to use interpreters to communicate.

114. Camps and prisons in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic continued to be of significant concern. Data on the numbers in camps were uncertain, though most estimated around 35,000 to 40,000 in the Hawl camp alone. The majority were from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, though about 10 per cent were said to be foreigners. There continued to be numerous reports of ISIL (Da'esh)-linked indoctrination and training within the camps. In November, a security operation in the camp seized a significant quantity of weapons, including bombs and mines, as well as electronic communication devices. In addition, other detention centres in the Syrian Arab Republic were said to house up to 15,000 individuals associated with foreign terrorist fighters, according to one Member State. As noted in previous reports, there was no consistent international programme to repatriate and reintegrate those held in these facilities.

115. ISIL (Da'esh) continued to prioritize trying to release fighting-age male prisoners. If successful, it would replenish its ranks and bolster its capabilities. For example, five foreign terrorist fighters escaped from the Raqqah detention facility in August (two were recaptured). There were unconfirmed reports that ISIL (Da'esh) was already trying to take advantage of the change of Government in Damascus to release more of its fighters from camps and detention facilities.

116. The potential for ISIL (Da'esh) to take advantage of volatility in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic, including the possible release of its fighters from camps and detention facilities, posed a significant threat. The release of foreign terrorist fighters could also pose a threat beyond the region.

IV. Implementation of sanctions measures

117. The Monitoring Team took note of the Security Council's concern about the lack of implementation of the measures of the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions regime, including insufficient reporting by Member States to the Committee. The Team welcomes and seeks opportunities to enhance understanding of the sanctions regime and promote more effective implementation.

118. In its resolution 2734 (2024), the Security Council encouraged all Member States to more actively submit listing requests of individuals and entities supporting ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and their affiliates. Member States submitted six requests to list individuals in the reporting period. No new individuals or entities were added in 2024, with two names delisted.

A. Travel ban

119. No travel ban exemption requests were submitted to the Committee during the reporting period, and no information was received from Member States regarding attempted travel or interdiction of individuals designated on the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions list.

120. Member States continued to raise concerns regarding the lack of identifiers, the possible misspelling of names, the absence of biometric information and the reluctance of some countries to share information regarding listed individuals. Member States noted ongoing challenges and costs in ensuring that biometric collection systems were interoperable with national watch lists and advance passenger information and passenger name records to interdict the attempted travel of listed individuals. In addition, Member States faced challenges in collecting or accessing biometric data of foreign terrorist fighters located in conflict zones, and of those likely to return or relocate to other areas. The Monitoring Team engaged Member

States to improve the biometric identifiers included in the entries of the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions list, with a link to International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)-Security Council special notices.

121. Member States continued to stress the risk of listed individuals and foreign terrorist fighters seeking to travel using legal travel documents issued to them by the de facto authorities in Afghanistan. Member States noted that members of Al-Qaida affiliate groups operating in Afghanistan, labelled as refugees, received Afghan passports and national identity documents (*tazkiras*) from the de facto acting Ministry of the Interior, enabling their potential infiltration into neighbouring countries.

B. Assets freeze

122. The Monitoring Team received information from one Member State during the reporting period concerning the freezing of assets under resolution 2734 (2024) and related resolutions, indicating that the total value of assets frozen in its jurisdiction amounted to about $865,000, associated with accounts related directly or indirectly to listed individuals, or where they were the beneficial owners. Other Member States could renew efforts to provide similar data or update estimates of assets remaining frozen.

123. Some Member States raised questions regarding the application of asset freezing measures, in particular where identified funds or assets were controlled by designated persons or entities, or the identification of the beneficial owner, including in ownership structures of legal persons.

124. During the reporting period, the Committee received four assets freeze exemption requests, three for basic expenses and one for extraordinary expenses, all of which were approved.

