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Letter dated 15 January 2019 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions [1267 \(1999\)](#), [1989 \(2011\)](#) and [2253 \(2015\)](#) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the twenty-third report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team pursuant to resolutions [1526 \(2004\)](#) and [2253 \(2015\)](#), which was submitted to the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions [1267 \(1999\)](#), [1989 \(2011\)](#) and [2253 \(2015\)](#) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, in accordance with paragraph (a) of annex I to resolution [2368 \(2017\)](#).

I should be grateful if the present letter and the report could be brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(Signed) Dian Triansyah **Djani**
Chair

Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions [1267 \(1999\)](#), [1989 \(2011\)](#) and [2253 \(2015\)](#) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities



Letter dated 27 December 2018 from the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team in accordance with paragraph (a) of annex I to resolution 2368 (2017) addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities

I have the honour to refer to paragraph (a) of annex I to resolution 2368 (2017), by which the Security Council requested the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team to submit in writing, comprehensive, independent reports to the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, every six months, the first by 31 December 2017.

I therefore transmit to you the Monitoring Team's twenty-third comprehensive report, pursuant to annex I to resolution 2368 (2017). The Monitoring Team notes that the document of reference is the English original.

(Signed) Edmund **Fitton-Brown**
Coordinator
Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team

Twenty-third report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2368 (2017) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities

Summary

International terrorism continues to be a profound global security concern of Member States. Between July and December 2018, Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic suffered more attacks associated with international terrorist groups than any other countries. These were primarily the work of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL),^a although local affiliates of Al-Qaida (QDe.004) were more active in the north-west of the Syrian Arab Republic. Globally, ISIL and its affiliates continue to pose the main and best-resourced international terrorist threat, while Al-Qaida remains resilient and active in many regions and retains the ambition to project itself more internationally. Although the level of inspired terrorist activity remains high, the number of successful attacks associated with ISIL fell during the reporting period.

ISIL has not yet been defeated in the Syrian Arab Republic, but it remains under intense military pressure in its residual territorial stronghold in the east of the country. It has shown a determination to resist and the capability to counter-attack. Member States reported the continuing evolution of ISIL from a territorial entity back into a covert network, a process that is more advanced in Iraq (where ISIL was militarily defeated in 2017) than in the Syrian Arab Republic. ISIL is still led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi,^b with a small, dispersed, delegated leadership group, which is directing some fighters to return to Iraq to join the network there. This network is being established at the provincial level with a cellular structure mirroring the key functions covered by the central leadership. The objective is to survive, consolidate and resurge in the core area. If successful, ISIL may be expected to revive its focus on external terrorist operations, but for now the ISIL core lacks the capability to direct international attacks.

The foreign terrorist fighter issue remains acute, although the flow of returnees and relocators from the ISIL core has been slower than expected. Many are still fighting, while others are in various stages of detention, processing, transit, relocation and return. Most foreign terrorist fighters in other conflict zones come from within those regions, rather than being returnees from the ISIL core.

Member States remain concerned also about the situation in Afghanistan, the southern Philippines, Yemen, Somalia, Libya, the Lake Chad basin and the Sahel. The underlying drivers of global terrorism are all still present, and the risk remains of an Al-Qaida resurgence or the emergence of some new mutation or brand. The recent abatement in directed international terrorist attacks cannot be relied upon to last.

The Monitoring Team enquired about instances of overlap between international terrorism and transnational organized crime. The extent of this overlap varies among regions, theatres and groups. Despite limited evidence of a systemic nexus of ISIL or Al-Qaida with transnational organized crime, the Monitoring Team did learn of instances of overlap between their affiliates and cross-border criminal activity, the most apparent of which were in the Sahel and neighbouring parts of Africa.

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

^b Listed as Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri al-Samarrai (QDi.299).

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I. Overview of the threat

A. Status of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

1. The military campaigns against Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) continued in the Syrian Arab Republic during the second half of 2018. As of year-end, the group's only territorial holding is a small pocket in the Middle Euphrates River valley near the Iraqi border, around the town of Hajin. ISIL in this area has been under intense military pressure and suffered heavy casualties but has shown resilience and even a propensity to counter-attack when possible.

2. Still under Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi,¹ the ISIL core leadership has been reduced to a dispersed group, the few members of which are each responsible for multiple tasks. These include the functions judged essential to the survival of the ISIL covert network: finance, logistics, military, intelligence, security, doctrine and media.² ISIL media production fell during the course of 2018, as did the quality of its output and the reliability of its claims of responsibility for attacks.

3. The transition of ISIL into a covert network is well advanced in Iraq. It is in a phase of transition, adaptation and consolidation, seeking to create the conditions for a resurgence. It is prioritizing local operations and poses a major threat in Iraq, carrying out frequent attacks and seeking to assassinate official and civilian targets, so as to intimidate and weaken its enemies and provoke instability.³

4. In Iraq, ISIL has already started to organize cells at the provincial level, identifying suitable personnel and locations for training and military manufacturing, and replicating key leadership functions. While some funding is available from the centre, provincial networks must plan to become financially self-sufficient. This approach entails kidnapping for ransom and extortion and envisages benefiting from reconstruction funds when they materialize.⁴

5. There is currently a net flow of ISIL fighters from the Syrian Arab Republic to reinforce the emerging network in Iraq. Nevertheless, some Member States expect that the Syrian network will, over time, take a similar shape to that in Iraq. In both countries, ISIL will try to portray itself as a champion of marginalized communities. Attacks on Shi'a targets are aimed at stoking sectarian tension. ISIL will attempt to cause or aggravate failings of stabilization, reconstruction, service provision and detainee-handling in order to bolster support for its rejectionist approach. Its centre of gravity is expected to remain in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic.

B. Developing global threat from Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Al-Qaida

6. There was a substantial reduction in global external attacks associated with ISIL in 2018 as compared with 2017. The number of successfully directed attacks collapsed relative to the most intense period of ISIL external operational activity in 2015–2016. While these trends represent an improvement in global security, Member States are concerned at the unpredictable nature of inspired attacks and the stated determination of ISIL leadership to continue to inspire and instigate such attacks globally.

¹ Listed as Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri al-Samarrai (QDi.299).

² Member State information.

³ Member State information.

⁴ Member State information.

7. The ISIL leadership retains centralized control over what remains a global organization. It communicates and provides resources to its affiliates, albeit at a reduced level. This is likely to continue because of the importance to ISIL of demonstrating relevance and strength and being able to claim leadership of a “global caliphate”. If ISIL regains access to permissive space and reinvests in its external attack-planning capability, directed attacks will revive.⁵

8. The attrition of key leadership and operational personnel has also been a factor in the fall in global external attacks and plots. Damage to the ISIL brand may be another way in which its progressive military defeat has reduced its capacity to project an international threat. At the same time, ISIL continues to be associated with more terrorist activity than any competitor group, so it continues to pose by far the most significant threat. It retains an interest in attacking aviation and in the use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials. It is also the group most likely to execute a large-scale, complex attack in the near future.⁶ Meanwhile, foreign terrorist fighters leaving the conflict zone, or older returnees becoming active again on release from prison or for other reasons, will increase the threat.

9. Member States estimate the number of ISIL militants active in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic at between 14,000 and 18,000, including up to 3,000 foreign terrorist fighters. Approximately 2,000 foreign terrorist fighters are also detained in the two countries, along with a larger number of dependants. One Member State estimates that 30 per cent of foreign terrorist fighters have left the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq for various countries, usually their countries of origin. Some try to enter those countries under the guise of refugees and labour migrants, seeking to conceal themselves among the civilian population.

