

# [Yemen's Daesh affiliate claims Aden police station attack](#)

Author:

AP

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Fri, 2019-08-02 10:11

SANAA: Daesh's affiliate in Yemen has claimed responsibility for a deadly attack on a police station in the southern city of Aden the previous day. That attack killed 11 people and involved suicide bombers using a car, a bus and motorcycles laden with explosives that targeted a police station in the city's Omar al-Mokhtar neighborhood during a morning police roll-call. It was one of two major attacks in Aden on Thursday that killed a total of 51 people. The other attack involved a ballistic missile fired by Yemen's Houthi militants at a military parade and killed at least 40 troops.



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Al-Qaeda attack kills 19 soldiers in south Yemen: security officials  
Tehran blamed for Yemen carnage after scores die in parade attack

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## [Airstrikes halt in Syria's Idlib as truce goes into effect](#)

Author:

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Fri, 2019-08-02 07:41

BEIRUT: Opposition activists said airstrikes have stopped in northwestern Syria after a truce went into effect there, seeking to reduce violence in the wake of a three-month government offensive.

Syrian state media quoted an unnamed military official as saying the conditional cease-fire went into effect at midnight Thursday.

The reports say the rebels will have to retreat 20 kilometers from demilitarized areas around the stronghold agreed to in a cease-fire deal reached last September.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights says the province of Idlib is witnessing "cautious calm" on Friday as warplanes stopped flying over the province.

Ahmad Sheikho of the opposition's Syrian Civil Defense, also known as White Helmet, says that since midnight "there are no warplanes in the air" but that artillery shelling continued.



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First group of Lebanese, Syrian, Palestinian pilgrims leave Beirut for Hajj  
Syrian regime gains ground in opposition bastion

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## [Syrian regime gains ground in opposition bastion](#)

Author:

Thu, 2019-08-01 22:48

BEIRUT: Syrian regime forces have gained some ground in the country's last opposition bastion during a Russian-backed offensive that aid agencies warn is growing bloodier.

The wave of violence in northwest Syria since late April has killed more than 400 civilians and forced more than 440,000 to flee toward the Turkish border, the UN said last week.

Syria's army seized a handful of villages, fields and hills in the Hama countryside in the past two days, a military media unit for Lebanon's

Hezbollah, which fights alongside Damascus, said on Thursday.

The region – including Idlib province and parts of nearby Hama – is part of the last major stronghold of armed opposition to Syria's Bashar Assad, who has vowed to reclaim all of Syria, though his side has not made major advances in this latest assault.

In rare public comments, the Syrian army's political chief pledged to seize Idlib if Russia, Assad's key ally, does not reach a diplomatic solution with Turkey, long an opposition backer.

Airstrikes by the Syrian regime and its allies have hit schools, hospitals, markets and bakeries, UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet said last week. She denounced the "apparent international indifference" to the mounting civilian casualties.

Bombing has escalated in the last four weeks, killing and wounding more people than at any time this year, the nonprofit Doctors Without Borders said on Wednesday night.

At least 33 children were killed since the end of June, more than during all of 2018, the charity Save the Children said last week. "Bodies, some torn into pieces or burned beyond recognition, are still being recovered from the rubble," it said.

Maj. Gen. Hasan Hasan, head of the Syrian Army's political bureau, said on Thursday that the military path to eliminate "terrorism" in the north is ongoing.

He told the pro-regime Al-Watan newspaper that it would be good if Moscow or Tehran could find a solution through talks with Ankara, which has Turkish forces stationed in the northwest.

"But at the same time, when matters reach a dead end, then the Syria Arab Army which cleansed all these vast areas ... will not stop at all, neither at Idlib nor at any area," he said.

The dominant force in Idlib is Tahrir Al-Sham, formerly the Nusra Front, and factions backed by Turkey also have a presence in the region.

The regime has described its operations as responses to militant violations and has denied targeting civilians during the eight-year war.

Idlib falls within a "de-escalation zone" agreed on last year.



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Syrian regime, Russian forces kill over 40 civilians in Idlib province:  
MonitorUN experts: Daesh aims for resurgence in Iraq, Syria

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## [Egypt calls for Palestinian state during Kushner visit](#)

Author:

Associated Press

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1564671370480079700

Thu, 2019-08-01 14:44

CAIRO: Egypt's president has reiterated his support for the creation of a Palestinian state during talks with White House envoy Jared Kushner. Kushner is visiting the region to rally support for the administration's efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. President Donald Trump's administration has not endorsed a two-state solution, which has long been seen internationally as the only viable path to peace. Egypt issued a statement Thursday saying President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi told Kushner that Egypt supports efforts aimed at resolving the conflict "on the

basis of a two-state solution and the creation of Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital.”

