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Letter dated 13 February 2023 from 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 addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the thirty-first 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 [2610 \(2021\)](#).

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) Vanessa **Frazier**
Chair

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



Letter dated 30 December 2022 from the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team in accordance with paragraph (a) of annex I to resolution 2610 (2021) 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 2610 (2021), 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, the first by 31 December 2021

I therefore transmit to you the Monitoring Team's thirty-first comprehensive report, pursuant to annex I to resolution 2610 (2021). In formulating this report, the Monitoring Team considered information it received up to 19 December 2022. The Monitoring Team also notes that the document of reference is the English original.

(Signed) Justin **Hustwitt**
Coordinator

Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team

Thirty-first report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2610 (2021) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities

Summary

The threat from Al-Qaida, ISIL (Da'esh) and affiliated groups remains high in conflict zones and neighbouring countries. It remains relatively low in other areas, but both groups continue to aspire to project threat.

Africa has emerged in recent years as the continent where the harm done by terrorism is developing most rapidly and extensively. Two of the three most dynamic ISIL affiliates are in Africa, and the continent has seen the greatest growth in ISIL affiliates, with several groups expanding their radius of influence often across national borders. ISIL continues its efforts to exploit regional and local grievances throughout the continent for propaganda purposes, publicizing related events and attacks to enhance its global footprint. Equally, Al-Qaida's most successful affiliate in Somalia, Al-Shabaab, continues to grow in strength and reach as the group's most brutal affiliate, and Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM) has been able to expand its operations in West Africa and the Sahel.

It is noteworthy that relatively few of the individuals associated with these groups are subject to sanctions pursuant to Security Council resolution 1267 (1999). Sanctions are one of the tools to reduce the developing threat, impede the movement of foreign terrorist fighters in the region and limit terrorist access to funding. The context of Al-Qaida- and ISIL-related terrorism on the continent is complex, exploiting and exacerbating pre-existing conflicts.

Issues of leadership were significant during the reporting period. ISIL core continues to be under pressure, with attrition in its leadership and depleting resources. It has proven resilient, but morale is low. The group is strengthening through its affiliates beyond Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic: in Africa and with the aggressive agenda of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan (ISIL-K) in Afghanistan, whose rivalry with the Taliban will continue to have a destabilizing effect in Afghanistan and the region. Most of the attacks by ISIL-K are against the Taliban. A new leader of ISIL was killed after barely eight months in charge. The function of leader has become almost totemic, a rallying point for the wider group. For the time being, ISIL core continues to produce leaders who meet this need, and members of affiliates pledge allegiance swiftly and without question, not anticipating close operational direction.

Member States' predominant view is that Sayf al-'Adl is now the de facto leader of Al-Qaida, representing continuity for now. But his leadership cannot be declared because of Al-Qaida's sensitivity to Afghan Taliban concerns not to acknowledge the death of Aiman Muhammed Rabi al-Zawahiri in Kabul and the fact of Sayf al-'Adl's presence in the Islamic Republic of Iran. His location raises questions that have a bearing on Al-Qaida's ambitions to assert leadership of a global movement in the face of challenges from ISIL.

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I. Overview and evolution of the threat

1. The threat posed by Al-Qaida, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh) (QDe.115) and affiliated groups and individuals remains high in conflict zones and neighbouring Member States. In Africa, the geographic spread and incidence of violence related to both groups have increased. Propaganda efforts by Al-Qaida (QDe.004), ISIL (Da'esh) and their affiliates have become more sophisticated and prolific, often detailing conflict between the groups and their commanders, reflecting competing ideologies, competition for sources of revenue and efforts to inspire and recruit followers. Operations mounted by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan (ISIL-K, QDe.161) in Afghanistan have been designed to challenge regional security and the credibility of the Taliban as guarantors of security both domestically and internationally. Both Al-Qaida and ISIL (Da'esh) continue to aspire to project threat beyond conflict zones. Member States are concerned about this, and about violence and instability spreading deeper into Africa, and potentially outwards from Afghanistan into neighbouring countries.

2. Several Member States have drawn a distinction between ISIL (Da'esh), which is focused on claiming a physical “caliphate” holding territory, and Al-Qaida, which is more focused on an ideological agenda, thus posing a greater threat in the longer term. As the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team has noted in previous reports (see [S/2022/547](#), para. 4), two of the most dynamic ISIL networks are in Africa. Member States have noted that the situation in the Sahel region is particularly worrying because of increased violence, especially against civilians, the extension of the area in which armed groups are operating and the complexity of the local context. Terrorist groups exploit local disputes to recruit fighters and establish themselves in fragile communities.

3. In this region, Al-Qaida- and ISIL (Da'esh)-related acts are often intertwined with pre-existing conflicts that are exploited by these terrorist groups. This presents challenges for effective application of the 1267 sanctions regime. The Monitoring Team, through its engagement with Member States, will assist in listing of individuals who meet the criteria for designation within the sanctions regime, where such listings might achieve a beneficial effect.

4. The question of leadership of both ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida has been a preoccupation of Member States during this reporting period, both as a marker of the resilience of the groups, but also as an indicator of ideological and operational direction. The identity of the ISIL leader, Abu al-Hassan al-Hashemi al-Qurashi (reported by some Member States to be also known as Sayf Baghdad and Abdal-Rahman al-Iraqi), was not confirmed when the group announced on 30 November his death the previous month. The new leader was announced as Abu al-Husain al-Husaini al-Qurashi, and his true identity is not yet known.

5. The loss of ISIL leaders has become normalized within the group and is reflected in the tone of the announcement of Abu al-Hassan's death. Member States noted numerous immediate pledges of allegiance to the new leader, Abu al-Husain, by ISIL affiliates far and wide without specific knowledge of his identity or qualities as a leader. The pool of potential leaders in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic who could be presented as having the right lineage and operational experience is sufficiently deep to weather the steady attrition in the group's leadership in the short term. Member States also noted a decline in morale among ISIL core personnel. Affiliates outside Iraq and the Levant expect and value continuity in leadership from ISIL core, which the organization delivers.

6. For Al-Qaida, the most significant development was the death of its leader, Aiman Muhammed Rabi al-Zawahiri (QDi.006) in a kinetic strike on 31 July, which was

confirmed by the United States of America. Neither Al-Qaida nor the Taliban formally acknowledged the death. The presence of al-Zawahiri in central Kabul at the time, in a building reported by Member States to belong to the Haqqani Network (TAc.012), demonstrated an ongoing and cooperative relationship between Al-Qaida and the Taliban. His death has raised the questions of succession and its impact on the threat posed by Al-Qaida.

