



Global Islamism Monitor No. 73

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Related Categories: Democracy and Governance; Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues; Islamic Extremism; Terrorism; Africa; Southeast Asia; Turkey

INDONESIA'S RADICALS GET BOLDER

Islamic extremists in Indonesia have attacked one of the country's most prominent political figures. On October 10th, a pair of militants believed to have been inspired by the Islamic State attacked and stabbed the country's security minister, Wiranto, while the latter was on an official visit to central Java. The assailants, security officials said, were married and members of the *Jamaat Ansharut Daulah*, a local Islamist group which had previously pledged allegiance to ISIS and its now-deceased *emir*, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Wiranto, for his part, survived the attack and was hospitalized in Jakarta. (*New York Times*, October 10, 2019)

ISLAMISTS SOW UNREST IN AFRICA

Militants linked to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in Mali are using subterfuge and divisive violence to gain a greater foothold in the African state. By provoking feuds between the Fulani and the Dogon – two ethnic groups with members in Mali that have fought each other in the past – radical actors are able to offer "protective services" to victims of the very violence they are instigating. This strategy of creating instability and then monopolizing the response to it as a way of engendering goodwill among local populations is one that extremist groups have employed for decades, and Mali today provides fertile ground for just this sort of manipulation. Since January of this year, 817 people (150 of them children) have been killed and at least 140,000 have been displaced by the violence taking place within the country. (*Washington Post*, October 10, 2019)

MORE MILITANCY IN MALI

A recent attack carried out by the Islamic State in Mali has left more than 50 government soldiers dead along the Mali-Nigeria border. The attack, the largest and most sophisticated ever to have been perpetrated by the Islamic State inside Mali, consisted of three synchronized suicide bombings at a Malian army base situated along the country's border with Nigeria. The incident follows a pattern of escalating violence perpetrated by ISIS-inspired militants, throughout the region. Similar recent incidents have included a sophisticated high profile attack in Niger this spring that left 28 Nigerien servicemen dead. (*Long War Journal*, November 3, 2019)

TURKEY'S HARSH JUSTICE

Turkey is playing hardball with ISIS detainees - and with Europe. On the heels of Turkey's military incursion into, and occupation of, northeastern Syria, the country's Interior Minister, Suleyman Soylu, has asserted that his government plans to send convicted IS members back to their countries of origin, even if their citizenship had been revoked in those places. The policy is aimed squarely at the countries of Europe, which Ankara blames for failing to sufficiently defuse the threat posed by ISIS detainees in the Syrian theater, or to take responsibility for repatriating European-origin militants to their home countries. (*Riyadh Al Arabiya*, November 4, 2019)

[EDITORS' NOTE: Turkey's stance raises significant questions of international law. Under established norms, countries have responsibility for their nationals, even when those individuals are situated outside of that country's territory. Recognizing this standard, a number of nations (including Australia) have chosen to strip citizenship from nationals who mobilize to join extremist causes in the Middle East. Ankara, however, is effectively saying that it refuses to recognize this change of status, and will send back militants to the countries they came from regardless of their status under that country's laws.]

ISIS: RESURGENT ALREADY

In a rare interview, Lieutenant General Saad al Alaaq, the head of Iraqi military intelligence, has told *CNN* that members of the Islamic State currently in Turkey are plotting to storm Syrian and Iraqi jails. The plan would, if carried out successfully, potentially free tens of thousands of prisoners as part of an effort to have these individuals replenish ISIS ranks. The strategy has the potential to dramatically expand the threat posed by the militant group; roughly 10,000 alleged Islamic State fighters are currently being held captive in northern Syria alone. (*CNN*, November 18, 2019)