



الائتلاف الإسلامي العسكري لمحاربة الإرهاب
ISLAMIC MILITARY COUNTER TERRORISM COALITION

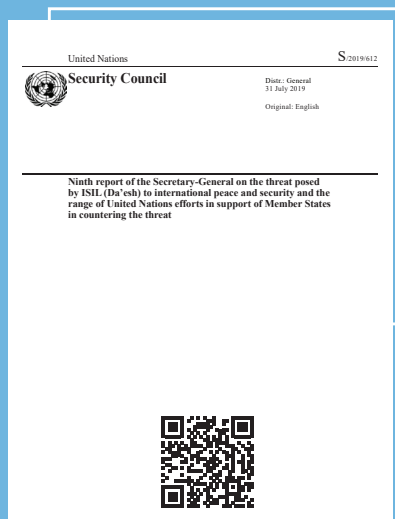
General Directorate of Planning and Coordination

Spotlight
On

11

Special
Reports
March 2020

The Threat Posed by Daesh to International Peace and Security





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Spotlight On

The Threat Posed by Daesh to International Peace and Security

The United Nations is making great efforts to support Member States in countering the threat of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the threat it poses to international peace and security, while providing an annual report on the seriousness of the threat and the range of the United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat. It is revealed that in the ninth report, issued in July 2019, in the aftermath of a series of its territorial defeat, ISIL continues to aspire to global relevance, by creating more affiliates all over the world and carrying out inspired attacks whenever favorable opportunities arise. In resolution 2253 (2015), the Security Council expressed its determination to address the threat of this organization and its associated groups and individuals. In adopting its resolution 2253 (2015), the Security Council expressed its determination to address the threat posed to international peace and security by ISIL along with its affiliates and associated individuals and groups.

The report further highlights ongoing threats and challenges, such as the issue of returning fighters and their families. The report also calls for addressing the issue of the detainees and internally displaced persons and the urgent need to repatriate such individuals, security concerns and humanitarian and jurisdictional challenges.

First: Threat Assessment



Middle East

- ▶ During the review of the report, ISIL suffered a massive military defeat in Syria and lost myriads of its fighters, who were doomed to bite the dust in the battlefield, while some others fought tooth and nail trying to defend the last remnant of the so-called Caliphate State”, and large waves of them took to their heels before and after the fall of ISIL and hence were forced to be internally displaced into camps and detention facilities in the north-east of Syria, bringing about grave humanitarian and security concerns.
- ▶ The rise in the number of extremists and foreign fighters has become a serious threat, in light of the growth of a covert network of ISIL members since 2017 at the provincial level in Iraq, while some ISIL senior leaders and members were reported to have taken refuge in governorates of ongoing fighting as is the case in various parts of Syria.
- ▶ It is unlikely that ISIL will be able to regain its strength or attract new foreign fighters, given the fierce resistance it has encountered in the Arabian Peninsula, where it has almost no presence in the Kingdom, as well as in Yemen, where it has been exhausted by fighting with Al-Qaeda.
- ▶ Most of the ISIL senior figures and leaders are reported to be in Iraq, with the ISIL

core having to reduce the functions and personnel. It is also reported that the ISIL is unable to support foreign fighters, and limiting protection to the main members of the Syrian and Iraqi fighters; these bode ill for ISIL demise.

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- ▶ Al-Baghdadi’s video posted by the end of April 2019 confirms that ISIL still aspires to global relevance and highlights its affiliates. ISIL adopted a dispersed, delegated leadership approach, which entails giving specific better-established ISIL affiliates greater responsibility to support lesser and newer ones, except for psychological warfare along with propaganda that promotes the risible attacks that the ISIL continues to implement despite its repeated failure.
- ▶ Perhaps Afghanistan is the only fertile land on which ISIL has been able to establish its presence and plan external operations, in addition to the regions of West Africa and Southeast Asia. Member States, therefore, expect that the current lull or inactivity of international attacks will be temporary, and that ISIL will resume its activities when conditions are favorable.
- ▶ It is widely believed that, despite the loss of most of its resources, ISIL is still capable of supporting its terrorist acts with funds, whether through cash couriers, companies not registered in money services, or money order brokers. ISIL is left with wealth estimated to be as much as \$300 million.
- ▶ The looting of the Nineveh antiquities and other historical and archaeological sites that were financially motivated may have an impact on that. It should be noted though that some leaders retain the secrets of these sites.

Regional Trends

1. Africa

- ▶ Despite the decreasing number of its members in Libya, ISIL still poses a threat to the coastal region extending from the oil fields in the east to the borders of Tunisia and Algeria, especially in light of the security vacuum stemming from the fighting in the areas surrounding the capital.

