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**Letter dated 11 July 2022 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 thirtieth 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) Trine **Heimerback**  
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 20 June 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 thirtieth comprehensive report, pursuant to annex I to resolution 2610 (2021). The Monitoring Team notes that the document of reference is the English original.

(Signed) Edmund **Fitton-Brown**

Coordinator

Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team

**Thirtieth 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*

Issues that have preoccupied the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team in recent reports – the spread of terrorism in Africa and the implications of the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan – remain unresolved and continue to represent major concerns for Member States. But the most dynamic developments of early 2022 have taken place in the ISIL core area. A major jailbreak in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic was of dubious operational benefit to ISIL but a great propaganda success. Meanwhile, ISIL continued to lose senior figures, most notably their leader, who was killed on 3 February. Currently, the identity of the new leader is not established. By contrast, Al-Qaida's leadership prospects have eased, and Aiman al-Zawahiri is confirmed to be alive and communicating freely.

Over the course of recent reports, the Monitoring Team has progressively built up a picture of the ISIL general directorate of provinces: structures that were put in place to sustain the group's global capability and reputation following the defeat of the territorial "caliphate". In the present report, the Monitoring Team provides a detailed account of the nine regional ISIL networks and the offices that connect them to the ISIL core. Fleshing out these networks into functioning structures is a work in progress, proceeding at uneven speeds in different locations, but this is how ISIL anticipates organizing and directing its human and other resources and reviving its external operational capability.

The threat from ISIL and Al-Qaida remains relatively low in non-conflict zones, but is much higher in areas directly affected by conflict or neighbouring it. Unless some of these conflicts are brought to a successful resolution, the Monitoring Team anticipates that one or more of them will incubate an external operational capability for ISIL, Al-Qaida or a related terrorist group. In this regard, the areas of most concern are Africa, Central and South Asia and the Levant, all of which include the active presence of both ISIL and Al-Qaida. Another major potential threat multiplier is the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters and the human legacy of the "caliphate" in terms of its personnel and dependants. The international community must continue to do more to manage this issue.

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## I. Overview and evolution of the threat

1. In conflict zones, and by extension in neighbouring Member States, the threat remains high. ISIL and Al-Qaida rely on these arenas for their successes, but they also aspire to project a threat into non-conflict zones, where attacks generate more publicity, which in turn translates into greater interest and support. As a result, it is vital to continue to monitor any revival of or enhancement to the external operations capabilities of ISIL or Al-Qaida to direct or enable attacks outside conflict zones. Member States continue to judge that ISIL poses the more immediate threat in this regard, although some regard Al-Qaida as the more dangerous group in the longer term.

2. In the present report, the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team has assembled information from a number of Member States that provides a more complete picture than was previously available of the work of the ISIL general directorate of provinces, and of the networks that it manages. In its core area, ISIL maintains two distinct organizational structures for Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, with the office of the general directorate of provinces managing the latter, known as the Al-Sham office. The Al-Faruq office was established in Türkiye to manage the network that also included the Caucasus, the Russian Federation and parts of Eastern Europe, but key arrests by the Turkish authorities have effectively closed down the Al-Faruq office and the ISIL network in Türkiye is now reportedly managed by the Al-Sham office.

3. The most vigorous and best-established ISIL regional networks are those whose hubs are in Afghanistan (the Al-Siddiq office), Somalia (the Al-Karrar office) and the Lake Chad basin (the Al-Furqan office). The Al-Siddiq office covers South Asia and, according to some Member States, Central Asia. The Al-Karrar office covers Somalia, Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Al-Furqan office covers Nigeria and its neighbours, including the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) (QDe.163) affiliate in the western Sahel. The remaining three regional networks are low-functioning or moribund: the Al-Anfal office was created to cover parts of northern Africa and the Sahel and based in Libya; the Umm al-Qura office is based in Yemen and is responsible for the Arabian peninsula; and the Zu al-Nurayn office is responsible for Egypt and the Sudan and is based in the Sinai Peninsula.

4. Member States differ as to how far these offices and networks have materialized on the ground following their invention by ISIL during the period 2017–2019, as it was preparing to maintain its global presence following the defeat of the territorial “caliphate”. The assessment of the Monitoring Team is that they are being developed at different speeds and with varying degrees of success. Some have failed or will likely fail, others have had degrees of success, and the ISIL general directorate of provinces adapts its planning accordingly. The ISIL narrative should not be accepted uncritically, but it does reflect the evolving situation on the ground. It is notable that two of the three most dynamic ISIL networks are in Africa, which is also the location of some of Al-Qaida’s most dangerous affiliates. Member States remain acutely concerned about the spread of terrorist violence in Africa.

5. The most dynamic developments of the period under review, however, took place in the ISIL core area in the Syrian Arab Republic, where there has been a continuing attrition of leaders and fighters. In January 2022, ISIL mounted a major jailbreak in Hasaka, releasing a large number of prisoners while sustaining heavy casualties.

6. On 3 February, ISIL leader Amir Muhammad Sa’id Abdal-Rahman al-Salbi (QDi.426) was killed in a counter-terror operation in Atmah, near the Turkish border, led by the United States of America. On 10 March, ISIL acknowledged the death of

al-Salbi and announced his successor as Abu al-Hassan al-Hashemi al-Qurashi, followed by extensive video footage of ISIL affiliates around the world pledging allegiance to the new leader. Abu al-Hassan's identity is not yet established but has been much discussed among Member States, with Iraqi national Bashar Khattab Ghazal al-Sumaida'i (not listed) cited as the most likely candidate. Some Member States suggested that al-Sumaida'i was arrested in Türkiye near Istanbul in May; others maintain that he remains at large. ISIL has not yet commented. Regardless, ISIL has suffered a rapid succession of leadership losses since October 2019, with an as yet unknown impact on its operational health. Nevertheless, Member States continue to express concern that political, economic and governance challenges inhibiting stabilization and recovery in the Syrian Arab Republic will be exploited by ISIL and Al-Qaida for the foreseeable future.

7. Al-Qaida senior leadership enjoyed a more settled period in early 2022. Aiman Muhammed Rabi al-Zawahiri (Qdi.006) issued regular video messages that provided almost current proof of life. Member States note that al-Zawahiri's apparent increased comfort and ability to communicate has coincided with the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan and the consolidation of power of key Al-Qaida allies within their de facto administration. Al-Qaida is not viewed as posing an immediate international threat from its safe haven in Afghanistan because it lacks an external operational capability and does not currently wish to cause the Taliban international difficulty or embarrassment.

8. The international context is favourable to Al-Qaida, which intends to be recognized again as the leader of global jihad. Al-Qaida propaganda is now better developed to compete with ISIL as the key actor in inspiring the international threat environment, and it may ultimately become a greater source of directed threat. According to one Member State, the Hittin Committee, which coordinates Al-Qaida global leadership, has demoted Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula below the African affiliates. Next in line of seniority after al-Zawahiri are: Sayf-al 'Adl (Qdi.001);<sup>1</sup> Abdal-Rahman al-Maghrebi; Yazid Mebrak (Qdi.389)<sup>2</sup> of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) (Qde.014); and Ahmed Diriye (Soi.014)<sup>3</sup> of Al-Shabaab.

