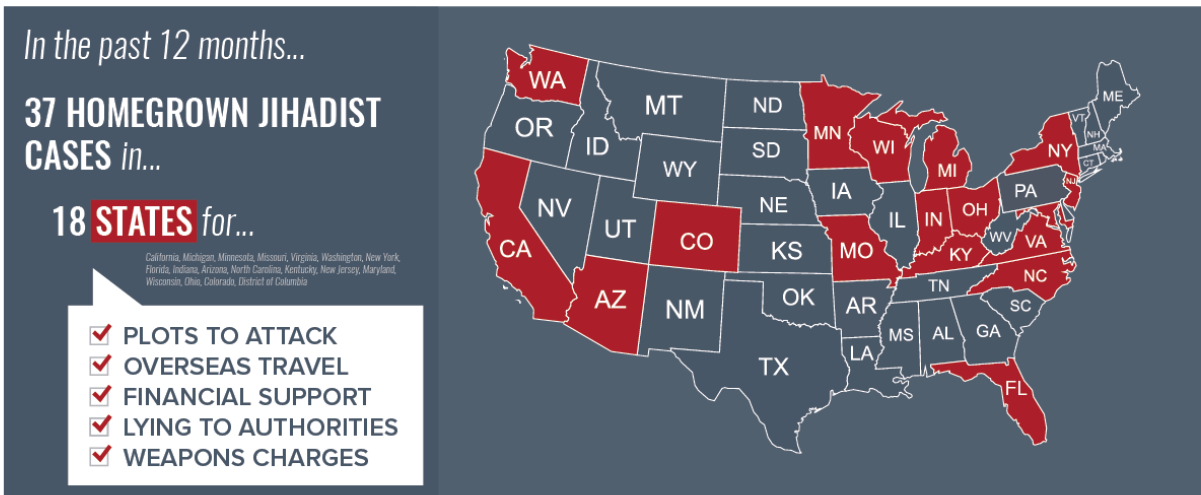


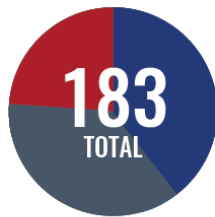


THE PERSISTENT TERROR THREAT TO THE UNITED STATES



TOTAL ISIS-LINKED PLOTS TO ATTACK THE WEST

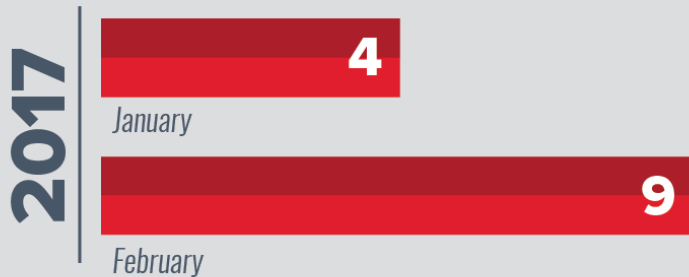
(2013 - Present)



- **74** IN EUROPE
- **37** IN THE U.S.
- **72** TARGETING WESTERNERS OUTSIDE U.S./EUROPE

See note in report regarding methodology changes

13 ISIS-LINKED PLOTS AGAINST THE WEST in...



HOMELAND.HOUSE.GOV

This document is produced by the Majority Staff of the House Homeland Security Committee. It is based on information culled from open source materials, including media reports, publicly available government statements, and nongovernmental assessments.

KEY POINTS

- ◆ In America, homegrown jihadist cases have hit a disturbing milestone, numbering over 200 since the attacks of September 11, 2001.



- ◆ ISIS continues to inspire and direct terrorist plotting at a high rate with 13 plots or attacks against Western targets since just the beginning of 2017, an average of more than one a week. At the same time, Al Qaeda poses a persistent danger—from Iraq and Syria to Yemen and Somalia—and remains determined to strike the United States.
- ◆ The threat level is particularly elevated in Europe, where more than a half-dozen jihadist plots have been thwarted in the past month. The growing danger on the European continent also poses a threat to U.S. interests overseas and, ultimately, to the homeland.
- ◆ Terrorists’ growing use of small drones and chemical weapons for attacks in the conflict zone in Iraq and Syria is raising alarm that the same tactics might be exported for terrorist attacks in the West.
- ◆ Terror activity in Afghanistan is also on the rise, as Taliban militants rocked the country with a number of attacks in February, and as ISIS’ Khorasan Province continues to expand its strength throughout both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

