

By Jessica Lewis McFate and Harleen Gambhir
With Evan Sterling

The attack by an alleged ISIS supporter at a Lindt chocolate shop in Sydney, Australia on December 15, 2014 has raised fears of the international spread of ISIS. The incident, which resulted in critical injuries to four hostages and the deaths of two, bore no signs of formal connection to ISIS. Yet the assailant, Man Haron Monis, [requested](#) an ISIS flag during the attack, and had recently [posted](#) an online pledge of allegiance to the “Caliph of the Muslims”, belying sympathies for the group that claims to have established the Islamic Caliphate. ISIS is not limited to Iraq and Syria; the global threat of attacks by ISIS is amply attested and requires due consideration.

ISIS Calls for Attacks against the West

ISIS has publically and frequently encouraged attacks against the West. Since its declaration of the Caliphate in July 2014, ISIS has [instructed](#) supporters in the West who cannot perform *hijrah*, or emigration, to Iraq and Syria to remain in place and organize. ISIS Spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani released a more incendiary statement on September 21, 2014 urging “soldiers of the Islamic State” to conduct [lone-wolf](#) attacks against the West. On November 13, 2014, ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi released a statement accepting [pledges of allegiance](#) from groups abroad, declaring five wilayats, or provinces, outside of Iraq and Syria, and encouraging groups to “[erupt](#) volcanoes of jihad everywhere.” ISIS possesses a global network of [foreign fighters](#) and Western [influencers](#) who are also supporting ISIS by encouraging travel to Iraq and Syria, and so the threat of attacks against Western countries exists in the context of ISIS’s main effort in Iraq and Syria. ISIS is, in sum, imparting three concurrent messages to foreign supporters:

- 1) **Perform Hijrah**- participate in jihad by traveling to Iraq and Syria
- 2) **Declare Bay’at**- remain in place and create communities of ISIS support
- 3) **Conduct Lone-Wolf Attacks**- remain in place and conduct attacks against the enemies of ISIS

The following factsheet collates known instances of ISIS messaging to Western supporters and reciprocal messaging from those supporters back to ISIS. Low-level chatter on jihadi forums is intentionally excluded. The factsheet also collates known instances of formal bay’at declarations to ISIS by groups outside of Iraq and Syria, as well as official acknowledgement of those groups by ISIS. The goal of this factsheet is to contextualize the apparent threat to Western countries posed by ISIS on the basis of intent and overt messaging activity. All dates are in 2014 unless otherwise noted.

Conduct Lone-Wolf Attacks

- [Adnani Statement](#). On September 21, 2014, in a statement directed at the “[soldiers of the Islamic State](#),” Adnani imparted the following guidance to those living abroad: “*mujahideen in Europe, Australia, and Canada...O mujahideen in Morocco and Algeria...O mujahideen in Khorasan, the Caucasus, and Iran...O mujahideen, we call you up to defend the Islamic State....So rise O mujahid. Rise and defend your state from your place wherever you may be.*” Adnani also specified, “*You must strike the soldiers, patrons, and troops of the tawāghīt. Strike their police, security, and intelligence members, as well as their treacherous agents. Destroy their beds. Embitter their lives for them and busy them with themselves. If you can kill a disbelieving American or European – especially the spiteful and filthy French – or an*

Australian, or a Canadian, or any other disbeliever from the disbelievers waging war, including the citizens of the countries that entered into a coalition against the Islamic State, then rely upon Allah, and kill him in any manner or way however it may be. Do not ask for anyone's advice and do not seek anyone's verdict. Kill the disbeliever whether he is civilian or military, for they have the same ruling. Both of them are disbelievers. Both of them are considered to be waging war [the civilian by belonging to a state waging war against the Muslims]."

Events Related to Lone-Wolf Attacks in the West

Note: This factsheet focuses only on events in Western countries and Australia, and does not exhaust ISIS-related events in the countries listed.

