



Security Council

Distr.: General
25 July 2023

Original: English

Letter dated 24 July 2023 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 thirty-second 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) Vanessa **Frazier**
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 30 June 2023 from the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team 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 thirty-second comprehensive report, pursuant to annex I to resolution 2610 (2021). In formulating the report, the Monitoring Team considered information it received up to 16 June 2023. I also note that the document of reference is the English original.

(Signed) Justin **Hustwitt**
Coordinator
Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team

Thirty-second 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

The threat of terrorism remains high in conflict zones and relatively low elsewhere. The situation is dynamic and, while the threat is suppressed in some conflict zones, the resilience of terrorist groups means that there is a risk of resurgence in certain circumstances.

The large population remaining in camps in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic are a factor in that risk. Further progress has been made in the repatriation of residents but, at the current rate, the risk will persist for several more years. The overwhelming majority of the residents are Iraqi or Syrian.

The Sahel and the Democratic Republic of the Congo continue to cause concern as the level of violence and threat increases in those regions. Member States are concerned that terrorist groups will exploit the current instability in the Sudan, with implications for conflict zones in Africa.

The impact of counter-terrorist operations against Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, QDe.115) has been particularly significant with the deaths of Ali Jasim Salman Muhammad al-Juburi on 24 February, who oversaw the ISIL general directorate of provinces, and Bilal al-Sudani on 25 January, who played a key financial role in the ISIL Al-Karrar office. The reported killing of the overall leader, Abu al-Husain al-Husaini al-Qurashi, in April has not been confirmed.

The structures of Al-Qaida and ISIL (Da'esh) continually adapt to pressure on the core leadership, with regional affiliates exercising operational autonomy.

Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K, QDe.161) continues to pose significant threat within Afghanistan, and Member States are concerned about its potential to develop external operations capability and to project a threat into the region and beyond.

Globally, more terrorist groups have developed an unmanned aerial systems capability. In parts of Africa, more destructive, and greater use of, improvised explosive devices has been observed.

Terrorist groups continue to demonstrate an ability to generate significant revenues and agility and innovation in the use of new financial technologies.

Member States should be encouraged to propose designations under the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions list. The overall trend in approved listings is downwards.

Reporting by Member States on the implementation of all aspects of sanctions measures remains limited.

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Overview and evolution of the threat	5
II. Regional developments	6
A. Africa	6
B. Iraq and the Levant	11
C. Arabian Peninsula	14
D. Europe	15
E. Asia	15
III. Impact assessment	18
A. Resolutions 2199 (2015) and 2462 (2019) on the financing of terrorism	18
B. Resolution 2347 (2017) on cultural heritage	19
C. Resolution 2396 (2017) on foreign terrorist fighters, returnees and relocators	19
IV. Implementation of sanctions measures	20
A. Travel ban	21
B. Assets freeze	21
C. Arms embargo	21
V. Recommendations	22
VI. Monitoring Team activities and feedback	22

I. Overview and evolution of the threat

1. The threat posed by Al-Qaida (QDe.004), Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh) and affiliated groups continues to be high in conflict zones and neighbouring Member States. The threat remains relatively low elsewhere. The situation is far from static, however, with significant shifts in several theatres during the reporting period.

2. Counter-terrorist operations in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, Mozambique and Yemen have significantly suppressed or constrained terrorists' capabilities domestically and their ability to mount external operations. In the Sahel and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the level of violence and threat continues to rise, with regional implications. In Somalia, significant success in counter-terrorist operations has been mirrored with increased attacks by Harakat Al-Shabaab Al-Mujaahidiin (Al-Shabaab, SOe.001), with the Al-Qaida-affiliated group remaining strong and resilient.

3. Despite significant attrition of the ISIL (Da'esh) leadership in Iraq and the Levant, the group remains resilient and the risk of resurgence should counter-terrorist pressure ease is real. The reduction in the group's activity is assessed by many Member States to be both enforced and deliberate. The group has adapted its strategy and has exercised caution in choosing battles that are likely to result in limited losses, while rebuilding and recruiting from camps in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic and from vulnerable communities, including in countries neighbouring the core conflict zone. The large population present in the camps and detention centres in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic constitutes a major threat to the region and beyond. The successful military targeting of the leadership continues to be critical in keeping ISIL on the defensive, but the group's ability to adapt its modus operandi and embed itself within local populations, giving it time to regroup, enables its resilience, causing vulnerability to terrorist threat. ISIL also continues to take advantage of the lack of coordination between various counter-terrorism forces in the region, in a fractured political environment.

4. The situation in Afghanistan has become more complex, with Member State concerns increasing about the ability of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K, QDe.161) to project a threat into the region, and further afield into Europe. Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP, QDe.132), emboldened by the Afghan Taliban's assumption of power as the de facto authorities, derives advantage from its presence in Afghanistan for its operations across the border into Pakistan. There is growing reporting that other sanctioned terrorist groups are using support to TTP as a means to evade control by the Afghan Taliban. Some Member States expressed concern that greater Taliban control of such groups could result in some elements aligning more closely with ISIL-K.

5. The trend of counter-terrorist pressure prompting ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida to adopt flatter, more networked and decentralized structures has continued, with operational autonomy in the affiliated groups. Member States have little evidence of command and control of the affiliates from the core leaderships. The questions of titular and executive leadership at the core of both Al-Qaida and ISIL (Da'esh) remain unresolved, but have not had an impact on the level of violence perpetrated by the affiliated groups and their perceived success.

6. The media apparatus of both ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida very effectively propagandizes the operations of their affiliates in conflict zones, reaching a wide audience, with the aim of radicalizing, gaining support and recruits, and inspiring attacks beyond conflict zones. While the previously well-developed external operations capability of both the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida core groups remains

diminished and largely constrained, the ambition and intent of both groups to recover and project a threat beyond conflict zones is clear. Al-Qaida in particular claims, and has demonstrated, strategic patience.

7. The dynamic between Al-Qaida and ISIL (Da'esh) affiliates in the field is environment dependent. While there are some very rare examples of coordination, or even cooperation, there is an ideological gulf between the two groups. Where they are not forced into direct confrontation they can coexist, pursuing independent agendas. Where they compete for resources, territory, and hearts and minds, as in the Sahel, they can come into violent conflict, which becomes the paramount objective of the group, with operations against government and other targets moving to the second order. Member States registered concern about greater fluidity in Afghanistan where relationships and affiliations have a longer history and are more complex. The distinctions between members of Al-Qaida and affiliated groups, including TTP, and ISIL-K are at times blurred at the edges, with individuals sometimes identifying with more than one group and a tendency for people to gravitate towards the dominant or ascending power.

8. Terrorist methodology has evolved. The use of unmanned aerial systems continues to proliferate, with Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP, QDe.129) using them effectively. As indicated in the present report, there is greater use of improvised explosive devices, with greater effect, in conflict zones in parts of Africa. While not a widespread trend, it is worth noting that some Member States provided examples of terrorists' interests in using toxins in their attack methodology. Member States also noted that ransoms paid to terrorist groups to secure the release of kidnapped hostages had enabled terrorist groups to improve their capabilities, resulting in loss of life in further terrorist attacks.

