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Fifteenth 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

I. Introduction

1. In adopting its resolution [2253 \(2015\)](#), the Security Council expressed its determination to address the threat posed to international peace and security by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant¹ (ISIL, hereinafter referred to as “Da’esh”)² and associated individuals and groups and requested that the Secretary-General provide an initial strategic-level report on the threat, followed by updates every four months. In its resolution [2610 \(2021\)](#), the Council requested that the Secretary-General continue to provide, every six months, strategic-level reports that reflect the gravity of the threat posed by Da’esh to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat.

2. The present report is the fifteenth such report.³ It was prepared by the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team pursuant to resolutions [1526 \(2004\)](#) and [2253 \(2015\)](#) concerning ISIL (Da’esh), Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities,⁴ the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Office of Counter-Terrorism, in close collaboration with other United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities.

3. During the first half of 2022, the threat posed by Da’esh and its affiliates to international peace and security continued to rise, with no deviation from the trend observed in the past two years. The threat remains particularly high in conflict-affected settings, from where it may potentially spill over to non-conflict areas. Despite significant leadership losses, Da’esh and its affiliates continue to exploit security gaps and conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism to recruit and to organize and execute complex attacks. The global economy slowdown and growing inflation, as well as the fiscal and monetary measures implemented by Governments in response to them, may render such conditions even more conducive to the spread of terrorism, potentially increasing the threat further.

¹ Listed as Al-Qaida in Iraq (QDe.115).

² In line with General Assembly resolution [75/291](#).

³ See [S/2016/92](#), [S/2016/501](#), [S/2016/830](#), [S/2017/97](#), [S/2017/467](#), [S/2018/80](#), [S/2018/770](#), [S/2019/103](#), [S/2019/612](#), [S/2020/95](#), [S/2020/774](#), [S/2021/98](#), [S/2021/682](#) and [S/2022/63](#).

⁴ The present threat assessment is based in part on the Monitoring Team’s thirtieth report ([S/2022/547](#)).



II. Threat assessment

A. Overview of the threat

4. The threat posed by Da'esh remained high in conflict zones and, by extension, neighbouring Member States. Da'esh relies on exploiting conflict-related fragilities while also seeking to inspire or direct attacks in non-conflict zones, where attacks generate more publicity and, consequently, may translate into greater interest and support. Although the threat remains relatively low outside conflict zones, it is essential to continue to monitor any revival or enhancement of the external operations capability of Da'esh.

5. Member States have provided the Monitoring Team with a more complete picture than was previously available of the activities of the Da'esh "general directorate of provinces" and of the networks that it manages. In the core conflict area, Da'esh maintains two distinct organizational structures, one for Iraq and one for the Syrian Arab Republic, with the Sham "office" of the general directorate of provinces managing the latter. The Da'esh hub in Türkiye (Faruq "office"), which managed the networks operating in the Caucasus, the Russian Federation and parts of Eastern Europe, was effectively rendered non-operational owing to arrests by the Turkish authorities, and the Da'esh network in Türkiye is now reportedly being managed by the Sham "office".

6. The most vigorous and well-established Da'esh regional networks are those with hubs in Afghanistan (Siddiq "office"), Somalia (Karrar "office") and the Lake Chad basin (Furqan "office"). The Siddiq "office" covers South Asia and, according to some Member States, Central Asia. The Karrar "office" covers the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique and Somalia. The Furqan "office" covers Nigeria and the neighbouring countries, including the Da'esh-affiliated Islamic State in the Greater Sahara in the western Sahel. The remaining three Da'esh regional networks are low-functioning or moribund: the Anfal "office", based in Libya, was created to cover parts of Northern Africa and the Sahel; the Umm al-Qura "office", in Yemen, covers the Arabian Peninsula; and the Zu al-Nurayn "office", in Egypt, covers Egypt and the Sudan. It is notable that two of the three most dynamic Da'esh networks are in Africa. Member States remain acutely concerned about the spread of terrorist violence on the continent.

7. Member States differ as to how far those "offices" and networks have materialized on the ground following their establishment in 2017–19, as Da'esh made preparations for maintaining its global presence following the territorial defeat of its so-called "caliphate". While some "offices" and networks have failed or will likely fail, others have had varying degrees of success, with the Da'esh general directorate of provinces adapting its planning accordingly. Although the Da'esh public narrative on those "offices" and networks may be overstated for propaganda purposes, they reflect to some extent the evolving situation on the ground.

8. On 3 February 2022, the Da'esh leader, Amir Muhammad Sa'id Abdal-Rahman al-Salbi (QDi.426), was killed in a counter-terrorist operation led by the United States of America in Atmah, Syrian Arab Republic, near the border with Türkiye. On 10 March, Da'esh acknowledged the death of Al-Salbi and announced that it regarded Abu al-Hassan al-Hashemi al-Qurashi (not listed) as his successor, with extensive video footage of Da'esh affiliates around the world expressing their allegiance to him.

1. Da'esh finances

9. Many Member States continue to assess that Da'esh leadership controls approximately \$25 million in reserves (some estimate the amount to be between \$25 million and \$50 million), with most funds remaining in Iraq. Da'esh expenditure, primarily payments to fighters and their family members, many of whom are in

displaced persons camps, exceed current revenues. Sources of revenue for the group include extortion, kidnapping for ransom, zakat, direct donations and income from trading and investments. Those diverse sources of income have helped to establish a financial system that allows the group to adapt and sustain itself in varied conditions. Payments to fighters and families have recently decreased, with one Member State citing \$50 per month as a typical payment to the family of a Da'esh fighter. Even so, another Member State reported that would-be fighters travelling to the Syrian Arab Republic were recruited with promises of monthly payments of up to \$1,000.

