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USDOS – US Department of State

Country Report on Terrorism 2019 - Chapter 5 - Army of Islam (AOI)

Aka Jaysh al-Islam; Jaish al-Islam

Description: Designated as an FTO on May 19, 2011, the Army of Islam (AOI), founded in late 2005, is a Gaza-based terrorist organization responsible for numerous terrorist acts against the Israeli and Egyptian governments and British, New Zealand, and U.S. citizens. The group, led by Mumtaz Dughmush, subscribes to a violent Salafist ideology.

Note: AOI is a separate and distinct group from the Syria-based Jaysh al-Islam, which is not a designated FTO.

Activities: AOI is responsible for the 2006 and 2007 kidnappings of civilians, including a U.S. journalist. AOI also carried out the early 2009 attacks on Egyptian civilians in Cairo and Heliopolis, Egypt, and planned the January 1, 2011, attack on a Coptic Christian church in Alexandria that killed 25 and wounded 100. In November 2012, AOI announced that it had launched rocket attacks on Israel in a joint operation with the Mujahidin Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem. In August 2013, an Israeli official reported that AOI leader Dughmush was running training camps in Gaza.

In September 2015, AOI reportedly released a statement pledging allegiance to ISIS. In a short post attributed to the group, AOI declared itself an inseparable part of ISIS-Sinai Province. Since then, AOI has continued to express support for ISIS. In October 2017, the group released a video in an effort to encourage ISIS fighters defending Mosul. In August 2019, AOI shared another video praising ISIS that included training information for individuals to conduct suicide attacks.

Strength: Precise numbers are unknown.

Location/Area of Operation: Egypt, Gaza, and Israel

Funding and External Aid: AOI receives much of its funding from a variety of criminal activities in Gaza.

ecoi.net summary:

Brief description of the Army of Islam (Excerpt of chapter 5 of the country report on terrorism 2019)

Countries:

Egypt, Israel, State of Palestine

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