10. There has not been a substantial relocation of veterans of the core conflict zone in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic to other theatres of conflict. The vast majority of those who join regional affiliates come from within that region. Some “frustrated travellers”, who have been unable to reach the core conflict zone, have been redirected elsewhere or gone at their own initiative, sometimes after a prolonged period in a transit location. The total numbers of foreign terrorist fighters joining affiliates of ISIL and Al-Qaida are small compared with those who gravitated towards the ISIL core.⁷

11. Al-Qaida could take advantage of the lull in ISIL strategic terrorist activity by mounting a major attack of its own. ISIL has suffered significant military setbacks in its core area, in northern Afghanistan and in the southern Philippines. Al-Qaida is stronger than ISIL in some regions. Its leadership appears to be growing more ambitious: Aiman Muhammed Rabi al-Zawahiri (QDi.006) communicated 12 times in 2018, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi only twice.

12. One Member State estimates the Al-Qaida-aligned Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)⁸ to have approximately 20,000 fighters in Idlib province, making it much stronger than the more globally minded Al-Qaida-aligned Hurras al-Deen, or the approximately 500 ISIL fighters in Idlib. HTS also has heavy weapons at its disposal, along with significant numbers of foreign terrorist fighters.

13. On a global level, Member States expect to see militants move between groups. It is possible that ISIL foreign terrorist fighters will choose to join Al-Qaida affiliates in areas where they are the dominant brand. There is a concomitant risk of Al-Qaida growing stronger, or of the emergence of new coalitions or mutations.

⁵ Member State information.

⁶ Member State information.

⁷ Member State information.

⁸ Listed as Al-Nusrah Front for the People of the Levant (QDe.137).

II. Regional trends

A. Levant

14. ISIL territorial losses have forced the group to abandon notions of controlling a geographical so-called “caliphate” for the near future. Nevertheless, it retains and continues to advance this aspiration through statements by ISIL leadership and online propaganda. The remaining strength of ISIL in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq is estimated by Member States to be in the range of 14,000 to 18,000 militants, including as many as 3,000 foreign terrorist fighters. Some estimates put the number of foreign terrorist fighters under arrest at approximately 1,000 in Iraq and just under 1,000 (plus more than 500 dependants) in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic. Many Member States are struggling to ascertain the nationality of these detainees.

15. Assessments of the number of armed ISIL fighters remaining in Iraq vary. One Member State estimated that approximately 3,000 armed ISIL fighters are active; other Member States believe that the number of fighters that remain is much larger. Member States note that the ongoing threat in Iraq emanates from both ISIL remnants within the country and fighters crossing the border from the Syrian Arab Republic, in particular into the deserts in Al-Anbar and Ninawa, where they have established safe havens. In northern Iraq in mid-2018, ISIL successfully operated checkpoints from which it ambushed Iraqi forces operating in the area. In Diyala and Salah al-Din provinces, ISIL cells are reported to be conducting surveillance activities with small groups of fighters.

16. ISIL cells in Iraq engage in activities aimed at undermining government authority, creating a sense of lawlessness, hampering societal reconciliation and increasing the financial burden of reconstruction and counter-terrorism. Such activities include kidnapping for ransom, targeted assassinations of local leaders and attacks against government utilities and services.

17. Other factors driving potential radicalization include the large number of internally displaced persons. ISIL cells have been reported to seek access to internally displaced persons camps for indoctrination and recruitment, especially in camps of those expelled from Diyala, Salah al-Din and Ninawa. Iraqi prisons and holding facilities, severely overloaded with detainees, are also highlighted as a source for radicalization.

18. In the Syrian Arab Republic, the only remaining ISIL territorial holding is a small pocket in the Middle Euphrates River valley near the Iraqi border, around the town of Hajin. The number of fighters in the Hajin area is estimated to be between 3,000 and 4,000, with Iraqi fighters comprising the bulk of ISIL ranks. Continued military pressure in the eastern Syrian Arab Republic is responsible for foreign terrorist fighters attempting to flee north towards Turkey. In the process, however, many are detained, continually adding to the numbers cited above. Others, mainly from the Iraqi contingent, are crossing the border in small groups and reconstituting in cells within Iraq.

19. Al-Qaida affiliated groups in the Syrian Arab Republic continue to pose a substantial threat. HTS remains the largest terrorist group in the country. Another Al-Qaida affiliated group, Hurras Al-Deen, is steadily growing and attracting fighters disillusioned with HTS. The group’s leadership has close historic ties to Aiman al-Zawahiri and his inner circle. In parallel, HTS and its core component, Al-Nusrah Front for the People of the Levant (ANF) (QDe.137), still have foreign terrorist fighters and maintain communications with the Al-Qaida core. Member States assess that Al-Qaida is likely to focus on recruiting disillusioned ISIL members into Hurras Al-Deen, because the newly established Al-Qaida arm may be better positioned than

others to attract new members. Such concerns were evident when ISIL labelled Hurras Al-Deen as “guardians of polytheism” and encouraged attacks on them.⁹

20. ISIL is believed to be preserving its financial reserves in several ways, including through bulk storage of cash in both Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. Some cash is also thought to have been smuggled into neighbouring countries for safekeeping. A third means of protecting its reserves is assessed to be through investment in legitimate businesses. ISIL retains occasional access to oil-producing areas in the eastern Syrian Arab Republic, depending upon fluctuations in the military campaign, and still extracts some oil directly by basic methods. More often, it extorts funds from local extraction. One Member State described ISIL financial assets as having been largely hidden from view, with a strategic intent still focused on larger-scale attacks once the opportunity re-emerges.

B. Arabian Peninsula

21. Member States assess that Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) (QDe.129) is confined to Yemen, where it is under sustained pressure from military strikes against many of its leaders. Notwithstanding this pressure, AQAP remains resilient, with leadership and expertise transferred to its ranks. AQAP is assessed to have recovered from the losses, reorganized and managed to shelter its elements among local communities.¹⁰ The group is currently targeting both Yemeni security officials in Shabwah and Abyan Governorates and Arab coalition Security Belt Forces in Abyan Governorate, in addition to instigating clashes with tribal elite forces in Shabwah and Hadramawt Governorates. The success of AQAP is manifested in the level of trust and sense of mutual interest that it has built with key urban, tribal and youth constituencies and leaders.

22. Information from Member States in the region indicates that AQAP has been expelled from some of its long-time strongholds in the Markhah district of western Shabwah and redeployed to Bayda’ Governorate. Nevertheless, the group has weathered this setback and remains aggressive, sustaining a campaign of guerrilla warfare and strategic retreats and conducting bombing operations and assassinations, especially the targeting of government officials. AQAP still wants to expand its terrorist operations to other countries, but this ambition may be frustrated by current conditions in Yemen and clashes among insurrectionist militias. Financial difficulties faced by AQAP are also lowering its profile, forcing it to restrict itself mainly to indirect clashes with the Arab coalition, notably in the southern governorates.

23. AQAP maintains a presence in the port of Mukalla, as well as other areas of Hadramawt Governorate. Control of Sana’a by the Houthis militia has helped AQAP to create alliances with local tribes and to gain support in southern Yemen for its self-proclaimed role in fighting the Houthis. The group operates locally under the name “Ansar al-Sharia” in Hadramawt valley, and in Abyan, Lahij, Shabwah, Al-Bayda’ and Ma’rib Governorates. Some Member States report that the Houthis have been in coordination with AQAP and ISIL in Yemen, seeking tactical accommodation in certain areas where their interests coincide.¹¹

24. Member State information suggests that AQAP maintains two wings: one targeting enemies within local communities, the other – under the guidance of Qasim

⁹ “ISIL calls for attacks against Hurras Al-Deen”, *Al-Naba’*, issue 129, published on Telegram on 27 April 2018. This was the first public instance of ISIL addressing Hurras Al-Deen; the group called on Muslims to “fight them for their disbelief in Allah”.