9. Although the implications are not yet clear, several Member States observed that the current conflict in the Sudan has prompted a renewed focus on the long presence and historic activities of both Al-Qaida and ISIL (Da'esh) in that country. They voiced concerns that both groups would seize upon the opportunity presented by political and military instability and advance terrorist agendas, with potentially serious implications in African conflict zones. Joint regional counter-terrorism operations remain critical in this regard.

II. Regional developments

A. Africa

Central and Southern Africa

10. In Mozambique, the deployment of regional forces in Cabo Delgado Province ([S/2022/83](#), para. 9), continues to have a significant impact on Ahlu Sunna wal-Jama'a (ASWJ, not listed), disrupting its leadership, command structures and bases. Regional Member States estimate that ASWJ has between 180 and 220 battle-hardened adult male fighters. Since January, Mozambican and regional forces have killed between 44 and 65 fighters and commanders. Member States note that displaced fighters have formed small and medium-sized cells, adapting to current conditions, presenting few opportunities for exploitation and scarce access to resources. Consistent attacks over the past two years and the subsequent displacement of villagers, farmers and civilians have resulted in the near collapse of informal businesses in nearby towns and a cessation of meaningful production by the small-scale farmers on which ASWJ are reliant for provisions during their raids and rampant lootings.

11. Following the launch of Operation Vulcão IV,¹ there has been an escalation in clashes between ASWJ and deployed regional forces on both sides of the Messalo River, central Cabo Delgado. Since January, forces have killed a senior ASWJ Commander, Abu Fadila, in Nguida (Macomia district), Issa Wachi (senior commander in Nangade) and Mustapha (senior commander in Macomia district). Clashes have mostly centred on engagements between ASWJ and the forces of the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) and Mozambique with Member States reporting a notable decrease in deaths and attacks on civilians in the past six months.

12. There are clear signs that insurgents are trying to cultivate social and economic relationships with the local community in the hope of normalizing their presence and sustaining themselves, which Member States assess to be a sign of local, mostly self-generated funding with little evidence of ASWJ receiving any significant external funding.

13. The ASWJ leadership structure includes Abu Yasir Hassan (not listed), a Tanzanian national serving as the spiritual leader of the group, and operations leader, Bonomade Machude Omar (not listed, Mozambique national) from Macomia, who has extensive knowledge of the terrain. Foreign terrorist fighters originate from the United Republic of Tanzania, Kenya and, to a lesser extent, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and Uganda. Regional Member States maintain that there is no clear evidence of “command and control orders” from ISIL over ASWJ.

14. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Operation Shujaa, the joint military operations by Congolese and Ugandan forces against the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF, CDe.001), continue to disperse ADF beyond its traditional strongholds, expanding its area of operation. Operation Shujaa has targeted ADF senior commanders, strongholds and fighters. One Member State reported that in two months 424 ADF operators were killed, 81 captured and 115 abductees rescued. In Mwalika Valley, in February, forces of Operation Shujaa targeted and killed the head of the political wing of ADF, its third most senior leader and former head of operations, Mulalo Segujja (aliases Ssegujja and Fezza).

15. Despite Operation Shujaa, attacks by ADF persist unabated. In North Kivu, the situation has worsened significantly due to the use of lethal improvised explosive devices and some of the bloodiest attacks to date. On 15 January, ADF detonated an improvised explosive device at Lubiriha Church in Kasindi, Beni territory. The explosion killed 16 and injured more than 60 civilians. Member States assess that the improvised explosive device was the largest, most powerful bomb ever used by ADF, killing the highest number of victims in a single explosion. The bomb weighed between 7 and 10 kg and was made using urea nitrate and metal shrapnel, enhancing its blast radius and lethality.

16. Member States report that the bomb was built by ADF Commander, Abwakasi (not listed), who used his network to procure explosives to make larger and more dangerous bombs, with the express intent to cause maximum civilian casualties. Abwakasi also built the bomb that was detonated in a busy marketplace in Ma Campagne, Beni town, on 25 January. While that bomb was much smaller, between 500 and 700 grams, it injured 18 civilians, including 10 children. Fragments recovered indicate that the bomb was detonated either by a radio-controlled device or a timer.

¹ Joint operations of Mozambican and deployed regional forces.

17. In one week in March, ADF had killed more than 80 civilians in North Kivu Province. By the end of the month, more than 150 civilians overall had been killed, the total killed rising to more than 500 in the past six months.

18. Meddie Nkalubo (not listed) and Abwakasi are assessed by Member States to be the key orchestrators of the most lethal attacks in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda.

19. ADF is assessed to have between 1,500 and 2,000 adult male fighters under the leadership of Seka Baluku (alias Musa Baluku, CDi.036). Notwithstanding pledges of allegiance by ADF to ISIL, several regional Member States refute any “command and control” links between ADF and the ISIL core.

East Africa

20. In Somalia, the Government has embarked on a strong military offensive against Al-Shabaab. While Al-Shabaab suffered significant losses from targeted airstrikes and military operations against its leadership and fighters, Member States assess that Al-Shabaab’s financial and operational capacity remains undiminished, with an estimated 7,000 to 12,000 fighters. Al-Shabaab generates \$100 million per annum from its taxation of all aspects of the economy of Somalia.

21. Al-Shabaab continues to kill government officials, soldiers, law enforcement officers and international peacekeepers. Over the past six months, its focus has been on strategic targeting of Somali military and African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) bases. In its most lethal attack, over 500 Al-Shabaab fighters attacked an ATMIS base in Bulo Marer, killing a significant number of Ugandan forces. The group continues to stage targeted attacks both domestically and in neighbouring States, including incursions into Kenya.

22. Member States assess that Al-Shabaab is preparing for the second phase of the Government’s offensive, which is aimed at targeting the group in southern Somalia, and that Al-Shabaab will exert greater effort to protect its traditional support base of the South-west, Middle and Lower Juba regions, which might be very taxing on government forces.

23. ISIL in Somalia has a presence in Puntland. Member States note, however, that the group does not have the capacity to control large terrain or the capacity to undertake significant operations owing to continued attacks by Al-Shabaab. ISIL in Somalia is estimated to have between 100 and 200 fighters. ISIL in Somalia hosts the Al-Karrar office ([S/2022/547](#), para. 24), headed by the emir of ISIL in Somalia, Abdul Qadir Mumin (not listed).

24. On 25 January, key ISIL financier, Bilal al-Sudani, was killed in a United States-led operation in northern Somalia. Al-Sudani was responsible for expanding ISIL activity in Africa. He played a significant role in supporting key elements of a network of financial hubs that operate in Africa, and beyond, through the Al-Karrar office.

25. Several Member States assess that revenue streams to the Al-Karrar office emanate from a country bordering the former so-called caliphate, with one Member State emphasizing that 100 per cent of money to Al-Karrar flowed through that country. Notwithstanding, some Member States maintain that Al-Karrar generates its funds through the exploitation of various sectors of the economy in northern Somalia. Other Member States report that the strength of Al-Karrar is overestimated, noting that funding to the Al-Furqan office far exceeds revenue flows to Al-Karrar.

26. Several Member States registered concern that well-established terror groups would exploit political instability and violence in the Sudan. The ISIL cell in the Sudan, fully operational since 2019, is headed by Abu Bakr al-Iraqi (Iraqi national).