7. No announcement has been made on succession and there was a paucity of reporting from Member States on speculation or rivalry within Al-Qaida itself. In discussions in November and December, many Member States took the view that Sayf al-‘Adl¹ is already operating as the de facto and uncontested leader of the group. Assessments varied as to why his leadership had not been declared. Some flagged that al-Zawahiri’s evident presence in Kabul had been an embarrassment for the Taliban, which is seeking legitimacy as a governing authority, and that Al-Qaida chose not to exacerbate this by acknowledging the death. However, most judged a key factor to be the continued presence of Sayf al-‘Adl in the Islamic Republic of Iran. This raised difficult theological and operational questions for Al-Qaida. One Member State rejected claims, reports and assessments regarding the presence of any Al-Qaida affiliate or dependent in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

II. Regional developments

A. Africa

Central and Southern Africa

8. In Mozambique, the deployment of regional forces in Cabo Delgado Province (S/2022/83, para. 9), has had a significant impact on Ahlu Sunna wal-Jama’a (ASWJ) (not listed), disrupting its leadership, command structures and bases. While there was an initial proliferation of small-scale attacks by compact isolated units, mostly looting for provisions, the trajectory of the conflict has changed significantly. Regional Member States estimate that ASWJ has seen its forces reduced to 280 adult male fighters, from an initial 2,500 fighters. In the past six months, operations by deployed forces have resulted in the deaths of 70 to 120 fighters and commanders. Member States note that surviving fighters are hardened combatants, able to move and strike strategically, relying on independent and well-established local networks for support, skills and a flow of foreign fighters.

9. ASWJ fighters showed enhanced strategic and tactical coordination, forcing the overextension of regional forces, by launching attacks against civilians, internally displaced persons, safe havens and strategic mining concerns in northern, central and southern Cabo Delgado. Member States noted that cells attacked police armouries for weapons and raided villages for provisions, regularly engaging in beheadings and high levels of violence. Insurgents also attacked high-value international mining and energy operations involving some of the world’s largest graphite and ruby mines and the country’s largest solar power plant. While local fatalities are generally decreasing, such attacks have serious economic consequences and result in massive displacement of vulnerable populations.

10. ASWJ fighters made a strong push southward, with insurgents opening a new theatre of conflict in Ancuabe and Chiure districts, launching attacks as far south as Nampula Province, while engaging in persistent attacks in northern districts of Macomia, Nangade and Muidumbe. During the reporting period, districts at the epicentre of attacks were Ancuabe and Macomia. Between June and July 2022 alone,

¹ Listed as Mohammed Salahaldin Abd El Halim Zidane (QDi.001), also known as Sayf al-‘Adl.

161,046 persons were displaced owing to attacks in Ancuabe and Chiure districts. Of the 946,508 internally displaced persons in Northern Mozambique, over half are children.

11. On 14 July 2022, regional forces captured Sheik Assane Base (also known as Base Catupa), a significant ASWJ camp in Macomia, killing their leader, Sheik Assane, a Tanzanian national. Bonomade Machude Omar, the operations commander, managed to escape. The raid resulted in the seizure of significant ledgers on finances, membership, communication equipment and weaponry. In total, 600 hostages were freed in the joint operation.

12. ASWJ is led by Abu Yasir Hassan (not listed), a Tanzanian national serving as the spiritual leader of the group. Member States assess that the group is composed of semi-autonomous cells that do not adhere to a strict hierarchical command structure, making them agile and adept to change. Member States noted that Hassan had been injured in a car accident but was recovering after treatment. The leadership's longstanding relations with seasoned foreign fighters linked to regional networks in East and Central Africa has only enhanced the assimilation of battle-hardened insurgents into their ranks. Foreign terrorist fighters are from Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania and to a lesser extent from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and Uganda.

13. Regional Member States are of the view that there is no clear evidence of "command and control orders" from ISIL over ASWJ. ISIL more recently referred to ASWJ as a separate affiliate, ISIL-Mozambique.

14. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, joint military operations by Congolese and Ugandan forces against the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF, CDe.001) have dispersed ADF into smaller units throughout their area of operation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Following raids on strategic camps, ADF pulled out of strongholds near the Ugandan border and headed westwards, widening the theatre of conflict from the Ugandan border to western Ituri Province, with attacks taking place as far west as Ituri's Mambasa Territory and as far south as the capital of North Kivu Province, Goma. Within four months of Operation Shujaa,² ADF had expanded its range of coverage and influence from 2,820km² to 8,200km².

15. ADF also increased attacks in and near Butembo. It carried out a successful prison break in Butembo, North Kivu, on 10 August 2022, freeing 800 prisoners. Member States assessed that, while 112 prisoners had been recaptured and another 120 had refused to join ADF, the majority had been forcibly assimilated into the group. This was a significant injection of fighters and, over time, they risked becoming hardened ADF combatants. ADF also staged two bombings in Butembo on 6 September and 3 October, targeting national intelligence offices and a commercial cinema, respectively.

16. ADF perpetrated its first suicide attack in Goma on 7 April 2022. Six persons were killed and more than a dozen injured when a woman, a Tanzanian national, detonated an explosive vest she was wearing in a bar in Katindo military camp. Member States assessed that an ADF network in Goma had received instructions from Meddie Nkalubo (not listed) (S/2022/83, paras. 15 and 17), and Abu Akassi by phone. Nkalubo had provided instructions on operating the explosive vest and the use of the trigger mechanism. Member States assessed that the explosive vest bore the same signature as the device used in the 25 December 2021 bombing in Beni. Nkalubo is

² A joint operation against ADF by Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda forces in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

assessed by regional Member States to be the orchestrator of attacks in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda.

17. The ADF is assessed to have between 1,500 and 2,000 adult male fighters. Under the leadership of Seka Baluku (alias Musa Baluku, CDi.036). ADF has notably fractured around Baluku's strong allegiance to ISIL ([S/2022/83](#), para. 13). Notwithstanding the pledges, several regional Member States refute any "command and control" links between ADF and ISIL (Da'esh) core.

East Africa

18. In Somalia, the Government embarked on a strong military campaign in the fight against Harakat Al-Shabaab Al-Mujahidin (Al-Shabaab, SOe.001). While Al-Shabaab suffered some losses from targeted airstrikes against its leadership and fighters, Member States reported that some of Al-Shabaab's largest-scale attacks had taken place more recently. Al-Shabaab has killed over 500 civilians, government officials, soldiers, law enforcement officers and international peacekeepers in the past six months. In its most lethal attack, Al-Shabaab detonated car bombs near the Ministry of Education compound in the capital, Mogadishu. The twin blasts killed 121 people and injured 333 others. Al-Shabaab has also staged several deadly hotel sieges. Member States assess that the group continue to extend its territorial advances both domestically and in neighbouring States, noting multiple cross-border incursions into Ethiopia.

19. Member States estimate that Al-Shabaab commands between 7,000 and 12,000 fighters and remains undiminished in capacity. Member States assessed that Al-Shabaab generated between \$100 million and \$150 million per annum from its taxation of all aspects of the economy of Somalia ([S/2022/83](#), para. 20) and used at least 25 per cent of its revenue for military purchases.

20. ISIL in Somalia has a presence in Puntland. Member States note, however, that the group neither has the capacity to control large terrain, owing to continued attacks by Al-Shabaab, nor possesses the capacity to undertake large-scale sophisticated attacks. ISIL in Somalia is estimated to have between 200 and 250 fighters. ISIL in Somalia hosts the Al-Karrar office ([S/2022/547](#), para. 24), headed by the Emir of ISIL in Somalia, Abdul Qadir Mumin, a former leader within Al-Shabaab who had pledged allegiance to ISIL in October 2015.