10. Member States report that the ability of Da'esh leadership to direct and maintain control over the flow of funds to global affiliates remains resilient and that such flow represents an important element of the loyalty shown by affiliated groups. According to several Member States, all transactions involving affiliates are directed by Da'esh leadership. Recipients include the Da'esh affiliate in Afghanistan, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K) (QDe.161), through trusted cash couriers, as well as affiliates in Africa, through the Karrar "office" in Somalia, which is cited as dealing with fund transfers inside and outside of Africa. One Member State highlighted the emerging importance of individuals in South Africa in facilitating the transfer of funds from Da'esh leadership to affiliates in Africa.

2. Da'esh fighters and their family members in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic

11. During the reporting period, the already precarious situation of foreign terrorist fighters, other Da'esh fighters and their family members, including tens of thousands of women and children perceived to be associated with terrorism, being held in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic further deteriorated. Dozens of assassinations were carried out in those camps and prisons. According to one Member State, some women in the overcrowded Hawl camp are considered among the most extreme Da'esh members. There have been many successful escapes from the camp, and funds continue to flow in and out, mainly through unregistered informal cash transfer (hawala), distributed according to family size. Moreover, a major prison break following a Da'esh complex assault in Hasakah, in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic, has raised the spectre of similar attempts and highlighted the dire conditions in the camps and other facilities where those persons are held, as well as protection risks to children. Further to legal, human rights and humanitarian concerns, the holding of individuals in such circumstances risks exacerbating security threats.

12. One Member State reported that, among the persons held in 11 camps and approximately 20 facilities in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic, there were 30,000 children under the age of 12 at risk of Da'esh indoctrination. Another Member State highlighted that Da'esh continued to focus indoctrination efforts on children through the "Cubs of the Caliphate" programme, aimed at creating a new generation of extremists, many of whom are approaching or have reached adulthood. Another Member State noted that approximately 10,000 foreign terrorist fighters remained in the custody of the Syrian Democratic Forces.

3. Da'esh weapons

13. Da'esh significantly increased the use of unmanned aerial systems in the past year, and one Member State highlighted such use in northern Iraq. With the commercial availability of low-cost and high-tech unmanned aerial systems, which are difficult to track, groups like Da'esh can identify and attack targets with a high degree of accuracy. In some cases, it was noted that Da'esh had used such systems to attack freighters. Da'esh has used front companies to acquire those systems in Asia, Canada and the United States, subsequently converting them to lethal use. One Member State reported that, to evade detection, anti-aircraft weapons and unmanned aerial systems were sourced from spare parts and later assembled.

B. Regional developments

1. Africa

Central and Southern Africa

14. Mozambique has seen a proliferation of small-scale violent attacks in villages throughout Cabo Delgado Province, resulting from leadership losses in Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a (not listed). Member States have noted that fighters are regrouping into smaller and more mobile groups along the corridor connecting Macomia town to the provincial capital, Pemba. Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a has been focusing its attacks on Nangade and other northern districts, including Macomia, Meluco and Mueda. Constant raids, beheadings, abductions, looting and destruction of property have caused mass displacements of the local population. Inclement weather and impending famine caused Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a to lose momentum in April and May. Insurgents retreated in search of food and provisions, with a large number surrendering to local forces. More than 200 women and children were also released by the group.

15. Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a foreign terrorist fighters are mostly from the United Republic of Tanzania and Kenya, but also include elements from Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda. On 1 April, a video was released purportedly depicting members of Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a renewing their pledge of allegiance to the new leader of Da'esh, Abu al-Hassan.

16. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Allied Democratic Forces (CDe.001) killed more than 383 civilians between December 2021 and February 2022, despite the launch, on 1 December 2021, of a joint military operation against the group by Congolese and Ugandan forces. As joint operations have dispersed the Allied Democratic Forces, there has been a gradual westward movement of fighters, widening the theatre of conflict from the Ugandan border to western Ituri Province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Allied Democratic Forces, led by Seka Baluku (alias Musa Baluku, CDi.036), renewed the group's purported pledge of allegiance to Abu al-Hassan in a video released on 1 April. Benjamin Kisokeranio (not listed), who leads the Allied Democratic Forces splinter group loyal to Jamil Mukulu (CDi.015), which rejects allegiance to Da'esh, was arrested on 11 January, possibly further weakening the faction. The membership of the Allied Democratic Forces is composed of Ugandan and Congolese nationals, while foreign terrorist fighters are mostly from the United Republic of Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi and Somalia.

17. There has been a significant increase in the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters by the Allied Democratic Forces, as evidenced by the arrest of Kenyans, Tanzanians and Somalis in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, most of them seasoned fighters with a documented history in multiple theatres of conflict. In January, Salim Mohamed Rashid (not listed), a Kenyan member of the Allied Democratic Forces, was arrested with three other Kenyans who had sought to join Da'esh in the Syrian Arab Republic. In February, four Tanzanian members of the Allied Democratic Forces were arrested in Beni. In March, joint forces killed Abu Aden, a leading Allied Democratic Forces commander of Somali origin, following which two Tanzanian fighters were killed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In Uganda, authorities arrested more than 100 Allied Democratic Forces suspects following the bombings in Kampala in October and November 2021.

