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aka al-Qa'ida in Iraq; al-Qa'ida Group of Jihad in Iraq; al-Qa'ida Group of Jihad in the Land of the Two Rivers; al-Qa'ida in Mesopotamia; al-Qa'ida in the Land of the Two Rivers; al-Qa'ida of Jihad in Iraq; al-Qa'ida of Jihad Organization in the Land of the Two Rivers; al-Qa'ida of the Jihad in the Land of the Two Rivers; al-Tawhid; Jam'at al-Tawhid Wa'al-Jihad; Tanzeem Qa'idat al Jihad/Bilad al Raafidaini; Tanzim Qa'idat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn; The Monotheism and Jihad Group; The Organization Base of Jihad/Country of the Two Rivers; The Organization Base of Jihad/Mesopotamia; The Organization of al-Jihad's Base in Iraq; The Organization of al-Jihad's Base in the Land of the Two Rivers; The Organization of al-Jihad's Base of Operations in Iraq; The Organization of al-Jihad's Base of Operations in the Land of the Two Rivers; The Organization of Jihad's Base in the Country of the Two Rivers; al-Zarqawi Network; Islamic State in Iraq; Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham; Islamic State in Iraq and Syria; ad-Dawla al-Islamiyya fi al-'Iraq wa-sh-Sham; Daesh; Dawla al Islamiya; Al-Furqan Establishment for Media Production; Islamic State; ISIL; ISIS

Description: Al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on December 17, 2004. In the 1990s, Jordanian militant Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi organized a terrorist group called al-Tawhid wal-Jihad to oppose the presence of U.S. and Western military forces in the Middle East and the West's support for, and the existence of, Israel. In late 2004, he joined al-Qa'ida (AQ) and pledged allegiance to Usama bin Laden, at which point al-Tawhid wal-Jihad became known as al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI). Zarqawi traveled to Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom and led his group against U.S. and Coalition Forces until his death in June 2006.

In October 2006, AQI publicly re-named itself the Islamic State in Iraq and in 2013 it adopted the moniker ISIS to express its regional ambitions as it expanded its operations to include the Syrian conflict. On May 15, 2014, the Department of State amended the Foreign Terrorist Organization designation of AQI to add several aliases, including ISIS. ISIS is led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, aka Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri, aka Abu Du'a. In June 2014, ISIS leader al-Baghdadi declared an Islamic caliphate.

Activities: As AQI, ISIS conducted numerous high profile attacks, including improvised explosive device attacks against U.S. military personnel and Iraqi infrastructure, videotaped beheadings of U.S. citizens, suicide bombings against both military and civilian targets, and rocket

attacks. ISIS perpetrates suicide and mass casualty bombings in Iraq using foreign and Iraqi operatives. In 2014, ISIS was responsible for the majority of deaths of the more than 12,000 Iraqi civilians killed that year. ISIS was heavily involved in the fighting in Syria during 2014, including against other militant opposition groups, and participated in a number of kidnapping incidents against civilians, including aid workers and reporters.

ISIS remained active throughout 2015 and 2016, conducting several large-scale attacks in Iraq and Syria and across the globe. In February 2016, a series of ISIS suicide and car bombs killed at least 129 people in Homs and Damascus, Syria. In March, ISIS carried out a suicide attack at a crowded park in Iskandariya, Iraq at the end of a football match, killing approximately 29 and wounding more than 60 others. Also in March, at least 60 people were killed in an attack claimed by ISIS in Hilla, Iraq when an explosives-laden fuel tanker ran into an Iraqi security checkpoint.

In early May 2016, two suicide car bombs claimed by ISIS killed 32 and wounded another 75 in Samawa, in southern Iraq. In mid-May, ISIS conducted a series of attacks in and around Baghdad, including suicide bombings and a car bombing at a crowded market in Sadr City that killed at least 88 people – most of them women and children. In late May, ISIS killed 12 people when the group attacked a Real Madrid Supporters' Club in Iraq where people had gathered to watch the Champions League final match. In July, ISIS claimed a car bombing at a popular shopping center in Baghdad that killed nearly 300 people, making it the single deadliest bombing in Iraq's capital city since 2003. In October, it was revealed that ISIS was using hundreds to thousands of Iraqi civilians as human shields. The group reportedly rounded up and massacred 284 men and boys before dumping their bodies in a mass grave in northern Mosul, Iraq.

