

Country Report on Terrorism 2020 - Chapter 5 - ISIL-Libya

Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant-Libya

Aka Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant-Libya; Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant in Libya; Wilayat Barqa; Wilayat Fezzan; Wilayat Tripolitania; Wilayat Tarabulus; Wilayat al-Tarabulus

Description: The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant-Libya (ISIL-Libya) was designated as an FTO on May 20, 2016. In 2014, then-ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi dispatched a group of ISIS operatives from Syria to Libya to establish a branch of the terrorist group. In 2014, several hundred operatives set up a base in Darnah, and the following month, Baghdadi formally established the branch after announcing he had accepted oaths of allegiance from fighters in Libya.

Activities: Since becoming established, ISIL-Libya has carried out multiple attacks throughout Libya and threatened to expand ISIS's presence into other countries in Africa.

In 2015, ISIL-Libya claimed responsibility for a suicide attack on a luxury hotel in Tripoli that killed eight people, including a U.S. contractor. In 2015, ISIL-Libya released a propaganda video showing the murder of 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians who had been kidnapped from Sirte, Libya, in two separate incidents in 2014 and 2015.

In 2016, ISIL-Libya expanded operations into Libya's oil crescent, launching attacks on some of the country's largest oil installations: burning oil tanks, killing dozens, and forcing facilities to shut down operations.

In 2018, ISIL-Libya claimed responsibility for an attack on Libya's electoral commission headquarters in Tripoli that killed 14 people. Also in 2018, ISIL-Libya claimed responsibility for a suicide attack on Libya's National Oil Company headquarters that left 2 persons dead and 10 others wounded. Later that year, ISIL-Libya was implicated in an attack on a town in central Libya that resulted in 5 persons killed and 10 others kidnapped. Still later that year, ISIL-Libya claimed responsibility for an attack on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that killed three people.

In 2019, ISIL-Libya claimed responsibility for numerous attacks on the Libyan National Army (LNA). These included a dawn assault on a military training camp in the southern city of Sabhā that killed at least nine soldiers and an attack on the town of Zillah in which three soldiers were killed and four captured.

In May, ISIL-Libya claimed responsibility for three attacks on LNA forces at an LNA checkpoint in southern Libya. ISIS-Libya reportedly used explosives and Katyusha rockets in these attacks, which targeted Tamanhint Airbase, the headquarters of the LNA's 628 Battalion in Taraghin, and the LNA's Khalid Ibn al-Walid Battalion headquartered in Umm al Aranib. Also in May, ISIL-Libya conducted a separate VBIED attack targeting a LNA checkpoint in Taraghin.

Strength: ISIL-Libya is estimated to have fewer than 500 fighters.

Location/Area of Operation: Libya

Funding and External Aid: ISIL-Libya's funding comes from a variety of sources, including criminal activity, such as smuggling and extortion, and external funding. The group also receives support from ISIS [in Syria].

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Brief description of the
ISIL-Libya (Excerpt of chapter 5
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terrorism 2020)



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