¹⁰ Member State information.

¹¹ Member State information.

Mohamed Mahdi al-Rimi (QDi.282) – targeting Western and regional interests and tasked with human and technical infiltration of the Arab coalition in Yemen.

25. Member States assess that the current priority of AQAP is to restructure itself and establish an effective intelligence wing composed mainly of new members and veterans of the group. These efforts have also seen the launch of a new series of leaflets called “Asrar wa Akhtar” (Secrets and risks), aimed at providing instruction on covert operations and protective measures to avoid infiltration. In addition, AQAP imposed on its fighters several new security measures. For instance, telephone communications have been restricted unless there is authorization from the leadership; and any use of smartphones is strictly prohibited. Non-compliance with these measures is subject to disciplinary action.¹²

26. AQAP continued its cooperation with other affiliates. A joint statement by AQAP and Harakat Al-Shabaab Al-Mujaahidiin (Al-Shabaab) (SOe.001) indicated strong links between the two groups in the trade of weapons and equipment through the Red Sea into Al-Shabaab-controlled territories in Somalia. The trade is conducted by cells that have connections to trafficking and smuggling networks in both countries.¹³

27. Member States reported that the Al-Qaida core had issued a directive to define the areas of operation of its affiliates and that this had led to a reduction of AQAP activity outside Yemen. Meanwhile, command and control of the group inside Yemen is weak, and it struggles to communicate effectively. The group continues to encourage lone actor attacks in the West. Despite a mutual non-interference understanding which had existed between AQAP and ISIL in Yemen since 2014, and despite deputy leader Khalid Omar Batarfi’s (not listed) statement in June 2018 that the relationship of AQAP with other militant groups in Yemen was in good order, local conflict broke out on July 2018 in the Yakla’ and Qayfah areas of Al-Bayda Governorate. Following the incident and after having expelled ISIL from most of its strongholds in Al-Bayda, AQAP, under the name “Ansar al-Sharia”, issued a statement urging a resumption of cooperation to allow passage of fighters of either group through the other’s territories.¹⁴

28. Member States assess that ISIL in Yemen now has only a few mobile training camps and a dwindling number of fighters in the whole of Yemen, and that, under the leadership of Abu Shaker al-Muhajer (not listed), the successor of Muhammad Qan’an al-Saya’ri (believed killed), ISIL is concentrated in the Thahra area of Jawf Governorate.¹⁵ It is also struggling to keep a foothold on the Qayfah front in Al-Bayda. ISIL activities in Al-Bayda now consist mainly of protecting the group’s leaders and their family members. The group maintains four brigades of 60 members each. Relatively few foreign terrorist fighters are making their way to Yemen to join ISIL, or indeed AQAP.

29. In financing its operations in Yemen, ISIL depends on external support. Cash is reportedly smuggled via intermediaries through the Syrian Arab Republic to neighbouring Gulf countries, then into Yemen. The group’s finance chief, Sanad Al-Jazrawi (not listed), often travels to the city of Ghaydah in Mahrah Governorate to receive payments. Funds are sometimes brought in by new members, or are smuggled into Yemen by sea to Hudaydah and the coastal strip.¹⁶

¹² Member State information.

¹³ Member State information.

¹⁴ Member State information.

¹⁵ Member State information.

¹⁶ Member State information.

C. Africa

1. North Africa

30. ISIL in Libya continues to represent a substantial threat, both locally and to neighbouring countries. During the reporting period, some Member States assessed a decrease in the number of ISIL fighters in Libya. Nevertheless, the area of operation of ISIL expanded along the coast between Ajdabiya and Tripoli, and southwards towards Fuqaha' and Tazirbu. This signified increased activity and geographical dispersal. The group increasingly resorts to hit-and-run operations out of several points of concentration in Sabha and Jufrah Governorates near the rugged Haruj area, and in Kufrah Governorate.¹⁷ ISIL frequently raided and held inner-town police stations in shows of strength and to secure arms. This tactic was repeated in Uqayla', Zlitan, Fuqaha' and Tazirbu.¹⁸

31. ISIL carried out major attacks against the National Oil Corporation headquarters in Tripoli in September and against the Mabruk oil field in November 2018. The group has announced that it regards oil facilities and foreign companies in Libya as legitimate targets for attack.¹⁹

32. ISIL carried out kidnapping for ransom operations against locals in Sabha, Jufrah and Kufrah. This is a growing source of income for the group.²⁰ ISIL kidnapped notable individuals on a raid in Fuqaha', Jufrah's largest city, in October 2018 and offered to release the abductees in exchange for the release of two of its leaders captured by the Libyan National Army.²¹ In other setbacks to its leadership, Special Deterrence Forces affiliated to the Government of National Accord in Tripoli captured Abdelhakim al-Mashout (not listed), a former member of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (QDe.011), who returned to Libya after having fought with ISIL in the Syrian Arab Republic.²²

33. While ISIL remains resilient, Al-Qaida in eastern Libya suffered a setback with the loss of Darnah. The Libyan National Army announced the death of Abd al-Ghaffar Mansour al-Tashani, military commander of Darnah Mujahideen Shura Council,²³ as well as the capture of over 200 of its members, including Merai Abdefattah Khalil Zoghbi (QDi.223).

34. In Tunisia, Uqbah ibn Nafi' Battalion, affiliated to Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) (QDe.014), carried out two major attacks during the reporting period: one against a patrol of the national guard in Jendouba Governorate in July 2018, and another targeting a military convoy in the Chambi Mountain area in October. Despite these attacks, it is believed that the group employs only about 50 fighters, with activities limited to the mountainous areas of Kasserine and Jendouba.²⁴ The weakened status of the group follows the death of most of its leaders, including Khalid Al-Shayib and Murad Al-Gharsalli.²⁵ Ansar al-Shari'a in Tunisia (QDe.143) was inactive during the reporting period. Remnants of its forces may have moved on to Libya under pressure from a sustained military campaign.²⁶ One Member State

¹⁷ Member State information.

¹⁸ Member State information.

¹⁹ Member State information.

²⁰ Member State information.

²¹ Member State information.

²² Member State information.

²³ A rebranding of Ansar al Charia Darnah (QDe.145).

²⁴ Member State information.

²⁵ Member State information.

²⁶ Member State information.

mentioned that there might still be a relatively inactive group of approximately 30 fighters affiliated to ISIL in the mountainous region.

35. Military operations in Sinai continued against Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, which pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in November 2014. Member States assess no significant change in the number of fighters affiliated to the group from the previous reporting period (see [S/2018/705](#), para. 33).

2. West Africa

36. Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM) (QDe.159) remains the leading and most dangerous terrorist group in the Sahel, as well as one of the most successful Al-Qaida affiliates. JNIM is a coalition comprised of an estimated 100 to 150 combatants from Ansar Eddine (QDe.135), 50 to 100 from the Emirate of Timbuktu (the Sahara branch of AQIM (QDe.014)), 50 to 80 from Al Mourabitoun (QDe.141) and approximately 500 from Katibat Macina (the former Macina Liberation Front).²⁷ The Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) operates in the Sahel region as well, with an estimated 100 to 200 fighters in Ménaka, Ansongo, Gourma and Tillabéri.²⁸ ISGS and JNIM have joined efforts in at least three recent attacks.²⁹

37. Iyad Ag Ghali (QDi.316) currently leads JNIM. His deputy, Djamel Akkacha (aka Yahia Abou el Hammam) (QDi.313) heads operations and planned the 2018 attacks in Ouagadougou, Timbuktu, Sévaré and Ber.³⁰ Both leaders appeared in a propaganda video on 8 November 2018, together with the leader of Katibat Macina, Amadou Koufa, who was reported killed³¹ on 23 November 2018. AQIM regional leader Abdelmalek Droukdel (QDi.232), who ensures liaison with the Al-Qaida core, is consulted on all strategic decisions.³²