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- ▶ Many terrorist cells affiliated with ISIL in Morocco were dismantled and disrupted. Most of such terrorist cells arrested while returning from Syria and Iraq were aided by forged identification documents. As for Sinai, the area of operations of Ansar Bayt Al-Maqdis, which is reported to include up to 1,000 members, is active albeit confined to local areas.
- ▶ The movement of small numbers of fighters from North Africa through Sudan towards Algeria and Libya was detected, while West Africa witnessed a significant increase in recruitment operations for ISIL and Al-Qaeda, and in the acts of violence committed by their respective followers.
- ▶ Most of the ISIL attacks publicized by its headquarters in Nigeria, in West Africa, are in Niger and Mali (the Greater Sahara).
- ▶ ISIL which includes nearly four thousand fighters and seeks to attract foreign fighters, continues its operations in West Africa, in the provinces of Borno and Yobe, northeastern Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin.
- ▶ In early 2019, clashes erupted in Somalia between ISIL and Al-Shabaab in Puntland and Mogadishu, which enabled Al-Shabaab to control some of the ISIL bases and forced it to retreat to its stronghold in Ceelasha, near

Mogadishu. However, ISIL has been able to carry out limited assassination operations.

- ▶ Tawheed Waljihad group in the Democratic Republic of the Congo pledged allegiance to ISIL. Despite ISIL core refused to accept the pledge of allegiance, Tawheed Waljihad group continues its activities and strengthening its ranks by attracting foreign fighters who want to move to another location.
- ▶ Member States in Central Africa expressed in early 2019 their concern about the increasing frequency and momentum of ISIL operations in the region. Although ISIL is still in the process of development, it is being assisted by the support of ISIL in Somalia for other emerging branches, and operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- ▶ There is no evidence of this support and activity. What is happening in Central African Province is rebranding new alliances, such as Democratic Forces and the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda.

2. Europe

- ▶ The number of successful attacks decreased in the reporting period, but threats remain significant.
- ▶ Growing concern about local attacks is expressed by certain countries (for instance, sending back fighters back to Europe), with a relative increase in unsuccessful attacks due to lack of professionalism.
- ▶ Radicalization in prisons is a growing concern.
- ▶ The number of those who left the fighting is estimated between 5,000 to 6,000 foreign terrorists, 75% of whom joined ISIL, 30% to 40% of whom are likely to have been killed, while 10 to 15% of them are still detained, and may have moved to other regions, and 30 to 40% have returned to Europe.
- ▶ Most returnees retain their extremist views, albeit disillusioned with terrorist practices, or their disappointment in trying to live under ISIL, which increases their risk to society and the state.

- ▶ The number of European terrorist fighters who have been repatriated remains a major challenge, exacerbated by the refusal of their communities to include them.

3. Asia

- ▶ A small number of fighters are seeking to travel from Central Asia to Syria or Afghanistan. Since 2012, approximately 1,500 Tajik fighters and the same estimated number of Uzbeks have joined terrorist groups, many of whom are still being held in Syria. In 2019, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan realized repatriation of such fighters; they recovered a small number of them, mostly children and women.
- ▶ ISIL is taking advantage of the internet to urge more of its supporters in Central Asia to move to conflict zones or form sleeper cells, through propaganda campaigns in their local languages.

Terrorist groups in northern Afghanistan are cooperating with organized criminal networks active in drug trafficking, causing growing concern in the region.

- ▶ Despite the defeat suffered in 2019, the Islamic State in Iraq is still in Nangarhar and Kunar Provinces in Khorasan, and was forced to reduce the frequency and regularity of its attacks.
- ▶ The ISIL is taking advantage of various methods to derive revenues in Khurasan, including exploiting local resources, extorting locals and kidnappings for ransom.
- ▶ The ISIL renewed activities and dynamics and its transformation into a global network inspiring terrorism and its endeavor to expand into zones where it has not been active before are growing concerns to some Member States in Southeast Asia.
- ▶ The ISIL continues to launch attacks on places of worship in this area, whereby women plan and implement such terrorist incidents.