21. Member States assessed that the Al-Karrar office acted as a financial hub, transmitting funds to affiliates. Several Member States noted that the Al-Karrar office facilitated ISIL-K financially by sending \$25,000 worth in cryptocurrency every month. Member States assessed that ISIL Somalia generated \$100,000 per month through extortion of the shipping industry and illicit taxation. However, Member States had not presented any definitive information on the exact source of financial flows into the Al-Karrar office.

West Africa

22. Against the backdrop of the rise of terrorist groups in the region, Member States noted a deterioration of the security situation in the Sahel since the departure from Mali of several foreign forces that had helped to contain the threat. Although those forces were no longer fully adapted to the interwoven nature of the conflicts, their departure created a capability deficit that had been exploited by terrorist groups to increase their effectiveness and mobility and to expand their area of influence.³

³ The Monitoring Team was not able to visit the Sahel countries during the reporting period. It wishes to do so in 2023.

23. In central Mali and north and east Burkina Faso, Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM, QDe.159) is establishing itself as the central authority in the absence of strong governance. One Member State contended that written works by Abdelmalek Droukdel (QDi.232) (reportedly deceased) demonstrated how the group established influence within the community by exploiting pre-existing rivalries. Several Member States noted that the group had exploited the frustrations of vulnerable and underrepresented communities, such as the Tuareg and Fulani. The result was a strong ethnic polarization fuelling violence without knowingly contributing to the aims of JNIM. Several Member States reported that the activities of non-State actors or local militia in Mali and Burkina Faso exacerbated intercommunal tensions and facilitated the recruitment of fighters by JNIM or Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS, QDe.163).

24. In southern and central Mali, Katiba Macina (not listed), an affiliate of JNIM, was particularly active, and its leader, Amadou Koufa (QDi.425) was pursuing a strategy of radicalization among the Fulani community. Several Member States reported that the group was sending its cadres to the border with Mauritania and north-west of Bamako to carry out actions to control communication routes and collect taxes.

25. There was a decrease in violence against civilians around Mopti and Ségou, where, under the aegis of Katiba Macina, agreements had been reached between the Fulani and Dogon communities, which included recruitment clauses. Nevertheless, Katiba Macina's violent actions had spread eastward to Sikasso, on the border with Burkina Faso.

26. JNIM and its affiliates were thus increasing their pressure from rural areas and isolating cities to force the authorities to negotiate. However, several Member States noted that the capture of major towns would come at a cost for JNIM, which is currently focused on targeting ISGS.

27. Member States also noted a sharp increase in violence in northern and eastern Burkina Faso. JNIM and its affiliates, particularly through the strong presence of Ansarul Islam (not listed), have sought to control the north-south communication axis in the east of the country. The N18 road leading to Togo and Benin and crossing the provinces of Gnagna and Fada Ngourma was particularly targeted.

28. While ISGS experienced a slowdown of its operations in 2021 owing to attrition within its command structure and subsequent internal dissent, several Member States are now seeing a sharp increase in violence since the appointment in 2022 of the new leader, Abba al Saharawi (not listed). The central media arm of ISIL (al-Furqan) capitalized on the claims by ISGS of operational success against JNIM, as evidenced during the assault on the town of Telatai in September 2022. ISGS is extending attacks into Gao, the west bank of the Niger River and towards northern Burkina Faso. It has increased recruitment within the Fulani community by exploiting the frustrations and differences they have with the Daoussak community, with one Member State noting the heightened capacity and resilience of ISGS.

29. Owing to its expansion and the community tensions it fuels, ISGS must fight the security forces of the Sahelian countries, as well as JNIM, which concentrates its forces in eastern Mali, and Tuareg militias, such as the Groupe d'autodéfense des Touaregs Imghad et leurs alliés (GATIA) and the Mouvement pour le salut de L'Azawad (MSA), which, according to one Member State, has no choice but to mobilize in the face of its attacks.

30. The deteriorating security situation is spreading rapidly southward to Togo and Benin, where JNIM or its affiliates are now conducting attacks and could seek to reproduce the same pattern of leveraging and exploiting community tensions. Less

affected by this violence, Ghana could become the next target of JNIM, according to several Member States.

31. Both ISGS and JNIM finance themselves through the levying of taxes, such as zakat, to fund the recruitment of fighters. They also take advantage of security forces' weaknesses and are able to seize weapons during attacks on barracks.

North Africa

32. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – Libya (ISIL-Libya, QDe.165) continues to face challenges following strikes against its positions in southern Libya, which eliminated important field commanders. This has caused the group to redeploy to several cities in the south, including Fazzan, Sabha, Awbari, Murzuq, umm al-Aranib, Qatrun, Ghadwah and Fuqaha', as well as to mountainous areas, such as Akakus and Jabal al-Aswad.

33. ISIL-Libya continues to be resilient, exploiting the local political crisis and economic decline in the south, while maintaining cooperation with tribal elements involved in smuggling and illicit trade, which attract new fighters.⁴ The group finances itself from arms smuggling in southern Libya, taxes on illicit trade routes and kidnapping for ransom, in addition to small and medium-sized enterprises in Sahel towns run by their sympathisers, especially in western Libya.

34. ISIL-Libya is led by Abdulsalam Darkullah (not listed), who recently changed the organization's deployment strategy in southern Libya, dividing its fighters into six main cells of 30 to 40 individuals. The group also uses foreign fighters from Ghana, Kenya, the Niger, Nigeria and the Sudan.

35. One Member State indicated that the Sahara Army, formed in 2016, is affiliated with ISIL. It is led by Abdulaziz Mahwaz Al-Jamal and aims to establish a "caliphate" in Libya. It accounts for around 1,400 fighters, including sleeper cells that possess mortars, portable grenade launchers and small arms. This potential association might indicate that ISIL-Libya is stronger than previously estimated.

36. Al-Qaida in Libya utilized the city of Awbari as a pivot to other active terrorist organizations in the Sahel, including JNIM. Al-Qaida had intensified its efforts to transfer fighters from the Niger to Libya and settle them around the town of Awbari, where they were hosted by Faknan Targhi (head of security) and placed in guest houses by Hasan Awshi (alias Abu Talhah al-Targhi) and Muhammad Sidi Umar, all not listed.

37. In southern Libya, Al-Qaida depends on a strategy of intermarriage and embedding with local tribes to maintain legitimacy. Expansion plans focused on Sahel-Saharan countries, in particular northern Mali, and cities vital to its activities, including Awbari and Ghat, where local cells facilitated logistics.