9. Foreign terrorist fighters and their dependants continue to pose a serious policy challenge which, if it is not fully met, will multiply the terrorist threat in the longer term. International efforts to address internally displaced person camps and detention facilities in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic are still not commensurate with the seriousness of the issue.

10. During the period covered by the present report (January to June 2022), the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on threat calculations was less than at any time since 2020. Member States continue to assess the threat in non-conflict zones as being somewhat suppressed by public health restrictions, in particular those affecting international travel. It is striking, however, that the renewed availability of potential targets where people gather has not seen a resurgence of attacks. Some Member States are no longer of the view that attacks planned in non-conflict zones during lockdowns are likely to manifest as public health restrictions ease. The greater risk would be disinvestment from counter-terrorism on the assumption that the threat will not increase.

<sup>1</sup> Listed as Mohammed Salahaldin Abd El Hakim Zidane.

<sup>2</sup> Listed as Abu Ubaydah Yusuf al-Anabi.

<sup>3</sup> Listed under the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia.

## II. Regional developments

### A. Africa

#### Central and Southern Africa

11. Mozambique has seen a chaotic proliferation of smaller-scale violent attacks in remote villages throughout Cabo Delgado Province, resulting from the disruption in the leadership of the Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a (ASWJ) following the deployment of regional forces. Member States have noted that ASWJ fighters are regrouping into smaller, more mobile groups, carrying out attacks along the key corridor in Macomia that connects Macomia town to the provincial capital, Pemba. At the start of 2022, insurgents withdrew from Niassa Province, focusing their attacks on the northern districts of Macomia, Meluco and Mueda, with Nangade becoming the epicentre of attacks in Cabo Delgado. Constant attacks on villages, killings, beheadings, abductions, looting and the destruction of property have caused a mass displacement of the local population, with more than 800,000 internally displaced persons seeking refuge in neighbouring districts.

12. Abu Yasir Hassan, a Tanzanian national, heads ASWJ, while operations are led by Mozambicans who have extensive knowledge of the terrain. Member States estimate that ASWJ has between 200 and 400 active fighters, with deployed regional forces having killed 100 fighters since January 2022. ASWJ foreign terrorist fighters are mostly from Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania, while others are from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and Uganda. Member States have noted that the use of Swahili makes it easy for foreign terrorist fighters to communicate with one another and to assimilate within groups in the region.

13. On 1 April 2022, a video was published that purportedly depicted members of ASWJ renewing their pledge of allegiance to the new leader of ISIL, Abu al-Hassan al-Hashemi al-Qurashi. Despite such pledges, regional Member States continue to be of the view that there is no clear evidence of "command and control orders" from ISIL over ASWJ. ISIL has recently referred to ASWJ as a separate affiliate, ISIL-Mozambique.

14. Cross-border raids into the United Republic of Tanzania have increased, with four recent clashes in Tanzanian border villages. These raids are driven by a need for provisions and believed to be guided by Tanzanian members of ASWJ with detailed local knowledge of cross-border routes and border communities. In May, Tanzanian authorities arrested 30 terrorists attempting to cross the border.

15. ASWJ lost considerable momentum in April and May. Factors that are having an impact on this trend relate to impending famine as insurgents retreat in search of food and provisions, inclement weather and the Mozambique authorities calling on terrorists operating in Cabo Delgado to lay down their weapons in exchange for leniency, which led to large numbers of fighters surrendering to local forces. More than 200 women and children have been released by ASWJ as result of food shortages and the need for increased mobility. Member States report that hostages and insurgents appeared malnourished, coming at a time when multiple famine alerts have been issued for northern Mozambique.

16. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Congolese and Ugandan forces launched a joint military operation against the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) (CDe.001), on 1 December 2021. Despite these operations, ADF killed over 380 civilians in the first three months of the offensive. Following the capture of key camps, ADF pulled out of strongholds near the Ugandan border and headed inland. There has been a gradual movement of fighters from east to west, as joint operations



have dispersed ADF, widening the theatre of conflict from the Ugandan border to western Ituri. Violent, large-scale attacks occurred in Irumu territory in March and April 2022.

17. ADF, led by Seka Baluku (alias Musa Baluku, CDi.036) renewed the group's pledge of allegiance to the new leader of ISIL in a video released on 1 April 2022. Baluku is seen speaking in Swahili, reciting the group's *bay'ah*, or oath of allegiance, to Abu al-Hassan al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi. Benjamin Kisokeranio (S/2022/83, para. 13), who leads the ADF splinter group loyal to Jamil Mukulu (CDi.015), which rejects Baluku's allegiance to ISIL, was arrested on 11 January 2022, possibly further weakening this faction. Members of ADF are Ugandan and Congolese, while foreign terrorist fighters are mostly from the United Republic of Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi and Somalia.

18. There has been a significant uptick in the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters by ADF, as evidenced by the arrest of Kenyans, Tanzanians and Somalis in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, most of them seasoned fighters with a documented history in multiple theatres of conflict. In January 2022, Salim Mohamed Rashid, a Kenyan who joined ADF, was arrested with three other Kenyans who had failed to join ISIL in the Syrian Arab Republic. After joining ADF, however, they expressed disappointment with some ADF practices and ideological divergences. Rashid appeared in a video released in June 2021 in which he beheaded a soldier of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) while referencing ISIL. One of his fellow Kenyan fighters, Mahmoud Salim Mohamed, was in touch with Meddie Nkalubo (S/2022/83, paras. 15 and 17), who organized their journey to the ADF camps. In February, four Tanzanian members of ADF were arrested in Beni. In March, joint forces killed Abu Aden, a leading ADF commander of Somali origin, at Malulu, following which two Tanzanian fighters were killed at Kilunga near the Nobili-Busunga border crossing point.

### East Africa

19. Over 100 ADF suspects were arrested following the bombings in Uganda in October and November 2021. On 14 March 2022, authorities arrested ADF member Kabanda Abdallah Musa, a former member of Al-Shabaab, who was linked to the 2010 twin bombing case in Kampala. He had also established contact with Meddie Nkalubo, alias "Punisher", who has been assessed by one Member State as the mastermind of operations targeting Uganda.

20. The key challenge remains the disruption of ADF support networks, which will impede the movement of foreign terrorist fighters through the region and cut off their sources of funding. Key sources of terror financing for ADF include local Ugandan business owners. Ugandan and Kenyan expatriates also generate wealth in countries such as South Africa, and launder proceeds, which sometimes involve large transactions, to ADF.

21. In Somalia, Harakat Al-Shabaab Al-Mujaahidin (Al-Shabaab) (SOe.001) continues to exploit political instability, focusing on disrupting the political process with attacks on high-level targets. Member States report that some of largest attacks by Al-Shabaab in recent years took place in early 2022. Member States estimate that Al-Shabaab commands between 7,000 and 12,000 fighters.

22. Member States note that Al-Shabaab generates millions of dollars of revenue from its taxation of all aspects of the Somali economy and uses at least 25 per cent of its revenue on military purchases. According to ledgers that Member States have accessed, Al-Shabaab has approximately \$24 million available annually for spending on weapons and explosives. The ledgers indicate that Al-Shabaab earns between

\$50 million and \$100 million annually. One Member State reported that Al-Shabaab, while acting independently, also supports Al-Qaida directly from its internal funds.