The veteran leader of ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraq was delegated the authority by the ISIL core to establish a logistical and financial base in the Sudan from which transit and investment would take place. The ISIL cell has between 100 and 200 fighters, who are seasoned operators, but act as facilitators for logistical movements and transactions.

27. Abu Bakr Al-Iraqi, a businessman, had registered a variety of businesses using false identities in the Sudan and Türkiye. According to a Member State, he operates several money exchange businesses and a travel/tourism agency in Türkiye and holds substantial investments in the Sudan.

28. Member States warn that North African fighters use the Sudan as a hub for arrival and onward transfer to southern Libya, Mali and West Africa.

West Africa

29. With weakening centralized command of ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida, the African branches of these organizations now play a critical role despite their increasing autonomy, particularly in the context of local agendas. The area of operations of Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM, QDe.159) is expanding and strengthening beyond Mali, particularly into Burkina Faso. Positioning itself as a political player, JNIM is increasing pressure on local authorities to ensure a role in the event of negotiations. JNIM is thus developing a strategy which, while not diverging from Al-Qaida's doctrine, is in fact moving away from the group locally. In this respect, it is important to note that JNIM does not systematically use the Al-Qaida flag in its communications or on the battlefield; rather, it displays its own banner to mark its singularity.

30. JNIM has experienced certain difficulties. Because it recruits from diverse communities, JNIM has a significant challenge in managing potentially divergent agendas between different ethnic constituencies. Sustaining cohesion and coherence has become a priority for the leadership. Contrary to what might have been expected, JNIM does not currently appear able to counter expansionist intentions of Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS, QDe.163) in the tri-border area of Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger. Despite the mobilization of various *katiba* or battalions (Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal in Mali; and Gourma in Burkina Faso) and the support of non-terrorist Tuareg militia, JNIM is suffering heavy losses and no longer seems able to resist the steady advances of ISGS.

31. The declining strength of JNIM in the east in the face of ISGS advances contrasts with its enhanced position in Burkina Faso and central Mali. Completing its move into the Kayes, Koulikoro and Sikasso regions, JNIM has encircled the Malian capital thereby consolidating its control of the area between the capital and the western and southern borders. It has augmented its authority in Mali through various *katiba* (Timbuktu, Kidal, Gao), which are reasserting local political influence through conflict arbitration, policing, and community dispute resolution. The Katiba Macina (not listed but founded by Amadou Koufa QDi.425 and mentioned in the list entry for him), which exploits the Malian army's weaknesses, is securing its position despite the expanded presence of international non-State actors who appear unable to reverse this trend, notwithstanding ongoing operations. Central Mali remains a safe operating base for operations directed at Burkina Faso and the southern part of the Sahel.

32. The Katiba Macina is an important, almost semi-autonomous, force essential to JNIM. In cooperation with Ansarul Islam (not listed), Katiba Macina's actions in Burkina Faso have benefited from unresolved local conflicts and the increasing stigmatization of Fulani communities. As a result, it is difficult at times to distinguish between offensive action by JNIM and clashes between local communities.

33. JNIM maintains constant pressure on the forces of Burkina Faso in the southern border regions of Burkina Faso and is seeking to strengthen its positions, notably in the north-east of Benin, on the border with the Niger, and Togo.

34. ISGS is central to advancing ISIL core goals, despite significant losses of its leadership to JNIM attacks. It seeks to expand territory for logistical and recruitment purposes but faces challenges on several fronts. The recent deadly fighting with JNIM and the actions of international forces in 2022 and 2023 resulted in the loss of significant leaders, such as Oumeya Ould Albakaye and Ousmane Illiassou Djibo (alias Petit Chapori). The command structure, although currently uncontested, is primarily of Arab origin. The emir (Mohamed Ibrahim al-Salem al-Shafi'i, also known as Aba al-Sahrawi, not listed), and his deputy are of Arab heritage while the rest of the leadership is Fulani, as are most of the fighters. These imbalances represent potential vulnerabilities in the event of internal dissension, as the group has difficulty in federating the different Fulani components owing to fratricidal fighting with the Fulani of the Katiba Macina. ISGS has been forced to fight on several fronts simultaneously, constraining the group's advances and making it difficult to obtain supplies.

35. ISGS, nevertheless, remains resilient, acknowledges its losses and is multiplying its initiatives to break out of its isolation and extend its area of operations. Since the end of the truce with the Government of the Niger, there has been an upsurge in violence attributable to ISGS. It has targeted the areas of Sanam, Filingué, Tahoua and Abala in the Niger, to the north-west of Niamey, with urban centres as potential targets. Efforts to establish and strengthen a logistics corridor with Nigeria appear tenuous, but these efforts do serve to expand the pool for recruiting fighters and securing logistical supply from Nigeria, possibly through an enhanced relationship with Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP, QDe.162). Many Member States cite significant risks of the tri-border area becoming a sanctuary and base for recruitment that could expand to Nigeria; Mali remains a base of operations for action within Burkina Faso and the Niger.

36. Finally, in Nigeria, ISWAP, led by Abu Musab al-Barnawi (not listed), is a growing threat, with porous borders with the Niger that facilitate the transit of fighters and weapons. In this respect, one Member State considers that greater collaboration between ISGS and ISWAP is a serious concern as the run-up to the establishment of a new territorial caliphate.

North Africa

37. Both ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida in North Africa are assessed to be weak, but conditions for a potential resurgence persist. Returning foreign terrorist fighters and the impending release of prisoners whose sentences are ending are the most significant threat to the region. In Algeria, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM, QDe.014) shifted further south to the Sahel (northern Mali). Jund al-Khilafah in Tunisia (JAK-T) (QDe.167) faces challenges due to lack of funding and the killing of its most prominent leaders, with currently around 15 members spread out in western Tunisia in ech-Chambi and Samama Mountains.

38. In Morocco, authorities dismantled five terrorist cells during the reporting period, with the arrest of 25 individuals, several of whom maintained coordination with the ISIL core or ISGS. The most significant cell, whose members planned to rob banks and attack vital security infrastructure, was disrupted on 15 March.

39. In Libya, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Libya (ISIL-Libya, QDe.165) maintains a strong presence in southern Libya, where the group continues to exploit social discontent while collaborating with organized crime groups that control illicit trafficking activities. ISIL-Libya continues to recruit from communities in the south,

seeking to infiltrate local tribes. Member States estimate the group's strength between 300 and 500 fighters. One Member State reported the increasing focus of ISIL in Libya on recruiting scientists capable of making biological materials (such as poison) or handling sophisticated technological devices, with a view to carrying out terrorist attacks. Another Member State indicated that the "Army of the Sahara" (S/2023/95, para. 35) was trying to maintain its position in the central and southern regions of the country, in the absence of unified government authorities.

40. The deteriorating security situation in Fezzan and illicit trafficking networks allowed ISIL-Libya to reorganize itself in certain areas including Awbari, Sabha, Umm al-Aranib, Murzuk, Qatrun, Fuqaha', Uwaynat, al-Shuwayrif, as well as in Haruj, Akakus and Haruj al-Aswad mountains. The group opted for a clandestine modus operandi, changing positions when needed and settling in mountainous areas of Akakus, Tibesti and Lake Qar'un, where it can access water. One Member State noted that ISIL-Libya's objective in Fezzan was to strengthen its ranks in the Sahel and West Africa provinces through training and logistical support.

