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Country Report on Terrorism 2018 - Chapter 5 - Islamic State's Khorasan Province

Aka ISIL Khorasan; Islamic State's Khorasan Province; ISIS Wilayat Khorasan; ISIL's South Asia Branch; South Asian chapter of ISIL.

Description: Islamic State's Khorasan Province (ISIS-K) was designated as a FTO on January 14, 2016. The group is based in Afghanistan, conducts operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and is composed primarily of former members of Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan, the Afghan Taliban, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. ISIS-K's senior leadership has pledged allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, which was accepted in late January 2015. ISIS-K has carried out suicide bombings, small arms attacks, and kidnappings in Afghanistan against civilians and Afghan National Security and Defense Forces. The group has also claimed responsibility for attacks on civilians and government officials in Pakistan.

It was reported that ISIS-K leader Hafiz Saeed Khan was killed in July 2016. Khan's former deputy and the former Taliban Commander from Logar province, Abdul Hasib, took over leadership for ISIS-K. Abdul Hasib was killed in a joint Afghan and U.S. operation in April 2017. His successor, Abu Sayeed Orakzai, was killed in August 2018.

Activities: In January 2016, the group claimed it carried out a strike on a Pakistani consulate in Afghanistan, resulting in the deaths of seven Afghan security personnel. In July 2016, the group conducted a bomb attack at a peaceful protest in Kabul, Afghanistan, that killed an estimated 80 people and wounded another 230. In August 2016, ISIS-K claimed it carried out a shooting and suicide bombing at a hospital in Quetta, Pakistan, targeting lawyers, which killed 94. It also claimed responsibility for a November 2016 suicide bombing at the Shah Noorani Shrine in Balochistan province, Pakistan, killing more than 50 people.

In July 2017, ISIS-K attacked the Iraqi Embassy in Kabul, killing two people and bombed a mosque in western Afghanistan, killing 29 people and injuring 60 others. Between October and December of 2017, ISIS-K claimed responsibility for several deadly attacks in Kabul, including ones targeting a television station, a Shia cultural center, and an Afghan intelligence office near the U.S. Embassy.

ISIS-K also claimed multiple attacks in Pakistan in 2017, including an attack on a Sufi shrine in Sindh province in February that killed at least 88 people, and an attack on a church in Quetta that killed at least nine people. In July 2018, ISIS-K claimed

responsibility for an attack on an election rally in Balochistan province in Pakistan that killed 149 people. In September 2018, ISIS-K claimed responsibility for a double suicide bombing in a Shiite majority neighborhood in Kabul, leaving more than 20 dead and 70 injured.

Strength: Estimates of ISIS-K strength ranged from 2,000 to 5,000 fighters in 2018

Location/Area of Operation: The group mainly operates in eastern Afghanistan and western Pakistan. ISIS-K operated in northern Afghanistan until its surrender to Afghan Security Forces in that region in August 2018.

Funding and External Aid: ISIS-K receives some funding from ISIS. Additional funds come from illicit criminal commerce, taxes, and extortion on the local population and businesses.

ecoi.net summary:

Brief description of Islamic State's Khorasan Province (Excerpt of chapter 5 of the country report on terrorism 2018)



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