C. Arms embargo

125. Counter-terrorism operations disrupted ISIL (Da'esh) efforts to develop and manufacture weapons in Iraq. On 29 August, a joint Iraqi-coalition operation in western Anbar eliminated Abu-Ali al-Tunisi, who had overseen ISIL (Da'esh) weapons development, including previous efforts in chemical weapons production. More recently, he was identified as a drone specialist, focusing on the development and use of drones for both attack and surveillance purposes. In Iraq, ISIL (Da'esh) operations relied on indirect fire tactics, including the use of mortar shells, sniper rifles and improvised explosive devices.

126. For nearly a year, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda have not experienced any ADF bombings, and the use of improvised explosive devices has fallen sharply. Member States attribute this to a successful disruption of supply networks of raw materials for explosives and detonators as well as pressure from joint military operations, forcing ADF to move regularly, making it difficult to set up laboratories for the manufacture of explosive devices. ADF has therefore focused on enhancing its unmanned aerial vehicle capacity to design suicide drones. On 24 August, ADF sent a repurposed weaponized drone with an improvised explosive device into a FARDC camp. As it was approaching the camp it was shot down by FARDC and fell near the camp. The attached device failed to detonate.

127. In the thirty-third report (S/2024/92, para. 7), Member States underlined the need to remain vigilant on the chemical weapons-related ambitions of designated terrorist groups under the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions regime. Concerns had previously been raised by some Member States. One reported that HTS carried

out training on the use of a chemical weapon agent in November 2024 with third-party assistance; the Monitoring Team could not confirm whether the training was offensive or defensive in nature. Such possible non-compliance with the measures imposed in resolution 2734 (2024) requires further engagement with Member States to enable the Team to gather information for possible further reporting.

128. Two Member States reported that HTS was provided with unmanned aerial vehicle capabilities by foreign specialists who were sent to Idlib. One Member State noted a recent visit on 15 October to deliver 75 such vehicles and provide training. This Member State reported that eight specialist engineers and intelligence officers had accompanied the drone delivery. One Member State reported that HTS owned an unmanned aerial vehicle manufacturing plant in Idlib that included foreign specialists.

129. In Afghanistan, Al-Qaida-affiliated groups (including TTP, IMU, ETIM/TIP and Jamaat Ansarullah) continued to have access to weapons seized from the former Afghan National Army, transferred to them by the de facto authorities/Taliban or purchased from the black market. One Member State reported that ETIM/TIP in Afghanistan possessed anti-tank missiles, including BGM-71 TOW missiles. In the Syrian Arab Republic, ETIM/TIP access to unmanned aerial vehicles had also been reported by one Member State after its “Falcon” unmanned aerial vehicle squadron was reported to be used in active air strikes against Syrian government forces along with HTS. Another Member State, however, said that there was no indication that ETIM/TIP had access to advanced weaponry such as unmanned aerial vehicles or the capability to manufacture them.

V. Recommendations

130. Given the growing concern that individuals designated on the ISIL (Da’esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions list might seek to travel using legal travel documents, the Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States highlighting the importance of controlling the international travel of foreign terrorist fighters, returnees, relocators and listed individuals and the relevance of biometric information to interdict attempted travel, in particular of those travelling with stolen, forged or altered travel documents. In the light of resolution 2396 (2017), the Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States encouraging them to submit to INTERPOL available international biometric data, in particular high-quality pictures and fingerprints of listed individuals, in accordance with their national legislation and with respect to international human rights law, and urging them to utilize better available international databases to enhance sanctions implementation, including the INTERPOL database of stolen and lost travel and identity documents.

131. Given the increasing risk of online radicalization and recruitment targeting young people and minors exploited by terrorist groups through the use of alternative Internet platforms and encrypted chat applications, the Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States highlighting the importance of strengthening prevention efforts in addressing the conditions and factors that lead to the rise of radicalization and violent extremism conducive to terrorism among young people. The Monitoring Team would welcome the Committee’s support in requesting assistance from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, subject to the availability of funds.