38. Counter-terrorism pressure by Egypt in the Sinai had reduced the presence of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (ABM) locally. Nevertheless, the group remained active and resilient, targeting local communities and Egyptian security forces. Its strength is assessed by Member States at around 1,000 fighters. It mainly concentrates in the north, with a recent shift from the north-east to the north-west, likely attributed to personnel issues. One Member State noted that western regions offered escape routes to the Sinai Mountains in the south. The reduction of ABM capabilities was credited to Egyptian public investments and infrastructure programmes in the Sinai Peninsula. Some Member States noted the improved capability of ABM in perpetrating terrorist

⁴ From southern Libya, as well as Algeria, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, the Sudan, Tunisia, and mercenaries from Chadian and Sudanese opposition groups active in southern Libya.

acts, such as in the village of Jalbanat in August and the targeting of the Egyptian 26th Military Brigade in July.

39. In Morocco, the terrorist threat persists. Several terrorist plots targeting security service facilities using explosives, firearms or knives had been thwarted. Terrorist cells operating clandestinely online were a cause of growing concern, with recent arrests producing evidence of operational planning. In the rest of North Africa, ISIL- and Al-Qaida-affiliated groups remained constrained, owing in part to counter-terrorism pressure, particularly in Algeria and Tunisia, as well as the movement of some fighters to the Sahel.

B. Iraq and the Levant

40. ISIL (Da'esh) continues to suffer substantial leadership losses in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, with the November 30 announcement of the death of ISIL leader Abu al-Hassan al-Hashemi al-Qurashi and succession of Abu al-Husain al-Husaini al-Qurashi as the new leader. His death occurred during operations on 15 to 17 October 2022 in Jasim, Dara'a governorate, southern Syrian Arab Republic.

41. The former leader was identified by a few Member States under the aliases "Abdal-Rahman al-Iraqi" and "Sayf Baghdad"; the identity behind those aliases was reported as Nur al-Din Abdul'ilah Mutni (Iraqi, not listed). His status and identity were confined to a limited circle, and he reportedly did not have a deputy. The identity of the newly announced leader remains unknown. One Member State portrayed him as an ISIL veteran of Iraqi origin who likely will continue the same strategy of his predecessor.

42. The Syrian ISIL leadership branch also suffered setbacks, with the deaths of its leader, Maher al-Agal, in July in north-west Syrian Arab Republic, and one of his deputies, Abu-Hashum al-Umawi, in October in northern Syrian Arab Republic, in operations mounted by the United States. Several other ISIL leaders or facilitators were killed or captured, including through arrests by Türkiye. One Member State indicated that Juma'a Awwad Ibrahim al-Badri (not listed) had also been detained along with, or shortly after, the arrest of Bashar Khattab Ghazal al-Sumaida'i (not listed), ruling both out as the former ISIL leader.

43. Although the attrition of leadership weakened ISIL core, Member States assess the group to remain resilient. ISIL is estimated to have 5,000 to 7,000 members and supporters spread between the two countries, roughly half of whom are fighters.

44. In the Syrian Arab Republic, ISIL is attempting to move its leadership away from areas of enhanced counter-terrorism pressure, spreading its cells of around 15 to 30 individuals across the country, including in the south, notably in Dar'a, while maintaining hideouts west of the Euphrates River. The group continued its guerrilla warfare tactics, waging asymmetric attacks against Syrian government forces, Syrian Democratic Forces and civilians, with operations concentrated in Dayr al-Zawr and Homs governorates, reaching Hama, Hasakah and Raqqah. The central (Badiyah) desert continues to be strategic to ISIL, to train and reorganize.

45. One Member State cited ISIL links with facilitation networks that were connected with the north of the Syrian Arab Republic and that operated from a neighbouring country. These included the provision of logistical support and guesthouses in exchange for payment. The guesthouses are usually headed by women, often unaware of their guests' identities, and are organized in different categories according to the countries of origin of the ISIL members.

46. In Idlib, the Al-Nusrah Front for the People of the Levant (also known as Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, HTS, QDe.137) remains the predominant Al-Qaida affiliate,

commanding between 7,000 and 10,000 fighters, including around 1,000 foreign fighters. HTS maintained a locally oriented focus and sought to expand its presence beyond Idlib, as manifested in its October expansion towards Afrin. The group exercised a harsh governance system through arbitrary arrests and use of torture. Despite the group's attempts to portray a disassociation from Al-Qaida, some HTS leaders eulogized al-Zawahiri. HTS generated income mainly from controlled territory, benefiting from its monopoly on public services, and trading commodities, in addition to taxation, extortion, online donations and community fundraising campaigns. Its monthly earnings from trading fuel and energy through the front company Watad Petroleum (see [S/2021/68](#), para. 16) and its subsidiaries were estimated at approximately \$1.5 million.

47. Khatiba al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (KTJ, QDe.168) remains the most capable Central Asian terrorist group acting under the HTS umbrella, with its strength increasing to approximately 800. HTS was reported to view negatively the listing of KTJ on the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions list in March 2022 and renamed KTJ to Liwa Abu Ubayda.

48. According to several Member States, the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM, QDe.088), also known as the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), worked closely with HTS in Idlib. One Member State reported that the two groups had conducted joint training on uncrewed aerial vehicles and other weapons. According to that Member State, in October, ETIM/TIP had dispatched dozens of people to join HTS' fight against the Syrian National Army in Aleppo and had seized Afrin district. It had procured weapons in large quantities and had strengthened military training. One Member State reported that the group had trained more than 500 minors, indoctrinating the ideology of "armed liberation of East Turkistan", two hundred of whom had enrolled in the order of battle and had participated in front-line armed patrol missions. The group actively recruited Chinese nationals from ISIL in the Syrian Arab Republic.

49. The other major Al-Qaida branch, Hurras al-Din (HAD, not listed), led by Samir Hijazi (aliases Abu Hammam al-Shami, Faruq al-Suri, Abu Hammam al-Askari, not listed),⁵ maintained a low-profile presence, including in the south of the Idlib de-escalation zone and north of Latakia. No significant change in its leadership was reported. Some Member States assess the group's strength at 1,500 to 2,000⁶ fighters, while others estimate it at 300 to 500 active fighters. The continuous pressure by HTS on HAD hampered its operational capabilities, reportedly forcing a move from Idlib to areas further north, closer to Türkiye. The group still aspires to attack the West but faces difficulties in securing financing. One Member State indicated that HAD receives direct instructions from Sayf al-'Adl.

50. In Iraq, the ISIL insurgency remains effective. The group maintained its ability to perpetrate attacks despite Iraqi counter-terrorism efforts that had killed around 150 ISIL operatives this year. The group operated in rural mountainous areas, profiting from the porous Iraqi-Syrian border.

51. The frequency of ISIL attacks in Iraq slightly abated during the reporting period. Some Member States indicated that ISIL seeks, under the direction of its leader in Iraq, Abdallah Makki Muslih al-Rafi'i (alias Abu Khadija, not listed), to deliberately reduce visibility, to rebuild and recover from losses. ISIL maintains its manoeuvrability to evade attacks by Iraqi forces.

⁵ Samir Hijazi is believed to be the son-in-law of Sayf al-'Adl (QDi.001) (see [S/2021/68](#), para. 17).

⁶ One Member State noted half of the fighters were from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and Central Asian countries.