38. Katibat Macina has developed into an ethnic-based insurgency in central Mali, with the support of the Emirate of Timbuktu and Ansar Eddine.³³ Koufa's death has disrupted the group, but this may prove temporary unless followed by further counter-terrorism action.³⁴ In Burkina Faso, Ansarul Islam's expanding insurgency is concerning to Member States. Its leader, Jafar Dicko (not listed), claims independence, but his group received training from Ansar Eddine and operational support from Katibat Macina.³⁵ With 1,000 fighters from the Fulani ethnic group ensuring theatre continuity in Macina, Gourma and Burkina Faso, counter-insurgency is a significant challenge that requires more resources than counter-terrorism.³⁶

39. JNIM maintains an asymmetric strategy involving three types of attacks: simple attacks with the use of small arms or improvised explosive devices, which occur frequently; more elaborate attacks combining small arms and improvised explosive devices, which are less frequent; and complex attacks with many combatants, indirect fire and several improvised explosive devices, such as the one in Ber on 27 October 2018, for which JNIM planning capabilities were required.³⁷

40. Smuggling and related transnational criminal activities generate financial resources for terrorist groups in the Sahel. Al Mourabitoun focuses on kidnapping for

²⁷ Member State information.

²⁸ Member State information.

²⁹ Member State information.

³⁰ Member State information.

³¹ Member State information.

³² Member State information.

³³ Member State information.

³⁴ Member State information.

³⁵ Member State information.

³⁶ Member State information.

³⁷ Member State information.

ransom and the trafficking of narcotics, weapons and gasoline.³⁸ Al-Mansour Ag al-Kassam, the leader of Katibat Gourma who was killed in October 2018 and a key logistician for Ansar Eddine, was also a vehicle smuggler.³⁹ Sultan Ould Badi (not listed), who surrendered to Algerian authorities in August 2018, was involved in illegal mining and the smuggling of automobile spare parts to support ISGS.⁴⁰ Finally, owing to the security situation in Libya, people smugglers are now forced to use routes through territories under terrorist control and are subject to taxation.⁴¹

41. The Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), with 1,500 to 3,500 fighters operating in the tri-border area of the Lake Chad basin, is the strongest ISIL affiliate in Africa.⁴² ISWAP operational capability grew throughout 2018 under the ambitious operational agenda of Abu Musa'ab al-Barnawi (not listed).⁴³ ISWAP mounted numerous attacks on military bases and towns and killed more than 700 Nigerian troops during the reporting period.⁴⁴ The group gained access to cash resources and military equipment, including weapons, ammunition and vehicles, and developed reconnaissance-drone capability.⁴⁵ ISWAP propaganda is increasingly aggressive; online statements increased fivefold compared with the first half of 2018.

42. ISWAP has learned lessons from previous fighting in the region. It combines intimidation and incentives to recruit from the local population. It avoids over-extending its forces, and in 2018 its military gains were not offset by a single significant reverse.⁴⁶ It is growing in confidence, and a small number of foreign terrorist fighters may have joined the group.⁴⁷ Internal conflict within ISWAP led to the killing of two of its leaders, Mamman Nur and Ali Gaga.⁴⁸

43. By contrast, Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (Boko Haram) (QDe.138) experienced military setbacks in the Sambisa Forest and along the Nigeria-Cameroon border.⁴⁹ Its ability to harass the population, sustain funding and seize equipment has been diminished, and Abubakar Shekau (QDi.322) and his lieutenants are currently focused on survival.⁵⁰ In 2018, the group's suicide operations fell by 70 per cent, and attacks on military targets by 50 per cent.⁵¹

3. East Africa

44. Al-Shabaab remains a strategic Al-Qaida affiliate, demonstrating resilience and cooperating with AQAP. It retains a large number of fighters with the capability to conduct high-impact attacks resulting in a large number of casualties and destruction of infrastructure. Member States assessed that, in the latter part of 2018, Al-Shabaab opted for urban guerrilla warfare and conducted fewer massed attacks within Somalia. Al-Shabaab established strong positions in Mogadishu, backed by a special battalion which enhanced its capability. This battalion operates through cells composed of up to five members reinforced by significant logistical support and has demonstrated advanced skills in recent attacks.

³⁸ Member State information.

³⁹ Member State information.

⁴⁰ Member State information.

⁴¹ Member State information.

⁴² Member State information.

⁴³ Member State information.

⁴⁴ Member State information.

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⁵⁰ Member State information.

⁵¹ Member State information.

45. Al-Shabaab is financially self-sufficient and continues to diversify its revenue streams through an elaborate, two-tier collection system: one for collecting monetary taxes and another for non-monetary collections.⁵² In addition to its usual revenue sources (see S/2018/14, para. 40, and S/2018/705, para. 49), Al-Shabaab retains influence and appeal by providing basic services to the local population for a fee.⁵³ For instance, individuals often prefer Al-Shabaab courts to the government judiciary. Given the large number of cases adjudicated daily, the court fees have boosted the group's resources. This steady flow of income funds recurrent payments of salaries to fighters and administrators, as well as loyalty payments to local influencers and community welfare programmes.⁵⁴

46. Al-Shabaab continues to exploit porous borders with neighbouring States to conduct incursions, make transactions, recruit fighters and seize arms, vehicles and equipment.⁵⁵ In late 2018, the movement of foreign terrorist fighters slowed, as the group changed its recruitment tactics to target locals and cross-border communities who have a home-ground advantage to operate and find safe havens in the communities to avoid detection.⁵⁶ Additionally, Member States reported that Al-Shabaab had enhanced forced conscription through threats to families with members aged between 20 and 30 within Somalia and across the border.

47. Member States observe that in mid-2018 the ISIL affiliate in Somalia demonstrated operational capability in Mogadishu, where it established a profile without upsetting Al-Shabaab dominance. ISIL claimed responsibility for several small-scale attacks and for an upsurge of assassinations of government officials and businessmen in Mogadishu. A Member State assessed that in July 2018 ISIL operatives under the direction of Abdikadir Mumin (not listed) established cells in Bakaara market and the Ceelasha Biyaha area on the outskirts of Mogadishu. Another Member State assessed that ISIL was also active in Afgooye and south-central Somalia (see S/2018/705, para. 47). In addition, ISIL maintains a regional media platform in Puntland through which it projects its presence and broadcasts propaganda, coverage of attacks and local news.

48. Despite recent gains in Mogadishu, some Member States assess that ISIL in Puntland is struggling with diminishing membership occasioned by defections of some mid-level commanders with their supporters and the deaths of operatives in attacks targeting government officials and businessmen who refused to pay taxes to the group. A Member State assesses that ISIL has approximately 300 fighters distributed in various locations within the Qandala and Boosaaso areas, whereas the Iskushuban area serves as its training and weapon storage base. Most of these weapons are acquired in Yemen.

49. Member States observe that ISIL and Al-Shabaab coexist in Puntland, although Al-Shabaab has a large presence. Both have support within the local communities owing to clan affiliations, and the Amniyat branches of both groups cooperate. In mid-2018, Al-Shabaab freed all imprisoned foreign terrorist fighters sympathetic to ISIL and allowed them to stay in Al-Shabaab-controlled areas.

D. Europe

50. ISIL continues to pose a significant threat in Europe despite its diminished ability to direct attacks. There have been fewer "lone actor" attacks recently, which

⁵² Member State information.

⁵³ Member State information.

⁵⁴ Member State information.

⁵⁵ Member State information.