West Africa

18. Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (QDe.163) was announced as a purported autonomous Da'esh province, independent from the so-called Islamic State West Africa Province (QDe.162), as of 23 March, mostly for propaganda purposes. The group

struggled to maintain its presence in the tri-border area between Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger as it was pushed to the border between Mali and the Niger following the launch of operations by Al-Qaida affiliate Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (QDe.159) to recover the area south of route nationale 20. Moreover, Islamic State in the Greater Sahara had to engage in combat with Dawsahak Tuaregs and local armed groups in Mali who rejected Da'esh atrocities and extortion. Given the deterioration of its public outreach and operational visibility, Islamic State in the Greater Sahara launched in late May a campaign to create a second safe haven east of Ménaka.

19. In north-eastern Nigeria, Islamic State West Africa Province confirmed its dominance over the remnants of Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (Boko Haram) (QDe.138). Although some Boko Haram fighters remain in the border area with the Niger under Bah Koura (not listed), the group has been weakened by the transfer to Islamic State West Africa Province and by the surrender of most of its fighters to the Government of Nigeria. The status of Abu Musab al-Barnawi (not listed) remains unclear: while some Member States reported him dead, others declared him active as the head of the Furqan "office".

East Africa

20. In Somalia, between 200 and 280 Da'esh fighters remain in Puntland but lack the capacity to undertake major operations, owing to attacks from Al-Shabaab (SOe.001). Despite their limitations, they host the Karrar "office", headed by the emir of Da'esh Somalia, Abdul Qadir Mumin (not listed), a native of Puntland and a dual Somali-British national. Member States reported that Al-Karrar acted as a financial hub in Africa and transmitted funds to ISIL-K. While one Member State reported that such funds reached Afghanistan through Yemen, another asserted that the money was transferred through a cell in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Some of the funds are reportedly generated in Somalia from extortion exercised against the shipping industry and illicit taxation.

North Africa

21. In Egypt, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (not listed) has been able to carry out several terrorist attacks since January at Rafah city and in the centre of Sinai Province, including in the Nussayriyat, Tarabin, Bura, Tuma'a and Kabr Amir districts. Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis also attacked a gas pipeline in the Umariyah region and kidnapped four road workers. The group launched two attacks against Egyptian armed forces, resulting in the death of approximately 18 soldiers. Those attacks notwithstanding, Member States assessed that the group was declining in strength as a result of successful counter-terrorism operations by Egyptian forces and a concerted effort by the Government in the Sinai area to address underlying grievances among local communities, including Bedouin tribes, from which most recruitment by the group occurs. One Member State noted that Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis was primarily located in northern Sinai and consisted of approximately 500 fighters.

22. In Libya, some Member States assess that Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Libya (ISIL-Libya) (QDe.165) is confined to the southern part of the country, where it conducts attacks against various militias. The group seeks to reactivate its logistical nodes in the northern part of the country, in particular in Bani Walid and near the Tunisian border, in Sabratah, to facilitate the replenishment of its ranks by foreign terrorist fighters. ISIL-Libya has been weakened by leadership losses and military raids in Sabha and Bani Walid, which have reduced the group's operational capacities. One Member State assesses that ISIL-Libya retains fewer than 100 fighters in the country.

23. ISIL-Libya has established a new approach in southern Libya to disperse and move in small groups to evade detection by Libyan security actors and other counter-

terrorism forces. Some ISIL-Libya foreign terrorist fighters from sub-Saharan Africa may have established a link between that group and other terrorist groups in the Sahel, Somalia and the Sudan. While one Member State noted that ISIL-Libya sought to recruit migrants from neighbouring countries, another reported that the group maintained ties with certain Nigerian terrorist groups, with some Libyan foreign terrorist fighters possibly located within Islamic State West Africa Province in the Lake Chad basin area.

24. In Morocco, the security services arrested nine pro-Da'esh individuals between January and May. Two were seeking to travel to other conflict zones, including Afghanistan. One was found with instruction manuals on home-made explosives. Despite counter-terrorism successes, there is a continuing threat from Da'esh and Al-Qaida in the country.

2. Middle East

Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic

25. Da'esh continues to face significant leadership losses in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, despite sporadic operational successes from exploiting security gaps. The death of Da'esh leader Al-Salbi was announced by a new spokesperson, following the killing of the previous one, Abu Hamza al-Qurashi (not listed), in an air strike in Aleppo Governorate in November 2021. There is no consensus among Member States regarding the identity of the new leader, Abu al-Hassan. One Iraqi candidate is Juma'a Awwad Ibrahim al-Badri (not listed), brother of the former Da'esh leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Another is Abd al-Raouf al-Muhajir (not listed), who may have previously headed the general directorate of provinces. The name most widely discussed is Bashar Khattab Ghazal al-Sumaida'i (alias Dr. Zayd, not listed). Some Member States assess Al-Sumaida'i to be an influential ideologue, albeit with no senior operational position held recently within Da'esh that would position him as a credible successor. There were reports that he was arrested near Istanbul in May, an unlikely location for a Da'esh leader, which may indicate that Abu al-Hassan remains at large. Da'esh has not yet commented.

26. Despite leadership attrition, Member States observe no significant change of direction for the group or its operations in the core conflict zone. Da'esh remains a persistent threat, owing to its decentralized structure and ability to organize complex attacks. The Iraqi-Syrian border continues to be an area of major vulnerability, with multiple smuggling networks operating in the area. The combined number of Da'esh fighters is estimated between 6,000 and 10,000 across the two countries, concentrated mostly in rural areas and assessed to be predominantly Syrian and Iraqi nationals, although a number of third-country nationals are also believed to be in the Hawl and Rawj camps.