52. Activities in Iraq were concentrated in two areas: a “logistical theatre” in Anbar, Nineveh and Mosul Governorates; and an “operational theatre” comprising Kirkuk, Diyala, Salah al-Din and North Baghdad. One high-profile attack occurred on 18 December in Kirkuk that led to more than 10 casualties. ISIL attacks in these areas underscored the importance of maintaining enhanced cooperation between Iraqi and Peshmerga forces. The group continued to target Iraqi security forces, community leaders and civilians, mainly via armed assaults and improvised explosive device detonations.

53. Despite current setbacks, the risk remains of an ISIL resurgence in the core conflict zone. Neighbouring countries are also vulnerable to ISIL-directed or -inspired attacks. One Member State reported that, on 26 October, an ISIL (Da’esh) fighter attacked the Shah-e-Cheragh Shrine in Shiraz, Islamic Republic of Iran, killing 15 people, including 3 children. ISIL (Da’esh) claimed responsibility in its weekly magazine.

54. The potential for the group’s reach to extend beyond the immediate region persists, making continued international coordination on countering ISIL essential, particularly in northern Syrian Arab Republic.

C. Arabian Peninsula

55. Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP, QDe.129), operating in Yemen under the leadership of Khalid Batarfi (not listed), faces ongoing setbacks owing to sustained counter-terrorism pressure and internal frictions. The group continued to exploit the conducive environment to rebuild and expand local operations to attack coalition and foreign forces. Notwithstanding setbacks, AQAP persisted as a local and regional threat that could extend further abroad.

56. AQAP maintained a presence mostly in Hadramawt, Shabwah, Ma’rib, Bayda’ and Abyan Governorates, with sleeper cells in Mahrah, the Hadramawt coast, Aden and Lahij. While it is difficult to assess the precise size of AQAP owing to its integration with certain local tribes, the estimate of its strength ranges from the low thousands to 2,500 to 3,000 fighters. One Member State described Batarfi as an ineffective leader, unable to provide suitable financial and logistical means for AQAP. The leadership cadre includes Ibrahim Mohamed al-Banna (security), Ibrahim Ahmed al-Qosi (sharia) and Sa’ad bin Atef al-Awlaki (operations), all not listed.

57. AQAP had increased attacks in the southern governorates of Shabwah and Abyan, mainly in retaliation for the “arrows of the east” initiative that had begun in August. This may be indicative of the tendency of AQAP to intensify efforts under pressure rather than change strategy. One Member State indicated that the attacks underscored the threat that AQAP posed and its offensive ambitions in the southern governorates. The group’s attacks had been covered in AQAP media outlets, which continued to incite lone actor attacks in the Gulf region and the West. Member States consider AQAP media productions a major radicalization tool.

58. To mitigate infiltration, AQAP increasingly relies on a decentralized structure allowing each cell to operate independently, connected through specific individuals responsible for security. AQAP cooperated with Al-Shabaab and a network of associated individuals in smuggling weapons. A few Member States noted a movement of fighters from Somalia to Yemen, and possibly vice versa, but with no clarity as to purpose. One Member State cited opportunistic cooperation between Houthis and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Yemen (ISIL-Yemen, QDe.166) in addition to AQAP (see [S/2022/547](#), para. 53).

59. AQAP derives revenues from robbery, including of banks and exchange companies, as well as smuggling weapons and petrochemicals and counterfeit currencies. To secure additional funding, the group increased kidnapping for ransom operations (with AQAP reportedly reducing its cut to one fifth). AQAP is recruiting to replenish its ranks and reinforce tribal support.

60. ISIL-Yemen claimed one attack in July after slipping into near-obscurity. Some fighters pledged allegiance to the new ISIL leader, but the group is expected to continue to decline, outperformed by AQAP. The group has no leader, and internal disputes appear significant. Fighters in Bayda' and Aden Governorates formed sleeper cells, while leaders utilized safe havens in Shabwah and Ma'rib. One Member State assesses ISIL-Yemen's strength at around 250 fighters, most of whom are AQAP defectors. The sharia official, Nasir Muhammed 'Awad al-Ghidani al-Harbi, and the media official, Abdul Aziz al-Shedri, are not listed. One Member State noted coordination between ISIL-Yemen and ISIL-Somalia in the smuggling of weapons and operatives.

D. Europe

61. Member States described the threat of terrorism in Europe as endogenous, stemming from self-radicalized individuals. Although ISIL propaganda has lost momentum and peer influence, the new pro-Al-Qaida English-language magazine, "Mujahideen in the West", produced by Hurras Al-Tawheed, caters to a younger audience of prospective adherents and continues to incite lone-actor operations in Europe. Member States noted attacks within prisons by self-radicalized inmates targeting prison officers. One Member State noted with growing concern the threat from former convicts of terror-related crimes who continue radical ideology following their release.

62. Member States flagged the threat of returning foreign terrorist fighters reinventing themselves as recruiters to form homegrown cells on European soil. Most are individuals skilled in radicalization and directly linked to central commands in conflict zones. In October, the Spanish National Police dismantled an ISIL cell in Melilla, Spain, that had indoctrinated and recruited more than 50 minors whom they gathered in different public parks and mosques in the city; 13 individuals were arrested in Melilla and Granada, Spain, and two in Nador, Morocco. Two of the detainees had previously been convicted of recruiting fighters and sending them to Mali. The cell, whose leader was the imam of the Assalam mosque in Melilla, had established a well-organized infrastructure that produced and disseminated ISIL propaganda on different digital platforms.

63. Several Member States expressed concern that the Balkans provided a route for terrorists to gain access to European territory undetected. In August, the Spanish National Police arrested two foreign terrorist fighters from North Africa who had joined Al-Qaida in the Syrian Arab Republic in 2014, had gained combat experience in conflict zones and had travelled by irregular means across Türkiye, Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary and Austria. They had used migrant smuggling networks in Serbia, which had provided them with forged passports to enter the Schengen zone. One Member State stressed the additional challenge of intercepting foreign fighters travelling overland from the Balkans through the Schengen zone, compared with those returning by sea, who are subject to biometric controls upon arrival at the Mediterranean coast.

64. Member States noted the abuse of terror-linked non-profit organizations that are not listed. Al-Bashaer, an Egyptian non-profit registered in Türkiye with a likely affiliate organization in the Syrian Arab Republic, had been instrumental in transferring funds under the guise of humanitarian aid for orphans in eastern Ghouta,

Syrian Arab Republic, from Spain-based donors coordinated by Fares Kutayni to known members of a HTS militia in Idlib, led by Manaf Kutayni (both individuals not listed) for the purposes of recruiting and training future terrorist fighters.

65. Member States noted the implications of repatriation policies in Western Europe and the risk of female returnees indoctrinating others, especially minors, thereby questioning the effectiveness of existing rehabilitation and reintegration programmes. Prosecutors from one Member State highlighted the challenge of establishing the nationality of Syrian Arab Republic-born children of their citizens, whose legal status remains unresolved in many European countries, and its impact on civil rights and reintegration policies.

66. In the context of the recently concluded trials for the 2015 Paris attacks, as well as the 2016 attacks in Brussels and Nice, France, one Member State noted the challenge in denying defendants a platform to portray themselves as victims or heroes, thereby feeding terrorist propaganda, while also discouraging participation in terrorism through judicial processes.