41. Several ISIL terrorist cells were dismantled by Libyan security services, including the arrest of a 20-year-old Libyan engineer on 21 January, who planned to target gas supply pipelines using armed drones, in collaboration with the ISIL core. His seized belongings revealed a handbook with instructions on the manufacturing of toxins and biological materials.

42. One Member State reported that ISIL-Libya had created four structural subgroups: security, led by Al-Hajj Ibrahim (Libyan, not listed); fighters, led by "Abu Yasir" (Egyptian); explosive manufacturing, led by Hashem Abu Sedra (Libyan, not listed); and military commission, led by Abu Mu'awiya a-Sudani (Sudanese, not listed). These groups are divided between Sabha, Murzuq, Umm al-Aranib, Qatrun, Zala and Hun city.

43. Al-Qaida in Libya is embedded with Libya's tribal groups, particularly in southern Libya, its stronghold and a crucial area for logistical support to the Sahel. Its strength is estimated at 150 to 200 fighters in Awbari, Sabha, Uwaynat and Ghat. In Awbari and Ghat facilitation networks led by Tuareg provide logistical support for Al-Qaida. Some cells move regularly between Libya, Mali, the Niger and the Sudan. One Member State reported ad hoc cooperation between ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida in Libya, notably in the South, through the exchange of fuel and food and the use of common messengers for communications.

44. Terrorist activities by Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (ABM, not listed) in Egypt continue to decrease mainly due to counter-terrorism pressure by Egyptian authorities in the Sinai, which contained ABM presence locally and largely dismantled its core structure and leadership cadres. The group was forced to withdraw to the west and south-west of the northern Sinai Peninsula following significant personnel losses. It struggles to perform high-profile attacks, such as the 30 December 2022 attack on an army checkpoint in Ismailia, which was assessed by some Member States as an act of desperation. The active strength of ABM has declined; one Member State noted it to be in the tens of members, while others estimate it to be between the low and mid hundreds. Egyptian public investments and infrastructure programmes in the Sinai Peninsula and the authorities' outreach to local communities have contributed to a reduction in local grievances, which had previously enabled ABM to recruit.

B. Iraq and the Levant

45. The ISIL (Da'esh) core continues to face leadership challenges due to ongoing counter-terrorism pressure. On 24 February, ISIL General Directorate of Provinces leader, Ali Jasim Salman al-Juburi (Iraqi, aliases Abu Sara al-Iraqi, Kafush), was

killed in an air strike in the north-west of the Syrian Arab Republic. His death is assessed by Member States as a significant blow to the group, describing him as its shadow leader. Abu Sara influenced ISIL strategy, played a key role in personnel assignment, including the previous two ISIL leaders, and directed external operations and finances. Nevertheless, his loss appears to have disrupted the group only for the short term. One Member State noted his potential successor as Ammar Mohamed Ibrahim al-Juburi (not listed, Iraqi, aliases Abu Zeinab, Abu Hamudi). Other leadership losses included Khalid ‘Aydd Ahmad al-Juburi (responsible for planning attacks in Europe), and Abd-al-Hadi Mahmud al-Haji Ali (responsible for planning terrorist and kidnapping operations in Middle East and Europe).

46. On 30 April, Türkiye reported killing ISIL leader, Abu al-Husain al-Husaini al-Qurashi, in Afrin, subsequently identifying him as a Syrian-born individual, holding the alias of Abdul-Latif. Member States could not confirm the leader’s death, with one identifying the deceased as only the security leader in the group’s Syrian branch. Some Member States dismissed the possibility of a non-Iraqi overall ISIL leader. The operation was undertaken by Türkiye following indications that he aimed to relocate to another Syrian region and had started to take extreme safety measures following Abu Sara’s death. The real identity of Abu al-Husain remains unconfirmed by Member States.

47. Leadership attrition led the ISIL core to adopt a flat command and control structure; the role of the overall leader has become less relevant to the group’s functioning. Leadership losses affected ISIL operations in the core conflict zone, as the group failed to launch attack campaigns during the month of Ramadan, which previously triggered a surge in ISIL activity.

48. Nevertheless, ISIL is assessed to remain resilient, commanding between 5,000 to 7,000 members across the two countries, most of whom are fighters. The group deliberately adopts a strategy to reduce attacks and use guerrilla tactics, while reorganizing and recruiting. While most senior ISIL (Da’esh) leaders remain in the north-west of the Syrian Arab Republic, the group is relocating some key figures, including in Dara’a, where the Sharia commander and several Arab leaders are located and, to a lesser extent, central Badia and the Syrian-Iraqi border area with Anbar governorate, where the group is increasing activities and exploiting the porous border. The ISIL presence in Dara’a is estimated at several hundred fighters.

49. In Iraq, counter-terrorism pressure by Iraqi forces continues to result in reducing ISIL activities and suppressing the threat.² Nevertheless, the group maintains its low-grade insurgency, exploiting security gaps along the Kurdistan region of Iraq to enable attacks and resupply its cells and elements in desert and mountainous areas. The group is operating under the direction of Abu Abd al-Qader (Iraqi), succeeding his predecessor, Abdallah Makki Muslih al-Rafi’i (Iraqi, alias Abu Khadija, not listed), who now supervises the Iraqi-Syrian zone along with the “Bilad al-Rafidayn” regional office. Al-Rafi’i’s role within ISIL has become more important.

50. Operations were contained in rural areas while attacks in urban centres were less frequent. ISIL (Da’esh) maintained its presence in its strongholds around Salaheddin, north of Baghdad (Tarmiya), Diyala and Kirkuk, particularly in the Hamrin mountains where most ISIL (Da’esh) in Iraq branch leaders are present (including Wadi al-Shay) and al-Anbar province, including Wadi Hauran, which is a refuge to reorganize and restructure. One Member State noted ties between ISIL and organized crime groups in Mosul, Kirkuk, Tikrit and Ramadi.

51. In Iraq, ISIL (Da’esh) is organized into eight units: administration, media, sharia, procurement, finances or economy, groundwork, explosive manufacturing and

² Some Member States estimated ISIL strength in Iraq to be as low as 600 to 1,000 fighters.

prisoner release, across 10 Iraqi regional divisions, some of which have been combined owing to insufficient resources. The group is becoming increasingly risk-averse to personnel losses, with plans to release its prisoners and recruit from vulnerable communities.

52. In the Syrian Arab Republic, ISIL (Da'esh) operates under the "Holy Land" regional office and exploits areas where counter-terrorism pressure is weak. The group continues to wage asymmetric attacks albeit at a relatively lower frequency, mainly in Homs, Dayr al-Zawr, Raqqah, Hama and Hasakah. Ongoing military pressure has largely contained the group in the central Badia which, while a haven for ISIL (Da'esh) for training and reorganizing, is characterized by difficult terrain and lack of critical infrastructure, thereby limiting the group's ability to operate or disseminate propaganda effectively. Small cells undertook regular attacks, including in north Palmyra and eastern Hama. ISIL (Da'esh) continued to use the north-east to rebuild, recruit, and try to release key leaders from prisons.