- Australia.
 - 21 MAR: Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) released a video introducing the Australian preacher Abu Sulayman al Muhajir as part of their effort to reconcile the schism between JN and ISIS. Abu Sulayman claims to be a member of "Al-Qai'da in the Levant" and uses the video in an attempt to undermine the legitimacy of ISIS.
 - 21 JUN: Al-Hayat Media Foundation released a recruitment video featuring an Australian and a British fighter, entitled "There is no Life Without Jihad." The video targets foreign fighters and claims that any good Muslim is obligated to immediately join the Islamic State in jihad.
 - 18 SEP: Australian authorities charged two men for an alleged plot to carry out a public execution. "The assailants "planned to kidnap a member of the public, behead the victim and then drape him or her in an ISIS flag." According to Prime Minister Tony Abbot, the inspiration for the attacks came "from an Australian who is apparently quite senior in ISIL (Islamic State) to networks of support back in Australia to conduct demonstration killings here in this country." Doubt was later cast on the plot as reports emerged that the sword seized by authorities may have been plastic and was a replica of Zulfiqar, the sword of Shi'a religious figure Imam Ali. The use of a Shi'a symbol in an ISIS plot would be very unusual.
 - 18 SEP: Australian government agencies estimate that over 100 Australians are currently fighting in Syria. At least a dozen of those individuals have joined radical groups such as ISIS or JN, including Abu Yahya ash Shami who recently appeared in an ISIS recruitment video.
 - 23 SEPT: 18-year-old Abdul Numan Haider was shot dead after stabbing two officers from the Joint Counter Terrorism team outside a Melbourne police station. The assailant's family had come to Australia from Afghanistan. ISIS mentioned Haider by name in the 5th edition of its English-language magazine, Dabiq, claiming that his attack was the "direct result of the Shaykh [Adnani]'s call to action."
 - 20 OCT: Al-I'tisam Media Foundation, one of ISIS's three main media houses, released "Messages of the Mujahid 5" depicting an Australian foreign fighter threatening Western leaders. The speaker addresses Prime Minister Tony Abbott and President Barack Obama.
 - 15 DEC: Australian federal police arrested two Sydney men charged with funding Australians to travel to Iraq and Syria to fight with ISIS. 22 year-old Omarjan Azari (already indicted from 18 SEPT event) and a 25-year old allegedly were "key facilitators in the movement of [up to \$15,000 of] funds" to support emigrating Australians.
 - 15 DEC: Self-styled Iranian cleric Man Haron Monis took 17 individuals hostage in the Lindt Chocolate Café in Martin Place, an Australian shopping center. Monis, who had a criminal record, reportedly demanded a call with Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, as well as the delivery of an ISIS flag. Australian authorities stormed the café 16 hours after the siege began. Monis, as well as two Australian citizens, Katrina Dawson and Tori Johnson, were killed in the ensuing firefight. Several others were wounded.

- Canada. Michael Zehaf-Bibeau [shot](#) and killed a Canadian soldier at the National War memorial in Ottawa, Canada on October 22, 2014, prior to continuing on to the parliament building where he was later killed. Two others, one a security guard, were injured during the events. Zehaf-Bibeau was a Canadian native and radicalized convert to Islam with a significant criminal track record. Two days earlier, on October 20, 2014, Martin Couture-Rouleau [ran over](#) two soldiers at a strip mall in Quebec. Couture-Rouleau had converted to Islam a year ago, and had expressed support for ISIS online. Couture-Rouleau was possibly obeying ISIS Spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani's September 21, 2014 speech, in which Adnani [instructed](#): *"If you are not able to find an IED or a bullet, then single out the disbelieving American, Frenchman, or any of their allies. Smash his head with a rock, or slaughter him with a knife, or run him over with your car, or throw him down from a high place, or choke him, or poison him. Do not lack."* ISIS [mentioned](#) both Zehaf-Bibeau and Couture-Rouleau in the 5th edition of its English-language magazine Dabiq, claiming that their attacks were the "direct result of the Shaykh [Adnani]'s call to action." The magazine also included a picture of Couture-Rouleau.
- Britain. Four men were [arrested](#) in London on October 7, 2014 by Scotland Yard on terrorism charges. The men, had been under [surveillance](#) by MI5, were suspected of plotting a major terrorist attack in Britain. One member of the group was confirmed to have links to the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS).
- United States. Self-radicalized U.S. citizen Zale Thompson [attacked](#) 4 police officers with a hatchet in New York City on October 23, 2014. ISIS [mentioned](#) Thompson in the 5th edition of its English-language magazine Dabiq, claiming that his attack was the "direct result of the Shaykh [Adnani]'s call to action." The FBI issued a [statement](#) on December 1, 2014 warning members of the US military about the threat ISIS posed to their personal security. In particular it warned troops to ensure their social media presence did not give away personal information or display affiliation to the military.
- Belgium. A Frenchman named Mehdi Nemmouche [fired](#) at civilians in the Jewish Museum in Brussels, Belgium on May 24, 2014. Three civilians were killed and a fourth eventually succumbed to his wounds. Mr. Nemmouche was later arrested with a Kalashnikov, a handgun, and audio recording claiming responsibility, and a, "white sheet emblazoned with the name of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant."
- Pro-ISIS Fighters. Several ISIS supporters have issued separate calls for attacks against the West:
 - [3 OCT](#): British Islamic State Fighter addresses Cameron, calls for lone wolf attacks in Britain
 - [7 OCT](#): Islamic State Fighter calls for attacks on Canada
 - [16 OCT](#): American, French, and German Islamic State fighters threaten to behead Western soldiers who come into Iraq, call on Westerners to join ISIS
 - [20 OCT](#): AQAP Expresses support for fighters in coalition airstrikes, calls to attack America
 - [14 OCT](#): ISIS supporter calls for attacks on British sheikhs who support War on Terror
 - [17 NOV](#): Islamic State fighter calls for domestic attacks, mentions Quebec
 - [19 NOV](#): French fighters in IS call Muslim countrymen to travel to join group, carry out lone-wolf attacks in France
 - [8 DEC](#): Canadian IS Fighter calls countrymen to execute lone-wolf attacks or travel to join group
 - [8 DEC](#): Alleged IS Weapons Maker Claims that "Radioactive Device" has entered Europe