⁵⁶ Member State information.

suggests that the ability even to inspire such attacks may be declining.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, there has been a recent re-emergence of communication between ISIL command and control, and individuals in different European countries.⁵⁸

51. The number of European returnees who reached their countries of origin during the reporting period was relatively low; however, the expected defeat of the group led by Oumar Diaby (QDi.342), which is comprised primarily of French nationals and operates in the Syrian Arab Republic, may result in the return of foreign terrorist fighters to Europe. “Frustrated travellers” remain an issue, illustrated by the major terrorist attack plan foiled in the Netherlands in September 2018.

52. The impact of media and propaganda operations of the ISIL core in Europe is assessed to have declined over the reporting period. The decrease in propaganda directly from ISIL coincided with an increase in recycled material, implausible claims of responsibility for attacks and ongoing online messaging. Al-Qaida and ISIL tutorials remain available online. One European Member State reported that propaganda inspired by ISIL was now developed locally.

53. Radicalization of criminals within the prison system remains a significant challenge (see S/2017/573, para. 10), as illustrated by the 11 December 2018 attack in Strasbourg.⁵⁹ In France, 500 detainees convicted of terrorism charges are in prison. A further 1,200 are reported to have been radicalized. Approximately 90 per cent of those 1,700 people will be released by 2025.⁶⁰ The listing of Anjem Choudary (QDi.419), just before his release in October 2018, is being closely observed by security officials in several European countries where similar individuals, currently unlisted, may soon be released.⁶¹

54. The overall threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters and violent extremism in the western Balkans is assessed as medium to low. Member States have successfully disrupted planned terrorist attacks in the region and highlighted their amateur quality. This may reflect the broader trend of the ISIL core focusing on inspiring attacks by local actors, who in some cases may lack the training of fighters in the core.

55. Approximately 1,000 foreign terrorist fighters have travelled from the western Balkans to the conflict zone in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, often with a weak ideological commitment despite radicalization activities observed in the region. Of those, 100 have been reported killed and 300 returned; the remainder are unaccounted for.⁶² All departures to the conflict zone have been registered with national authorities, which report extensive information-sharing in the region regarding the movements of such fighters. Member States further report that foreign terrorist fighters have been detained and prosecuted upon their return. A number of returnees have expressed disillusionment with ISIL or ANF.

56. As a consequence of counter-terrorism measures in the western Balkans, radicalization through face-to-face recruitment has diminished significantly; online indoctrination and recruitment via social media now fill the gap.

57. In the Russian Federation, more than 35 ISIL cells have been identified and disbanded since the start of 2018, with some 775 individuals charged with support for terrorist activity and thousands of websites promoting violent extremism blocked.⁶³

⁵⁷ Member State information.

⁵⁸ Member State information.

⁵⁹ Member State information.

⁶⁰ Member State information.

⁶¹ Member State information.

⁶² Member State information.

⁶³ Member State information.

58. In Europe, Member States report no collaboration between ISIL and Al-Qaida and transnational organized criminal networks.

E. Central and South Asia

59. ISIL is seeking to expand its area of activity in Central Asia and has called for terrorist attacks targeting public gatherings, primarily in the Ferghana valley. On 30 July 2018, ISIL claimed responsibility for the killing of four foreign cyclists in Tajikistan. In November, ISIL stated that one of its fighters was responsible for the attack that sparked a riot in a high-security prison in Khujand, Tajikistan. Foreign terrorist fighters who are nationals of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are attempting to use Kazakhstan as a transit route for moving in and out the region. In 2018, 50 nationals of Central Asian countries were detained in Kazakhstan, 30 of whom were wanted for terrorism-related reasons. Since 2012, approximately 100 Kazakh nationals (men and women) who had previously joined terrorist groups have been returned or extradited to Kazakhstan.⁶⁴

60. In the Syrian Arab Republic, Khatiba Imam Al-Bukhari (QDe.158) and Katibat al-Tawhid wal Jihad (KTJ), a battalion of ANF composed primarily of Uzbek nationals, have approximately 200 to 300 fighters each. Approximately 40 to 50 fighters from Kazakhstan are reported to be in the Syrian Arab Republic with HTS. The same number of Kazakh nationals are reported to be with ISIL in the Hajin pocket in Dayr al-Zawr province. Many ethnic Uzbeks request deportation from Turkey to the Republic of Korea, where the total number of Uzbeks is estimated to be between 20,000 and 30,000. Some Uzbek migrant workers in the Republic of Korea are reported to have been radicalized and to be a source of financing for the travel of extremists to the Syrian Arab Republic.⁶⁵

61. In Afghanistan, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (QDe.010) broke up into small groups dependent on the Taliban. Central Asian terrorists from the Islamic Jihad Group (QDe.119) and KTJ provide military training for Taliban fighters. Some of these groups aspire to infiltrate countries in Central Asia but are instead obliged by the Taliban to focus their attacks on the Government of Afghanistan.

62. At present, ISIL strongholds in Afghanistan are in the eastern provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar, Nuristan and Laghman. The total strength of ISIL in Afghanistan is estimated at between 2,500 and 4,000 militants.⁶⁶ ISIL is also reported to control some training camps in Afghanistan and to have created a network of cells in various Afghan cities, including Kabul. The local ISIL leadership maintains close contact with the group's core in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq. Important personnel appointments are made through the central leadership, and the publication of propaganda videos is coordinated.

63. The primary activities of ISIL in Afghanistan have centred around a series of high-profile attacks, including in Kabul. In 2018, ISIL is assessed to have carried out 38 terrorist attacks in Afghanistan.⁶⁷ ISIL targets have included North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military personnel, the Afghan army and police, officers of the Afghan special services, the Taliban, diplomats, employees of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations, journalists and medical institutions, as well as religious minorities who are understood by ISIL to be soft targets. The 2018 fighting season has been a challenging one for Afghan forces, who describe the current situation as critical.

⁶⁴ Member State information.

⁶⁵ Member State information.

⁶⁶ Member State information.

⁶⁷ Member State information.

64. ISIL positions in northern Afghanistan suffered a severe setback during the reporting period. In July 2018, approximately 1,000 Taliban launched an offensive on ISIL positions in Jowzjan province. A total of 200 ISIL fighters were reported killed, with 254 surrendering to government forces and 25 foreign terrorist fighters surrendering to the Taliban. The Monitoring Team's interlocutors consider that the province of Jowzjan has been "cleansed" of ISIL fighters, although they also assess that a minority of Taliban (approximately 170 fighters in Faryab, 100 in Sari Pul and 50 in Balkh) retain sympathies for ISIL. Following the killing of ISIL leader Abu Sa'id Bajauri on 14 July 2018, the leadership council of ISIL in Afghanistan appointed Mawlawi Ziya ul-Haq (aka Abu Omar Al-Khorasani) (not listed) as the fourth "emir" of the group since its establishment.⁶⁸

65. Al-Qaida continues to see Afghanistan as a safe haven for its leadership, based on its long-standing, strong ties with the Taliban. Aiman al-Zawahiri, Hamza bin Laden (not listed) and the Taliban leadership have repeatedly, in public statements, emphasized the importance of the alliance between Al-Qaida and the Taliban. Al-Qaida is seeking to strengthen its presence in Badakhshan province, especially in Shighnan district, which shares a border with Tajikistan. Al-Qaida is eager to expand its presence in Barmal district in Paktika province. The Haqqani Network (TAe.012) maintains close ties with Al-Qaida. Al-Qaida members act as instructors and religious teachers for Taliban personnel and their family members.

66. According to Member States, there are approximately 500 foreign terrorist fighters in Badakhshan Province who are from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, the North Caucasus and Pakistan; these fighters reportedly operate under the umbrella of the Taliban. Foreign terrorist fighters lack independent sources of income and depend on both the Taliban and Al-Qaida, with Al-Qaida providing most of the financial support. The Al-Qaida affiliated Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (QDe.088) maintains a presence in Taliban-held areas of Badakhshan province. The group's local leader is Hajji Furqan (not listed); Mawlawi Ibrahim (not listed) serves as his deputy. The security risks for Central Asia stem mainly from these extremists in Badakhshan, which also include Jamaat Ansarullah.