HOMEGROWN ISLAMIST EXTREMISM

- ◆ Homegrown Islamist extremism has reached a new and disturbing milestone, with more than 200 total homegrown jihadist cases in the United States since 9/11 (202), a majority of which have occurred in just the past few years.¹
- ◆ The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) claims it is still tracking more than 1,000 homegrown violent extremists in the United States, most of which are part of ISIS-related cases.²

Recent Developments

- ◆ [February 19, 2017](#): In Cary, NC, 27-year-old Garrett Grimsley was arrested and charged with transmitting a threat to injure a person. Grimsley had sent private messages of radical Islamist nature against non-Muslims and posted a public message on an anonymous app, saying “Salam....don’t go to Cary tomorrow.” Authorities who searched Grimsley’s home found an AK-47 along with four 30-round magazines and approximately 340 rounds of ammunition.
- ◆ [February 17, 2017](#): Robert Lorenzo Hester Jr., age 25, from Columbia, Missouri was charged with providing material support to ISIS by preparing to launch a terrorist attack with undercover law enforcement agents that he believed were associated with ISIS. The undercover [FBI agents](#) constructed a fake plan to [target](#) buses, trains, and a train station in Kansas City on President’s Day with Hester’s participation.³

¹ These figures are based on open-source data compiled and analyzed by the Majority Staff of the Homeland Security Committee. Data recently collected on the previous charges of homegrown members of Al Shabaab have led to an increase in the number of homegrown jihadist cases tracked by the Committee since 9/11.

² This data was provided by the FBI in a letter to House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Michael McCaul dated January 19, 2017.

³ This plot is counted both as a homegrown jihadist case and an ISIS-linked plot against the West.



ISIS TERROR PLOTS AGAINST THE WEST

- ◆ Since ISIS was formed, there have been at least 183 ISIS-linked plots or attacks against Western targets, including 13 known plots since the beginning of the year, nine of which were in February.⁴
- ◆ Despite losing territory in its safe havens, ISIS continues to be the lead driver of jihadist activity in the West. In Europe, Germany's domestic intelligence service (the BfV) noted a [considerable jump](#) in radical Islamists from around 100 people of concern in 2013 to about 1,600 today. According to [BfV Chief](#) Hans-Georg Maassen, approximately 570 individuals are considered capable of a terror plot, and between two and four credible terrorism tips are received daily. The growing number of such cases in Europe poses a clear threat to America, given the ease of travel between the European continent and the United States.

Recent Developments

- ◆ [February 26, 2017](#): Jurgen Kantner, a 70-year-old German was [beheaded](#) by Abu Sayyaf after he was captured in November 2016 while sailing in the Philippines with his partner Sabine Merz. Merz was found [dead](#) on the couple's boat, and Kantner was held by the group until his February beheading, allegedly in Sulu Province. Abu Sayyaf demanded a ransom payment of \$600,000 by February 26, 2017 from the German and Philippine governments. Kantner was killed after the deadline passed.
- ◆ [February 21, 2017](#): A man identified as Sascha L. was [arrested](#) on suspicion of planning a terror attack, along with possession of items that could create an explosive. He had previously been arrested in 2014 for spreading [ISIS messages](#) online, but, until 2013, there is [speculation](#) that the suspect was a neo-Nazi.
- ◆ [February 11, 2017](#): 45-year-old Danish citizen Mahamad Laban and 38-year-old Swedish citizen Mohammed Tefik Saleh were [arrested](#) in Turkey after 10 days of police interrogation. The two men were suspected of planning ISIS attacks in Europe.
- ◆ [February 10, 2017](#): Four suspects, a 16-year-old girl and three men, were arrested in Montpellier, Clapiers, and Marseillan, France in a foiled terror plot. The three were constructing triacetone triperoxide (TATP), the same explosive used in the Paris and Brussels attacks. The girl involved in the plot had pledged [allegiance](#) to ISIS via video on her cell phone and the investigation produced a partially assembled [improvised explosive device](#).

⁴ These figures are based on open-source data compiled and analyzed by the Majority Staff of the Homeland Security Committee. Previously, Committee staff did not include individual Western hostage cases as terror plots, but ISIS-related hostage incidents are now being counted as part of the total, which include past hostage cases in which Westerners were held by Abu Sayyaf Group after they [pledged allegiance to ISIS](#) in the summer of 2014.