E. Asia

Central and South Asia

67. Afghanistan remains the primary source of terrorist threat for Central and South Asia. It originates from groups including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K, QDe.161), Al-Qaida (QDe.004), Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP, QDe.132), as well as ETIM/TIP, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU, QDe.010), Islamic Jihad Group (QDe.119), Khatiba Imam al-Bukhari (KIB, QDe.158), Khatiba al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (KTJ, QDe.168), Jamaat Ansarullah (not listed) and others. These groups enjoy greater freedom of movement in Afghanistan owing to the absence of an effective Taliban security strategy.

68. ISIL-K portrays itself as the primary rival to the Taliban de facto administration, with its strategic focus on Afghanistan and beyond in the historical Khorasan region. Its main goal is to portray the Taliban as incapable of providing security in the country. By targeting diplomatic missions, ISIL-K seeks to undermine the relationship between the Taliban and neighbouring countries. The 5 September attack on the Russian Embassy in Kabul was the first against a diplomatic presence in Afghanistan since the Taliban took control; in December, ISIL-K claimed attacks against the Pakistan Embassy and a hotel that accommodated Chinese nationals. It also threatened to launch terrorist attacks against Chinese, Indian and Iranian embassies in Afghanistan. Apart from high-profile attacks, ISIL-K conducts low-level attacks nearly daily, causing fear in local communities, targeting Shia minorities to undermine Taliban Pashtun authority and challenging nascent security agencies.

69. Regional Member States estimated current ISIL-K strength at between 1,000 and 3,000 fighters, of whom approximately 200 were of Central Asian origin, but other Member States believed that number could be as much as 6,000. Core ISIL-K cells are located primarily in the eastern Kunar, Nangarhar and Nuristan Provinces of Afghanistan, with a large cell active in Kabul and its environs. Smaller groups had been detected in the northern and north-eastern Badakhshan, Faryab, Jowzjan, Kunduz, Takhar and Balkh Provinces. Since Balkh is one of the most economically developed provinces in the north, it remained of primary interest to ISIL-K in terms of revenue generation. One Member State reported that ISIL-K had started smuggling narcotics, which was a new development.

70. The ISIL-K magazine “Voice of Khorasan” releases propaganda in Pashto, Persian, Tajik, Uzbek and Russian languages; recent outreach in Tajik and Uzbek was

noteworthy following a man named Rashidov, an Uzbekistan national, joining the ISIL-K media wing. With the goal of recruiting from ethnic groups in the region and strengthening the group's capabilities, ISIL-K had recruited Rashidov online while he was working in Finland as a labour migrant, before moving to Afghanistan. ISIL-K used the teachings of Syrian Arab Republic-based radicalizing ideologist Abu Mohammad Qosoni (Khodjihonov). The propaganda of the Tablighi Jamaat movement in Kyrgyzstan, the only country in Central Asia where it is not banned, was spreading to neighbouring countries. Ethnic Uzbek and Tajiks were targeted for recruitment, with approximately 200 Uzbekistan nationals reportedly joining groups in the Syrian Arab Republic since the beginning of 2021.

71. Member States reported no significant change in Al-Qaida's strength since the previous report. Despite the announcement by the United States of the killing of Al-Zawahiri, ties between Al-Qaida and the Taliban remain close, as underscored by the regional presence of Al-Qaida core leadership and affiliated groups, such as Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (not listed). It was expected that Al-Qaida would remain in Afghanistan for the near future. According to one Member State, Al-Qaida-linked Katiba Umer Farooq (Red Unit) was possibly being re-activated in Kunar and Nuristan Provinces following the return of Abu Ikhlas al-Masri, Al-Qaida's operations commander who had been captured in Kunar Province in 2010. It also reported that he had resumed leadership after his release following the Taliban takeover.

72. On 2 September, IMU leader "Usmon" (Madumarov Kholimzhon Paradayevich), a Tajikistan national, was killed by unknown attackers. He was succeeded by "Noman" (Samatov Mamasoli), the IMU deputy, who had previously been in charge of finance. Several Member States reported that ETIM/TIP continued its relocation from Badakhshan to Baghlan Province, establishing operational sites and arsenals there. One Member State noted cooperation between ETIM/TIP and ISIL-K, despite the fact that historically the former had aligned with Al-Qaida. According to that State, the groups had exchanged personnel and planned joint operations, with ETIM/TIP providing military instructors to ISIL-K and sending members to join its operational unit responsible for tracking Chinese nationals and carrying out attacks. On 29 July, they had plotted in Kabul to purchase weapons and conduct terrorist attacks against Chinese targets in Afghanistan. Both groups had jointly published Uyghur-language propaganda posters. Whether such cooperation between the groups was strategic or opportunist required further study.

73. Some Member States reported developments in the relationship between ETIM/TIP and TTP, with the former providing TTP with intelligence and explosive devices and the latter pledging support to ETIM/TIP as it infiltrated Pakistan. One Member State reported that ETIM/TIP cooperated with Jamaat Ansarullah and IMU on redeploying some of its armed forces in Badakhshan in September.

74. Several Member States reported that the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan had emboldened TTP to escalate attacks against Pakistan. On 28 November, TTP announced the end of the May ceasefire with the Government of Pakistan following the killing of two senior TTP commanders in Afghanistan. According to one Member State, while there had been a decrease in attacks against Pakistani security forces in the early months of the ceasefire, that number had increased gradually as TTP consolidated its presence in Afghanistan. In August, Abdul Wali Rakhib (alias Omar Khalid Khurasani), a founding member and military commander of TTP, was killed along with two other TTP leaders in Paktika Province, Afghanistan. He was reportedly succeeded by Mukarram Shah (alias Umar Khorasani, not listed). According to one Member State, on 14 July, TTP announced its decision to approve the application of "Majeed Brigade" to join TTP.

South-East Asia

75. Terrorist activity in South-East Asia remained low during the reporting period, notwithstanding the sizable presence of terrorist groups associated with ISIL, including the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG, QDe.001), and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI, QDe.092), which has historically worked with Al-Qaida. In Malaysia, curfews on the Sabah coast has curbed incursions by ASG. ISIL carried out attacks in September and called for fighters in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore to join the group. JI, which is not affiliated with ISIL, continued to focus on recruitment and the infiltration of Indonesian institutions.

76. One Member State noted that porous borders presented a threat from returning foreign terrorist fighters in the tri-border area in the Sulu and Celebes Seas, comprising Sabah state in the east of Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia. North African individuals linked to Al-Qaida seeking to relocate to South-East Asia presented a threat to the region. Concern exists that those individuals could form the basis for new terrorist activities. ISIL-South-East Asia (QDe.169) remains heavily reliant on funds from ISIL core to increase propaganda activities and attacks.