67. On 22 September 2018, 24 Iranians were killed and 60 injured in the city of Ahvaz. Information confirmed the role of ISIL in planning and executing the attack.⁶⁹ ISIL attacks in the Islamic Republic of Iran over the past two years have killed 41 individuals and injured more than 100. Border controls have reportedly been enhanced in response to the increased terrorist threat.

F. South-East Asia

68. Although the current reporting period saw relatively few successful attacks, Member States in the region assess the ongoing terrorist threat to be high, in particular from ISIL and Al-Qaida-affiliated groups. They note that efforts to disrupt attacks at the planning stage are having some success.

69. Among the challenges highlighted by Member States are the resource-intensive demands of ongoing monitoring or detention of returned foreign terrorist fighters and questions regarding whether and how to repatriate fighters currently in detention in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic.⁷⁰ There are also complex issues related to repatriating family members of detained or deceased foreign terrorist fighters, some

⁶⁸ Member State information.

⁶⁹ Member State information.

⁷⁰ One South-East Asian Member State reported approximately 600 foreign terrorist fighters in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic.

of whom are assessed to require close monitoring and extensive social services upon their return.

70. A number of Member States have concerns regarding “frustrated travellers”, those unable to reach Iraq or the Syrian Arab Republic, who return home intending to commit acts of violence and to reinforce messaging of the ISIL core that the group remains viable and with a global presence. One Member State noted that some returnees from the conflict zone had arrived with significant sums of cash seeking to procure new identities. In one case, a returning fighter attempted to establish an employment agency specializing in the recruitment of migrant workers. There are also cases of foreign terrorist fighters from other regions travelling to South-East Asia as a means of avoiding detention or punishment in their countries of origin. According to Member States, some terrorist attacks in the region have been funded by the ISIL core in the Syrian Arab Republic.

71. As noted in the previous report (see [S/2018/705](#), para. 66), in mid-May 2018 Indonesia experienced a series of attacks by members of ISIL-affiliated Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD), including three suicide bombings by families and their minor children. The subsequent investigation by Indonesian authorities raised concerns that such attacks could reflect a new model for suicide bombings and noted that a “frustrated traveller” to the caliphate had provided some of the inspiration for the attacks. During 2018, Indonesia experienced more than 20 terrorist attacks targeting police and religious institutions; such attacks are attributed primarily to JAD.⁷¹

72. Authorities in the Philippines continue to face challenges related to foreign terrorist fighters seeking access to the country, in particular the south. On 31 July 2018, a German-Moroccan foreign terrorist fighter launched a suicide attack on Basilan island using a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device. The bombing, responsibility for which was subsequently claimed by ISIL, marked the first successful operation by a foreign terrorist fighter within the Philippines.⁷² The previous report highlighted the aftermath of the siege of Marawi City (see [S/2018/705](#), para. 67). Member States assess that the threat persists there from local cells seeking to stage attacks that highlight their continued presence and capture the attention of the ISIL core.

73. South-East Asia boasts some of the world’s largest numbers of Internet users. Member States cited difficulties with social media platforms not responding quickly enough to content promoting violent extremism, or with features on certain platforms that frustrated efforts by government authorities to identify and remove such content. States have observed a shift away from platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Google to software and apps such as Telegram and Wickr, which allow for encrypted communications and/or messages that automatically disappear after a period of time. Member States report that the self-radicalization of individuals online remains a significant challenge.

74. The role of teens and women in attacks or attempted attacks in the region appears to be evolving, with ISIL initially discouraging the involvement of women but more recently inviting their direct participation (the Surabaya attacks of May 2018 included mothers who acted as suicide bombers).⁷³ Member States have noted that teenagers are increasingly vulnerable to recruitment and, whereas at one time that may have been as passive supporters, they have more recently been found to be involved in planning attacks and manufacturing improvised explosive devices. One

⁷¹ Member State information.

⁷² Member State information.

⁷³ Member State information.

Indonesian foreign terrorist fighter recently killed in the Syrian Arab Republic was 5 years old at the time his father helped carry out the 2002 Bali hotel bombing.

III. Impact assessment

A. Resolution 2199 (2015) on the financing of Islamic State in Iraq and Levant and Al-Nusrah Front

75. ISIL is assessed to retain access to significant financial reserves, estimated to be between \$50 million and \$300 million. Although the sustained loss of territory has eliminated some key sources of revenue, ISIL leadership now has fewer financial liabilities. The group retains access to financial resources that will continue to sustain its operations.

76. Remaining sources of revenue generation available to ISIL include extortion, kidnapping for ransom and other criminal activity. Although ISIL no longer extracts and sells significant quantities of oil, the group is able, for example, to extort payments when oil and other goods are transported to areas where it can project its power. ISIL retains the ability to reinvigorate currently inactive revenue streams through extortion of civilians living in remote rural communities and areas that were previously controlled by ISIL. The group is also believed to retain intelligence and data on populations that lived under its control; such information could be drawn upon for future revenue generation.

77. An ISIL document obtained by a Member State in May 2018 reportedly describes how ISIL is expected to sustain financial operations in the face of territorial losses, primarily through actions that undermine the performance and credibility of the Governments of Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic with civilian populations, including the infiltration of local government and the establishment of front companies. ISIL fighters are encouraged to prioritize actions that seek to thwart economic progress, stabilization and reconstruction, and to sabotage economic infrastructure.

78. ISIL cells are increasingly expected to be self-sustaining. Individual ISIL members are instructed to self-finance attacks, using funds provided by family members, the proceeds of petty crime and even school loans. One Member State observed that a consequence of reduced revenue collections by ISIL was the imposition of financial penalties against members in lieu of physical punishments or the death penalty.

79. Former ISIL members have reported that the group retains access to financial expertise and continues to exploit cadres of computer-savvy members. The informal financial sector, in particular unregistered money-service businesses, remains the most prevalent means of initiating funds transfers involving ISIL and Al-Qaida. Gold exchanges are also reported to be a source of illicit funding flows to ISIL and Al-Qaida.

80. Several Member States highlighted ISIL statements encouraging the use of new financial technologies, including cryptocurrencies. Such currencies are not assessed by Member States to currently be a significant source of revenue for ISIL or Al-Qaida.⁷⁴ Government authorities are, however, reporting challenges providing

⁷⁴ The United States Department of Justice announced on 26 November 2018 the guilty plea of a woman who had purchased \$62,000 in bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies, and initiated wire transfers to shell companies that were fronts for ISIS. (Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs, "New York Woman Pleads Guilty to Providing Material Support to ISIS", 26 November 2018.)

oversight and governance over new financial technologies involving traditional currency that promise near-instant settlement mechanisms, sometimes without the accompanying controls necessary to ensure appropriate sanctions screening of both the originators and beneficiaries of fund transfers.

81. In early December 2018, seven individuals were arrested in the Russian Federation on charges of providing support to ISIL and ANF. Between 2016 and 2018, they reportedly raised funds under the pretext of constructing mosques and providing assistance to refugees. Approximately \$500,000 is believed to have been diverted to the Syrian Arab Republic.

82. Despite systematic consultation with Member States, the Monitoring Team has been unable to establish that ISIL ever generated significant funds from human slavery or sexual violence, although it was certainly massively engaged in such crimes on a basis internal to the so-called “caliphate”. Member States also broadly share the analysis that ISIL did not systematically or fully exploit the funding potential of looting and trading in antiquities and cultural goods. Nevertheless, it will not be possible to draw firm conclusions on this until more is known about what was taken, and until enhanced detection and enforcement efforts have yielded more information.