23. Member States describe the ISIL in Somalia presence in Puntland as a small footprint that lacks the capacity to undertake major operations as a result of attacks from Al-Shabaab. This has caused losses that have now depleted ISIL in Somalia to between 200 and 280 fighters. Despite its small force, it hosts the Al-Karrar office, headed by the emir of ISIL in Somalia, Abdul Qadir Mumin (not listed), a native of Puntland and a dual citizen of Somalia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Mumin, formerly an influential religious leader within Al-Shabaab, pledged allegiance to ISIL in October 2015.

24. The assessment of Member States is that the Al-Karrar office acts as a financial hub, transmitting substantial funds to Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan (ISIL-K) (QDe.161). One Member State reports that the Al-Karrar office (S/2022/83, para. 15), facilitates the flow of funds to Afghanistan by way of Yemen, with a potential link to Kenya; while another asserts that the money is transferred using a cell in the United Kingdom. Some of the funds are reportedly generated in Somalia from extortion of the shipping industry and illicit taxation. Member States assert that ISIL-K uses these funds in the acquisition of weapons and to pay the salaries of fighters. One Member State maintains that Somalia, Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of the Congo remain under the purview of the Al-Karrar office.

### **West Africa**

25. In the Sahel region, Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM) (QDe.159) is increasing its control and expanding towards the Atlantic coast, with support from local communities. The exploitation of local grievances and the dissemination of a radical ideology, caused by poor governance and human rights abuses, contrasts with the indiscriminate and constant violence of ISGS. Abu Ubaydah Yusuf Al-Anabi (alias Yazid Mebrak), who took over AQIM regional command from the late Abdelmalek Droukdel (QDi.232), remains the strategic link to the Al-Qaida core in Algeria, and promotes JNIM strategy within the Hittin Committee.

26. Iyad Ag Ghali (QDi.316) is the architect of the strategy to integrate several terrorist groups within JNIM, a unified regional affiliate of Al-Qaida, over the past five years. He is primarily assisted by Amadou Koufa (QDi.425) and Sidan Ag Hitta (not listed). Ag Hitta, who is related to Droukdel, was involved in the transfer of AQIM from Algeria to Mali. Based in the Kidal area, he plays a key logistical and operational role. Koufa is advancing his fighting force from the Macina area further into the region, deploying north, south and east of Bamako. Talha Al-Libi (not listed), the emir of Timbuktu, also supports JNIM logistically, while Faknane Ag Taki (not listed), the emir of Menaka, is more involved in the campaign against ISGS in the Ansongo-Menaka wildlife reserve.

27. JNIM has further opened up a corridor to the south through Burkina Faso along route nationale 18, with the support of Ansarul Islam (not listed). Within the context of increased instability associated with the coup d'état in Burkina Faso of 24 January, most of Ansarul Islam joined JNIM. Jafar Dicko (not listed) remains the leader of Ansarul Islam and is reported by one Member State to be directly under the command of Mebrak. Sekou Muslimu (not listed) is a JNIM senior leader in Burkina Faso who ensures liaison with Ansarul Islam. JNIM recruits from Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Togo are trained in Burkina Faso prior to being redeployed to their countries of origin. In Togo, 8 soldiers were killed and 13 wounded in an attack on their military base in the Kpendjal Prefecture on 11 May.

28. As the withdrawal of international counter-terrorism forces from Mali nears completion, several Member States have expressed concern that Mali could become

a sanctuary for terrorist groups. During the period under review, however, there were international counter-terrorist successes in Mali and neighbouring countries. The neutralization north of Timbuktu, on 26 February, of a prominent historic figure of AQIM, Yahia Djouadi (alias Yahia Abou Ammar al-Jazairi, QDi.249), was a major setback for the group. Samir al-Bourhan (not listed), another senior member of JNIM, was killed on 14 April. Furthermore, 60 terrorists were killed in the third week of January, east of Djibo, Burkina Faso, and 30 were killed on 2 February south-east of Gao, Mali. On 7 February, 10 terrorists who participated in the Inata attack on 14 November 2021 were neutralized north-east of Ouahigouya, Burkina Faso, and 40 of those who killed 5 park rangers and their French operational mentor on 8 February in the W National Park of Benin were intercepted on 10 February close to Diapaga, Burkina Faso.

29. The ongoing military reconfiguration in the region may jeopardize past counter-terrorism efforts. In this context, JNIM and ISGS agreed to a joint ceasefire in the last week of May 2022 to focus their efforts against Malian forces.

30. ISGS was announced as an autonomous ISIL province independent from Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) (QDe.162) as at 23 March, mostly for propaganda purposes. The group was pushed to the border between Mali and the Niger after JNIM launched operations to recover the area south of route nationale 20. Moreover, ISGS had to engage in combat with Dawsahak Tuaregs and local armed groups in Mali who rejected ISIL atrocities and extortion. As a result, ISGS struggled to sustain its presence in the tri-border area between Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger. Given the deterioration of its public outreach and operational visibility, in late May ISGS launched a campaign to create a second safe haven east of Menaka.

31. In north-eastern Nigeria, ISWAP confirmed its dominance over the remnants of Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (Boko Haram) (QDe.138). Some Boko Haram fighters remain in the border area with the Niger in the Lake Chad area under Bah Koura (not listed), but the group has been weakened by the transfer to ISWAP or surrender to the Nigerian Government of most of its fighters. The status of Abu Musab al-Barnawi (not listed) remains unclear. While some Member States reported him dead, others declared him active as the head of the Al-Furqan office. Violence remains endemic in the area as illustrated by the persistence of kidnappings for ransom and attacks on civilian and military targets, both in Nigeria and the Niger.

32. In north-western Nigeria, Ansaru (Ansarul Muslimina Fi Biladis Sudan) (QDe.142) pledged allegiance to JNIM on 31 December 2021. The presence of an Al-Qaida affiliate associated with JNIM in the region is a significant concern, especially as its area of operations could blend with those of serious crime groups and some former Boko Haram operatives in the States of Kaduna, Katsina, Niger and Zamfara. In this context, it may prove difficult to clearly identify the perpetrators of major attacks. In Zamfara State, unidentified groups killed approximately 200 individuals in January, 20 in March and 50 in May.

### **North Africa**

33. Member States in the region expressed concerns about the threat posed by individuals who are currently serving prison sentences for terrorism offences and whose sentences are expected to end in the near term. Many are assessed as posing an ongoing threat. States expressed similar concerns about a number of North African foreign terrorist fighters imprisoned in other countries who have recently been released.

34. In Egypt, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (ABM) (not listed) was able to carry out several terrorist attacks since January 2022, at Rafah city and in the centre of Sinai, including in the Al-Nussayriyat district, Tarabin, Al-Bura, Tuma'a and Kabr Amir districts.

ABM also attacked a gas pipeline in the Amoriyah region and kidnapped four road workers. The group launched two attacks against Egyptian armed forces resulting in the death of 18 soldiers. Notwithstanding these attacks, the assessment of Member States is that the group is declining in strength. This is attributed to successful counter-terrorism operations by Egyptian forces as well as a concerted effort by the Egyptian Government in the Sinai area to address underlying grievances among local communities, including among Bedouin tribes, from which most recruitment by the group takes place. One Member State noted that ABM is primarily located in northern Sinai and consists of approximately 500 fighters.