27. In the Syrian Arab Republic, Da'esh launched a major operation on 20 January to free fighters from the Sina'a prison in Hasakah, where an estimated 5,000 fighters were being held. Most Member States estimate that between 100 and 300 fighters fled to the Badiyah desert or crossed the border into Iraq. The number of fugitives is offset by the number of casualties that the group suffered in executing the attack, limiting the net operational impact of the operation. No senior Da'esh leader reportedly managed to escape. Nevertheless, the attack provided a significant propaganda boost to the group and highlighted its prioritization of attacks on prisons holding their members and its efforts to use it as a catalyst for resurgence. Member States assess that more jailbreak attempts should be expected.

28. Da'esh mounted other sporadic attacks, using insurgent tactics. Activities were concentrated in Dayr al-Zawr, southern Raqqah and Hasakah, eastern Homs and south-western Dar'a and Suwayda' Governorates. Da'esh resumed training that had

previously been curtailed, especially in the Badiyah desert. One Member State noted occasional Da'esh activity in Damascus.

29. In Iraq, counter-terrorism operations against Da'esh continued to result in arrests and enhanced security. However, active Da'esh cells remain in remote areas, and the group continued to mount attacks on infrastructure and cultivated areas, including in Diyala, Salah al-Din and Kirkuk Governorates. On 21 January, an assault on an Iraqi army base in Diyala Governorate resulted in the death of 11 soldiers. On 23 May, Da'esh killed 12 civilians in two operations in Kirkuk and Diyala Governorates, where farmers were targeted while harvesting crops. One Member State noted that some Da'esh members involved in recent attacks in those areas may be escapees from detention facilities across the Syrian border. Attacks also occurred in Anbar and Ninawa Governorates, where Da'esh operates mainly in small, mobile cells.

30. Information obtained from Sami Jasim Muhammad al-Jaburi (not listed), whose arrest was announced by Iraq in October 2021 (see [S/2022/83](#)), indicates that he was in charge of Da'esh finances until his capture. He also simultaneously acted as deputy "caliph" and member of the "delegated committee". Several Member States assess that his capture has disrupted the group, especially its finances, and that the functions that he fulfilled may now be performed by several individuals.

31. During Ramadan, from early April to early May, Da'esh carried out a global campaign of enhanced operational activity in revenge for the deaths of its leader and its spokesperson. In Iraq, Da'esh claimed more than 80 attacks as part of the campaign, although they caused relatively few casualties among the Iraqi security forces and communities that were the main targets.

Arabian Peninsula

32. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Yemen (QDe.166) is assessed to be overshadowed in Yemen by Al-Qaida. The group is in a downward trajectory, with no recent attacks. One Member State reported that some Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Yemen fighters had assimilated into various tribal forces in the country and reintegrated into the overall Yemeni conflict. While their battlefield experience suggests that they remain a potential threat, the lack of resources and leadership will inhibit any resurgence in the near term. The value of Yemen to Da'esh may reside in the presence of the Umm al-Qura "office" of the general directorate of provinces and the facilitation and financial links across the Red Sea to the Karrar "office" in Somalia.

3. Europe

33. Da'esh activity has been reduced primarily to issuing appeals to sympathizers to resume attacks in Europe. The threat level is assessed as moderate and the "lone actor" phenomenon has declined. Recent attacks in Europe claimed by Da'esh were carried out primarily by individuals with mental health issues, inspired by Da'esh but lacking logistical or economic support. The early detection of such attacks poses a significant challenge to law enforcement.

34. Radicalization in prisons and prison-based recruitment remain key drivers of the threat. Most individuals incarcerated in Europe for travelling to the Syrian Arab Republic before 2015 received short sentences and are expected to be released by 2025. One related issue is the prospect of female returnees. While the number of female terrorist inmates remains low, prisons in Europe must be prepared for a potential influx of female returnees from detention camps, including arrangements for the care and custody of their children that are in the children's best interests, during the coming years. Member States remain concerned about returning terrorist

fighters seeking to establish cells in Europe with a view to carrying out more sophisticated attacks, including through Kosovo.⁵

35. In February, three individuals were arrested in Spain for allegedly having used a complex network of front companies to divert funds to a terrorist group based in Libya with links to Da'esh and led by Mohamed Salem Bahroun (alias El-Far, not listed). They allegedly managed a criminal network of oil smuggling, false passports, money held in tax havens and the transfer of wounded terrorist fighters to private clinics in Spain to recover from battlefield injuries. The group allegedly used human couriers, bank transfers and hawala to transfer funds that arrived in Spain from Libya to various jurisdictions, including Türkiye, Tunisia and, ultimately, Antigua and Barbuda. As much as \$4 million is reported to have been laundered. The case remains under investigation.

4. Asia

Central and South Asia

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

37. The current leader of the Siddiq "office" is Sheikh Tamim al-Kurdi (not listed), previously part of the Da'esh core. He was appointed by the Da'esh general directorate of provinces and arrived in Afghanistan in 2020. Da'esh views Afghanistan as a base for expansion in the wider region for the realization of its "great caliphate" project. ISIL-K seeks to strengthen its capabilities by recruiting members from other terrorist groups, as well as to attract disaffected Taliban fighters and dissatisfied local ethnic minorities. One Member State reported the defection of 50 Uighur fighters from the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (QDe.088) to ISIL-K. Several Member States reported that ISIL-K was able to recruit thanks to higher monthly payments to fighters.