The group since at least 2015 has also been responsible for integrating local children and ones brought by foreign terrorist fighters into its forces and using them as executioners and suicide attackers. ISIS has systematically prepared child soldiers in Iraq and Syria using its education and religious infrastructure as part of its training and recruitment of members.

In Iraq and Syria, ISIS's use of military equipment captured in the course of fighting gave the group greater capabilities in line with a more conventional military force, including the reported use of eastern bloc tanks, artillery, and self-developed unmanned aerial drones. According to estimates from the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq, acts of terrorism, violence, and armed conflict killed more than 6,000 civilians and injured more than 11,300 in 2016.

ISIS continued to commit atrocities against groups in areas under its control, including Yezidis, Christians, Shia Muslims, Sunni Muslims, Kurds, and other groups. In 2015 and 2016, ISIS abducted, systematically raped, and abused thousands of women and children, some as young as eight years of age. Women and children were sold and enslaved, distributed to ISIS fighters as spoils of war, forced into marriage and domestic servitude, or subjected to physical and sexual abuse. ISIS established "markets" where women and children were sold with price tags attached and has published a list of rules on how to treat female slaves once captured. (For further information, refer to *the Trafficking in Persons Report 2016*, <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2015/index.htm>.)

ISIS also directs, enables, and inspires individuals to conduct attacks and act on behalf of the group around the world, including in the United States and Europe. In November 2015, ISIS carried out a series of coordinated attacks in Paris, France, including at a rock concert at the Bataclan concert hall, killing approximately 130 people and injuring more than 350 others; 23-year-old U.S. citizen Nohemi Gonzalez was among the dead. In March 2016, ISIS directed two simultaneous attacks in Brussels, Belgium – one at the Zaventem Airport and the other at a metro station. The attacks killed 32 people, including four U.S. citizens, and injured more than 250 people. In June 2016, a gunman who pledged allegiance to ISIS killed 49 individuals and injured

53 others at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida. In July 2016, ISIS claimed an attack in which a cargo truck drove into a crowd in Nice, France, during Bastille Day celebrations, resulting in 86 deaths, including three U.S. citizens. In December 2016, ISIS claimed responsibility for a truck attack on a crowded Christmas market in Berlin, Germany that killed 12 people and injured 48 others.

Although ISIS has not claimed responsibility, it was likely responsible for several attacks involving chemical-filled munitions in Iraq and Syria during 2016. The United States has been proactively working with our allies to dismantle this chemical weapons capability, as well as deny ISIS and other non-state actors access to chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) -useable materials and expertise through interdictions and strengthening the ability of regional governments to detect, disrupt, and respond effectively to suspected CBRN activity.

Strength: Estimates suggest between 12,000 and 15,000 members.

Location/Area of Operation: ISIS's operations are predominately in Iraq and Syria, but 2015 and 2016 witnessed the continued creation of external ISIS branches and networks. In 2016, several branches of ISIS were designated as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) and Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs): ISIL-Libya as an FTO and SDGT in 2016; ISIS in Yemen as an SDGT in 2016; and ISIS in Saudi Arabia as an SDGT in 2016. Islamic State's Khorasan Province was designated as an FTO and SDGT in 2015. ISIS branches in the Caucasus Province and Algeria were also designated as SDGTs in 2015. In addition, supporters and associates worldwide inspired by the group's ideology may be operating without direction from ISIS central leadership.

Funding and External Aid: ISIS receives most of its funding from a variety of businesses and criminal activities within areas it controls in Iraq and Syria. Criminal activities include robbing banks, smuggling oil, looting and selling antiquities and other goods, as well as extortion, human trafficking, and kidnapping-for-ransom.

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