35. Some Member States have concluded that Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – Libya (ISIL-Libya) (QDe.165) is confined to southern Libya, where it conducts attacks against various militias. It also seeks to reactivate its logistical nodes in the northern part of the country, in particular in Bani Walid and near the Tunisian border in Sabratah, to facilitate the replenishment of its ranks by foreign terrorist fighters. ISIL-Libya has been weakened by leadership losses, while the United States Africa Command raids in Sabha and Bani Walid have successfully reduced the group's operational capacities. It is the assessment of one Member State that ISIL-Libya retains fewer than 100 fighters in the country.

36. ISIL-Libya has established a new approach in southern Libya to disperse and move in small groups to evade detection by Libyan security services. Some foreign terrorist fighters with ISIL-Libya from sub-Saharan Africa may have established a link between the group and other terrorist groups in the Sahel, Somalia and the Sudan. One Member State noted that ISIL-Libya seeks to recruit migrants from neighbouring countries; another reported that the group maintains ties with certain Nigerian terrorist groups, with some Libyan foreign terrorist fighters possibly located with ISWAP in the Lake Chad basin.

37. Al-Qaida continues to rely on its tribal platforms in central and south-western Libya and uses the country as a base to send reinforcements to northern Mali. The cities of Awbari and Sabha are home to the main terrorist structures of Al-Qaida in Libya.

38. The Internal Security Service of Morocco arrested nine pro-ISIL individuals between January and May 2022. Two were seeking to travel to other conflict zones, including Afghanistan. One was found with instruction manuals on homemade explosives. Despite counter-terrorism successes, there is a continuing threat from ISIL and Al-Qaida.

## **B. Iraq and the Levant**

39. ISIL continues to face significant leadership losses in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, despite having sporadic operational successes as it exploits security gaps. On 3 February, ISIL leader Amir Muhammad Sa'id Abdal-Rahman al-Salbi was killed in an operation by the United States in Atmah in the north-western Syrian Arab Republic, close to the Turkish border. On 10 March, ISIL announced their new leader as Abu al-Hassan al-Hashimi al-Qurashi (Abu al-Hassan). Additional leadership losses include the former spokesperson Abu Hamza Al-Qurashi, who was killed, according to one Member State, in November 2021 in an airstrike in Aleppo Governorate.

40. There is no Member State consensus regarding the identity of the new leader. One Iraqi candidate is Juma'a Awwad Ibrahim al-Badri (not listed), brother of former ISIL leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Another is Bashar Khattab Ghazal al-Sumaida'i (alias Dr. Zayd, not listed). In both cases, there are arguments against identification as Abu al-Hassan. Some Member States consider al-Sumaida'i to be an influential

ideologue, but he has not held senior operational positions within ISIL recently, which would have positioned him as a credible successor. Some Member States also suggested that he was arrested in Türkiye near Istanbul in May; others assert that he remains at large. ISIL has not yet commented. Another Iraqi candidate cited by some Member States as a potential leader was the head of the ISIL general directorate of provinces, known as Abd al-Raouf al-Muhajir.

41. Despite leadership attrition, Member States observed no significant change of direction for the group or its operations in the core conflict zone. ISIL remains a resilient and persistent threat owing to its decentralized structure and ability to organize complex attacks. The Iraqi-Syrian border continues to be a major vulnerability where multiple smuggling networks operate. The combined number of ISIL fighters is estimated to be between 6,000 and 10,000 across the two countries, concentrated mostly in rural areas, and thought to be predominantly Syrian and Iraqi.

42. ISIL launched a major operation on 20 January to free fighters from Sina'a prison in Hasakah, where an estimated 5,000 fighters were held. Most Member States estimate that between 100 and 300 fighters fled to the Badiya desert or crossed the border to Iraq. The number of fugitives is offset by the number of casualties the group took in executing the attack, limiting the net impact of the operation. No senior ISIL leader reportedly managed to escape. Nevertheless, the attack provided a significant propaganda boost to the group and highlighted its prioritization of attacks on prisons that hold their members, which the group seeks to use as a catalyst for resurgence. Member States consider that more jailbreak attempts should be expected, particularly in the Syrian Arab Republic.

43. ISIL mounted other sporadic attacks in the Syrian Arab Republic utilizing insurgent tactics. Activities were concentrated in Dayr al-Zawr, southern Raqqah and Hasakah, eastern Homs and southwestern Dar'a and Suwayda' Governorates. One Member State noted some infrequent activity in Damascus. Member States believe ISIL has resumed its training activities that had been previously curtailed, especially in the Badiya desert.

44. The Idlib de-escalation area continues to serve as a strategic location for ISIL despite its near total control by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS, listed as an alias for the Al-Nusrah Front for the People of the Levant, QDe.137). HTS remains the predominant terrorist group in Idlib with some 10,000 fighters. One Member State noted that HTS incorporates several subgroups, among them approximately 200 Russian nationals. HTS continues to seek to portray itself as opposed to international terrorism, and regularly conducts hostile operations against Hurras al-Din (HAD) (not listed), the other Al-Qaida-affiliated group in the area. HTS has also released a few HAD prisoners on condition that they not carry out attacks. HAD is estimated to retain a few thousand fighters, some with aspirations to attack the West. HAD is reported to include a group operating under its auspices consisting almost entirely of foreign terrorist fighters. Some HAD members were also reportedly instructed to travel to Afghanistan but were unable or unwilling to do so. One Member State indicated that HAD leader Samir Hijazi, alias Faruq al-Suri (not listed), joined the Al-Qaida leadership's Hittin Committee in 2020 or 2021.

45. Several Member States reported that the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) (QDe.088), also known as the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), is estimated to have between 1,000 and 2,000 fighters, mainly operating in Idlib and commanded by Kaiwusair. The group is closely allied with HTS in carrying out terrorist operations. It is also reported as operating gas stations and other businesses in Idlib to raise funds to support their activities. The group also regularly holds armed training to maintain combat ability.

46. In Iraq, ongoing counter-terrorism pressure has produced arrests and enhanced law and order. However, active ISIL cells remain in the desert and remote areas of the country. The group continued to mount attacks with strategic intent, in particular targeting infrastructure and agriculture.

47. Attacks continued in the Diyala, Salah al-Din and Kirkuk Governorates. On 21 January, an assault on an Iraqi army base in Diyala Governorate resulted in the death of 11 soldiers. On 23 May, ISIL killed 12 civilians in two operations in the Kirkuk and Diyala Governorates where farmers were targeted while harvesting crops. One Member State noted that some ISIL members involved in recent attacks in these areas may be escapees from detention facilities across the Syrian border. Attacks have also occurred in Anbar and Ninawa Governorates, where ISIL operates mainly in small mobile cells.

48. During Ramadan, the group carried out a global campaign of enhanced operational activity in revenge for the deaths of its previous leader and the spokesperson. In Iraq, this manifested in attacks mainly on security forces and Iraqi communities, using a range of terrorist tactics including raids, targeted shootings and improvised explosive devices.