ISIS Messages to Foreign Governments

- [Baghdadi Statements](#). Abu Bakr al Baghdadi, the leader of the Islamic State and self-proclaimed Caliph, issued a statement on November 13, 2014 entitled “Even if the disbelievers despise it.” Baghdadi created five new wilayats in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, Libya, and Algeria. He also stated, “America, Europe, Australia, Canada, and their apostate tails and slaves from amongst the rulers of the Muslims’ lands were terrified by the Islamic State.”
- [Dabiq](#). The most recent [edition](#) of ISIS’s English-language magazine, published on November 21, 2014, includes repeated references to ISIS Spokesman Adnani’s September 21 call for lone wolf attacks. As explained above, the publication mentions lone wolf attacks in Australia, Canada, and the United States. ISIS claimed that *“All these attacks were the direct result of the Shaykh [Adnani]’s call to action, and they highlight what a deadly tinderbox is fizzing just beneath the surface of every western country, waiting to explode into violent action at any moment given the right conditions. Suddenly the muhajidin of the Islamic State weren’t some esoteric concept fighting in a land nobody knew or cared about, they were on the doorstep of millions of people living in some of the biggest, most modern cities in the western world.”*
- [“Lend me Your Ears” Series](#). ISIS released several videos featuring “news reports” from British captive John Cantlie. Each episode reflects on the West’s failure to defeat ISIS, and demonstrates a concerted ISIS effort to track and respond to Western political debates about ISIS.
 - [18 SEP](#)
 - [22 SEP](#)
 - [29 SEP](#)
 - [12 OCT](#)
 - [16 OCT](#)
 - [25 OCT](#)
 - [27 OCT](#)
 - [21 NOV](#)
- [Beheadings](#).
 - [19 AUG](#): James Foley beheading
 - [02 SEPT](#): Steven Sotloff beheading
 - [03 OCT](#): Alan Henning beheading
 - [13 SEPT](#): David Haines beheading
 - [16 NOV](#): Peter Kassig execution video

Perform Hijrah

- [Dabiq](#). ISIS has published five issues of its English-Language magazine. Each issue of Dabiq celebrates the global nature of ISIS’s support base. Through Dabiq, ISIS repeatedly reminds Western audiences that they have an obligation to perform *hijrah* and immigrate to the Islamic State. Dabiq glorifies ISIS’s military and governance activity, portraying ISIS as an invincible group creating an idyllic Muslim state.
 - [JUL 5](#): Issue 1
 - [JUL 27](#): Issue 2
 - [AUG 29](#): Issue 3
 - [OCT 12](#): Issue 4
 - [NOV 21](#): Issue 5

- ISIS Martyr messages. ISIS glorifies its martyrs and showcases those who hail from foreign lands. ISIS regularly publicizes reports of its international “martyrs,” or suicide attackers. Recent examples of ISIS martyr videos highlight attackers from the countries below, though the published list of ISIS martyrs is much more extensive.

