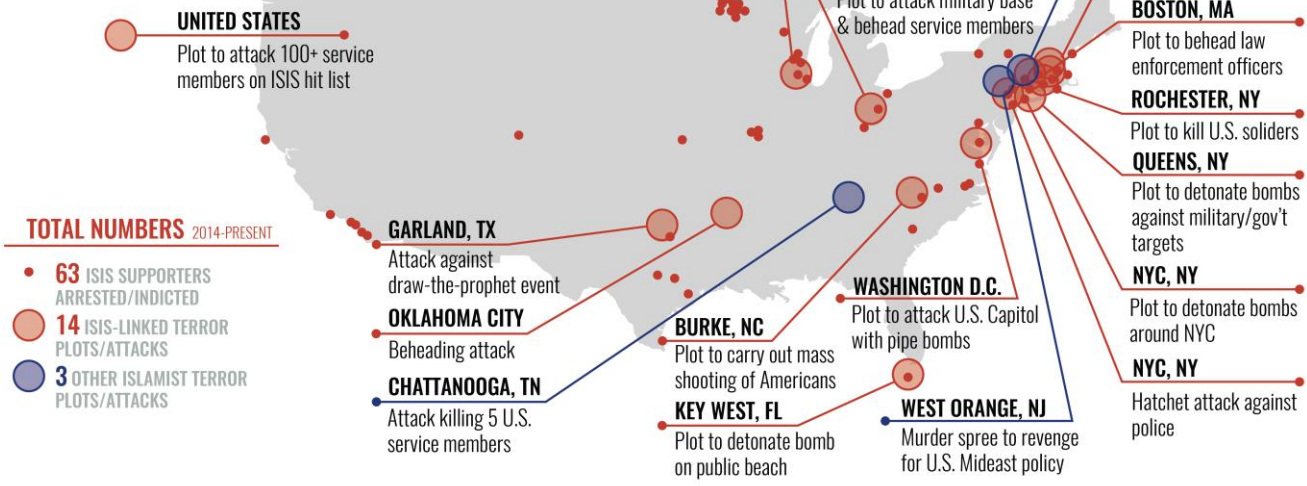


TERROR IN AMERICA

THE ISLAMIST TERROR THREAT TO THE U.S. IS SURGING, LARGELY DUE TO ISIS
RADICALIZATION & RECRUITMENT. THE GROUP IS NOW LINKED TO **14 TERROR PLOTS** &

63 ARRESTS OR INDICTMENTS IN AMERICA.

2014-PRESENT



TOTAL NUMBERS 2014-PRESENT

- 63 ISIS SUPPORTERS ARRESTED/INDICTED
- 14 ISIS-LINKED TERROR PLOTS/ATTACKS
- 3 OTHER ISLAMIST TERROR PLOTS/ATTACKS



MAJORITY OF RECENT ISLAMIST TERROR PLOTS TARGETED LAW ENFORCEMENT OR U.S. TROOPS.
2014-PRESENT

FROM NY TO SYDNEY, ISIS HAS INSPIRED OR DIRECTED 55 PLOTS AGAINST THE WEST.

This document is produced by the Majority Staff of the House Homeland Security Committee.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The terror threat level in the U.S. homeland is high, and the situation is getting steadily worse.** There have been more U.S.-based jihadist terror cases in 2015 than in any full year since 9/11. In July alone, a terrorist murdered U.S. service members in Chattanooga, and authorities arrested extremists seeking to live-stream a terrorist attack on a college campus and planning to kill U.S. vacationers on the beaches of Florida. The number of U.S. terrorist cases involving homegrown violent jihadists has gone from 38 in July 2010 to 122 today—a three-fold increase in just five years.
- Islamist terrorists are intent on killing law enforcement and American troops, in addition to innocent civilians.** As we saw in Chattanooga, radicals are increasingly targeting men and women in uniform here in the United States. Since early 2014, the majority of Islamist terror plots on U.S. soil have featured plans to kill police or U.S. soldiers.
- Globally, ISIS is fueling the Islamist terror wildfire—and at unprecedented speed.** As of the end of July, the group has inspired or directed 55 terrorist plots/attacks against Western targets,

including 14 in the United States. There have been nearly twice as many ISIS-linked terror plots against the West this year (35) as there were in all of 2014 (20).

- **America and its overseas partners have largely failed to rollback the ISIS terror safe haven.** Despite a year of airstrikes, U.S. intelligence agencies have reportedly concluded that the group is no weaker than it was before and can still muster 20,000 to 30,000 foot soldiers. ISIS has drawn fighters from more than 100 countries, and “dozens” of Americans are currently believed to be embedded in its ranks. These foreign fighters continue to recruit online and across borders to inspire new generations of extremists to join them overseas and to conduct attacks in their home countries.