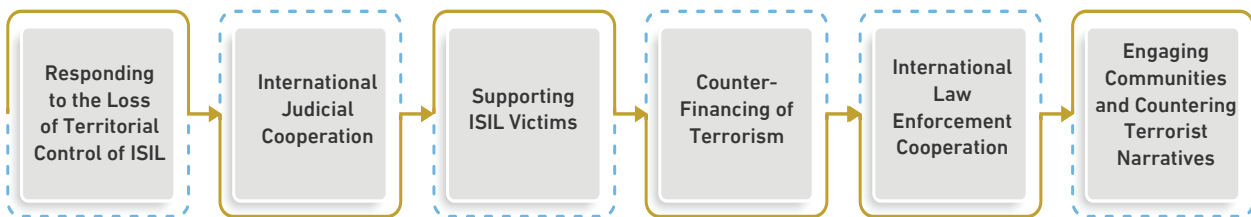
Foreign Terrorist Fighters

- ▶ Estimates indicate that the rate of attrition among foreign terrorist fighters reached 25% killed, and 15% unaccounted for, while it is estimated that about 40,000 people first joined the (Caliphate State). These figures suggest that between 24,000 and 30,000 fighters are still alive, and Member States are concerned about the challenges posed by these returning and relocating fighters, although they have yet to appear in large numbers and have not demonstrated their continued activity.
- ▶ Among the growing concerns for Member States is the difficulty to secure one approach to process and repatriate women, including internally displaced persons, and providing legal protection for women detained with their children, and the difficulty to prove and verify their identifications and nationalities.
- ▶ The increasingly growing and worsening threats posed by detainees, whether adults or minors, the difficulty of their social inclusion and the obstacles faced by judiciary regulations and laws and reforms that may be an infamous environment for such extremist ideologies to be rampant if not addressed effectively.

Second: Updates on Responses to the Evolving Threat

Member States and international, regional and sub-regional organizations continue to develop their tools to address the different types of threat posed by ISIL, its affiliates and supporters, while the UN continues to galvanize international cooperation through conducting a series of regional conferences organized by the Office of Counter-Terrorism in the Member States under the supervision of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Compact Coordination Committee in this regard. The following sheds fresh light on the updates on responses to counterterrorism:

Updates on Responses to the Evolving Threat



Responding to the Loss of Territorial Control of ISIL

1. Repatriation

- ▶ Thousands of people, most of whom are children and women in overcrowded camps in Iraq and Syria, face tragic situations, and lack the basic rights to food, medical care and more daily needs.
- ▶ In March 2019, the United Nations developed key principles for the protection, repatriation, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of women and children linked to terrorism.
- ▶ Each Member State bears the responsibility of its citizens, with the obligation not to enact laws that deprive them of their citizenships.
- ▶ There are major legal, practical and executive challenges that hinder the repatriation processes in some countries.
- ▶ The Russian Federation, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan have repatriated young children and including orphans.

2. Prosecution

- ▶ Bringing ISIL members to justice while ensuring a fair trial in compliance with international law is a major challenge for Member States.
- ▶ Member States must intensify work with countries most impacted by ISIL to bring their citizens to justice.
- ▶ Iraq has prosecuted ISIL members suspected of committing terrorist crimes, including Iraqi and foreign persons, pursuant to counter-terrorism law, with the

United Nations being keen to support and ensure their right to fair trials.

- ▶ All individuals suspected of crimes should receive fair investigation and prosecution with guarantees of due process through the judiciary and justice observed.
- ▶ Many Member States face significant challenges regarding the risks of extremism leading to prison violence, due to scarce resources, prison overcrowding, and poor conditions of detention and treatment.
- ▶ Detainees contacting with one another help to spread violent extremism that leads to terrorism.

3. Rehabilitation

- ▶ The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office, through the Joint Project on Violent Extremist Prisoners, provides help to Member States to enhance security and safety in prisons, meet needs, assess risk, rehabilitate and integrate socially and find alternative methods to imprisonment.

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- ▶ The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate helps the relevant authorities of the Member States concerned to develop regional screening approaches to prosecution, rehabilitation and inclusion or reintegration.
- ▶ The government of Niger, with the assistance of the International Organization

for Migration (IOM) and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, has made significant progress in screening 200 people associated with the Boko Haram, and making respective recommendations for each.

- ▶ Key challenges remain strong upon the consideration of the use of amnesties or exemptions from prosecution, which leads to incentivizing impunity for gross violations of human rights.
- ▶ Creating plans that take into account the human dimensions in prosecuting, rehabilitating and reintegrating women linked to terrorist groups face major challenges.
- ▶ Great challenges are encountered while developing tailored plans that take into consideration the humanitarian dimensions in the prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of women linked to terrorist groups.
- ▶ The Trends Report issued by the Executive Directorate of the Counter-Terrorism Committee in February 2019 revealed gaps related to the number and characteristics of women returning from ISIL-held territory, and the risk of marginalization, so as not to return to extremism, which is lying in wait for or lurking around for women returning to weak support in the rehabilitation and integration stage.
- ▶ Concerted efforts should be made to prevent terrorist groups from using violence against children whom they recruit and exploit.

International Judicial Cooperation

There is an urgent need to establish judicial cooperation programs and networks between law enforcement agencies and the judiciary at the regional level to facilitate the collection and exchange of information relating to terrorists and suspects. Facilitated by the United Nations, focal points within the Task Force work together to collect and share information related to terrorists and suspects to the preparation and transmission of cooperation requests to its constituent Member States.