53. ISIL continues to view the north-west as a potential gateway to Türkiye and a haven where it can blend into the population. Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)³ remains the terrorist group exerting effective control in the area. HTS still commands between 7,000 and 12,000 fighters, including approximately 1,000 foreign terrorist fighters. The group maintains its local expansionist vision, conducting through its armed wing an offensive against armed factions affiliated with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in rural Aleppo and other surrounding villages, including the city of Afrin. The group is largely self-financing (S/2023/95, para. 46).

54. Khatiba al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (KTJ, QDe.168) continues to be the most capable Central Asian terrorist group operating under an HTS umbrella. KTJ and financial intermediaries, including Kubilay Sari (not listed) received funds from donors on behalf of KTJ fundraisers for the purchase of materiel, including night vision goggles, in addition to facilitating fund transfers to the benefit of HTS.

55. The Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (QDe.088), also known as the Turkistan Islamic Party (ETIM/TIP), in the Syrian Arab Republic remains closely linked with HTS. The group mainly operates in Idlib Province. One Member State reported that the group's overall strength was on the rise, and that ETIM/TIP has increased military training and upgraded its combat weapons, and actively opens channels to infiltrate into a neighbouring country and Central Asia. The group reportedly sent members to Africa and South Asia to establish training camps and staging posts there, and plan attacks on Chinese nationals and agencies.

56. Hurras al-Din (HAD, not listed) continues to face challenges due to HTS previous arrests of key leaders and successive targeting and killing of senior figures. The group is led by Samir Hijazi (alias Abu Hammam al-Shami, not listed) assisted by a shura council that includes sharia leader Sami al-Uraydi (not listed). Some Member States reported that HAD reorganized its relationship with HTS, who released key leaders under the condition that they would cooperate locally and not plan external operations. Reportedly, HAD did not comply but rather took advantage of long-standing links with armed factions in Idlib, including Ansar al-Tawhid (not listed), to relocate HAD fighters to other areas. One Member State noted the aspiration of HAD to enhance its armed drone capabilities. HAD strength is estimated to be between 1,500 and 2,000 fighters, mostly in Idlib and Latakia, with a small presence in Dara'a.

57. Current ISIL (Da'esh) setbacks in the core conflict zone are largely attributable to effective counter-terrorism pressure. The ongoing successful targeting of ISIL leadership is important. The group's ability to embed within local populations remains

³ Listed as Al-Nusrah Front for the People of the Levant (QDe.137).

a challenge. ISIL continues to take advantage of security loopholes and lack of coordination between various counter-terrorism forces, establishing conditions that could enable a rapid revival should pressure ease.

C. Arabian Peninsula

58. Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP, QDe.129) continues to face setbacks and leadership losses due to sustained counter-terrorism pressure and has been drawn further into the Yemeni conflict. Nevertheless, AQAP persists as a threat in Yemen and the region. As the most combat-ready terrorist group, it maintains ambitions to conduct external operations and to establish control over major ports in the Gulf of Aden.

59. AQAP incurred serious leadership losses in their sharia, media and improvised explosive device production cadres. On 26 February, a drone strike on a house in Hsoun al-Jalal in Ma'rib Governorate killed Hamad bin Hamoud al-Tamimi, among the top AQAP leaders. The targeted house was the site of previous meetings of AQAP leader Khaled Batarfi (not listed). The strike also killed Abu Nasser al-Hadhrami, who dealt with media and financial matters. One of the group's prominent explosive manufacturing experts was also targeted by a drone strike on 30 January in Wadi Ubaydah in Ma'rib Governorate. Following these strikes, certain AQAP elements sought safety by moving from Wadi Ubaydah to urban areas in the city of Ma'rib itself. Supporters' messages of solidarity with AQAP were circulated online, including reportedly by Taliban members in Afghanistan.

60. These leadership strikes have damaged AQAP operational capabilities in the short term. Nevertheless, while the cadre of experienced leaders is depleting, Member States assess that AQAP maintains its ability to train new leaders to undertake the tasks of those killed. The precise size of AQAP remains difficult to measure, owing to its embedded nature within local tribes, and is estimated in the low thousands. Some Member States assessed it at between 3,000 and 4,000 individuals, combining active and passive elements. Most AQAP top leaders are in Wadi Ubaydah, while some moved to other safe areas, including in Hadramawt, Shabwa and Abyan.

61. Some Member States reported the presence in Yemen of the son of Sayf al-Adl (QDi.001), Khaled Mohammed Salahaldin Zidane (not listed), while others noted planning for his relocation to Yemen, causing some controversy among AQAP leaders. One Member State indicated that he has overseen the AQAP media arm since 2020 and is married to the daughter of an influential tribal leader. It also noted that this reflects Sayf al-Adl's objective to tighten control over AQAP and its media arm given financial difficulties and differences between the conflicting wings in the group. These are led by Khaled Batarfi, a Saudi national, and Saad ben Atef al-Awlaki, who enjoys the support of some Yemeni tribes. Leadership losses might necessitate the restructuring of AQAP, and senior positions could be given to elements affiliated with Sayf al-Adl.

62. In January, AQAP transferred some of its field operations to one of its camps in Shabwa and shifted other activities to the Mahfad district in Abyan. The group continued its attacks in Shabwa and Abyan, mainly in retaliation for the "arrows of the east" counter-terrorism initiative that had launched its second phase in January. AQAP resorted to the use of armed drones in some attacks in the Musayn'ah district in Shabwa, possibly showing sensitivity to the risk of excessive losses of personnel during operations. One Member State reported that Houthi elements provided AQAP with the drones and were training their members to use them. AQAP has sought to develop its aerial capability and seems to have made progress. Attacks on maritime targets remain an aspiration for AQAP but progress has been slowed by resource

constraints. AQAP media publications remain their most powerful tool for outreach and radicalization. The group continued its efforts to recruit sympathizers and released video messages from Batarfi during the reporting period.

63. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Yemen (ISIL-Yemen, QDe.166) maintained minimal activity. Its strength is estimated to be around 100 fighters, who coordinate with ISIL-Somalia, especially for logistical purposes. One Member State noted that ISIL-Yemen is working on a new organizational structure and had called leaders to a meeting in Shabwa in May. It also noted opportunistic cooperation and profit-sharing between AQAP and ISIL-Yemen in kidnapping-for-ransom operations.

D. Europe

64. The situation in Europe remains stable, with a slight increase in the number of attempted terrorist acts thwarted by European security services since the end of 2022. According to one Member State, some attackers aspired to use explosives and chemical toxins.

65. Most lone-actor attacks are conducted by individuals not directly affiliated with ISIL or Al-Qaida, who have radicalized independently of social interaction and appear to be triggered by acts of hostility towards Islam. The fact that soft targets and places of worship have been the predominant choice for most attackers represents an additional challenge for counter-terrorism services. On 5 January, 15 individuals, reportedly inspired by ISIL-K instructions to carry out attacks against the Swedish and Dutch Consulates in Istanbul and Christian and Jewish places of worship, were arrested in Türkiye. On 25 January, a machete-wielding individual, after undergoing a rapid self-radicalization process, killed a sexton and injured a priest at two Catholic churches in Algeciras, Spain.

66. In addition to the January incitement campaign of the ISIL core's media apparatus calling for terrorist attacks against Christians in retaliation for incidents of Qur'an burning in Europe, the enhanced media and operational capabilities of ISIL-K risk inspired more lone actors in the region. Member States assess that ISIL-K might pursue high-impact operations against Western countries and their interests abroad in the medium term, as evidenced by the recently disrupted attack in Strasbourg, France.