49. Information derived from Sami Jasim Muhammad Al-Jaburi (not listed), whose arrest Iraq announced in October 2021 (S/2022/83, para. 42), indicated that he was, until his capture, in charge of ISIL finances. He also served simultaneously in two additional positions, as deputy “caliph” and member of the delegated committee. Several Member States believe that his capture has disrupted the group, especially its finances, and that his roles may now be performed by different individuals.

50. ISIL activities in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic continued to inspire attacks in the wider region. One such attack occurred on 27 March in Israel, resulting in more than a dozen casualties. While the ISIL core continues to aspire to a global external operations capability, its reach nevertheless remains limited so far, and Iraq and the Levant continue to be the centre of gravity of the organization and define its identity.

## C. Arabian Peninsula

51. Despite recent setbacks, Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) (QDe.129) poses a persistent threat in Yemen, across the region and abroad, where the group aspires to revive an international operational capability. Notwithstanding the recent ongoing ceasefire and changes in security dynamics, AQAP is actively exploiting the conflict in Yemen, capitalizing on its successful strategy to embed with local tribes and thereby gain supporters.

52. The group maintains strongholds in the Yemeni Governorates of Ma’rib, Abyan and Shabwah, where most leaders and fighters are located, in addition to a presence in Hadramawt, Mahrah and Jawf. Member States estimate AQAP strength at a few thousand fighters, primarily drawn from the Yemeni population and supplemented by small numbers of foreign terrorist fighters. The group raises revenue through kidnapping for ransom, looting and robbery, in addition to remittances from overseas relatives of AQAP members. One Member State observed that AQAP is working to enhance its maritime operations capability.

53. AQAP continues to suffer losses, announcing in January 2022 the death of its overall military commander Salih bin Salim bin Ubayd Abolan (alias Abu Umayr al-Hadhrami, not listed). In parallel, AQAP claimed responsibility for a prison break in Hadramawt, freeing a number of fighters. The group continued small-scale operations targeting Houthi forces primarily in Bayda’ and Ma’rib Governorates. However, one Member State reported collaboration between AQAP and Houthi

forces, with the latter sheltering some AQAP members and releasing prisoners in return for AQAP undertaking proxy terrorist operations and providing operational training to certain Houthi fighters. One Member State reported that AQAP operates through committees, which include a military committee led by Sa'ad bin Atef Al-Awlaki (not listed) as well as security, legal, medical and media committees. The finance committee has been disbanded owing to leadership losses.

54. AQAP remains the most important Al-Qaida affiliate for the dissemination of propaganda, including illustrated claims of attacks. The group's media arm has commemorated deceased fighters, issued biographies and encouraged lone-actor attacks in the West.

55. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – Yemen (ISIL-Yemen) (QDe.166) is considered to be overshadowed in Yemen by AQAP. The group is on a downward trajectory, and has not conducted any recent attacks. One Member State reported that some ISIL-Yemen fighters had assimilated into various tribal forces in the country and been reintegrated into the overall Yemeni conflict. Their battlefield experience suggests that they remain a potential threat, but a lack of resources and leadership would inhibit any resurgence in the near term. The value of Yemen to ISIL may reside in the presence of the Umm al-Qura office of the general directorate of provinces and facilitation and financial links across the Red Sea to the Al-Karrar office in Somalia.

## **D. Europe**

56. Member States assess the threat level in Europe as remaining moderate. Terrorists and aspiring attackers are mainly autonomous, with operational and ideological independence from global terrorist organizations. ISIL and Al-Qaida have limited resources to undertake attacks on European soil. Their activity has been reduced primarily to issuing appeals to sympathizers to resume attacks in Europe. The “lone actor” phenomenon has declined. Recent attacks in Europe claimed by ISIL were carried out primarily by individuals with mental health problems who were inspired by ISIL without material logistical or economic support. One Member State noted that this trend presents a significant challenge to early detection by law enforcement and subsequent prosecution. Furthermore, instances of perceived blasphemy remain a key driver in recent attacks, including the murder of a prominent French-Corsican nationalist in prison on 2 March by a fellow inmate.

57. Although ISIL is seeking to recruit those who feel excluded in the West, the recent convictions of two members of its so-called “Beatles” group, El Shafie Elsheikh (QDi.409) and Alexandra Amon Kotey (QDi.408), along with the trial in France of prominent ISIL members convicted for the Bataclan theatre attack, have deterred potential recruits. While ISIL propaganda focuses on private online channels to motivate its supporters, Al-Qaida maintains a more visible sustained online French-language presence with propaganda disseminated by Al Kifah Media.

58. Radicalization in prisons and prison-based recruitment continue to motivate the threat in Europe, with France, Spain, the United Kingdom and Belgium as the most affected countries. Authorities note that false compliance to obtain penitentiary benefits is an ongoing challenge in relation to risk assessments, probation and early release arrangements. Most individuals incarcerated for travel to the Syrian Arab Republic before 2015 received short sentences and are expected to be released by 2025. One related issue is the prospect of female returnees, especially those with children. While the number of female jihadist inmates remains low, European prisons must be prepared for a potential influx of female returnees from detention camps, including arrangements for the care and custody of their children, over the coming years.

59. The flow of refugees arriving in Europe could mask travel by terrorists, as returning foreign terrorist fighters use the same routes to reach European countries. This situation is aggravated by the fact that database interoperability among European Union member States remains a critical gap within the European counter-terrorism framework.

60. Several Member States were concerned about foreign terrorist fighters returning from the Syrian Arab Republic attempting to establish cells in Europe to carry out more sophisticated attacks. In Spain, as part of an ongoing counter-terrorism operation, eight Algerian nationals, including two ISIL fighters who had returned from the Syrian Arab Republic, were arrested in the fourth quarter of 2021 while trying to purchase an assault rifle for an imminent attack. Machetes and ammunition were also seized. The two ISIL fighters arrived by sea through an illegal migration route that operated along the Mediterranean from Oran, Algeria, to coastal cities in southern Spain. Both individuals are members of the ISIL affiliate Jund al-Khilafah in Algeria (JAK-A) (QDe.151), and were involved in recruitment activities in Malaysia, the United Republic of Tanzania and Algeria. The British ISIL fighter Abdel-Majed Abdel Bary (not listed) used the same route when he was arrested in April 2020 in Almeria, Spain.

61. One Member State reported that approximately 150 foreign terrorist fighters returned from the core conflict zone to Kosovo. These individuals are seeking to recruit new supporters and establish sleeper cells in Europe. There are several non-profit organizations in Kosovo with ties to the Gulf region that are promoting radicalization among the local population.

62. Although there is little evidence of systematic cooperation between transnational criminal networks in Europe and terrorist groups, the connection mainly appears through the use of financing sources, including the misuse of money/value transfer services and the abuse of non-profit organizations and online crowdfunding platforms, with a prominent role played by hawala and cryptocurrencies in the transfer and laundering of criminal proceeds and terrorist financing. Mohamad Ayman Adlbi (not listed), President of the Islamic Commission of Spain, was arrested in 2021 during an anti-terrorist operation that exposed a clandestine financial network that diverted funds raised by religious associations under the cover of using them as humanitarian aid for Syrian orphans to finance Al-Qaida militias that exist in the Syrian region of Idlib. In addition, part of the funding was used to finance a school for orphaned children with the intention of recruiting and training future terrorist fighters.