Supporting ISIL Victims

The United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by ISIL (Daesh) has made much progress in supporting the people working on collecting data and evidence in Iraq to hold ISIL accountable for its crimes that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Of the most notorious and horrendous crimes perpetrated by ISIL is sexual violence:

- ▶ Sexual violence may be a strategic objective of terrorist groups, and this is why the Security Council recognizes that victims of sexual violence by terrorist groups are victims of terrorist acts, who should be treated fairly and empowered with official support programs, such as victims of terrorism.
- ▶ The Security Council is keen to address the needs of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, enhance support and improve services for victims in all circumstances.
- ▶ The displacement of women who are victims of sexual slavery and other forms of sexual violence in camps, and their non-inclusion along with their children who were the births of sexual violence, in their indigenous communities, is a new challenge, worsening the knotty problem of identifying the missing persons who were kidnapped by ISIL, including women and children.
- ▶ A team of experts on rule of law and sexual violence in conflict-related situations helps the Iraqi government implement the Joint Communiqué on bringing perpetrators of sexual violence from ISIL to justice, ensuring that victims are treated fairly and are afforded adequate compensation.

Counter-Financing of Terrorism

- ▶ One of the most important efforts to counter the threat and risk of ISIL is preventing ISIL along with its associated supporters from raising, transferring and using funds. At a Security Council Arria formula, the Security Council has undertaken an initiative aimed at strengthening the responses of Member States.

- ▶ In March 2019, the Security Council adopted the first resolution drawn up exclusively to prevent the financing of terrorism.
- ▶ During the reporting period, the Counter-Terrorism Office received requests from financial action task forces in Member States and similar regional bodies to support the efforts of non-profit organizations (NPOs) to take strong measures to prevent misuse of funds for the purpose of financing terrorism.
- ▶ The United Nations and international organizations continue to address existing communications between international terrorism and organized crime. The United Nations Regional Institute for Crime and Justice Research has developed a toolkit for public policies, to identify challenges that must be urgently addressed.

International Law Enforcement Cooperation

- ▶ In 2019, the Office of Counter-Terrorism launched the Counter-Terrorism Travel Programme to further help Member States in enhancing their capacities to prevent, detect, investigate and prosecute terrorist offences and serious crime. The Program combats terrorist travel, improves the use of existing international databases and provides the necessary guarantees to verify the proper use of personal data in accordance with the international standards of human rights.
- ▶ In March 2019, the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate hosted an open session to foster awareness of the practices recommended by the United Nations with regard to the responsible use and sharing biometric data in counterterrorism.
- ▶ In May 2019, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, in close coordination with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) global Airport Communications Project, implemented two training exercises aimed at capacity-building in international airports to counter the threats of terrorists, foreign fighters, and returnees.

- ▶ The attacks carried out during the reporting period are evidence of the INSIL insistence on targeting vital infrastructure and easy targets, such as places of worship. An action plan has been developed to support government efforts to protect religious sites.
- ▶ In May 2019, the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate stressed the urgent need to make greater efforts to address the risk of terrorists using unmanned aircraft systems against critical infrastructure and easy targets.

Engaging Communities and Countering Terrorist Narratives

- ▶ In May 2019, the United Nations Office for Counter-Terrorism signed a tripartite memorandum of understanding with the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the UNODC to implement a joint program supporting parliamentary action in protecting society from terrorism and violent extremism.
- ▶ The Counter-Terrorism Office and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate participated in training workshops aimed at capacity-building capacities to combat extremist terrorist narrative through strategic communications.
- ▶ The Counter-Terrorism Office has worked directly with a number of civil society organizations in Jordan and the Philippines to help them in capacity-building to provide an alternative discourse to the narratives of terrorist and violent extremist groups.
- ▶ In June 2019, the Office announced the United Nations strategy on hate speech, which is implemented by the Office for the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect, involving 13 United Nations agencies, which aim to strengthen efforts in the study of the root factors of hate speech and address its effects in communities, while preparing a strong counter-narrative.
- ▶ The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), through the “Reviving the Spirit of Mosul” initiative,

continued the Education Employment Project to prevent violent extremism and rebuild the educational system in Mosul. In the Sahel region, UNESCO implements various programs to “promote peace and sustainable development” in nine countries.

Conclusion

Although ISIL has experienced collapse in the territory that was once under its control, Member States must remain vigilant for the threat of

global terrorism, counter its narrative and combat extremism in prisons. Member States must also work to integrate, rehabilitate men, women and children from conflict zones, prevent the targeting of religious sites, urge Member States to protect them, confront the escalation of hate speech, combat the financing of terrorism in accordance with Security Council resolutions. The United Nations pledges to continue to support various efforts at the international and regional levels to counter terrorism.

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Ninth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat

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