67. Some Member States noted a new route used by foreign terrorist fighters traveling from countries in Southern Europe to the Sahel. A joint security operation conducted in January by the Central Bureau of Judicial Investigations of Morocco and the General Commissariat of Information of the National Police of Spain dismantled an ISIL-affiliated terrorist cell composed of three individuals operating in the two countries who sought to carry out terrorist attacks after having failed to reach ISIL strongholds in the Sahel region and despite having links to ISIL recruiters and facilitators there.

E. Asia

Central and South Asia

68. Assessments of Al-Qaida, ISIL-K and other terrorist groups in Afghanistan were addressed in detail in the Monitoring Team's fourteenth report on the Taliban (S/2023/370). Member States reported that Afghanistan remained a place of global significance for terrorism, with approximately 20 terrorist groups operating in the country. One Member State assessed that the goal of those terrorist groups is to spread their respective influence across the regions and to build theocratic quasi-state entities.

69. The relationship between the Taliban and Al-Qaida remains close and symbiotic. For the most part, Al-Qaida operates covertly in Afghanistan to help promote the narrative that the Taliban comply with agreements not to use Afghan soil for terrorist purposes. Under the patronage of high-ranking officials of the de-facto Taliban authorities, Al-Qaida members infiltrate law enforcement agencies and public administration bodies, ensuring the security of Al-Qaida cells dispersed throughout the country.

70. Al-Qaida's capability to conduct large-scale terror attacks remains reduced while its intent remains firm. The group uses Afghanistan as an ideological and logistical hub to mobilize and recruit new fighters while covertly rebuilding its external operations capability. Al-Qaida is in a reorganization phase, establishing new training centres in Kunar and Nuristan Provinces. Member States assessed that Al-Qaida would likely remain dormant in the short term while developing its operational capability and outreach. Al-Qaida leaders seek to strengthen cooperation with regional terrorist groups of non-Afghan origin located in Afghanistan, including the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU, QDe.010), ETIM/TIP and Jamaat Ansarullah (not listed), intending to infiltrate and establish strongholds in countries in Central Asia. One Member State assessed that the mid- to long-term prospects of Al-Qaida depend on the overall situation in Afghanistan. Should Afghanistan descend into chaos and insecurity, the base for Al-Qaida would likely strengthen. Should the country achieve stability, Al-Qaida would likely seek to shift the core to other theatres, such as Yemen or North Africa.

71. Some Member States assessed Sayf al-Adl as most likely to succeed Aiman al-Zawahiri and reportedly still in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Al-Qaida core in Afghanistan remains stable at 30 to 60 members, while all Al-Qaida fighters in the country are estimated to be 400, reaching 2,000 with family members and supporters included. Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS, not listed) has approximately 200 fighters, with Osama Mehmood (not listed) being the emir. One Member State assessed that Al-Qaida is shaping AQIS to spread its operations into neighbouring Bangladesh, Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir, and Myanmar. That Member State also noted that certain limited elements of AQIS are ready to either join or collaborate with ISIL-K.

72. Member States assessed ISIL-K as the most serious terrorist threat in Afghanistan and the wider region, benefiting from increased operational capabilities inside Afghanistan. ISIL-K is estimated to have from 4,000 to 6,000 members, including family members. Sanaullah Ghafari (alias Shahab al-Muhajir, QDi.431) is viewed as the most ambitious leader of ISIL-K. One Member State reported that Ghafari was killed in Afghanistan in June. This remains to be confirmed. Mawlawi Rajab (QDi.434) is the leader of external operations for ISIL-K.

73. ISIL-K is becoming more sophisticated in its attacks against both the Taliban and international targets. The group was focused on carrying out a strategy of high-profile attacks to undermine the Taliban's ability to provide security. Overall, ISIL-K attacks demonstrated strong operational capability involving reconnoitre, coordination, communication, planning and execution. Furthermore, attacks against high-profile Taliban figures in Balkh, Badakhshan and Baghlan Provinces, raised ISIL-K morale and boosted recruitment.

74. Member States assess that Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP, QDe.132) is gaining momentum in its operations against Pakistan. Since the reunification with several splinter groups, TTP has aspired to re-establish control of territory in Pakistan after being emboldened by the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan. The group is focused on high-value targets in border areas and soft targets in urban areas. TTP capability is assessed as not matching its ambition, given that it does not control territory and lacks

popular appeal in the tribal areas. In June, certain TTP elements were relocated away from the border area, as part of the Taliban's efforts to reign in the group under pressure from the Government of Pakistan. Member States are concerned that TTP could become a regional threat if it continues to have a safe operating base in Afghanistan. Some Member States registered concern that TTP might provide an umbrella under which a range of foreign groups operate, or even coalesce, avoiding attempts at control by the Taliban. One Member State noted the possibility of AQIS and TTP merging. It assessed AQIS to be providing guidance to TTP for conducting increased attacks within Pakistan. It was also reported that ETIM/TIP training camps in Kunar Province were being used for TTP fighters.

75. Some Member States estimate that the strength of ETIM/TIP varies between 300 and 1,200 fighters in Afghanistan. Regional countries reported that the group continued to acquire weapons and created new bases in Afghanistan. The group actively expanded the scope of its operations and built operational bases and armouries in Baghlan Province, while retaining its presence in Badakhshan, Takhar, Kunduz, Baghlan, Logar, Kunar and Sari Pul Provinces. ETIM/TIP continues to recruit fighters of various nationalities in an effort to internationalize. One Member State reported that the group formulated a long-term plan to train young fighters, with hundreds already trained; engaged in drug trafficking to raise funds; and actively carries out mining activities and smuggling to provide logistical support for the group. Some Member States reported that the group had developed links with ISIL-K, jointly publishing propaganda posters, and reported some ETIM/TIP members joining ISIL-K operations.

South-East Asia

76. Increased counter-terrorism pressure in the region accounted for the relatively low number of terrorist attacks during the reporting period. Successful counter-terrorism operations against ISIL-South-East Asia (ISIL-SEA, QDe.169) and Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG, QDe.001), especially in the Philippines, provide a reminder of the residual threat due to the substantial number of terrorists remaining in the region. Two Member States noted a slight increase of terrorist activity in the region. ISIL emissaries actively promote their ideology and the inclusion of part of the region into the "great caliphate", exploiting unresolved territorial, cultural and religious differences. Recently, there has been a tendency to strengthen cooperation between the main terrorist groups in South-East Asia, including those under the ISIL (Da'esh) banner.

77. Fahaarudin Hadji Benito Satar (aliases Abu Zacharia and Jer Mimbantas), the so-called emir of ISIL-SEA and former leader of the Maute Group (known as Dawlah Islamiya, not listed), as well as Joharie Sandab (alias Abu Morsid), who oversaw the group's logistics and finances, were killed in Philippine operations. One regional Member State reported the intention of ASG to conduct a massive attack in Mindanao in retaliation for Abu Zacharia's death and to attain the release of his detained wife and children.

78. One regional Member State noted the deaths of ASG leader, Radullan Sahiron (QDi.208), in late March in Patikul, Sulu Province, Philippines; and an ASG leader, Nurudin Muddalan, in a clash with police in Basilan province on 13 June.

