



## Global Islamism Monitor No. 96

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**Related Categories:** International Economics and Trade; Islamic Extremism; Public Diplomacy and Information Operations; Terrorism

### NEW ZEALAND'S NEW ANTI-TERROR LAW

This Fall, the government of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern adopted a new anti-terrorism law in response to a recent terrorist attack in Auckland. The new measures outlaw preparations for terror attacks which include weapons or combat training. They also allow police the right to warrantless search, surveillance and entry when conducting anti-terror operations. The steps come following an ISIS-linked knife attack that wounded seven. They represent an attempt by New Zealand authorities to address the growing phenomenon of "lone wolf" terrorism. (*Reuters*, September 30, 2021)

### AFTER AMERICA, MILITANCY SURGES IN AFGHANISTAN

Under the conditions of the truce struck between the Trump administration and the Taliban in February 2020, the militant movement agreed not to allow Islamic extremist groups to operate in territories under its control. But now, with the Taliban in control of the entire country in the wake of America's August withdrawal, that commitment is being sorely tested. Over the past month-and-a-half, sectarian violence has grown significantly. In October, ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K) - the Islamic State's franchise in the country - carried out a pair of coordinated suicide bombings against Shi'ite mosques in the country - signaling a surge in the group's targeting of groups that it considers religious enemies.

ISIS-K now appears to be active in almost all of Afghanistan's 34 provinces - and this foothold is growing as the Afghan economy deteriorates under Taliban rule. According to UN Special Representative Deborah Lyons, a humanitarian catastrophe is now imminent, while the country's economic collapse has created conditions that "help facilitate terrorism," as drugs, arms, and human trafficking becomes more prevalent. (*NPR*, October 15, 2021; *Reuters*, November 17, 2021)

### MALI'S CT STRATEGY: NEGOTIATIONS AND OUTSOURCING

The al-Qaeda-linked militant group *Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin* (JNIM) is expanding in Mali, posing a growing threat to the ruling government in Bamako. Coming amid a growing political instability and security challenges, Malian officials have pivoted to a new - and controversial - approach to extremism, and have floated the idea of opening negotiations with JNIM. The development has drawn an outcry from Mali's international partners, with French President Emmanuel Macron warning that his government would abandon its current stabilization mission in the country if Mali engages diplomatically with JNIM.

Diplomacy is not the only strategy being pursued by Malian authorities, however. Even as Bamako considers opening negotiation with its Islamist opponents, authorities are moving toward outsourcing the country's security mission by finalizing agreements with Russian private military contractors - specifically with the notorious Wagner Group run by Kremlin ally Yevgeny Prigozhin. Russian officials have vowed ongoing support for Mali's counterterrorism efforts, including the provision of materiel and training, citing the need to do "whatever is necessary to prevent threats to Mali's statehood and territorial integrity." And while Moscow has remained mum on the potential lash-up between Wagner and Bamako, it has quietly sent signals of approval to Mali. "Regarding reports on the Malian government's plans to apply for a Russian PMC's (private military contractor's) services... this question is exclusively within the jurisdiction of the legitimate Malian government," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said in a recent meeting with his Malian counterpart, Abdoulaye Diop. (*Reuters*, October 19, 2021; *France24*, November 11, 2021)

### HAMAS' SECRET STASH

Double Cheque, a business intelligence firm, has exposed the extent of clandestine financial operations carried out by Hamas over the past two decades. Between the early 2000s and 2018, the company reported, the Palestinian militant movement amassed some 40 commercial companies, mostly in the real-estate and infrastructure sectors, based in Turkey, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Algeria, and Sudan. The total value of the assets is estimated at some \$500 million. While information after 2018 is limited, it appears that Turkey and Algeria remain major sources of foreign investment for Hamas, while countries such as the UAE and Sudan have halted much of the group's ability to operate following the signing of the "Abraham Accords" last Fall. (*Jerusalem Post*, October 28, 2021)