77. According to one Member State, counter-terrorism forces had dealt a blow to the Indonesian Timur Mujahidin group when one of the group's senior commanders, Jaid (alias Pak Guru), was killed in September in the Central Sulawesi province. Furthermore, the Indonesian counter-terrorism unit Densus 88 had arrested 17 members of JI and 15 members of Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (QDe-164) during July and September 2022. Indonesia also identified five Indonesian ISIL fighters that had transferred money from Indonesia and Türkiye for individuals in the Deir Al-Azur and al-Hawl camps for recruitment activities involving minors. World Human Care (not listed), a non-profit organization established by the Indonesian Mujahidin Council (not listed) provided funds and weapons to ISIL fighters in the Syrian Arab Republic.

78. In the Philippines, collaboration between former insurgent groups and security forces had resulted in the arrest in July and August of four militants from the Maute Group (not listed) and the arrest of two members of the Hassan Group (ISIL-affiliated). In addition, a lack of support among the population and the harsh conditions in Mindanao had resulted in the surrender of eight militants from the Maute Group and another from the Hassan Group, who received amnesty from the Government. In November, the attrition of militants due to counter-terrorism operations had led to the surrender of 150 ASG members in Mindanao in exchange for amnesty. In October, an ASG subcommander, Indang Susukan, was killed at a high-security prison in Zamboanga City.

III. Impact assessment

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

79. Member State estimates of ISIL (Da'esh) cash reserves held in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq range from \$25 million to \$50 million, with several assessing that reserves are depleting. ISIL finances support affiliates and members around the world, as well as recruitment and propaganda operations, and help to secure the release of detainees from prisons and internally displaced persons camps. The largest ISIL expense, however, is payment of salaries to fighters and financial assistance to families of deceased and imprisoned fighters, which reach hundreds of thousands of

dollars. While the financial structure of ISIL has proven resilient against leadership removal, current pressure on the organization is resulting in a decline in revenues.

80. Furthermore, counter-terrorism operations place ISIL revenue streams under pressure, with ISIL core's expenses for weapons, ammunition, training and salaries outpacing its income. Fundraising therefore has become critical for the organization. Scarcity of resources has resulted in declining morale.

81. Revenue generation methods vary according to the location of ISIL affiliates (i.e., illicit trade in natural resources), but funds are raised primarily through extortion, looting, donations, zakat and kidnapping for ransom, which has increased. One Member State noted that ISIL raises funds from drug trafficking, specifically fenethylline (Captagon). ISIL still controls illegal commercial routes and taxes smugglers of weapons and narcotics and human traffickers. Some Member States contended that oil smuggling continued as a revenue source in some ISIL areas, such as Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic. One Member State reported that ISIL has begun laundering money through investments in legitimate businesses, such as hotels and real estate in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. ISIL had reportedly also used livestock theft to raise money and create instability among tribes.

82. Hawala and mobile money services continued as the dominant means used by ISIL to move money, along with cash couriers, currency exchanges, secure payment systems and virtual assets. ISIL is increasingly using virtual currencies, especially "stable coins". One Member State noted the use of one (Tether) with transactions greater than \$100,000 to fund ISIL-K, demonstrating increased sophistication in the use of lesser-known privacy-enhanced cryptocurrencies. ISIL continued to fundraise on social media platforms, often using creative means, such as the exchange of video gaming points to fiat currency. Some Member States observed that ISIL directed financial donations online, instead of having supporters travel to conflict zones, and that ISIL sought to develop in-house communication technologies.

83. Of particular note, Iraq had its first known conviction in a terrorist financing case since the adoption of its 2005 terrorist financing law. Muhammad Abd-al-Qadir Mutni Assaf Al-Rawi, the head of the Al-Rawi financing network, was sentenced to life imprisonment in March for moving funds and conducting black market exchange operations (see [S/2021/655](#), para. 68).

B. Resolution 2347 (2017) on cultural heritage

84. No specific incidents were reported during the reporting period, although connections between transnational organized criminal networks and terrorist organizations have been observed in the trade of cultural property.

85. The illicit trade in cultural heritage, used to finance terrorism, benefits from a lack of transparency and trafficking in unmonitored spaces. The ease of cross-border transfers and storage of cryptocurrencies makes the market suited to illicit transfers of money, potentially facilitating the financing of terrorism. Income from trading in antiques and other cultural treasures stolen from conflict zones enables terrorist groups to support recruitment and strengthen their operational capacity to carry out terrorist attacks. Furthermore, cryptocurrencies, gaming platforms, social media and hawala are exploited to market and traffic antiquities.

86. One Member State highlighted that terrorist organizations continue to exploit cultural heritage by collecting "taxes" or permitting excavation. Areas around the Bamiyan cliff in Afghanistan, where the Buddha niches are located, suffered looting and illegal excavations. Mitigating the risk of Al-Qaida profiting from the illegal trade in antiquities, art trade associations from Australia, Czechia, France, Germany, Italy,

Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States joined efforts to prevent the illicit trafficking in cultural heritage from Afghanistan and Central Asian countries. Member States expressed caution about the possible trade in Afghan looted artifacts. Several Member States noted the key role that the Council of Europe Convention on Offences Relating to Cultural Property can play in limiting terrorist revenues by criminalizing the illicit excavation, destruction and damage of cultural heritage.

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

87. Although there had been some progress with repatriation programmes, Member States noted no significant improvement as regards the situation in camps and detention centres, in particular in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic (S/2022/547, paras. 88–91). The security and humanitarian risks continued to be grave, and the situation was volatile, with serious potential consequences for both the regional and global threat landscape. Concerns remained acute, including that the camps were producing the next generation of ISIL (Da'esh) fighters.

88. Prison break operations led by ISIL to replenish operational and leadership cadres remained a serious risk. However, one Member State assessed that, despite releasing 100 to 300 detainees, on balance ISIL had lost significant military capabilities in its January 2022 attack on the prison in Hasakah (ibid., para. 91). It was still working to rebuild that capability.

89. In north-east Syrian Arab Republic, the operation mounted in late August by Syrian Democratic Forces to eradicate ISIL facilitation networks in the al-Hawl camp resulted in over 200 arrests of ISIL-related members, the discovery of tunnels and the confiscation of weapons. While the operation degraded ISIL capabilities in the camp, the group continues to use the camp for recruitment.

90. Assessments of the number of Iraqis, Syrians and foreign terrorist fighters in camps and prisons varied but were broadly consistent with previous reports. Assessments of the number of foreign terrorist fighters at large in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq range from 2,000 to 3,000. The absence of foreign troops in Afghanistan limits the country's appeal for these fighters as a theatre of conflict. Member States reported no significant flow of foreign terrorist fighters from the Syrian Arab Republic to Afghanistan, owing in part to the ban by HTS on its members leaving the Syrian Arab Republic, the absence of any call by influential preachers and the Taliban's discomfort with the risks of transfers of foreign terrorist fighters, as existed in the 1990s and early 2000s. Several Member States reported that some foreign terrorist fighters in Afghanistan had received domestic identity documents (tazkiras) from Taliban de facto authorities. Afghanistan remained attractive as a safe haven, rather than a front.