79. Two regional Member States reported the arrest of three Uzbek individuals (not listed), members of KTJ, for attacks on 24 March on a police station in north Jakarta, in which an immigration official was killed and four others were injured. The individuals had travelled from Istanbul, transiting through Abu Dhabi and entering Indonesia via Malaysia, where they stayed for almost a month.

80. One Member State reported that “Jihad al-Mahdi fi Bilad al-Arakan” (approximately 300 militants) was increasingly active in Myanmar’s border regions. The group has already established ties with terrorists in the region, hoping to open a broad front in South-East Asia and create a basis for the formation of an Islamic caliphate in the region.

81. ISIL-affiliated groups in South-East Asia generate revenue locally. In some cases, they support ISIL networks in the Middle East, with some exploiting the charitable sector to raise funds for terrorist activities in Indonesia. ISIL in the Philippines continues raising its own funds using the formal financial sector to transfer fiat currencies, with increased use of virtual currencies.

III. Impact assessment

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

82. As noted in the Monitoring Team’s thirty-first report (S/2023/95), revenue of the ISIL core (QDe.115) continues to decline due to ongoing counter-terrorism pressure in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. The Team previously reported estimates of between \$25 million and \$50 million being available, but some Member States believe the amount to be significantly less and diminishing. Notwithstanding military operations successfully targeting ISIL leaders, significant cash reserves remain at the disposal of the group; physical reserves of cash buried in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic are excavated and then smuggled out.

83. The leadership losses that ISIL has suffered include at least two in charge of financial operations – Ali Jasim Salman Muhammad al-Jaburi, on 24 February, and Bilal al-Sudani (alias Suhayl Salim Abd-El-Rahman, Abu-Faris), on 25 January. Al-Sudani’s role in facilitating transfers from the Al-Karrar office to ISIL affiliates is a significant loss of expertise. Some Member States assess Al-Karrar in Somalia as remaining an important hub in transferring funds.

84. ISIL continues to use funds to pay family members of ISIL fighters who are killed and in prison and to secure the release of prisoners, but reports about declining revenue and the resulting pressure on the group persist. Member States note sporadic payment to leaders and the lack of payment to fighters as an indication of the need to increase limited funding. ISIL leaders continue to emphasize the importance of fundraising.

85. While the source of funding depends on the local circumstances in which each terrorist group operates, extortion and kidnap-for-ransom remain the primary means of ISIL (Da’esh) and Al-Qaida for raising funds. Where groups control territory, illicit taxation of the population by exploiting the collection of zakat prevails. In Somalia, Al-Shabaab engages in a range of activities to generate as much revenue as \$100 million per annum, including through kidnapping, businesses, coercion of fees from residents and illegal charcoal smuggling. JNIM, ISGS and AQAP sources of funding include kidnap-for-ransom, gold panning, smuggling, arms trafficking, cattle rustling, poaching, levies on economic activity and taxes on goods shipments, on transport services and on escort or protection services.

86. Other methods of financing consist of online fundraising platforms and donations. ISIL-Somalia raises funds through criminal activities, including illegal fishing and black-market smuggling, sometimes smuggling in collaboration with Al-Shabaab and AQAP. ISIL-West Africa extorts local agricultural businesses and

fishing operations in Lake Chad and engages in kidnap-for-ransom operations in Nigeria, raising significant sums.

87. Member States registered concern about the continued use of kidnap-for-ransom operations by terrorist groups to generate revenue. They noted that payment of ransoms through intermediaries had significantly enhanced terrorist capability, resulting in loss of life. In cases in which a difficult political decision not to pay ransom had been taken, while hostages had tragically been killed, no further hostages of that nationality had been taken by the group and terrorist capabilities had not been enhanced. Such payments are contrary to Security Council resolution [2133 \(2014\)](#).

88. Concerning the delivery of funds, traditional methods continue to be predominant, particularly *hawalas* or cash couriers but mobile wallets are increasingly utilized ([S/2023/95](#), para. 82), including in East Africa and Iraq, highlighting the potential need to address how anti-money-laundering and countering the financing of terrorism measures can be implemented to deal with risks of misuse. ISIL also provides members with prepaid phone cards or rechargeable cards that can be sold for cash. ISIL also is reported to be using regional versions of cryptocurrency and stable coins. ISIL has been increasingly using virtual assets for international funds transfers. These funds transfer methods allow ISIL leadership to support militant operations, recruit and maintain a loyal cadre of supporters and secure the release of its members from detention.

89. Member States observe that terrorist groups continue to demonstrate great capacity for innovation and agility in the use of new methods and technologies in financing their operations, including the use of Bitcoin and crowdfunding. One Member State cites as an example a terrorist cryptocurrency project created for the collection of funds on the dark web in cryptomoney and disseminated in several languages.

B. Resolution [2347 \(2017\)](#) on cultural heritage

90. No specific incidents were noted during the reporting period. Although connections between transnational organized criminal networks and terrorist organizations have been observed in the illicit trafficking of cultural property, all reported cases were exclusively linked to organized crime networks. One Member State reported that ISIL continued to benefit from the illegal export of valuable cultural objects from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic.

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

91. Although there has been significant progress in repatriation efforts in the first six months of 2023, with a reported 14 countries repatriating their nationals, the challenge of the camps and detention centres in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic and the risks they generate persist. One Member State flagged the Cubs of Caliphate, who were child soldiers recruited between 2014 and 2017, now referred to as Generation Caliphate. The latter includes adolescents recruited in the overcrowded Hawl camp, dominated socially by ISIL (Da'esh). They are characterized now as a generation that is more operationally experienced, more extreme and more organized, judged to pose heightened threat in the near future. One Member State noted children being recruited within the camp for ISIL (Da'esh) suicide operations. Hawl is not the only camp of concern.

92. The spread of nationalities in the camps and detention facilities is still wide, with a number of European passport holders believed to be in the Hawl camp, along with Central Asians, Arabs from North Africa and the Gulf, and others. Most of the estimated remaining population of 55,000, however, were reported to be either Syrian (47 per cent) or Iraqi (49 per cent). This represented a large Arabic population from the region, of which a significant percentage was radicalized, very close to the Iraqi border. Women and children account for around 90 per cent of the remaining inhabitants of Hawl, while children under the age of 18 constitute approximately 60 per cent of the overall population.

93. Iraq has now repatriated almost 5,000 individuals from the camps, in 10 waves. At the current pace of repatriation of all nationalities, however, the risks associated with that single camp, and others, will persist for several more years. Disease and harsh conditions have caused some loss of life. There were also several instances reported of ISIL (Da'esh) moving funds to enable group members to leave the camps for operational objectives. The reintegration of repatriated families has proved challenging in some cases and requires continued support to build community acceptance. One Member State suggested that a unified mechanism, under the auspices of the United Nations, could better support Member States' efforts to facilitate repatriation from the camps.