HOMEGROWN ISLAMIST EXTREMISM

The terror threat level in the U.S. homeland is as high as it's ever been.

By the numbers

- Since September 11, 2001, there have been 122 U.S. terrorist cases involving homegrown violent jihadists. Over 80 percent of these cases—which include plotted attacks and attempts to join foreign terrorist organizations—have occurred or been disrupted since 2009.¹
- Authorities have arrested or charged at least 48 individuals in the United States this year – 63 since 2014 – in ISIS-related cases. The cases involve individuals: plotting attacks; attempting to travel to join ISIS overseas; sending money, equipment and weapons to terrorists; falsifying statements to federal authorities; and failing to report a felony.²
- FBI Director James Comey has said authorities have [hundreds](#) of open investigations of potential ISIS-inspired extremists that cover all 56 of the bureau’s field offices in all 50 states. He stated there may be hundreds or [thousands](#) of Americans who are taking in recruitment propaganda over social media applications: “It’s like the devil sitting on their shoulders, saying ‘kill, kill, kill.’”

Recent Developments

- [July 29](#): Arafat Nagi, 44, was arrested after he attempted to travel to join ISIS and recruit individuals in the Lackawanna, New York area to join the group.
- [July 16](#): Muhammad Youssef Abdulazeez, 24, attacked two military facilities in Chattanooga, Tennessee, killing four Marines and a Navy sailor. Abdulazeez died from gunshot wounds. Investigators have [discovered](#) that he possessed the sermons of Islamist extremist cleric Anwar al Awlaki, who was the external operations leader for al Qaeda’s affiliate in Yemen before being eliminated in 2011.
- [July 9](#): FBI Director Comey announced that a recent string of FBI arrests had “disrupted efforts to kill people likely in connection with July 4th.”

¹ This figure is based on open-source data compiled by the Congressional Research Service and the Majority Staff of the Homeland Security Committee.

² This figure is based on open-source data compiled by the Majority Staff of the Homeland Security Committee.

- [July 4](#): As noted in the previous section, ISIS supporter Alexander Ciccolo, 23, was arrested in the Boston, Massachusetts area following his purchases of multiple weapons and material for building pressure cooker bombs. He initially expressed his interest in targeting military and law enforcement personnel, and then later discussed targeting civilians at a university.

TERROR PLOTS AGAINST THE WEST

Globally, ISIS is fueling the Islamist terror wildfire—and at unprecedented speed.

By the numbers

- Since early 2014, there have been 55 planned or executed ISIS-linked terror plots against Western targets, including 14 inside in the United States.³
- There have been nearly twice as many ISIS-linked plots against Western targets in the first seven months of this year (35) than in all of 2014 (20).⁴

Recent Developments

- [July 28](#): Harlem Suarez, a 23-year-old resident of Key West, Florida, was arrested after attempting to construct a remotely detonated bomb to be emplaced on a public beach in Key West. Suarez expressed Islamist extremist sympathies and his support for ISIS on Facebook.
- [July 22](#): Italian authorities arrested a Tunisian and a Pakistani for threatening to attack an Italian military base that hosts U.S. Air Force troops. The two suspects also intended to travel to Syria to join ISIS.
- [July 21](#): British citizen Junead Khan was charged in connection with a plot to attack American service members stationed in the United Kingdom. Khan and his uncle planned to join ISIS in Syria.
- [July 16](#): Muhammad Youssef Abdulazeez, 24, attacked two military facilities in Chattanooga, Tennessee, killing four Marines and a Navy sailor. Abdulazeez died from gunshot wounds. Investigators have [discovered](#) that he possessed the sermons of Islamist extremist cleric Anwar al Awlaki, who was the external operations leader for al Qaeda's affiliate in Yemen before being eliminated in 2011.
- [July 16](#): French authorities arrested three ISIS-inspired individuals, including one reportedly in communication with and directed by an ISIS member in Syria, for plotting to behead military personnel at a training center in southern France.
- [July 11](#): Authorities in Kosovo have arrested five ISIS-linked individuals in connection with a plot to poison the water supply in the country's capital.
- [July 11](#): ISIS claimed credit for a car bombing that targeted Italy's consulate in Cairo, Egypt.

³ This figure is based on open-source data compiled by the Majority Staff of the Homeland Security Committee.

⁴ This figure is based on open-source data compiled by the Majority Staff of the Homeland Security Committee.

- [July 4](#): ISIS supporter Alexander Ciccolo, 23, was arrested in the Boston, Massachusetts area following his purchases of multiple weapons and material for building pressure cooker bombs. He initially expressed his interest in targeting military and law enforcement personnel, and then later discussed targeting civilians at a university.
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FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Undeterred by airstrikes, foreign fighters continue to pour into the conflict zone in Syria and Iraq, bolstering ISIS and representing a potential threat to their home countries—including America—upon return.