91. Member States noted that, since 2019, four Central Asian countries – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan – had repatriated 1,320 Central Asian nationals from camps in the Syrian Arab Republic and prisons in Iraq, mostly women and children who had previously lived under ISIL. Repatriated women and children were provided with medical, psychological, financial and social assistance in their respective countries, including access to educational and social programmes, housing and employment. Member States assessed that such measures mitigated potential terrorist risks in the medium and long term.

IV. Implementation of sanctions measures

A. Travel ban

92. During the reporting period, no travel ban exemption requests were submitted to the Committee 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.

93. The effectiveness of travel ban measures relies on the quality of the United Nations Security Council Consolidated List. Several Member States noted, however, that challenges remain in guaranteeing that biometric collection systems are interoperable with national watch lists for the effective screening and interdiction of listed individuals. Member States continue 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. The Monitoring Team has 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.

B. Assets freeze

94. In paragraph 46 of its resolution [2610 \(2021\)](#), the Security Council called upon all States to submit an updated report to the Committee on measures taken to freeze assets and exemptions thereto. A note verbale containing a link to an online form for the submission of that report was circulated to all Member States on 5 May 2022; the deadline for receiving the reports was 1 November 2022. Another note verbale was sent on 23 September to remind Member States of the upcoming deadline. In total, 25 Member States reported to the Committee. The Monitoring Team stands ready to brief the Committee regarding the responses.

95. During the reporting period, the Committee received and approved two requests for assets freeze exemptions through the focal point for delisting, for basic and extraordinary expenses.

C. Arms embargo

96. With a spotlight on Africa, Member States noted with concern the proliferation of conventional and improvised weapons on the Continent.

97. Regional Member States noted that, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, weapons used by ADF were mostly captured from the Forces armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) in battle, as well as during attacks on armouries. There was also prolific trafficking in ammunition. In Goma and Beni, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, armour-piercing bullets had been used against helicopters and the United Nations Force Intervention Brigade. In Northern Mozambique, weapons had been seized from police armouries in towns that had come under attack, with rapid intervention units in Nangade suffering several attacks recently.

98. Weapons used by ASWJ include: AK-47 rifles, light machine guns –(PKMs), heavy machine guns, grenade launchers with tripods and optics to target helicopters with armour-piercing ammunition, grenades, mortars, RPG-7 guns with anti-personnel ammunition to penetrate soft-skin vehicles, explosives, and detonators for

improvised explosive devices using solar rechargeable cell phone batteries. Member States noted the construction of improvised explosive devices in ASWJ and ADF camps, with evidence of batteries, soldered components for improvised explosive devices and remote detonators being assembled in camps. ASWJ used abducted women to assemble components. Improvised explosive devices have been used against the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique and Rwandan forces in Cabo Delgado Province.

99. Member States assessed that a trainer would have had to have come to Mozambique to train ASWJ in constructing improvised explosive devices. Explosives are made of ammonium nitrate (fertilizer). ASWJ has the necessary equipment in the bush, including generators stolen from mining companies and grinding machines for ammonium nitrate. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the improvised explosive device techniques used by ADF have advanced, with increased use in cities, carrying bigger payloads and better triggers, indicating the involvement of outside trainers.

100. Member States note that, off the coast of Cabo Delgado, weapons have been delivered by sea, using floating plastic bags with markers. Buoys with solar-powered satellite communications transmit their location. Weapons are also transported in fuel trucks using compartmentalized welded platforms, crossing porous borders throughout the region.

101. With respect to uncrewed aerial systems, or drones, authorities in Mozambique reported shooting down two ASWJ surveillance drones. Drones had also been used by ADF. In West Africa JNIM, ISGS and Islamic State in West Africa Province had used reconnaissance drones for surveillance. The African Union Mission in Somalia had detected the use of mini/micro uncrewed aerial systems over a military base in the Middle Shabelle region of Somalia.

102. Member States assessed that members of Al-Shabaab were part of a weapons trafficking network in Yemen. Al-Shabaab transported improvised explosive device components, ammunition and arms from Yemen to Somalia via boats. AQAP members were identified to be part of an Al-Shabaab weapons trafficking network in Yemen, trafficking anti-vehicle land mines, rocket-propelled grenades, AK-47s, machine guns and sniper rifles with silencers and telescopic sights.

103. ISIL-Somalia members also smuggled weapons from Yemen to Somalia via dhows using middlemen in Puntland. The middlemen supplied weapons to both ISIL-Somalia and Al-Shabaab and have no specific allegiance.

V. Recommendations

104. Many Member States raised with the Monitoring Team concerns that their Governments, as a matter of policy, use the term “Da’esh” rather than “ISIL” or variations thereof. Those Member States wish to disassociate Islam from a narrow terrorist group that includes the word “Islamic” in the name it has given itself, as it could give credibility to its narratives. This creates obstacles for the effective implementation of the 1267 sanctions regime, as the term “Da’esh” appears less frequently in the Monitoring Team’s reports and other communications with States, in line with relevant Security Council resolutions, and in the related list entry.

105. The Monitoring Team wishes to draw the Committee’s attention to Member States’ concerns and highlights that “Da’esh” does not appear in the relevant list entry of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, QDe.115), with consequent challenges regarding sanctions implementation. The Monitoring Team would find it helpful if the Committee could consider how to resolve this issue, perhaps by an

amendment to the list entry. The Team stands ready to provide any assistance, if required.

106. The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee engage with Member States to explore how existing tools under the 1267 sanctions regime could be utilized to address the issue of terrorism on the continent of Africa.

107. In its 30th report, the Monitoring Team noted the challenges encountered by some Member States regarding the quality of the list and implementing changes to the list in a timely manner ([S/2022/547](#), para. 104). At the time, the Monitoring Team reported that the issue was being addressed. The Monitoring Team continues to hear from many Member States that the problem persists and still has not been addressed. The Team emphasizes the importance of automatic notification to Member States of changes to the 1267 list and recommends that the Committee give this matter its urgent attention.

108. The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee engage Member States to encourage real-time sharing of information on foreign terrorist fighters and listed individuals, between each other and with the Committee and INTERPOL, in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions.

VI. Monitoring Team activities and feedback

109. During the reporting period, as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has eased, the Monitoring Team resumed its practice of extensive travel for face-to-face meetings with Member States. The quality of dialogue between experts in a secure environment, including with intelligence and security agencies, added value. Greater disruption to complex travel schedules had a negative impact on the Monitoring Team's efficiency. The Team requests maximum flexibility within United Nations travel rules where necessary.

110. The Team continued to seek information relevant to its mandate and to explain and promote the sanctions regime through participation in meetings with relevant international and regional organizations, members of the private sector and civil society, as well as in partnership with the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1373 \(2001\)](#) concerning counter-terrorism, and panels of experts supporting other Security Council committees.

111. In the reporting period, the Monitoring Team carried out the annual review of listings under the 1267 regime. In parallel, it conducted a data validation exercise, as approved by the Committee, starting with the names under annual review, and made proposals for amendments to the list. In 2023, the Team will continue to conduct data validation exercises for the rest of the names on the 1267 list, to harmonize existing inconsistencies and propose further amendments.

112. The Monitoring Team welcomes feedback on the present report at 1267mt@un.org.