63. In March, four Albanian nationals who were in possession of ISIL propaganda were arrested in Bari, Italy, for allegedly financing Genci Abdurrahim Balla (not listed), an imam of the Xhamia e Letrës mosque in Kavajë, near Tirana, who is currently in jail. The money was delivered to Albania through crowdfunding in bitcoin or transported as cash by sea from Puglia, Italy. In a separate case, three individuals were arrested in Spain in February 2022 for using a complex network of front companies to divert funds to a terrorist group based in Libya with links to ISIL, led by Mohamed Salem Bahroun, alias El Far (not listed). The terrorist cell managed a criminal network involving oil smuggling, false passports, money in tax havens and the transfer of wounded terrorist fighters to private clinics in Spain to recover from battlefield injuries. The group used human couriers, bank transfers and hawala networks to transfer funds that arrived in Spain from Libya to a number of jurisdictions, including Türkiye and Tunisia, and ultimately to Antigua and Barbuda. As much as \$4 million is reported to have been laundered. The case remains under investigation.



## E. Asia

### Central and South Asia

64. The activities of Al-Qaida, ISIL-K and other terrorist groups in Afghanistan and the wider region were covered in detail in the Monitoring Team's latest report on the Taliban (see [S/2022/419](#)). The situation in Afghanistan remains complex. International terrorist organizations based in the country view the victory of the Taliban as a motivating factor for disseminating their propaganda in the neighbouring regions of Central and South Asia, and globally.

65. Al-Qaida leadership reportedly plays an advisory role with the Taliban, and the groups remain close. During the reporting period, Aiman Muhammed Rabi al-Zawahiri (QDi.006) increased outreach to Al-Qaida supporters with a number of video and audio messages, including his own statement promising that Al-Qaida was equipped to compete with ISIL, in a bid to be recognized again as the leader of a global movement.

66. Al-Qaida members reportedly remain in the south and east of Afghanistan, where the group has a historical presence. Some Member States noted a possible shift of core members further to the west to the Farah and Herat Provinces. One Member State reported that Al-Qaida intended to establish a position in northern Afghanistan, mobilize new fighters and generate increased resources.

67. Al-Qaida enjoys greater freedom in Afghanistan under Taliban rule but confines itself to advising and supporting the de facto authorities. Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) is reported to have 180 to 400 fighters, primarily from Bangladesh, India, Myanmar and Pakistan. AQIS fighters are represented at the individual level among Taliban combat units.

68. Al-Qaida currently does not appear to have a clear leadership succession plan. The group's influence depends on having a safe haven, improved communications and resources to distribute. It is unlikely that Al-Qaida and its affiliates will seek to mount direct attacks outside Afghanistan for the near term owing to a lack of capability and restraint on the part of the Taliban, as well as an unwillingness to jeopardize their recent gains. Al-Qaida is considered a significant threat to international security over the long term, especially relative to ISIL-K, which poses the greater threat in the short and medium term.

69. Sanaullah Ghafari (alias Shahab al-Muhajir, QDi.431) remains the leader of ISIL-K. Other leadership figures are reported by one Member State to include Mawlawi Rajab Salahuddin (alias Mawlawi Hanas) as deputy, Sultan Aziz Azzam (spokesperson), Abu Mohsin (head of finance), Qari Shahadat (head of training), Qari Saleh (head of intelligence) and Qari Fateh (head of military operations).

70. The current leader of the al-Siddiq office is Sheikh Tamim al-Kurdi (alias Abu Ahmed al-Madani), previously part of the ISIL core. He was appointed by the ISIL general directorate of provinces and arrived in Afghanistan in 2020. ISIL views Afghanistan as a base for expansion in the wider region for the realization of its "great caliphate" project. ISIL-K seeks to strengthen its capabilities by recruiting members from other terrorist groups, as well as by attracting disaffected Taliban fighters and dissatisfied local ethnic minorities. One Member State reported the defection of 50 Uighur fighters from ETIM/TIP to ISIL-K. The ETIM/TIP operational commander in Badakhshan, Qari Faruq, was reportedly approached by the ISIL-K leader to join them, but he declined. Several Member States reported that ISIL-K was able to recruit based on its payment of higher monthly salaries.

71. ISIL-K has increased its presence in northern and eastern Afghanistan. It also includes fighters from Central Asia, who have increased activities in the north. In April 2022, ISIL-K claimed it had fired rockets into Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Although both countries denied that rockets had reached their territory, the risk of similar attacks remains. The aims were to undermine the credibility of Taliban security forces by demonstrating their inability to control the borders, and to attract new recruits from the region.

72. It is unclear whether ISIL-K can regain lost territory in eastern Afghanistan. Should they succeed, it may prove difficult for the Taliban to reverse such gains. According to one Member State, ISIL-K would then be positioned to develop a global threat capability from Afghanistan.

73. Jamaat Ansarullah (not listed) is closely associated with Al-Qaida. Following deteriorating relations between Tajikistan and the Taliban in the autumn of 2021, Ansarullah fighters were deployed with Taliban special units along the border of Tajikistan in Badakhshan, Kunduz and Takhar Provinces. According to one Member State, Jamaat Ansarullah senior leader Muhammad Sharipov (alias Mahdi Arsalan) controls security in five districts of Badakhshan Province under the Taliban administration.

74. Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) (QDe.132) constitutes the largest component of foreign terrorist fighters in Afghanistan (between 3,000 and 4,000). One Member State reported that current TTP leader Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud (QDi.427) has united the group, which is now more cohesive, presenting a greater threat in the region. On 3 June, TTP announced it would extend its temporary ceasefire with Pakistan following talks brokered by the de facto Afghan authorities. It remains to be seen whether the ceasefire leads to a more durable peace agreement.

75. According to one Member State, the leadership of ETIM/TIP is active in Baghlan Province and has re-established its main base there. In March, it announced changes to its leadership structure. Abdul Haq (QDi.268) remains the group's overall leader, with Abu Salam (not listed) appointed as deputy leader, Haji Furkan (not listed) as the general military commander and two new members, Zayiti (not listed) and Ibini Muhaimaide (not listed), added to its supreme shura council. The group has reportedly rebuilt several strongholds in Badakhshan, expanded its area of operations and covertly purchased weapons, with the aim of improving its capabilities for terrorist activities.

76. Several Member States noted that ETIM/TIP is continuing to strengthen its relations with TTP and Jamaat Ansarullah, augmenting its military training on the manufacture and use of improvised explosive devices, focusing on morale and planning to carry out terrorist attacks against Chinese interests in the region when the time is right.

77. One Member State noted that Taliban efforts to restrain the activities of ETIM/TIP may be one factor in the group not having launched recent attacks. This State suggested that the group is seeking to embed itself in Afghanistan through various means, including marriage and fraudulently obtaining local identity documents, and to portray its members as Afghan residents. Member State assessments of the strength of the group differ (S/2022/419, para. 86).

### **South-East Asia**

78. Member States report that the threat from groups affiliated with ISIL and Al-Qaida has largely receded in the South-East Asia region, with the exception of the potential for lone-actor or inspired attacks and some remaining pockets of activity primarily in the southern Philippines. One Member State cautioned that successful

counter-terrorism pressure in the Philippines against the Abu Sayyaf Group (QDe.001) may be pushing its activity into parts of Malaysia.