By the numbers

- More than [25,000 fighters](#) from 100 countries have traveled to Syria and Iraq to join extremists—the largest convergence of Islamist terrorists in world history.
- Approximately [4,500](#) Western fighters have traveled to Syria and Iraq.⁵
- An estimated [550](#) Western women have traveled to the conflict zone.
- More than [250 Americans](#) are estimated to have traveled – or attempted to travel – to Syria to fight. [Several dozen](#) are currently believed to be fighting with ISIS.
- Around [40 American fighters](#) who traveled to Syria have returned to the United States as of March 2015, and several have been arrested on terror charges.
- In addition to fighters joining Sunni extremist groups like ISIS and Jabhat al Nusrah in Syria, an estimated [5,000-7,000](#) Lebanese Hezbollah members and other Shi'a militants are fighting alongside the Bashar al Assad regime.

Recent Developments

- [July 29](#): As noted in the previous section, Arafat Nagi, 44, was arrested after he attempted to travel to join ISIS and recruit individuals in the Lackawanna, New York area to join the group.
- [July 7](#): Reports continue to emerge that ISIS is smuggling operatives into Europe on migrant boats filled with refugees fleeing the war in Syria and instability in North Africa.

FOREIGN JIHADIST NETWORKS & SAFE HAVENS

⁵ National Counterterrorism Center Deputy Director John Mulligan, testimony before the House Homeland Security Committee, June 3, 2015.

Islamist terror groups are developing deeper roots across the Middle East and North Africa—and are expanding their influence by radicalizing new recruits online and across borders.

By the numbers

- ISIS now has a direct presence, affiliates, or groups pledging support in at least 18 countries or territories, including Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Lebanon, Nigeria, the Palestinian territories (Gaza), Pakistan, Philippines, Russia (North Caucasus region), Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen.⁶
- ISIS controls 12 cities and towns in Iraq and 10 more in Syria as of mid-July.⁷

Recent Developments

- ISIS Safe Haven in Syria and Iraq
 - U.S. intelligence agencies reportedly [have concluded](#) that, despite nearly 12 months of airstrikes, ISIS is no weaker than it was a year ago.
 - Turkey has approved the use of Incirlik Air Base by American forces for the purpose of launching airstrikes against ISIS. Turkish officials also announced the intent to establish a “[safe zone](#)” in a stretch of Syrian territory along the Turkish border. However, Obama Administration officials [clarified](#) that this “will not include the imposition of a no-fly zone” and that “the goal is to establish an [ISIL-free zone](#).” It is [unclear](#) exactly what territory is being considered for this goal, what forces will be responsible for clearing and holding it, or the extent to which it would be defended from the Assad regime.
 - ISIS has maintained control of [Ramadi](#), the capital of Iraq’s largely Sunni-populated Anbar province along the Syrian border, after seizing it in May. It has been preparing to [defend](#) the area by digging trenches and emplacing improvised explosive devices, among other tactics. U.S.-led forces have been targeting ISIS assets in the area, [including](#) factories for building car bombs. Iraqi security forces supported by the U.S.-led coalition are attempting to [isolate](#) Ramadi in order to set the conditions for clearing ISIS from the city. Iranian-directed Shi’a militias and allied fighters have [focused](#) their operations on surrounding ISIS-controlled Fallujah, which lies 40 miles east of Ramadi.
 - ISIS launched counter-attacks against Syrian Kurdish forces and an offensive against Assad regime forces in northeast Syria, following its loss of the key Syrian border town of [Tel Abyad](#) to Syrian Kurdish and Free Syrian Army-linked forces in June,
- Emerging ISIS Safe Havens and Affiliates
 - ISIS-affiliated militants have been consolidating control in and around Sirte, Libya. ISIS was recently pushed out of the coastal city of [Darnah](#), which was at one point the [top source](#) of foreign fighters for al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), ISIS’s predecessor. An estimated [3,000 fighters](#)

⁶ Data compiled by the Majority Staff of the Homeland Security Committee.

⁷ These figures are derived from assessments of territorial control conducted by the Institute for the Study of War.

in Libya are aligned with ISIS. ISIS has reportedly sent fighters in Libya [funding and military trainers](#) over the last several months. The terrorists who separately attacked the National Bardo Museum and a coastal resort in Tunisia this year reportedly attended [training camps](#) in Libya. The Tunisian government estimates that [up to 1,000](#) of its citizens are fighting or training in Libya.