38. It appears that attacks claimed or attributed to ISIL-K have decreased, while their geographical spread has widened. In April and May, ISIL-K claimed to have fired rockets into Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Although both countries denied that rockets reached their territories, the risk of such attacks remains. The aims were intended to demonstrate the inability of de facto security forces to control borders and to attract new ISIL-K recruits from the region. It is unclear whether ISIL-K can regain control over lost territory in eastern Afghanistan. Should it succeed, it may prove difficult for the Taliban to reverse such gains and, according to one Member State, ISIL-K would then be positioned to develop a global threat capability from Afghanistan.

South-East Asia

39. The threat from Da'esh-affiliated groups has largely receded, with the exception of the potential for lone-actor or Da'esh-inspired attacks and some remaining pockets of activity, primarily in the southern Philippines. Da'esh-East Asia is assessed to have as many as 200 fighters in the southern Philippines and to remain capable of carrying out small-scale attacks. The Philippine authorities announced in March, and Member States confirmed, that the new leader of Da'esh-East Asia was Abu Zacharia (alias Jer Mimbantas, alias Faharudin Hadji Satar, not listed). He is reportedly a former

⁵ References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

leader of the Maute Group, a Da'esh affiliate that briefly held territory in the city of Marawi in 2017. In March, Philippine forces killed an Abu Sayyaf Group leader in Basilan, reflecting continued leadership losses by the group (see [S/2021/68](#)). The alleged spokesperson of Da'esh-East Asia, Abdulfatah Omar Alimudén (alias Abu Huzaifah, not listed), was killed in a military operation in Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Maguindanao, on 6 June. Abu Huzaifah was responsible for financial transactions between the group and Da'esh leadership in the core conflict zone.

III. Updates on responses to the evolving threat

A. Overview

40. The United Nations, Member States and international, regional and subregional organizations have continued to strengthen, refine and promote their use of effective tools and measures to prevent Da'esh and its affiliates from undermining the prospects for peace and to address the threat posed by Da'esh, its affiliates and supporters. Some terrorist groups and radical groups have called on their followers to take advantage of the war in Ukraine and the availability of weapons, including through lone-actor attacks in Europe. Terrorists and violent extremist groups have also exploited the situation to spread hateful content, calls for violence and disinformation online.

41. On 7 April, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1373 \(2001\)](#) concerning counter-terrorism and the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions [1267 \(1999\)](#), [1989 \(2011\)](#) and [2253 \(2015\)](#) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities examined in a joint open briefing the evolution of the threat posed by Da'esh in Africa, as well as Member States' responses to the threat and associated challenges. The examination covered such issues as Da'esh expansion in Africa, civil society resilience to terrorism and the possible threat posed to other continents by Da'esh affiliates in Africa.

42. Overly broad definitions of terrorism that may be susceptible to wide interpretation in the legislation or enactment of new laws by many States pose the risk of abuse by law enforcement and other officials, potentially affecting effective measures against Da'esh. Accordingly, in May 2022, the Office of Counter-Terrorism and Spain co-held the High-level International Conference on Human Rights, Civil Society and Counter-Terrorism in Málaga. Participants, who included 44 civil society representatives, shared experiences in designing human rights- and rule of law-compliant and gender-sensitive responses to terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

43. The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate continued to analyse emerging issues, trends and developments, as directed by the Security Council in its resolution [2617 \(2021\)](#).⁶ After two years working in virtual and hybrid formats as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Directorate resumed its on-site assessment visits on behalf of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1373 \(2001\)](#) concerning counter-terrorism, conducting a comprehensive visit to Bulgaria in April.

⁶ See United Nations, Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, "The interrelationship between counter-terrorism frameworks and international humanitarian law", study, January 2022, and "The state of international cooperation for lawful access to digital evidence: research perspectives", report, January 2022.

44. The entities of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact continued to work with Member States to strengthen international counter-terrorism cooperation and provide assistance on a range of priority and emerging counter-terrorism issues. The Compact currently comprises 45 entities, after the Financial Action Task Force and the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) joined in April. The Coordination Committee of the Compact held its eighth meeting in June to strengthen international and regional cooperation to address the increasing terrorist threat in Africa.

B. Suspected Da'esh members and their family members in conflict zones

1. Current situation

45. The deteriorating situation in detention facilities and camps in Iraq and the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic remains of grave concern. The conditions faced by foreign terrorist fighters and their accompanying family members, in particular women and children, present complex and acute human rights, humanitarian and security challenges requiring urgent attention and action. The conditions in the Hawl and Rawj camps and in detention facilities in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic have been further exacerbated by restrictions imposed to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The Da'esh attack on the Sina'a prison in January 2022 and reports of increased violence and killings in the Hawl camp, including of an aid worker, are important reminders of the security implications of this protracted situation and the need for a swift and concerted human rights-compliant response by the international community.

2. Repatriation efforts

46. The repatriation of foreign terrorist fighters and their accompanying family members, especially women and children, continues to occur intermittently. A key challenge remains ensuring the voluntary, safe and dignified repatriation of those individuals in full respect of States' respective obligations under international law, and in particular the need to ensure their prosecution, as appropriate, as well as their rehabilitation and reintegration. The consent of relevant Governments for any activity to be undertaken in territories under their control is a paramount consideration in all repatriation efforts. Member States continue to struggle with various issues, including conducting gender-sensitive and comprehensive risk assessments, addressing the specific and individual needs of children, satisfying evidentiary and jurisdictional requirements, combating the potential risk of in-prison radicalization to violence, as well as developing and implementing tailored, whole-of-government and whole-of-society prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies.