132. Given the existing risk that individuals and entities designated on the ISIL (Da’esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions list use sanctions evasion techniques to undermine screening controls and avoid the implementation of the asset freeze, the Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States to encourage them to provide detailed financial information on the updated standard form for listing,

especially regarding the identification of the final beneficiary, the use of cryptocurrencies in financial transactions and the connections with high-risk jurisdictions.

133. Given the growing use of cryptocurrencies by ISIL (Da'esh), in particular anonymity-enhancing cryptocurrency, the Monitoring Team reiterates its recommendation (see S/2024/556, para. 119) that the Committee write to Member States encouraging them to share relevant information on digital wallet addresses associated with listed entities, noting that the updated standard forms for listing include, under the "known assets" category, any virtual assets or crypto wallet addresses linked to the proposed names.

VI. Monitoring Team activities and feedback

134. The present report covers the period from 21 June to 13 December 2024.

135. The Monitoring Team is grateful for Member States' support and engagement in drawing up the report.

136. Worsening financial constraints, however, restricted travel by the Monitoring Team. As a result, the Team relied heavily on written contributions from Member States.

137. Reliable data on the number of fighters aligned with particular groups are difficult to obtain. The figures used in the report either reflect Member States' consensus or represent a reasonable range of views. The Monitoring Team has endeavoured to triangulate all information as far as possible.

138. The Monitoring Team welcomes feedback at 1267mt@un.org.

Annex

Listed individuals and entities linked to Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (QDe.137), as at 31 December 2024

Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham and Abu Mohammed al-Jawlani

Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) is listed on the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da’esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions list as the alias of Al-Nusrah Front for the People of the Levant, which was listed by the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da’esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities in May 2014 (QDe.137). Its leader, Abu Mohammed al-Jawlani, a Syrian national whose real name is Ahmad Hussein al-Sharaa, was added to the sanctions list in July 2013 (QDi.317).

Background

- In the narrative summary of reasons for listing the former leader of ISIL (Da’esh), Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (QDi.299), it was noted that al-Baghdadi had instructed Abu Mohammed al-Jawlani (QDi.317) to establish a front for Al-Qaida in Iraq in the Syrian Arab Republic by developing a local presence and fighting.
- Al-Nusrah Front for the People of the Levant (QDe.137) was officially announced as being active on 24 January 2012. Al-Baghdadi issued strategic directives to the overall leader of Al-Nusrah Front for the People of the Levant, Abu Mohammed al-Jawlani, instructing him to begin operations in the Syrian Arab Republic.
- On 30 May 2013, the name “Al-Nusrah Front for the People of the Levant” was first added as an alias for QDe.115 (Al-Qaida in Iraq, by then known as Islamic State of Iraq). It was last mentioned as an affiliate of QDe.115 in the fifteenth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team (S/2014/41, paras. 3, 8, 14 and 45). See press release SC/11019 (https://press.un.org/en/2013/sc11019.doc.htm).
- Following the split between the two organizations in 2013, Al-Nusrah Front for the People of the Levant was listed as a separate entity on the sanctions list. See press release SC/11397 (https://press.un.org/en/2014/sc11397.doc.htm).
- In August 2014, Al-Nusrah Front for the People of the Levant seized 45 United Nations Disengagement Observer Force peacekeepers in the Golan Heights (see S/2014/665, para. 2). One of the initial demands, later denied, was the removal of Security Council sanctions (see S/2014/770, para. 47).
- Al-Nusrah Front for the People of the Levant changed its name to Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) in January 2017. The Committee amended the name of QDe.137 to include “Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)” as an alias on 7 June 2017. See press release SC/12861 (https://press.un.org/en/2017/sc12861.doc.htm).

Sanctions list

As at 31 December 2024, the sanctions list comprised the names of 255 individuals and 89 entities, having last been updated on 23 August 2024. Among these, 10 entities and 30 individuals are remarked to be linked to HTS, in either the text of the list entries or the narrative summaries for reasons of listing.