94. There are approximately 11,000 ISIL (Da'esh) prisoners in Syrian Democratic Forces prisons, including approximately 2,000 foreign terrorist fighters of around 70 nationalities, and more than 3,500 Iraqis. There were limited reports of attacks on prisons, or prison breaks, during the reporting period, but Member States reported that ISIL (Da'esh) continued to aspire and plan to do carry out such actions. It was essential for the group to replenish the leadership, experience and operational capability being lost to air strikes. One Member State emphasized a specific threat to Raqqah prison motivated by difficulties in finding new recruits. That Member State also noted concerns that high-risk prisoners were released as a result of bribery or corruption. Some Member States flagged that the volatile military situation in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic, where there were some 40 detention facilities, and the impact of earthquakes in early 2023, heightened concerns about the possibility of detainees being able to rejoin ISIL (Da'esh) ranks.

95. It is difficult to make an accurate estimate of the number of foreign terrorist fighters at large in the core conflict zone. One Member State estimated the number associated with ISIL to be approximately 1,000, with 90 per cent in the Syrian Arab Republic. Estimates of foreign terrorist fighters fighting with HTS in the north-west of the Syrian Arab Republic ranged from 1,000 to over 2,000. Some Member States saw a small-scale flow of fighters away from the core conflict zone, including to Africa, Europe, Central Asia and South-East Asia. This included foreign terrorist fighters from North Africa returning to their home region, which could enhance capabilities of groups in West Africa and the Sahel.

IV. Implementation of sanctions measures

96. The effectiveness of sanctions measures relies on the quality of the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions list. Member States continue to raise concerns regarding the lack of identifiers, the possible misspelling of names and the absence of biometric information. The Monitoring Team proposed many technical amendments to the list based on Member States' information and approved by the Committee, but only a few of them substantively improved the quality of the list due to certain reluctance of Member States and other relevant international organizations to provide updated information about list entities and individuals. The Monitoring

Team continues to work on a data validation project approved by the Committee to identify inconsistencies in the list entries and narrative summaries, ensure the quality and accuracy of the list going forward, and reduce the number of false positives that could adversely impact sanctions implementation. Over 100 names have been reviewed and 30 amendments submitted to the Committee to correct inconsistencies in the list entries and narrative summaries.

97. In addition, the Team notes the gradual downward trend regarding new listings to the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions list in recent years, with only 19 listings since 2020.

A. Travel ban

98. During the reporting period, no travel ban exemption request was submitted to the Committee, and no information was received from Member States regarding attempted travel or interdiction of individuals designated on the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions list.

B. Assets freeze

99. During the reporting period, the Committee received and approved three requests for assets freeze exemptions.

100. Under Security Council resolution [2610 \(2021\)](#), the Council called upon all States to report on measures taken to freeze assets ([S/2023/95](#) para. 94) and encouraged Member States to provide greater reporting on the implementation of sanctions measures. The Team notes that Member States' reporting on the implementation of all aspects of sanctions measures remains extremely limited.

C. Arms embargo

101. 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 and the increased use of unmanned aerial vehicles and improvised explosive devices.

102. With the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, Member States have expressed concern over the availability of large quantities of weaponry and other military equipment of the United States of America and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), noting the proliferation of weapons from stockpiles left by former coalition partners in Afghanistan into neighbouring States. Regional Member States reported the use of NATO calibre weapons against government forces of neighbouring States, as well as the transfer of such weapons to listed entities, with an emphasis on TTP, ISIL-K, ETIM/TIP and Jamaat Ansarullah.

103. In the core conflict zone, ISIL has transitioned from the large-scale production of improvised explosive devices using self-made explosives, to producing fewer, simpler and smaller devices. With respect to suicide bombers, Member States assess that ISIL now only uses suicide vests as a last resort to avoid the unnecessary loss of operatives. A Member State notes that this situation explains the multiple seizures of unexploded suicide vests in operations. ISIL has more recently added the "Industry Committee", which focuses on new avenues for advancement, such as improvised explosive devices and drones. One Member State reported that ETIM/TIP in the Syrian Arab Republic was upgrading and developing weapons and equipment,

including drones. The group's artillery and unmanned aerial vehicle units are now in place.

104. Member States assess that AQAP has the capacity to develop improvised explosive devices and non-conventional explosive devices for external operations, using experienced explosive experts who train operatives within the group. In April, AQAP used drones to target security forces in Shabwa Governorate. AQAP capabilities are assessed to present a threat to the Government of Yemen and foreign interests, including the impact on maritime trade in this strategic location. AQAP also has unmanned aerial vehicles smuggled to them and delivered to Abyan Province. In the past six months, AQAP has undertaken multiple operations using weaponized drones.

105. In Africa, the use of improvised explosive devices is on the increase. In Somalia, Al-Shabaab has intensified its use of improvised explosive devices and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices. The use by ISIL of drones in northern Iraq has prompted the development of unmanned aerial vehicles by several Al-Qaida and ISIL-affiliated groups, which benefit from the sharing of technology and training on their use. In this regard, Al-Shabaab has recently conducted experimental trials in the use of commercial mini and microunarmed aerial systems for offensive purposes.

106. In the Sahel, most of the weapons of ISGS originate from the black market or are captured after attacks against security forces. ISGS also engages in the smuggling of weapons and receives some of its weapons from abroad, mostly from facilitation networks in southern Libya. Member States assess that groups in the Sahel also benefit from weapons recovered from the Malian army following attacks on their military bases and patrols. In West Africa, JNIM frequently uses improvised explosive devices, and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, and its arsenal includes machine guns, hand grenades, hand-held anti-tank weapons (including rocket-propelled grenades) and mortars; however, storage and maintenance remain a challenge for armed groups in the region.

V. Recommendations

107. The Monitoring Team notes that many list entries and narrative summaries of the sanctions list are not current. The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee encourage Member States to provide updated information along with supporting documentation to the list entries and narrative summaries and to respond to annual review requests in a timely manner.

108. The Monitoring Team further recommends that the Committee encourage Member States to propose new listings and amendments to ensure that the sanctions list mitigates the threat of terrorism more effectively. The Monitoring Team notes that proposing States sometimes do not have an adequate understanding of the procedure and requirements, with adverse impact on listing proposals. The Monitoring Team promotes best practices and is available to assist Member States in preparing listing proposals, including through in-country training and visits.

VI. Monitoring Team activities and feedback

109. In the thirty-first report, the Monitoring Team recommended that the Committee give urgent attention to persistent problems with the automatic notification to Member States of changes to the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions list maintained on the Committee's website. The accurate and timely uploading of revisions to the

list is essential in order to facilitate implementation by Member States of the sanctions measures.

110. An interim Really Simple Syndications feed tool with limited functionality can now be found on the main web page of the Security Council (<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/>). Given the critical importance of accurate and timely changes to the website, the Monitoring Team will request updates from the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Office of Information and Communications Technology to be included in quarterly briefings so that the Committee may continue to monitor the situation.

111. The Monitoring Team engaged a wide range of Member States in the preparation of the present report, including by receiving delegations in New York, conducting country visits and participating in written exchanges. In May, the Team hosted its largest ever regional meeting of intelligence and security services, with participation at a very senior level. The dynamic discussions and conclusions from both plenary and bilateral discussions over three days have significantly informed the report. Several Member States proposed further expanding the participation in and increasing the frequency of the meetings.

112. The 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, members of the private sector and civil society, as well as in partnership with the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism, and panels of experts supporting other Security Council committees.

113. The Monitoring Team welcomes feedback on the present report at 1267mt@un.org.