47. While progress has been achieved by the Government of Iraq with the repatriation of more than 2,500 individuals, approximately 28,000 Iraqi nationals remain in the Hawl camp and an unknown number are held in detention facilities. In March, the Global Framework for United Nations Support on Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq Third Country National Returnees, co-chaired by the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), concluded the first joint scoping exercise in Iraq to lay the foundation for an "all-of-United Nations" programme of work in support of repatriation efforts by the Government of Iraq.

48. UNICEF continues to support Member States with the development of holistic and evidence-based reintegration services to ensure that returnees can successfully and safely reintegrate into society. UNICEF has also worked with the Office for the

Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other United Nations entities to support community-based reintegration, prevent discrimination and stigmatization and facilitate access to basic social services.

3. Prosecution and investigation

49. UNITAD responded to requests for assistance from non-Iraqi prosecution authorities relating to foreign Da'esh members who may be potentially repatriated or are undergoing repatriation. UNITAD supported the Swedish prosecutorial authority in the trial of a Swedish female national charged with committing war crimes during her time with Da'esh, and it used artificial intelligence technology to respond more efficiently to Member States' requests for information.

50. In March, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) launched a training module on investigative interviewing as a key reference tool for Nigerian officials to conduct human rights-compliant investigations and prosecution of terrorism cases. UNODC enhanced the capacities of Morocco to investigate terrorist offences, including by foreign terrorist fighters and returnees, in accordance with the rule of law and human rights and taking gender dimensions into consideration. In the Niger, UNODC contributed to strengthening the capacity of law enforcement and criminal justice actors in the collection and use of battlefield evidence in conflict areas to bring terrorists to justice, with respect for human rights and the rule of law.

4. Rehabilitation and reintegration

51. Prisons can serve as potential incubators for radicalization to terrorism and terrorist recruitment, making terrorist offenders or those attracted to terrorist ideologies potential threats to public safety upon their release. This phenomenon underscores the urgent need to address prison management issues, including the segregation of detainees in the context of COVID-19 health measures and humanitarian grounds.

52. Between February and April, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in partnership with the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism and the Office of the National Security Adviser in Iraq, held round tables on prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration with relevant government institutions in Erbil and Baghdad. IOM also provided support for the reception, reintegration and rehabilitation of returning foreign terrorist fighters and their families, including the families of deceased foreign terrorist fighters, as well as foreign terrorist fighters released from prisons in the Western Balkans.

53. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) continued to work with Iraqi prison authorities, law enforcement officials, judges, prosecutors and defence lawyers to prevent torture, promote compliance with key legal conditions and procedural safeguards and address severe overcrowding in detention facilities as a measure to prevent violent extremism.

54. UNODC, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Office of Counter-Terrorism continued to implement a joint project entitled Regional Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience Strategy for Areas Affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin Region and to support Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria both in strengthening cross-border cooperation and in developing comprehensive and tailored approaches to screening, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration. The three entities also continued to partner with Indonesia to develop effective practices for the management, rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist prisoners and offenders charged with or convicted of terrorism-related offences.

C. International and regional cooperation

55. Since the previous report, the United Nations, Member States and international, regional and subregional organizations have continued to strengthen international and regional counter-terrorism cooperation and coordination. Notable progress has been made, in particular in Central Asia and Africa.

56. In March 2022, Central Asian States adopted the updated Joint Plan of Action for the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia, with substantive support from the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia. The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate contributed to “all-of-United Nations” activities to support Central Asian Member States in eliminating the supply of small arms and light weapons to terrorists and improving the use of biometrics in border control. In May, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the Directorate, UNODC and the Office for Disarmament Affairs held consultations with Uzbekistan as part of continued efforts to strengthen the capacities of Central Asian countries to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and their supply to terrorists. In June, the Office of Counter-Terrorism launched the Counter-Terrorism Early Warning Network for Central Asia to respond to security challenges and threats emanating from Afghanistan.

57. The Office of Counter-Terrorism coordinated with the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region to strengthen support for Member States and subregional organizations in countering the increasing terrorist threat posed by Da’esh-affiliated groups in the Great Lakes region. As part of a joint initiative to support countries in the Lake Chad basin with developing and implementing strategies for the screening, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of Boko Haram-associated individuals, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Office of Counter-Terrorism and UNODC, in close collaboration with the Lake Chad Basin Commission, held a bilateral Niger-Nigeria cooperation workshop, a regional workshop for Lake Chad basin countries and a national workshop for Cameroon. UNODC and the Directorate continued to partner in providing capacity-building support to Mozambique in collecting and preserving evidence while implementing a national asset-freezing mechanism, supporting inter-agency cooperation and developing a national counter-terrorism strategy.

D. Supporting the victims of Da’esh

58. Although some Member States have taken steps to implement survivor-centred approaches to support victims and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, those efforts have sometimes excluded certain communities or religious groups. In Iraq, little progress was achieved in holding Da’esh perpetrators of violence accountable. While several individuals alleged to be low-level members of Da’esh have been charged under counter-terrorism legislation, no cases have included charges of sexual violence. Legislation establishing a basis for the prosecution of Da’esh members for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide would be a crucial step towards delivering accountability for their crimes in Iraq.