As of December 2024, nine of the individuals were reportedly deceased. Among this group, nine individuals are also mentioned as being linked to Abu Mohammed al-Jawlani (QDi.317).

Entities and other groups

No.	*Entity name on the sanctions list*	*Source*	*Permanent reference number*
1	Al-Qaida	List entry and narrative summary of reasons for listing	QDe.004
2	Asbat al-Ansar	List entry and narrative summary of reasons for listing	QDe.007
3	Al-Qaida in Iraq, also known as ISIL	List entry and narrative summary of reasons for listing	QDe.115
4	Abdallah Azzam Brigades	List entry and narrative summary of reasons for listing	QDe.144
5	Hilal Ahmar Society Indonesia	List entry and narrative summary of reasons for listing	QDe.147
6	The Army of Emigrants and Supporters	List entry and narrative summary of reasons for listing	QDe.148
7	Harakat Sham al-Islam	List entry and narrative summary of reasons for listing	QDe.149
8	Jund Al Aqsa	List entry and narrative summary of reasons for listing	QDe.156
9	Khatiba Imam al-Bukhari	List entry and narrative summary of reasons for listing	QDe.158
10	Khatiba al-Tawhid wal-Jihad	List entry and narrative summary of reasons for listing	QDe.168

Individuals

No.	*Individual's name according to the designation on the sanctions list*	*Permanent reference number*
1	Aiman Muhammed Rabi al-Zawahiri	QDi.006
2	Hani al-Sayyid al-Sebai Yusif	QDi.198
3	Jaber Abdallah Jaber Ahmad Al-Jalahmah	QDi.237
4	Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri al-Samarrai	QDi.299
5	Abu Mohammed al-Jawlani	QDi.317
6	Said Arif	QDi.323
7	Abdul Mohsen Abdallah Ibrahim al Charekh	QDi.324
8	Abou Mohamed al Adnani	QDi.325
9	Hamid Hamad Hamid al-'Ali	QDi.326
10	Abdelrahman Mouhamad Zafir al Dabidi al Jahani	QDi.327
11	Hajjaj bin Fahd al Ajmi	QDi.328

No.	*Individual's name according to the designation on the sanctions list*	*Permanent reference number*
12	Ibrahim Suleiman Hamad al-Hablain	QDi.332
13	‘Abd al-Rahman Khalaf ‘Ubayd Juday’ al-‘Anizi	QDi.335
14	Anas Hasan Khattab	QDi.336
15	Maysar Ali Musa Abdallah al-Juburi	QDi.337
16	Shafi Sultan Mohammed al-Ajmi	QDi.338
17	Kevin Guiavarch	QDi.341
18	Oumar Diaby	QDi.342
19	Ashraf Muhammad Yusuf ‘Uthman ‘Abd al-Salam	QDi.343
20	Ali ben Taher ben Faleh Ouni Harzi	QDi.353
21	Shamil Magomedovich Ismailov	QDi.368
22	Mu’tassim Yahya ‘Ali al-Rumaysh	QDi.369
23	Nusret Imamovic	QDi.374
24	Sa’d bin Sa’d Muhammad Shariyan al-Ka’bi	QDi.382
25	Ayrat Nasimovich Vakhitov	QDi.397
26	Bassam Ahmad al-Hasri	QDi.399
27	Iyad Nazmi Salih Khalil, also known as Iyad al-Toubasi	QDi.400
28	Fared Saal	QDi.403
29	Murad Iraklievich Margoshvili	QDi.406
30	Jamal Hussein Hassan Zeiniye	QDi.428

In addition, entities have been linked to HTS in Monitoring Team reports, but the link to HTS is not included in the list entry and narrative summary of reasons for listing. These include the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement, also known as the Turkistan Islamic Party (ETIM/TIP), in the Syrian Arab Republic (QDe.088)[1] and Ansar Al-Islam (QDe.098).[2]

[1] See S/2024/556, para. 55; S/2024/92, para. 56; and other reports of the Monitoring Team.
[2] See S/2024/92, para. 57.