- ◆ [February 9, 2017](#): Police questioned a 23-year-old Nigerian and 27-year-old Algerian in Göttingen, Germany on suspicion of plotting extremist violence. Authorities [found](#) improvised weapons, large amounts of ammunition, and ISIS flags in their possession. The men were said to have discussed preliminary ideas for an attack, but prosecutors later stated “they had not committed any concrete crime” resulting in no further investigation. They are currently being held awaiting [deportation](#) and can be held in this capacity for up to 12 months.
- ◆ [February 8, 2017](#): Sameh Bayda and Alo-Bridget Namoa, both age 19, were [accused](#) this month of “conspiracy to do an act, or acts in preparation for, or planning, a terrorist act or acts” in Sydney, Australia after being taken into custody in early 2016 on lesser charges. They remained in custody at the time of further charges. According to previous court documents, Sameh Bayda gathered directions on constructing an explosive as well as how to commit a stabbing attack.
- ◆ [February 3, 2017](#): Abdullah Reda al-Hamahmy carried out an attack on soldiers at the entrance to the Louvre museum in Paris. While holding two machetes he shouted “Allahu Akhbar,” then [struck](#) one soldier and knocked down another before being shot in the stomach. Cans of spray paint were found in the attacker’s backpack. Al-Hamahmy had posted [pro-ISIS statements](#) on his twitter account: “Why are they afraid of the establishment of an Islamic state? Because the country of Islam will defend its resources and territory and the honour and dignity of Muslims.”
- ◆ [February 1, 2017](#): A 36-year-old Tunisian asylum seeker named as Haikel S. was arrested on suspicion of planning a terrorist attack during sweeping raids in Germany. The assailant is also wanted in Tunisia for his suspected involvement in the planning and executing of the 2015 [attack](#) on the Bardo Museum, which killed 21 foreign tourists. In August 2016, he was [detained](#) in Germany for a 2008 bodily harm conviction. However, like Anis Amri, the 2016 German Christmas market attacker, he was not able to be extradited due to a lack of required paperwork by the Tunisian authorities.

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST ISLAMIST TERROR

ISIS

Operations Against ISIS Territory

- ◆ [February 19, 2017](#): The fight for Mosul’s liberation from ISIS moved into west Mosul, as [announced](#) by Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi. The eastern portion of the city was taken by Iraqi government forces last month, and troops are working to [advance](#) on the remaining part of the city under ISIS control.
- ◆ As the operation in Mosul advances, the dispersion of ISIS fighters remains a threat. ISIS militants fleeing the offensive are [blending](#) into the crowds in an attempt to pass screening.



ISIS members are being extracted from groups and detained as some local Mosul residents serve as [“sources”](#), helping security forces to identify those involved in the group.

- ◆ [February 7, 2017](#): A Pentagon spokesman confirmed that signs of sulfur mustard have been detected around Mosul University, a central location in ISIS’ chemical weapons program, and that at least once a day Iraqi forces are encountering grenade-equipped ISIS drones. The group’s new, unconventional tactics—especially with chemical weapons and drones—have sparked fears that such methods might be used in Western attacks.

Notable ISIS Members Targeted

- ◆ [February 9, 2017](#): The Pentagon announced that top ISIS Khorasan [commander](#) Qari Munib was killed in an airstrike in eastern Afghanistan. Munib was [responsible](#) for multiple attacks in Kabul and [“large-scale atrocities”](#) in Nangarhar on the border of Pakistan.

Recent Non-Western ISIS Attacks

- ◆ Last month, ISIS formally established its [“Unmanned Aircraft of the Mujahideen”](#) unit, revealing a growing determination to use drones as a method of attack. While U.S. and Iraqi soldiers in range of the front lines have been warned of this development, observers are [concerned](#) ISIS will look to use drones against civilians.
- ◆ [February 24, 2017](#): Two [attacks](#) near Syria’s al-Bab killed 65 people, including civilians, as ISIS retreated from one of its last strongholds in northern Syria. ISIS claimed responsibility for the first attack Friday, one day after Turkish and rebel forces [regained](#) control of the town.
- ◆ [February 17, 2017](#): Afghan Army security posts were attacked by ISIS in eastern Nangarhar province, killing 17 soldiers. ISIS approached the posts from three different directions, initiating heavy fighting in which 21 ISIS fighters were also killed.
- ◆ [February 16, 2017](#): 88 people were killed and hundreds injured in one of the [deadliest attacks](#) in Pakistan in years at a shrine to Sufi saint Lal Shahbaz Qalandar in Sehwan. The bombing was claimed by ISIS Khorasan and incited [overnight raids](#) ending in the death of at least 39 suspected militants.
- ◆ [February 9, 2017](#): In an attack on a [convoy](#) in northeast Nigeria, Boko Haram killed seven new army recruits and wounded 19 soldiers while abducting a female soldier. The [attack](#) was executed in the town of Mafa, which is 30 miles east of Boko Haram’s birthplace, Maidaguri.
- ◆ [February 8, 2017](#): ISIS claimed responsibility for an attack that killed four guards at the International Village Hotel in Somalia’s Puntland.