- ISIS formally accepted a pledge of allegiance from followers in Russia's North [Caucasus](#) region. As many as [2,500](#) fighters from this region have joined extremists in Syria and Iraq.
- Al Qaeda Safe Havens and Affiliates
 - Al Qaeda's affiliate in Syria, Jabhat al Nusra, is a prominent force in an anti-Assad regime coalition [supported](#) by Qatar, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. That coalition recently [seized](#) several villages in northwest Syria adjacent to the Assad regime's traditional stronghold and earlier this year captured [Idlib](#).
 - Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has been forging [alliances](#) with and co-opting local Sunni tribes in southern Yemen since it defeated Yemeni security forces there in April. It is more recently reported to be [assisting](#) local Saudi-backed militias assist in their fight against the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels.
 - AQAP military [commander](#) Qasim al Raymi [released](#) his first statement since being [named](#) the leader of the group in June. Raymi pledged allegiance to al Qaeda leader Ayman al Zawahiri and called for attacks against American interests. AQAP's previous leader Nasir al Wuhayshi was [killed](#) in a targeted [strike](#) in Yemen last month. Wuhayshi served as deputy to Zawahiri and helped build AQAP following a 2006 prison break.
 - A July 8 [strike](#) eliminated longtime senior al Qaeda leader Muhsin al Fadhli, who led a network of veteran al Qaeda operatives in Syria plotting external attacks (also known as the Khorasan Group).

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

ISIS aggressively exploits social media in order to recruit fighters, disseminate propaganda, and trigger attacks in the West.

- FBI Director Comey [said](#) recently "ISIL's M.O. is they broadcast on Twitter, get people to follow them, then move them to Twitter direct messaging while they evaluate whether they're a potential liaison either to travel or to kill where they are."
- Attorney General Loretta Lynch said ISIS has attracted more than [20,000](#) English-language followers on Twitter.
- ISIS has pushed out more than [1,700](#) "[products](#)," including videos, photographic reports, and magazines, over social media through the first five months of this year.⁸

⁸ National Counterterrorism Center Deputy Director John Mulligan, testimony before the House Homeland Security Committee, June 3, 2015.

- There are an estimated [200,000](#) pro-ISIS messages posted on Twitter every day.
- ISIS released the 10th issue of its English-language magazine “Dabiq” in July, urging its followers to launch attacks in the West. It also [praises](#) the ISIS-connected Frenchman who beheaded his boss and attacked a chemical company and [calls on](#) members of the Afghan Taliban to join its ranks. The 9th issue of the magazine was released in May. It included articles praising the attackers who targeted the Garland, Texas, cartoon contest, exhorting followers to commit terrorist acts in the United States and other Western countries, and touting the “benefits” it offers people living in its territory.

Released Guantanamo Bay extremists continue to return to the fight, yet the Obama Administration is formulating a broader plan to completely shutter the facility by releasing or transferring the remainder of its detainees.

- In July, Belgium [arrested](#) two former Guantanamo Bay detainees who were suspected of recruiting for ISIS. Almost [30 percent](#) of released detainees from Guantanamo are known or suspected to have returned to the battlefield.
- Deputy National Security Advisor Lisa Monaco [said](#) recently that bringing some Guantanamo Bay detainees to American soil is the “only way we’re going to be able to close” the facility and “that’s the way we’re gonna do it.”
- The White House has [said](#) the Administration is close to sending Congress a plan for emptying and closing the facility.

The recent nuclear agreement with Iran is set to ease sanctions on the world’s leading state sponsor of terror and include hundreds of billions of dollars in economic relief as well as loosened restrictions on weapons trafficking.

- The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Quds Force (IRGC-QF), which oversees Iran’s global terror networks, and its top commander Qassem Suleimani will receive sanctions relief under the terms of the deal. The IRGC-QF was behind a foiled 2011 [plot](#) to assassinate the Saudi ambassador in what would have been a mass-casualty attack in Washington, DC. The IRGC-QF is also responsible for killing an [estimated](#) 500 American service members in its role overseeing Iran’s terror operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The previous IRGC-QF commander Ahmad Vahidi, who is tied to the 1993 bombing of the AMIA Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, Argentina, will [also](#) receive sanctions relief.
- Officials in Bahrain announced last week they had [disrupted](#) an Iranian-directed plot to smuggle C4 explosives and automatic weapons into their country, which hosts the U.S. Navy’s Fifth Fleet. They said one of the suspects involved received training at an IRGC camp in Iran. A preliminary investigation of a subsequent attack on security forces in Bahrain [concluded](#) that the explosives materials used were similar to those seized in previous Iranian-linked smuggling plots. A senior Iranian official [involved](#) in the nuclear negotiations recently said his country would “provide weapons to whomever and whenever it considers appropriate.”