59. The United Nations continued to assist Iraq in implementing the Law on Support for Female Yazidi Survivors and UNAMI continued to support the Government in implementing the Joint Communiqué on Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. UNITAD continued to provide analytical and investigative support for the joint investigation team created by the national prosecution authorities of

Sweden and France to investigate core international crimes committed by Da'esh against the Yazidis. In April, the team participated in the Netherlands in a session of the Network for Investigation and Prosecution of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes of the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation.

60. As at 31 March, at least 1,301 children had been convicted on national security-related charges in Iraq and were serving sentences of up to 15 years, including for their alleged association with armed groups, primarily Da'esh. The United Nations is not aware of specific programmes in the juvenile correction centres aimed at family and community reintegration of children upon their release. Under the Global Programme to End Violence against Children, UNODC concluded a project on tailored approaches for rehabilitating children perceived as associated or affiliated with Da'esh in Iraq, including workshops on investigation processes for judges, prosecutors, police investigators and lawyers, and on-the-job mentoring for social workers and judiciary staff.

61. In February, UNODC started to implement a project on strengthening resilience to violent extremism that focuses on child victims and witnesses affected by terrorism and violent extremism in Nigeria. In Indonesia, in close partnership with the National Counter-Terrorism Agency, a train-the-trainers workshop was delivered for law enforcement officials dealing with children associated with terrorist and violent extremist groups, including child returnees.

E. Countering the financing of terrorism

62. The United Nations continued to support Member States and international and other organizations to increase national capacities and strengthen regional collaboration to counter the financing of terrorism. In March, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate led a pilot consultation process with Uganda to identify technical assistance needs for implementing targeted initiatives. The Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Directorate supported the Executive Office for Control and Non-Proliferation of the United Arab Emirates with the implementation of targeted financial sanctions. In May, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, in partnership with the European Union and the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group, held a capacity-building workshop on protecting the non-profit sector from terrorist financing abuse. UNITAD continued to investigate the economic structure of Da'esh, the takeover of local agricultural sectors and the enslavement, pillaging and persecution of ethnic and religious minorities across Iraq.

63. The United Nations continued to cooperate with the Financial Action Task Force and its Global Network Coordination Group, including through regular updates on the financing by Da'esh, Al-Qaida and their affiliates; money-laundering and terrorism-financing risks associated with migrant smuggling; and the use of art, antiquities and other cultural objects as a tool for money-laundering and terrorism financing. The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate supported the work of several Financial Action Task Force-style regional bodies in their respective plenary meetings and thematic events and ensured consistency between the outcomes of mutual evaluations and the recommendations made in the assessments conducted on behalf of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1373 \(2001\)](#) concerning counter-terrorism, where applicable. In March, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, in collaboration with the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America and with support from the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate and the Monitoring Team, convened a regional conference on the topic of implementing targeted financial sanctions and enhancing international cooperation and domestic coordination to counter the financing of terrorism in Latin America.

F. Border management and law enforcement

64. The United Nations launched new initiatives to further strengthen the multifaceted capacities of Member States for border management and law enforcement. In February, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the European Union jointly launched the Tech Against Terrorism initiative, under which an expert group meeting on the use of artificial intelligence for social network analysis and an expert round table on counter-terrorism and unmanned aerial systems digital forensics were held in the following month. The Office also launched the Global Network of Experts on Vulnerable Targets Protection to foster synergies and exchange information and good practices on the protection of vulnerable targets.

65. Through various programmes, the Office of Counter-Terrorism and its partners continued to provide capacity-building assistance to Member States in border management and law enforcement. The United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel Programme, led by the Office and implemented in partnership with other United Nations entities and INTERPOL, is currently assisting more than 50 Member States in detecting and preventing terrorist and serious crime-related threats at borders through the provision of legal advice and guidance, as well as training and operational support. In February, the Global Programme to Counter Terrorist Attacks against Vulnerable Targets held in-depth consultations, led by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, on the level of capacity and preparedness, and from February to June 2022, the Programme produced national action plans for Togo and Tunisia and provided capacity-building support to more than 150 officials from the two countries.

66. Under the framework of the United Nations Programme on Threat Assessment Models for Aviation Security, the Office of Counter-Terrorism rolled out and completed a pilot programme in Botswana in February and cooperated with Nigeria on a review of its coordination framework, following recent attacks against the country's aviation infrastructure. Through its Fusion Cells Programme, the Office provided capacity-building support to Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Mozambique, Togo, Uganda and the secretariat of the Southern African Development Community to enhance their inter-agency counter-terrorism coordination mechanisms. From March to May, the Global Counter-Terrorism Investigations Programme, led by the Office, delivered training to counter-terrorism and law enforcement entities in Ghana, Kenya, the Niger and Togo.

67. The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, within the Office of Counter-Terrorism, together with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, continued to implement activities under the initiative on the responsible use and sharing of biometrics in counter-terrorism and the provisions of Security Council resolution [2396 \(2017\)](#), in particular through the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact. Both entities organized regional workshops for South-East Asia and Central Asia, as well as national workshops for Tajikistan and Thailand, to enhance capacities on the responsible use of biometric data.

68. The respect for human rights and the rule of law are critical components of effective counter-terrorism responses. In May, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, in partnership with UNODC, the International Maritime Organization and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), concluded a regional workshop on good practices in border security management for law enforcement officers from Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Morocco and the Niger. The Central Africa regional office of OHCHR, supported by the Office of Counter-Terrorism, concluded a four-year project aimed at enhancing the capacity of

Cameroonian officials with regard to human rights, the rule of law and counter-terrorism. The Office, in partnership with UNAMI, delivered a series of capacity-building initiatives for Iraqi law enforcement and intelligence officers on human rights-compliant responses to terrorism.