- ◆ [February 8, 2017](#): Gunmen from a local Afghan affiliate of ISIS delivered a deadly [attack](#) International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) workers as they delivered aid in northern Afghanistan. Six employees were killed and two employees were missing after the attack and feared [abducted](#) by the group. ICRC in Afghanistan's director [Yves Daccord](#) said it was the "the worst attack against us [in] 20 years."
- ◆ [February 7, 2017](#): ISIS claimed responsibility for a suicide bomb that killed 20 and wounded at least 35 in a parking lot near the Supreme Court in Kabul. According to Basir Mojahid, spokesman for Kabul's chief of police, the blast [targeted](#) Supreme Court employees leaving work.

AL QAEDA

Notable Al Qaeda Members Targeted

- ◆ [February 27, 2017](#): The reported deputy leader of Al Qaeda, [Abu al-Khayr al-Masri](#), was targeted in a drone strike on a small car in Syria's Idlib province. Jihadist websites confirmed the death. Al-Masri, a key planner of major U.S.-targeted terror attacks, was a close confidante of the group's leader Ayman al-Zawahiri and was married to one of Osama bin Laden's daughters. An [audio](#) message was released by Al-Masri in July 2016 supporting the break between Al Nusra Front and Al Qaeda.

Recent Al Qaeda Attacks

AQAP

- ◆ [February 26, 2017](#): AQAP fighters attacked al Houthi-Saleh forces in eastern Ibb in Yemen and also detonated an IED in the Nadirah district of Ibb. Additionally, the group targeted al Houthi-Saleh forces in al Bayda governorate with small arms, while also attacking al Houthi-Saleh forces in Bayda the same day, marking four attacks by AQAP militants between February 25 and 26, 2017.

Al Shabaab

- ◆ [February 16, 2017](#): Al Shabaab claimed responsibility for blasts outside of the presidential palace in Somalia during a ceremony transferring power to President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed. [Two civilians](#) were killed as three mortars hit a residential area near to the ceremony.
- ◆ [February 7, 2017](#): In the lower Jubba region of Somalia, Al Shabaab [publicly beheaded](#) four men who were found guilty by an al Shabaab court of being spies for Somalia's Western-backed government, the United States, and Kenya.

Tahrir al-Sham



- ◆ [February 23, 2017](#): The newly formed Tahrir al-Sham, originally [comprised](#) of Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (formerly Al Nusra Front), the Nour al-Din al-Zinki group, Liwa al-Haqq, Jaish al-Sunna and Jabhat Ansar al-Din, announced the termination of one its groups. In a recent attack in Syria, Liwa al-Aqsa killed over 150 Tahrir al-Sham members, prompting the elimination of the group from the alliance.
- ◆ [February 25, 2017](#): Attacks on [Homs security bases](#) left the local head of military intelligence dead along with a potential 40 others. Carried out by [Tahrir al-Sham](#), the attacks reportedly hit the military security headquarters in Homs along with a branch of state security.

SELECT ATTACKS, OTHER ISLAMIST TERROR GROUPS

- ◆ [February 28, 2017](#): The [Afghan Taliban](#) attacked police officers in Helmand Province, killing 11 in a gunfight at a police guard post, then blowing up the post itself while taking weapons from the victims.
- ◆ [February 21, 2017](#): Suicide bombers from the Pakistan Taliban group Jamaat-ur-Ahrar attacked a courthouse complex in Tangi, Charsadda district, [wounding](#) over 15 people. The bombers allegedly threw hand grenades and fire shots in order to enter the court, but were eventually killed. Two [attackers](#) detonated their devices and one was killed by police.
- ◆ [February 17, 2016](#): The [Afghan Taliban](#) killed five police officers and left one missing in eastern Kunar province during a raid on several security posts. The attack lasted nearly two hours but police eventually drove the Taliban from the posts.
- ◆ [February 15, 2017](#): The [Pakistan Taliban](#) carried out two deadly suicide attacks in the same day. In the first attack, a suicide bomber killed five people when he detonated his device outside of a government office. Later that day, a suicide bomber [killed](#) the driver of van carrying judges in Peshawar and wounded several of the judges.