Kushner, Trump’s son-in-law, is promoting the economic component of a yet-unreleased peace plan.

The Palestinians have cut ties with the White House, saying Trump’s policies are unfairly biased toward Israel.



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Jared Kushner meets with Jordan’s King Abdullah for talks on Middle East peace plan  
White House’s Kushner to finalize Palestinian economic plan on Middle East tour

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## [UN experts: Daesh aims for resurgence in Iraq, Syria](#)

Author:

By EDITH M. LEDERER | AP

ID:

1564668494839825800

Wed, 2019-07-31 23:40

UNITED NATIONS: Leaders of the Daesh extremist group are aiming to consolidate and create conditions for an “eventual resurgence in its Iraqi and Syrian heartlands,” UN experts said in a new report.

The panel of experts said in a report to the Security Council this week that

the process is more advanced in Iraq, where Daesh leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi and most of the militant group's leadership are now based following the fall of the so-called "caliphate" that he declared in the two neighboring countries.

In Syria, where the last Daesh stronghold was toppled in March, the Daesh covert network is spreading and sleeper cells are being established at the provincial level, mirroring what has been happening in Iraq since 2017, the report said.

As for Al-Qaeda, the panel said the extremist group "remains resilient" though its immediate global threat is not clear, with its leader, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, "reported to be in poor health and doubts as to how the group will manage the succession."

The report said "the most striking international developments" during the first six months of 2019 include "the growing ambition and reach of terrorist groups in the Sahel and West Africa," where fighters from Daesh and Al-Qaeda are collaborating to undermine fragile countries. "The number of regional states threatened with contagion from insurgencies in the Sahel and Nigeria has increased," said the experts, who monitor UN sanctions against both extremist groups.

In a video message in late April, Al-Baghdadi said Daesh "still aspires to have global relevance and expects to achieve this by continuing to carry out international attacks," the panel said.

The experts said Daesh is currently dependent on attacks that it inspires like the Easter Sunday church bombings in Sri Lanka. Al-Baghdadi mentioned the bombings but the panel said Daesh leaders "clearly knew nothing" in advance.

Whether or not the Sri Lankan attacks were motivated by a previous attack on Muslims at mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, in March, "the narrative of interfaith conflict is concerning," the panel added.

Looking ahead, the experts said the Daesh group "will reinvest in the capacity to direct and facilitate complex international attacks when it has the secure space and time to do so." The panel added, "The current abatement of such attacks, therefore, may not last long, possibly not even until the end of 2019."

The panel said up to 30,000 foreign fighters and others who traveled to the so-called "caliphate" that Daesh established in parts of Iraq and Syria may still be alive, "and their future prospects will be of international concern for the foreseeable future."

Outside Syria and Iraq, the experts said, Daesh and Al-Qaeda are contending "for dominance and international relevance." They said that in Afghanistan, concerns remain about short-term and long-term threats posed by groups affiliated with both Daesh and Al-Qaeda as well as "foreign terrorist fighters who have established themselves on Afghan territory."

Here are the experts' assessments of threats posed by Daesh and Al-Qaeda in other regions:

**ARABIAN PENINSULA** – Regional member states say the temporary strategy of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is to prioritize the fight against the Daesh affiliate in Yemen to maintain its dominant position, rather than fight Houthi Shiite rebels who are in a war with the government, which is backed by a Saudi-led coalition. An unidentified country reported that Al-Qaeda has been unable to establish itself in Saudi Arabia.

AFRICA – Daesh activity in southern Libya gained momentum as a result of preoccupation with fighting around the capital of Tripoli, and the extremist group is assessed to have substantial financial resources seized when it controlled the city of Sirte. A sharp rise in violence and recruitment efforts in West Africa, motivated by Daesh or Al-Qaeda affiliates, has been exacerbated “by porous borders and authorities ill-equipped to confront the growing threat.” In Somalia, Al-Qaeda affiliate Al-Shabab has shifted from high-impact attacks to sustained, frequent and eventually daily multiple attacks.

EUROPE – Online propaganda encouraging low-tech, Daesh-inspired attacks is still available but member states report a reduced incidence of successful attacks. Nonetheless, European countries “assess that the risk remains high.”

ASIA – Countries in central Asia see the greatest threat from their nationals returning from Iraq and Syria, and to a lesser extent from Afghanistan. In Southeast Asia, a series of successful and thwarted attacks attributed to Daesh-affiliated groups “underscores the persistent nature of the threat in the region.”



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