79. Indonesian authorities confirmed the arrest and sentencing in January 2022 of Aris Sumarsono, alias Zulkarnaen (QDi.187), a former leader of the military wing of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) (QDe.092), for his role in the 2002 Bali attacks. According to his United Nations sanctions listing, he helped to prepare the bombs that killed 202 people in Bali in 2002. Member States believe that JI continues to attempt to raise funds, train fighters and even infiltrate the Government by establishing a political party, despite not having carried out an attack in over a decade.

80. Islamic State East Asia is assessed as having as many as 200 fighters in the southern Philippines and being capable of carrying out small-scale attacks. Philippine authorities announced in March 2022, and Member States confirmed, that the new leader of Islamic State East Asia is Abu Zacharia (alias Jer Mimbantas, alias Faharudin Hadji Satar, not listed). He is reportedly a former leader of the Maute Group, an ISIL affiliate that briefly held territory in the city of Marawi for several months in 2017. In late March 2022, Philippine forces killed an Abu Sayyaf Group leader in Basilan, reflecting continued leadership losses by the group previously highlighted by the Monitoring Team (S/2021/68, para. 72). The alleged spokesperson of Islamic State East Asia, Abdulfatah Omar Alimuden (alias Abu Huzaifah, not listed), was killed in a military operation in Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Maguindanao Province, on 6 June. In addition to being the spokesperson of Islamic State East Asia, Abu Huzaifah was also responsible for financial transactions between the group and ISIL leadership in the core conflict zone.

81. One Member State highlighted recent arrests and killings of Abu Sayyaf Group members in Malaysia as an indication that the group continues to pose a threat, in particular in Sabah, Malaysia, which shares a maritime border with the Philippines. In March, the wife of Mundi Sawaadjan, an Abu Sayyaf Group leader, was arrested on Jolo island in possession of explosive material.

### III. Impact assessment

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

82. Many Member States report that ISIL leadership controls approximately \$25 million in reserves (some estimate the amount to be between \$25 million and \$50 million), and that much of the cash it controls remains in Iraq. Expenditures by the group, which primarily include payments to fighters and family members, many of them in displaced persons camps, exceed current revenues. Additional sources of revenue to the group are extortion, kidnapping for ransom, zakat, direct donations and income from trading and investments. Collectively, these diverse sources of income have helped to establish a financial system that allows the group to adapt and sustain itself amid variable conditions. Payments to fighters and families have decreased recently, with one Member State citing \$50 per month as a typical payment to the family of a ISIL fighter. Another Member State reported that would-be fighters travelling to the Syrian Arab Republic are recruited with promises of up to \$1,000 in monthly salaries. As noted previously by the Monitoring Team (S/2022/83, para. 72), funds are transferred primarily through a combination of hawala networks and trusted couriers.

83. Member States report that the ability of ISIL leadership to direct and maintain control over funding flows to global affiliates remains resilient and an important element of the loyalty shown by these groups. All transactions involving affiliates are

directed by ISIL leadership, according to several Member States. Recipients include ISIL-K in Afghanistan, using trusted cash couriers, and affiliates in Africa through the Al-Karrar office, as described in paragraph 24 above. The Al-Karrar office in particular is cited as having responsibility for funds transfers inside and outside of Africa. In this context, one Member State highlighted the emerging importance of South Africa in facilitating transfers of funds from ISIL leadership to affiliates in Africa. The Monitoring Team is aware of several large transactions totalling more than \$1 million.

84. According to one Member State, Sami Jasim Muhammad al-Jaburi remained active as finance emir of ISIL until the time of his capture in Türkiye in 2021. One Member State informed the Monitoring Team that his location at the time of his capture was relevant to his financial role and involvement in overseeing transactions and investments outside of Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic.

85. The Monitoring Team continues to receive reports of ISIL and Al-Qaida making use of cryptocurrencies to solicit donations and support activities. One Member State noted that ISIL was providing tutorials on how to open digital asset wallets and make transactions using cryptocurrencies. Another Member State raised concerns about transactions totalling more than \$700,000 involving privacy-enhancing cryptocurrencies to fund ISIL-K, indicating increased sophistication in the use of lesser-known cryptocurrencies and the ability to convert them to cash through virtual asset exchanges in Türkiye.

86. Many Member States highlighted the evolving role of social media and other online technologies in the financing of terrorism and the dissemination of propaganda. Platforms cited by Member States vary according to region, and currently include Telegram, Rocket.Chat, Hoop and TamTam, among others. There are also reports of ISIL supporters using platforms on the dark web for storing and accessing training materials that other sites decline to host. One Member State reported that pro-ISIL cells of information technology specialists are working to enhance the security of the group's online presence and to pursue its objective of establishing a "virtual caliphate" in cyberspace. This State noted that as much as 80 per cent of recruitment occurred online.

## **B. Resolution 2347 (2017) on cultural heritage**

87. Although no incidents of the smuggling of cultural property were reported during the period, several Member States noted that the lifting of travel restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic could increase the flow of returning terrorist fighters involved in the looting and smuggling of cultural property from conflict zones as a source of terrorist financing. South-Eastern Europe continues to be a key transit route for illicitly trafficked antiquities from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic to private collectors and auction houses in Western Europe and the United States, with growing markets in Asia and the Gulf region. Details of the smuggling routes used to transport looted antiquities, including who is moving artifacts to markets and which networks support this broader criminal-terrorist enterprise, are difficult to trace.

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

88. The situation of ISIL personnel and their dependants present in the ISIL core conflict zone, especially in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic, grew more precarious and challenging during the reporting period. The major prison break undertaken by ISIL in early 2022 raises the spectre of further attempts and has

highlighted the dire conditions in the camps and detention centres. Besides legal and humanitarian concerns, keeping people in such circumstances risks creating bigger security threats over the long term with negative consequences for the regional and global threat landscape.

89. One Member State reported that an estimated 120,000 individuals remain in 11 camps and some 20 prison facilities in the area. These include 30,000 minors under the age of 12 who are at risk of radicalization by extreme ISIL ideology. Another Member State highlighted that ISIL is focusing again on children, continuing its “cubs of the caliphate” approach that seeks to create a new generation of extremists, many of whom are approaching or have reached adulthood.

90. Several assassinations have been carried out in these camps and prisons. One Member State reported that some women in the still-overcrowded Hawl camp are considered among the most extreme ISIL members. In addition, there have been many successful escapes from the camp. Funds continue to flow in and out, mainly through hawala. Incoming funds are distributed according to family size. One Member State noted that approximately 10,000 foreign terrorist fighters remain in the custody of the Syrian Democratic Forces.

91. On 20 January, ISIL launched a coordinated attack on Sina’a prison in Hasakah Governorate. Member States reported that the attack was planned both from inside and outside the prison. The operation highlights the ability of the group to plan and mount a complex attack on a fortified base, and that ISIL does not intend to abandon its detainees in prisons. It also points to the risks of housing thousands of ISIL members in rudimentary prisons and underlines the limited capacity of de facto local authorities to maintain security.

92. One Member State noted cases of the smuggling of foreign terrorist fighters using forged Syrian identity documents from neighbouring countries to the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq. Such trips may cost approximately \$1,500. Member States had not yet observed significant flows of fighters from the ISIL core conflict zone to Afghanistan, although fighters may aspire to do so should the circumstances allow.