69. Preventing terrorists from gaining access to weapons and explosive material remains a significant challenge. In March, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research co-organized the launch of technical guidelines developed under the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact to facilitate the implementation of Security Council resolution 2370 (2017) and related international standards and good practices on preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons. The Office delivered training to Iraqi and Jordanian officials on preventing terrorists from using chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear material and weapons, strengthening their capacities to implement their respective counter-terrorism response plans.

G. Countering terrorist narratives and engaging with communities to prevent and counter violent extremism conducive to terrorism

70. The United Nations continued to provide Member States with a range of capacity-building and technical assistance to prevent and counter violent extremism conducive to terrorism and to support their engagement with civil society in their counter-terrorism efforts, including in the development of counter-terrorist narratives. In accordance with Security Council resolution 2354 (2017), the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism held an open meeting in March 2022 on countering terrorist narratives and preventing the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes. Participants in the meeting highlighted the exploitation by terrorists of pandemic-related and other grievances through conspiracy theories, a rise in distrust in Governments and State institutions and the importance of developing positive narratives that offered hope and the vision of a better future.

71. The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate continued to engage with civil society partners on specific thematic areas and on enhancing the transparency of those exchanges, including through a report synthesizing consultations with African civil society organizations on the trajectory and impact of the activities of Da'esh-affiliated groups in Africa;⁷ supporting a briefing of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism in May on the role of civil society in counter-terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism; and convening a virtual round table in June on the engagement of South-East European civil society organizations in the development and implementation of national counter-terrorism strategies.

72. The Office of Counter-Terrorism continued to focus on emerging issues in countering Da'esh, commissioning targeted research on the impact of violent extremism on online video gaming and analysing the current “state of play” for extremist actors online, as well as their interaction with vulnerable communities. The Office also continued its cooperation with Member States within the framework of its Global Programme on Security of Major Sporting Events and Promotion of Sport and Its Values as a Tool to Prevent Violent Extremism, including to plan a technical assessment mission to Ghana, the host of the 2023 African Games, and to organize in

⁷ United Nations, Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, “Civil society perspectives: ISIL in Africa – key trends and developments”, April 2022.

March a high-level round table on the protection of major sporting events and the use of sport values for the prevention of violent extremism.

73. Understanding power structures and gendered practices in society, including the role of masculinities in terrorist groups and how terrorist groups and networks interact with societies, is indispensable to ensure effective approaches to preventing and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism. In June, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the International Peace Institute published a report examining how masculinities are exploited by violent extremist groups and how they interact with State actors, including counter-terrorism institutions.⁸ IOM and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue issued three briefing notes on the Da'esh supporter ecosystem on social media, highlighting the group's main narratives and the online proliferation of its propaganda.

74. In Iraq, UNAMI continued its efforts to promote and protect the human rights of religious minorities to help to achieve robust protection and social cohesion for sustainable peace, security and development in Iraq, including the ongoing advocacy for the enactment of the Anti-Discrimination and Protection of Diversity Bill. In March, UNAMI and the Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide co-organized a dialogue on countering hate speech, discrimination and marginalization. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization continued to restore cultural heritage in Iraq through the "Reviving the spirit of Mosul" initiative and, through a new initiative supported by Canada, to promote gendered approaches to preventing violent extremism in Iraq through education.

75. In Mali, the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, in collaboration with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and a non-governmental organization, developed and implemented in March an initiative aimed at promoting mutual confidence and trust between Malian Defence and Security Forces and local communities.

IV. Observations

76. The surge of terrorist activities observed in my first report following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the threat posed by Da'esh and its affiliates to international peace and security. No sign of disruption to that trend was observed during the reporting period. Despite significant leadership losses and internal divisions and friction, Da'esh continues to take advantage of conflict, governance failure, political turmoil, socioeconomic inequalities and grievances to recruit and attract a growing number of followers and resources, as well as to incite, plan and organize terrorist attacks. The situation in Africa, in particular in Southern and West Africa, has further deteriorated since the previous report, with an escalation of violence in countries that had been largely peaceful before the group and its affiliates started to operate within their borders. I am particularly concerned about the potential impact of global food insecurity on West Africa, notably the Sahel, which may exacerbate fragilities and fuel local conflict dynamics that could catalyse the spread of terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

77. I remain deeply concerned about the tragically precarious and deteriorating situation in camps and other facilities in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic. Tens of thousands of individuals, mostly women and children, with suspected links to Da'esh and other terrorist groups designated by the Security Council, continue to

⁸ International Peace Institute and United Nations, Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, "Masculinities and Violent Extremism", June 2022.

face challenges relating to their basic human rights and access to humanitarian assistance. Reports of increased violence and recent attacks targeting those camps and facilities further highlight the continuing security risks and implications for affected civilians and Member States. I call upon Member States with nationals stranded in those camps to look into the medium- and long-term consequences of neglect and further their efforts to facilitate the safe, voluntary and dignified repatriation of all those individuals, in particular women and children, in line with applicable international law, including the best interests of the child.

78. The threat posed by Da'esh underscores the need for comprehensive responses to counter and prevent terrorism. While Member States have a primary responsibility in that regard, international cooperation remains indispensable. The United Nations will continue to work with Member States, international and regional organizations, civil society and other partners, including through the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, to support the balanced implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and responses that are gender-sensitive and firmly anchored in the rule of law and human rights.