B. Resolution 2347 (2017) on cultural heritage

83. During the reporting period, the Monitoring Team continued to engage with Member States and relevant international organizations focusing on disrupting the ability of terrorist groups to benefit from the smuggling of cultural property, as well as on raising awareness of resolution 2347 (2017) and the measures contained therein. Several Member States have reported difficulties implementing an effective national legal framework for the protection of cultural heritage.

84. In this regard, in April 2018, an informal “group of friends for the protection of cultural heritage” was established by Member States. The group⁷⁵ is open to the wider United Nations membership and aims to act as a platform that supports Member States in implementing the measures required by resolution 2347 (2017) by raising awareness, encouraging implementation of the existing international legal framework, sharing best practices and strengthening synergies.

85. The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States encouraging those which have not yet done so to consider joining the group of friends for the protection of cultural heritage, in order to enhance efforts by Member States to combat the destruction and trafficking of cultural property.

86. Customs authorities play a critical role in fighting illicit trade in looted and stolen cultural property. On 30 November 2018, the World Customs Organization launched a training handbook on the prevention of illicit trafficking of cultural heritage (PITCH handbook), to be used within the specialized training on this topic conducted by the Organization. This unique training programme includes a number of standard modules, as well as additional modules that are designed to address the specific needs of regions and countries in question.

87. The training on the prevention of illicit trafficking of cultural heritage is aimed at providing operational tools for frontline customs officers and can be deployed for multiple points of entry, such as airports, land-border crossings and seaports, as well as for surveillance and intelligence teams. It is supported by other tools of the World

⁷⁵ The group already enjoys the support of more than 20 countries from all regional groups.

Customs Organization, such as the ARCHEO platform,⁷⁶ as well as elements of other programmes of the World Customs Organization, in particular data analytic tools. The first deployment of the training took place in Dakar in December 2018, where 17 customs administrations of the West and Central African region participated. The training was organized by the World Customs Organization in cooperation with Senegalese Customs and the regional office of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Senegal.

88. The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States encouraging them to fund the deployment of the World Customs Organization training on the prevention of illicit traffic of cultural heritage (PITCH training) in key countries and regions and encouraging customs administrations to apply for this training.

C. Resolution 2396 (2017) on foreign terrorist fighters, returnees and relocators

89. The Monitoring Team continued during the reporting period to promote Security Council resolution 2396 (2017) with Member State interlocutors, highlighting the guidance that it offers on addressing the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters, returnees, relocators, detainees and persons in transit.

90. There has been no mass exodus or dispersal of foreign terrorist fighters and dependants from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, although there is net movement away from the core conflict zone in the following ways: individuals moving from active fighting into detention, hiding or transit; deportation of detainees, who become returnees; release into transit or relocation; and movement of individuals from transit, usually to become returnees. There is also some net movement into Iraq from within the core conflict zone and its neighbouring areas, especially from across the Syrian border.⁷⁷

91. There is also the phenomenon of “frustrated travellers”, ISIL or Al-Qaida supporters interested in travelling to the core conflict zone, who failed to do so for one reason or another. Along with the relatively few relocators from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, these may be among the foreign terrorist fighters who travel to other conflict areas such as Afghanistan, South-East Asia, Yemen, Somalia and West and North Africa. These other theatres draw foreign terrorist fighters overwhelmingly from within their own region, and in relatively small numbers, compared with the 40,000-plus foreign terrorist fighters who joined the so-called “caliphate”.⁷⁸

92. It is difficult to garner reliable figures, but significant numbers of people associated with the former so-called “caliphate” will continue to be processed by authorities in Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and other Member States. The handling of dependants, or in some cases of female terrorists pretending to be dependants, is particularly challenging. Radicalized women, and radicalized, brutalized or traumatized minors, may also pose a serious threat.

93. According to one assessment, there are 13,000 pre-teenagers lacking established nationality in Iraq alone. These are cases in which papers are unavailable, or birth

⁷⁶ ARCHEO is a real-time communication tool for information exchange and cooperation among customs administrations, other enforcement agencies and competent national authorities, international organizations and experts from academia and non-governmental organizations in order to prevent trafficking in cultural property. See Security Council resolution 2347 (2017), para. 17 (f), and S/2016/629, paras. 85 and 86.

⁷⁷ Member State information.

⁷⁸ Member State information.

was never registered. Some of these minors may be of Iraqi parentage; others will have one foreign parent, or two.⁷⁹ Member States have spoken of this as a generational challenge, with such persons, if they are not integrated into society, posing an immediate threat or growing up to pose such a threat anytime up to 20 years from now. Some Member States argue that countries of origin or nationality are still not taking their fair share of responsibility for managing this challenge by helping countries who hold detainees to move them on in accordance with due process.

IV. Sanctions measures

A. Travel ban

94. During the reporting period, the Monitoring Team continued to raise awareness, through its visits to Member States, concerning resolutions [2396 \(2017\)](#), [2309 \(2016\)](#) and [2368 \(2017\)](#). The Team noted that many Member States were still grappling with complex challenges relating to effective border management and the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters affiliated to ISIL and Al-Qaida and ISIL (see [S/2018/705](#), para. 87). Resolution [2396 \(2017\)](#) requires States to strengthen border security through effective passenger screening, cross-checking against watch lists and databases, collecting biometrics and enhancing information exchange. The Monitoring Team observed various efforts as Member States continue to issue new travel documents that adhere to the requirements for enhanced security of travel documentation, and which incorporate recent advancements in documentation security. In some instances, Member States observed an increase in lookalike or impostor fraud of travellers' identities. This is concerning because returnees and foreign terrorist fighters continue to seek ways to circumvent border security.

95. The Team continues to engage with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA), and takes note of efforts by Member States to adapt and improve the security features of e-passports. States have been encouraged to join the ICAO Public Key Directory, a repository that allows States to verify the biometric and biographical data in the chips of e-passports. Currently, approximately 120 States issue e-passports, and 60 States participate in the Directory. Many other States lack the necessary readers and supporting infrastructure to support the e-passport functionality at border crossing points. Consequently, manual or physical inspection of travel documents remains widespread, potentially allowing foreign terrorist fighters to exploit weaknesses in border controls to facilitate their travel.

96. Biometrics are a valuable tool for enhancing the verification of travellers and are in extensive use in border control applications in many countries, with fingerprinting, retinal scans or other forms of facial recognition technology regularly used to validate traveller identity and documentation.⁸⁰ There has also been progress in incorporating Advance Passenger Information/Passenger Name Records data into these applications. Nevertheless, States still face challenges with respect to data privacy, data protection and management, and information-sharing. Additionally, although Member States are required to ensure that returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters are identified, they face challenges implementing certain biometrics for minor children.⁸¹ Lastly, the complexity of incorporating biometric data into government systems can require extensive lead times, further delaying the widespread adoption of such practices.

⁷⁹ Member State information.

⁸⁰ Member State information.

⁸¹ Member State information.

97. Though widely acknowledged as good practice, information exchange and inter-agency cooperation, both within and between States, remains a key challenge. Meanwhile, States continue to utilize regional and international databases, including the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) databases, which incorporate the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List and suspected foreign terrorist fighters database. Nevertheless, it is of concern that not all border control points have access to these databases and there is lack of interconnectivity between the border points in many States. Additionally, many States are not participating in entering information into the foreign terrorist fighters database, meaning that some critical information necessary for interdiction may not be available to Member States.⁸²

98. **The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States highlighting the cooperation between INTERPOL and the Committee while stressing the need to ensure access to the databases at all border points to facilitate screening against the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List and suspected foreign terrorist fighter databases, which include individuals who are not listed.**

B. Asset freeze

99. The Team continues to cooperate with the Financial Action Task Force and similar regional bodies to collect information regarding efforts by Member States to counter terrorist financing and implement the asset freeze. The Task Force issued a public statement on 19 October 2018, in which it noted that members of the Financial Action Task Force Global Network continued “to take strong, coordinated actions to counter the financing of ISIL, Al-Qaida and their affiliates”.⁸³

100. Member States have reported to the Monitoring Team on an ad hoc basis the results of efforts to identify and freeze assets belonging to individuals and entities on the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List. A comprehensive review of frozen assets has not been undertaken, however, and would be possible only with improved reporting by Member States.

