



Global Islamism Monitor No. 69

August 13, 2019 **Ilan I. Berman, Jacob McCarty**

Related Categories: Democracy and Governance; Islamic Extremism; Terrorism; Afghanistan; Europe; Iran; Iraq; Israel; Middle East

AN ISIS RESURGENCE IN IRAQ AND SYRIA

Less than half-a-year after Coalition operations eliminated the last vestiges of the Islamic State's self-declared *caliphate* in Iraq and Syria, the extremist group is already poised to make a significant comeback in both Iraq and Syria. Over the past several months, according to the latest assessment of U.S. counterterrorism efforts from the Pentagon's Office of Inspector General, ISIS "solidified its insurgent capabilities in Iraq and was resurging in Syria." This activity is being enabled and empowered by the weakness of local governments, with both the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) still "unable to sustain long-term operations against ISIS militants."

Meanwhile, northeastern Syria is fast emerging as a critical flashpoint. In Hasanakah Province, the sprawling Al Hol refugee camp is currently home to "thousands of ISIS family members," including an estimated 29,000 children of foreign fighters. Not surprisingly, the terrorist group is now active there, attempting to recruit new members to its cause.

At the same time, the drawdown of U.S. forces in Syria in recent months has diminished the ability of America and its allies to accurately gauge conditions within the camp, forcing them "to rely on third-party accounts" provided by humanitarian organizations and activists about conditions there. Nor are local forces an adequate substitute; according to the OIG report, the SDF have been capable of providing only "minimal security" at the camp – something that has allowed the Islamic State's ideology to spread "uncontested." (U.S. Department of Defense, August 2019)

ISRAEL'S GLOBAL COUNTERTERRORISM CAMPAIGN

Itself long a target of Islamist terror, Israel has been quietly providing unprecedented assistance to other countries grappling with the same threat. Over the past three years, Israel's foreign intelligence service, the Mossad, has helped prevent no fewer than fifty terrorist attacks by the Islamic State and Iran in some twenty countries, according to a news expose by Israel's *Channel 12* television channel. Moreover, twelve of the thwarted attacks were being planned on Turkish soil, with Israel lending assistance to the government of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan despite strained relations between Ankara and Jerusalem. (*Jerusalem Post*, July 9, 2019)

FEAR AND LOATHING IN GERMANY

Roughly half of all German citizens see Islam as a detriment or even an outright threat to the country's social fabric, a recent survey by the Bertelsmann Foundation has found. While these opinions don't necessarily manifest in outward hostility toward people who are Muslim, they nonetheless reflect a surge of anti-Islam sentiment among the German populace - feelings that have intensified in parallel to an influx of Middle Eastern and North African refugees in recent years. By contrast, a majority of respondents to the Bertelsmann survey said that "Christianity, Judaism, and Buddhism serve to enrich Germany." (*Jerusalem Post*, July 12, 2019)

A RADICAL EDUCATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Islamic radicals are expanding their hold various universities throughout war torn Afghanistan, leading to rising extremism and violence at those institutions. According to concerned students and observers, extremist thought at higher education institutions has proliferated broadly, becoming the "new normal" on campus. "Extremism is [now] not limited to just a few professors and several faculties," notes one Kabul University student. "It encompasses the entire university." The rising radicalism has been mirrored by a surge in attacks on students and individuals on campus deemed to be deviating from strict *sharia* norms, either in their dress or their ideas. (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, July 22, 2019)