93. Iraq continues its efforts to repatriate its nationals from the Syrian Arab Republic and, during the period under review, returned 336 families consisting of 1,274 individuals. To date, 246 families have been returned and reintegrated into their hometowns in Iraq. Repatriations to France were reported primarily for children under the age of 13, with some of the older ones recalling having witnessed or even participated in ISIL murders.

## **IV. Implementation of sanctions measures**

### **A. Travel ban**

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

95. The Monitoring Team reiterates that data transmitted through advance passenger information and passenger name record systems are a key component of an effective evidence-based traveller risk-assessment and screening system. However, if such data are not systematically checked against national and international watch lists, United Nations sanctions lists and relevant databases of the International Criminal Police Organization, their usefulness as a tool for identifying terrorists and foreign terrorist fighters and tackling the use of evasive travel patterns is severely compromised.

Several Member States noted the growing risk of returnees and relocators that might use alternative organized crime routes on their way to the Western Hemisphere to avoid being detected by such systems.

96. The effectiveness of travel ban measures relies on the accuracy of the United Nations Security Council Consolidated List. 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 States to share information regarding listed individuals.

## **B. Assets freeze**

97. The Monitoring Team received no information during the reporting period regarding the freezing of assets under resolution [2610 \(2021\)](#) and related resolutions. In paragraph 46 of its resolution [2610 \(2021\)](#), the Security Council called upon all States to submit an updated report to the Committee no later than 180 days from the date of the adoption of a form for reporting measures taken to freeze assets. 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 is 1 November 2022. During the reporting period, the Committee received no requests from Member States for either basic or extraordinary exemptions to the asset freeze. The Committee received one request for an extraordinary expense exemption through the focal point mechanism established under resolution [1730 \(2006\)](#).

## **C. Arms embargo**

98. Member States remained concerned about the proliferation of weapons in Afghanistan, the Middle East and Africa, in particular the availability of small arms and light weapons. With the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, Member States have expressed increased concern over the availability of large quantities of sophisticated weaponry and other military equipment.

99. Several Member States reported a proliferation of weapons from stockpiles left by former coalition partners in Afghanistan, including AK-47s, medium-range rocket launchers, M-14s and M-16s, among others. Such concerns have been exacerbated by the fear that weapons in Afghanistan could fall into the hands of ISIL, Al-Qaida or other groups, and that such transfers could add to the offensive capability of the groups in question.

100. Member States noted that there was a free flow of night-vision equipment, thermal imagers and steel-penetrating bullets that were already in the hands of terrorists affiliated with both ISIL and Al-Qaida. They also noted a trade in frequency jammers within Afghanistan. One Member State observed that the technologies were already being used against national forces in neighbouring States, with a specific reference to thermal imagers and sophisticated night-vision equipment, which allow for enhanced surveillance and targeted, precise attacks.

101. One Member State highlighted the use of remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS) by ISIL in northern Iraq. ISIL has significantly increased the use of RPAS in the past year. With the commercial availability of low-cost, high-tech RPAS, which are difficult to track, groups such as ISIL can identify and attack targets with a high degree of accuracy. In some cases, it was noted that ISIL had used these in attacks on freighters.

102. Member States have noted that ISIL has used front companies to acquire RPAS in Asia, the United States and Canada and subsequently converted them for lethal use.

One Member State reported that anti-aircraft weapons and RPAS were sourced in the form of spare parts and assembled later to evade detection. In this regard, Al-Qaida is reported to be actively attempting to develop RPAS that have increased payload for the delivery of larger bombs. Parts for sniper equipment and dual-use parts for improvised explosive devices are also imported in the same fashion. Increasingly, such groups are also acquiring new technologies on the dark web.

103. In Africa, Member States have confiscated manuals from ISIL cells on the use of RPAS in targeted attacks. In Somalia, there is prolific use of RPAS, including mini-drones, by Al-Shabaab. In Africa, ISIL also profits from the manufacture of improvised explosive devices and the looting of weapons from national forces. In Mozambique, Member States have noted that ASWJ weapons stocks have increased significantly, with weapons being seized from military camps, patrolling soldiers, border posts and police armouries. Weapons recovered from ASWJ fighters include rocket-propelled grenade (RPG-7) launchers, PKM machine guns, AK-47 rifles and grenades. Other equipment includes vehicles, motorcycles, cell phones and technological devices. In early 2022, the Mozambican army also intercepted and neutralized several formations of RPAS used to gather intelligence on the positions of local and regional forces. In Uganda, national authorities have in the past three months also confiscated suicide vests, explosive devices, submachine guns, ammunition, cell phones, SIM cards, flash drives with recruitment videos and bomb-making manuals from ADF terror cells.

## V. Recommendations

104. The Monitoring Team welcomes the ongoing efforts by the United Nations Secretariat to enhance the timely communication of changes to the United Nations Security Council Consolidated List, which Member States are expected to implement without delay in accordance with paragraph 1 (a) of resolution 2610 (2021). The Monitoring Team is aware of continued challenges encountered by some Member States with both the quality of the list and implementing changes to the list in a timely manner. The latter issue is currently being addressed. All changes made to the Consolidated List, be they substantive or technical, are updated and accessible on the website of the Security Council.<sup>4</sup> However, there are some inconsistencies, mostly technical in nature, in the list entries and narrative summaries of the sanctions list in the electronic database, which appear in various languages. These inconsistencies should be identified and remedied, and a process implemented to assure the quality and accuracy of the list going forward and to reduce false positives. Part of the identification and remedy work has been done and will continue to be done during the annual review process.

**105. In support of further efforts to enhance the accuracy of the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions list and the effective implementation of sanctions measures, the Monitoring Team recommends that Secretariat, in partnership with the Monitoring Team, explore the possibility of a data validation exercise to ensure that the contents of the current sanctions list entries and narrative summaries, as reflected in the electronic database in all official languages of the United Nations, and accessible on the Committee website, are accurate, and to harmonize all the existing inconsistencies. For that purpose, the Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee take the necessary steps to ensure that resources are made available to implement this task and that the Secretariat propose a plan for the completion of the data validation exercise.**

<sup>4</sup> See [www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/list-updates-unscc-consolidated-list](http://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/list-updates-unscc-consolidated-list).



## VI. Monitoring Team activities and feedback

106. During the reporting period, travel restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic were further eased, allowing a greater number of in-person meetings during visits to Member States. The Monitoring 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, as well as with members of the private sector and civil society.

107. The Monitoring Team wishes to highlight the increased challenges of travel planning at a time when the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is fading but Member States are easing their restrictions at widely varying rates. The Monitoring Team's complex journeys run the risk of sudden and expensive disruption in the event of a member testing positive for COVID-19, while limited flight options and travel routes continue to add to the challenge of assembling itineraries. Under such circumstances, agility of travel is vital to the Monitoring Team's execution of its mandate. There will be occasions when the Monitoring Team needs to accept Member State invitations to visit on short notice. In such limited cases, the Monitoring Team asks for understanding from the Secretariat and the Committee in waiving the United Nations rule requiring notice of travel 25 calendar days in advance notice.

108. The Monitoring Team welcomes feedback on the present report at [1267mt@un.org](mailto:1267mt@un.org).