101. **The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States to recall the request set out in paragraph 44 of resolution 2368 (2017) to provide implementation reports that include any available information regarding assets frozen, and to share such information with the Monitoring Team.**

C. Arms embargo

102. The Monitoring Team previously recommended that the Committee write to Member States to highlight the rising trend of terrorists using unmanned aerial systems within the conflict zone and to encourage the exercise of enhanced due diligence when exporting such devices to areas in which ISIL- and Al-Qaida-affiliated groups operated (see [S/2017/875](#)).

103. Member States have continued to brief the Monitoring Team regarding the threat posed by unmanned aerial systems within the conflict zone and the threat posed by the weaponization of commercial off-the-shelf drones outside the conflict zone by

⁸² Member State information.

⁸³ “FATF Monitoring of Terrorist Financing Risks and Actions Taken to Combat ISIL, Al-Qaeda and Affiliates Financing”, 19 October 2018 (Paris). Available from www.fatf-gafi.org/publications/methodsandtrends/documents/isil-alqaeda-affiliates-financing-update.html.

actors who may be inspired by ISIL. It was also reported that the ISIL core continued to procure commercial off-the-shelf drones through a layered network of purchasers organized in small cells and dispersed over a number of countries. One such network, involved in shipping drones from western Europe to Iraq through Turkey, was dismantled in September 2018. In the Lake Chad basin, ISWAP uses drones for reconnaissance and surveillance, raising fears that it may have ambitions to weaponize them for attacks.⁸⁴ A Member State reported repeated attacks by ANF, using improvised fixed-wing drones against the Humaymim Air Base in the Syrian Arab Republic.

104. Threats from unmanned aerial systems used in terrorism are likely to increase owing to the exponential rise in the number of drones purchased by hobbyists and the decreasing cost of the technology. Rapid advancements in the technology of drones, including advances in speed, payload, fuel cells and resistance to radio interdiction, will further make countering the threat costlier and more difficult.

105. Member States report that important challenges in mitigating the threat include the lack of harmonized regulatory standards across different jurisdictions. Cooperation in developing the fundamentals of an international regulatory framework which does not impinge on the law enforcement and commercial opportunities inherent within the emergent technology was deemed necessary. In this regard, the Monitoring Team welcomes several inter-State initiatives currently rolled out to address this issue, including the Global Counterterrorism Forum initiative to counter threats from unmanned aerial systems; NATO workshops on the threat of drones and exercises on non-lethal effectors against low small-radar-signature drones; the cognizance of the Meeting of Heads of Special Services, Security Agencies and Law-Enforcement Organizations, held in Moscow, of the threat related to the terrorist use of unmanned aircraft and robotic systems; and the intent of INTERPOL to develop global guidelines for law enforcement and industry to facilitate coherent and consistent processes among Member States.

106. The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States to encourage those which have not done so to develop their own strategies to counter terrorist use of unmanned aerial systems in line with international best practices developed through emergent global initiatives. Member States with the requisite ability should also be encouraged to enhance efforts to share training and expertise on incident exploitation, forensics and interdiction in order to strengthen the overall international capacity to overcome this threat.

107. The ISIL core maintains a stock of arms from the time of the so-called “caliphate”.⁸⁵ In addition, there are still ISIL and Al-Qaida supply lines feeding terrorist groups in the conflict zone. Instances of arms shipments from eastern European countries to the Middle East and North Africa have been reported, including through the diversion of arms marked for legitimate end users. According to one Member State, arms manufacturers produce AK-47 automatic rifles under expired licences and send them to conflict zones. A Member State involved in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic reported that at least part of the arms supply to the Syrian Arab Republic had been diverted on the basis of a misleading end-user certificate. Additionally, Member States continued to highlight the threat from improvised explosive devices manufactured using diverted detonators and commercially available chemicals. The overwhelming majority of attacks in Iraq involving such devices during the period under review involved such chemicals, rather than military ordnance.

⁸⁴ Member State information.

⁸⁵ Member State information.

108. The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States to encourage the establishment of national outreach initiatives that promote engagement with private sector entities that manufacture, sell or distribute products containing commercially available explosive chemicals and that help local businesses to train employees to identify relevant chemicals and suspicious purchasing behaviours and establish proper procedures for reporting to law enforcement agencies.

109. The Monitoring Team further recommends that the Committee, in its communications to Member States, encourage the implementation of good practices in limiting the pernicious use of dual use components, including through the practice of detonation-resilience tests for chemical components, identification technologies for detonators and explosives marked for legitimate uses and proper physical security and stockpile management measures.

V. Monitoring Team activities and feedback

110. Between July and December 2018, the Team undertook 25 country and technical visits. It promoted the sanctions regime through its participation in 32 international conferences, meetings and workshops, including those of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNESCO, the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the European Union, the Global Counterterrorism Forum and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The Team also held one regional meeting of intelligence and security services focusing on the threat posed by ISIL, Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities in South-East Asia. The Team used this forum to promote the sanctions regime as an integral part of a national counter-terrorism strategy and to encourage greater regional, subregional and bilateral cooperation and intelligence-sharing to counter the threat.

111. The Team continued its engagement with entities and associations in the financial, energy, antiquities, and information and communication technology sectors. The Team was accepted as an observer to the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism during its twenty-eighth plenary meeting, held in Nanjing, China. The Team continued to engage private sector stakeholders in the information and communications technology sector and participated in several workshops and a special meeting organized by the ICT4Peace Foundation and the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate. During these events, the Team raised awareness of the provisions of the sanctions regime and the sanctions list. The Team maintains its close cooperation with the Executive Directorate and the Office of Counter-Terrorism in the production of mandated reports of the Secretary-General.⁸⁶ The Team remains an active member of the working groups of the Office's Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force. On 6 December 2018, the Team participated in the launch of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact.

112. The Team welcomes feedback on the present report through 1267mt@un.org.

⁸⁶ Security Council resolution 2368 (2017), para. 101.

Annex**Litigation by or relating to individuals and entities on the Sanctions List**

1. There has been no change to the state of affairs described in the present annex during the reporting period.
2. The legal challenges involving individuals and entities on the Sanctions List, or whose names the Committee has removed therefrom, that are known to be pending or to have been recently concluded are described below.

Pakistan

3. The action brought by the Al Rashid Trust (QDe.005) regarding the application of the sanctions measures against it remains pending in the Supreme Court of Pakistan, on appeal by the Government of an adverse decision in 2003. A similar challenge brought by Al-Akhtar Trust International (QDe.121) remains pending before a provincial high court.¹
4. In addition to the two cases mentioned above, a trustee of Pakistan Relief Foundation (listed as an alias of Al-Akhtar Trust International) has challenged the freezing of his bank account.²

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

5. The United Kingdom is defending judicial review challenges to its decision-making with regard to the designations under this sanctions regime of Abdulbasit Abdulrahim, Abdulbaqi Mohammed Khaled and Maftah Mohamed Elmabruk (all delisted). The cases are currently proceeding with hearings related to the use of closed evidence and the level of disclosure required.³

¹ Information provided by Pakistan.

² Information provided by Pakistan.

³ Information provided by the United Kingdom.