- [11 OCT](#): Indonesia
- [23 OCT](#): France
- [8 NOV](#): Iraq, Turkey, and Turkistan
- [13 NOV](#): Netherlands
- [22 NOV](#): Britain
- [9 DEC](#): Afghanistan
- [10 DEC](#): France, Saudi Arabia, and Syria

- ISIS Foreign Fighters. There have been some 15,000 fighters from 80 countries that have [traveled](#) to Syria to fight for ISIS. The largest numbers come from Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco, Turkey and Lebanon. About two thousand fighters have [traveled](#) from the West, primarily from the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Australia, and Germany. This list does not include documentation of Westerners who have been stopped from emigrating, though there are recorded cases in multiple countries, [including](#) the United States.

Declare Bay’at

- Dabiq. In [Issue 2](#) of Dabiq, ISIS imparts the following instruction to supporters living abroad: *“If you cannot perform hijrah (immigrate to the Islamic State) for whatever extraordinary reason, then try in your location to organize bay’at (pledges of allegiance) to the Khalifah Ibrahim. Publicize them as much as possible. Gather people in the masjid, Islamic centers, and Islamic organizations, for example, and make public announcements of bay’ah. Try to record these bay’ah and then distribute them through all forms of media including the Internet. It is necessary that bay’ah becomes so common to the average Muslim that he considers those holding back as grossly abnormal...if you live in a police state that will arrest you over such bay’at, then use means of anonymity to convey your bay’ah to the world.”*

- Groups Outside of Iraq and Syria.

Note: The list below is of groups that have pledged bay’at, or allegiance, to ISIS outside of Iraq and Syria. Expressions of support from al-Qaeda affiliates are excluded. Groups are listed under “Unconfirmed” if they have only voiced support and not pledged bay’at, if their bay’at pledge is unconfirmed, or if their existence is unconfirmed.

Confirmed

- [30 JUN](#): Mujahideen East Timor (MIT) in Indonesia
- [10 JUL](#): Caliphate and Jihad Movement in Pakistan
- [13 AUG](#): Ansar al-Khalifah in the Philippines
- [16 AUG](#): Abu Sayaaf Group in the Philippines
- [16 AUG](#): Bangsmoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) in the Philippines
- [14 SEP](#): Jund al-Khalifah in Algeria. The group is [reportedly](#) comprised of the al-Huda Battalion from Algeria and unidentified Algerian brigades.
- [27 SEP](#): Al Tawhid Battalion in Afghanistan and Pakistan
- [10 OCT](#): Bangsmoro Justice Movement (BJM) in the Philippines
- [13 OCT](#): Tehrik-e-Khalifat, composed of Tehrik-e-Taliban in Pakistan (TTP) former spokesperson, as well as 5 TTP regional commanders
- [18 NOV](#): Jundullah in Pakistan

Unconfirmed

- [23 APR](#): Khorasan Pledge signatories
 - [12 AUG](#): Ansar al-Tahweed fi Bilad al-Hind in India
 - [19 SEP](#): Statement attributed to Uqba bin Nafi battalion in Tunisia
 - [29 SEP](#): Jund al-Khilafah in Egypt
 - [26 SEP](#): Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in Pakistan
 - [7 OCT](#): Mujahideen Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem
 - [19 OCT](#): Jund at-Tawheed Wal Khalifah in Bangladesh
- November 10 Audio Statements & November 13 Wilayat Announcements. On November 10, 2014, ISIS's media outlets released 5 similarly branded audio statements from supporters in [Libya](#), [Yemen](#), and [Saudi Arabia](#), as well as from the existing groups [Jund al-Khalifah](#) in Algeria and [Ansar Beit al-Maqdis](#) in the Sinai Peninsula. Each group pledged allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. On November 13, 2014, Baghdadi formally accepting these pledges of allegiance, and announced the formation of “[wilayats](#),” or provinces, within Libya, Algeria, Yemen, the Sinai, and Saudi Arabia. Baghdadi also claimed that an ISIS leader would be appointed for each area, and gave specific words of encouragement to each group. Media activity from each area is summarized below.

