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Country Report on Terrorism 2022 - Chapter 5 - ISIS-Democratic Republic of the Congo (ISIS-DRC)

Aka ISIS-DRC; Allied Democratic Forces, Madina at Tauheed Wau Mujahedeen; City of Monotheism and Holy Warriors; Islamic State Central Africa Province; Wilayat Central Africa; Wilayah Central Africa Media Office; Wilayat Wasat Ifriqiyah; ISIS-Central Africa.

Description: ISIS-Democratic Republic of the Congo (ISIS-DRC) was designated as an FTO on March 11, 2021. ISIS publicly recognized the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) as an affiliate in late 2018 and claimed responsibility for ADF-attributed attacks starting in 2019 after an attack on an Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo base near Kamango. ISIS-DRC is responsible for many attacks across North Kivu and Ituri Provinces in eastern DRC. Under the leadership of Seka Musa Baluku, ISIS-DRC has been notorious in this region for its brutal violence against Congolese citizens and regional military forces.

Activities: In 2020, ISIS-DRC attacked the villages of Kamwiri, Kitsimba, and Lisasa in Beni, North Kivu Province, killing 21 people, abducting 20 others, and desecrating the Catholic Church in Lisasa. In 2021, ISIS-DRC attacked displacement camps near the towns of Boga and Tchabi in Ituri Province, killing 57 people and abducting 25 others. Also in 2021, ISIS-DRC conducted simultaneous suicide bombings in Kampala, Uganda, that killed three persons and wounded 33 others.

In 2022, ISIS-DRC claimed responsibility for a bomb attack during a service at a Protestant church in Kasindi, North Kivu Province, killing at least 10 people and wounding 39 others. Also in 2022, ISIS-DRC reportedly attacked several villages in Beni, killing 26 people and abducting 12 others.

Strength: ISIS-DRC has between 500 to 1500 members.

Location/Area of Operation: Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Funding and External Aid: Although ISIS-DRC's sources of funding remain largely unknown, the group probably does receive some support from ISIS. The group has seized weapons and ammunition from the Congolese military.

ISIS in the Greater Sahara

Aka ISIS-GS; Islamic State in the Greater Sahara; Islamic State of the Greater Sahel; ISIS in the Greater Sahel; ISIS-Sahel.

Description: ISIS in the Greater Sahara (ISIS-GS) was designated as an FTO on May 23, 2018. ISIS-GS emerged when leader Adnan Abu Walid al-Sahrawi and his followers split from al-Murabitoun. Al-Sahrawi first pledged allegiance to ISIS in 2015, which was acknowledged by ISIS in 2016. In 2022, ISIS-GS was elevated to a formal ISIS branch and changed its name to ISIS-Sahel (aka ISIS-Sahel Province).

Activities: Since 2017, ISIS-GS has been involved in numerous skirmishes and attacks in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso, including the 2017 attack on a joint U.S.-Nigerien patrol that killed four U.S. soldiers and five Nigerien soldiers, as well as other attacks targeting or killing French, Malian, Nigerien, and Burkinabe soldiers and civilians. In 2020, ISIS-GS militants attacked a Nigerien military base on the border between Niger and Mali, killing 89 soldiers, and were suspected of killing 6 French NGO workers, their Nigerien guide and 1 other Nigerien citizen near Niamey, Niger. In 2021, French forces killed ISIS-GS leader Adnan Abu Walid al-Sahrawi in southern Mali.

In September, ISIS-GS launched an attack on a northern Malian town that killed dozens of civilians. In the same month, ISIS-GS claimed responsibility for two attacks in northern Benin in July that killed six soldiers. In August, ISIS-GS was suspected of being responsible for an attack in central Mali that killed 42 soldiers.

Strength: ISIS-GS is estimated to have 400 to 1,000 fighters.

Location/Area of Operation: Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and to a lesser extent Benin.

Funding and External Aid: Sources of funding are unknown.

Associated documents