Wilayat Sinai

- [14 NOV](#): Ansar Bait al-Maqdis releases video of attacks on Egyptian army and rebrands itself Wilayat Sinai
- [28 NOV](#): ISIS Wilayat Sinai releases video of civilian casualties from an alleged Israeli drone attack.
- [5 DEC](#): ISIS official in Wilayat Sinai incites Muslims to take up arms against the government.

Wilayat Barqa and Tarablus (Libya)

- [3 OCT](#): Islamic Youth Shura Council in Derna, Libya pledges allegiance to ISIS.
- [10 NOV](#): “Supporters in Libya” pledge allegiance to ISIS
- [16 NOV](#): ISIS-linked Twitter account suggests ISIS's "Tripoli Province" behind bombings at Egyptian, UAE Embassies
- [16 NOV](#): ISIS Provincial Division in Libya claims suicide bombings, car detonations in east of country
- [16 NOV](#): Fighters under ISIS Banner in Libya celebrate pledge of allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi
- [25 NOV](#): IS Reports on Government Ministry elements repenting in Libya's "Barqah Province"

Aspirational: Wilayat Haramayn (Saudi Arabia)

- [May 6](#): The Saudi Interior Ministry raided a terrorist cell with alleged links to ISIS and al-Qaeda in Yemen. The 62 suspects included a Palestinian, a Yemeni, and a Pakistani citizen; the rest were Saudi citizens. The cell was reportedly based in Abha, and focused on human and weapons smuggling. Saudi officials claimed that the ultimate purpose of the group was “to create chaos in the kingdom...and [to] prepare a strategic post.”
- [26 AUG](#): The Saudi Interior Ministry arrested 8 Saudi citizens who been “recruiting youth to join extremist organizations abroad.” Al Arabiya News channel reported that the detainees were recruiting for ISIS.
- [1 DEC](#): Pro-ISIS al-Battar Media Foundation released a video in which “Supporters of the Islamic State in the Land of the Two Holy Mosques” allegedly shot Danish citizen Thomas

- Hoepner. Saudi officials later confirmed that a Danish man was shot while driving on November 22, and was later treated for shoulder wounds.
- [7 DEC](#): Saudi authorities arrested 135 “terrorists,” who were involved in recruiting, financing, and making explosives for radical organizations abroad. The detainees included several foreign nationals, including Syrians, Yemenis, Egyptians, an Afghani, an Ethiopian, a Bahraini, an Iraqi, and a Lebanese citizen. Saudi Interior Ministry spokesman General Mansour al-Turkmani announced that the suspects “differ ideologically,” making it unlikely that all are affiliated with ISIS.
 - [11 DEC](#): The Saudi Interior Ministry arrested 3 Saudi citizens, who were allegedly the gunman, driver, and cameraman responsible for the November 22, 2014 [shooting](#) of Danish citizen Thomas Hoepner. Saudi Interior Ministry spokesman General Mansour al-Turki claimed that the detainees committed the attack “in support” of ISIS, after training for two weeks in preparation.

Aspirational: Wilayat Yemen

- There is no sign as of yet of an ISIS-affiliated operational presence in Yemen. This is likely in part because of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP’s) strong influence in the country.

Aspirational: Wilayat Algeria

- Beyond Jund al-Khalifah’s September 24, 2014 [beheading](#) of French citizen Herve Gourdel, ISIS affiliates in Algeria have not released any formal messages.
- Additional Groups Acknowledged by ISIS. Baghdadi accepted the bay’at of all pledging groups and individuals in his November 13, 2014 speech. He acknowledged followers in Tunisia and Morocco specifically without granting them wilayat status. In addition, in the 5th edition of Dabiq, published November 21, ISIS [acknowledged](#) supporters in “Khurasan (Afghanistan), al-Qawqaz (Caucuses), Indonesia, Nigeria, the Philippines, and elsewhere.” ISIS claimed it would establish wilayat in these areas eventually, with “*either the appointment or recognition of leadership by the Khalifah for those lands where multiple groups have given bay’at and merged, or the establishment of a direct line of communication between the Khalifah and the mujahid leadership of lands who have yet to contact the Islamic State and thus receive information and directives from the Khalifah.*” ISIS thus appears to have charted out a pathway whereby a direct relationship can be formed between ISIS and supporting groups.