

NCT National Centre for Terrorist
Threat Assessment



Annual review
2025

Innehåll

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Introduction

The National Centre for Terrorist Threat Assessment (NCT) assess annually the terrorist threat to Sweden in the form of a forward-looking report. The report presented here is an overall annual assessment for the year 2025.

It starts off with a description of the terrorist attack threat over the past year, with assessments of what modus operandi and targets may be expected in 2025. Focus will be on terrorist attacks in the West that have either been carried out, or thwarted, and will also include acts of violence plausibly deniable by a state.¹ This will be followed by an account of a number of capability-enhancing circumstances such as facilitators, travellers to conflict zones, and financing of terrorism.

Thereafter, there will be a discussion on a number of intent-driving factors, such as disinformation and propaganda, as well as on how a generally deteriorated security situation affects international terrorist actors and the tendency of states to use violence in such a way that is plausibly deniable. The analysis will also include a number of difficult-to-assess phenomena, such as ideological hybridisation and a fascination with violence among underage individuals.

In the report's final and concluding section, international circumstances that could potentially have a long-term effect on the terrorist threat to Sweden will be discussed.²

1 The capability of a state to use deniable violence refers to a method in which state actors pursue their own political and security policy interests by covertly, and outside of their own state's territory, conducting acts of violence which are carried out in part by non-state proxies, and in part by actors associated with the state, but acting undercover.

2 Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine will not be discussed in the report, as no development linked to the war has been noted as having a bearing on the terrorism threat during 2024.



The terrorist attack threat to Sweden

During 2024, no terrorist attacks were carried out in Sweden. Over the past year, Sweden has once again reverted to being regarded as a legitimate target for international Islamist terrorist organisations, on par with other Western countries. This may be compared to 2023 when Sweden was mentioned specifically, in part due to the Qur'an burnings, which received considerable attention, and the disinformation campaigns depicting Sweden as anti-Islamic.³ The number of threats to Sweden, and specific mentions of Sweden in propaganda has gradually declined since the fall of 2023. During the past year, there were only a few instances in which Sweden was specifically mentioned. This shift in focus is primarily due to the outbreak of the war between Hamas and Israel. It is unlikely that a sustained peace agreement between warring parties in the Middle East would entail that international terrorist organisations would once again consider Sweden as a prioritised target.

The terrorist attack threat posed by both violent Islamist and violent right-wing extremists has declined over 2024. Seven terrorist attacks motivated by violent Islamism were conducted in the West during 2024. In three of these cases, the war between Israel and Hamas was the primary factor providing motivation and legitimacy for the attacks.⁴ A single terrorist attack motivated by violent right-wing extremism was carried out during 2024. As a whole, this has been a noticeable reduction compared to the previous year.⁵

The trend of underage actors has persisted throughout 2024.⁶ The majority of underage actors linked to thwarted and successful terrorist attacks had been inspired by the Islamic State (IS).

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- 3 The campaign known as the LVU campaign was initiated towards the end of 2021. LVU refers to the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act. Initially this consisted of criticism of the Swedish social services' taking children into custody based on what was perceived as being false grounds. Subsequently this came to include depictions of Sweden as an anti-Islamic country.
- 4 In the West during 2024, there were in total 19 thwarted terrorist attacks which had been motivated by violent Islamism; this may be compared with 21 thwarted attacks during 2023.
- 5 In total there were three thwarted terrorist attacks motivated by violent right-wing extremism in the West during 2024; this may be compared to ten thwarted attacks during 2023. In addition to this, there were five attacks with unclear ideological motivating factors.
- 6 Thwarted terrorist attacks involving young suspects may be an indication of the perpetrators' lack of capability.

The main terrorist attack threat to Sweden in 2025 will likely continue to be posed by lone perpetrators who are inspired to action based on violent Islamist or violent right-wing extremist ideology. Contact with like-minded individuals occurs almost exclusively online, but there is often no clear link to an international terrorist organisation. Despite developments in the digital sphere, physical platforms still continue to be utilised for attack planning and radicalisation. It is likely that any terrorist attacks carried out in Sweden or abroad, whether by violent Islamists or violent right-wing extremists, would inspire like-minded actors to carry out acts of violence.

The perception of Sweden as anti-Islamic, however, persists, and will likely continue to do so even beyond the assessment period. It is probable that this perception will periodically resurface, to various extents, should more incidents occur which may be considered as anti-Islamic, in particular if they occur in a context that is sensitive for Sweden in terms of security policy.

Modus operandi and choice of target

The modus operandi and targets for those attacks carried out in the West during the past year have largely adhered to the trends observed in recent years, i.e. lone perpetrators using relatively simple means such as vehicles, bladed weapons and firearms to carry out terrorist attacks on soft targets, mainly easily-accessible, unprotected locations and individuals.

The thwarted terrorist attacks over this year which had been motivated by violent Islamism were, generally speaking, aimed at the same types of targets as before, i.e. Jewish and Christian targets and symbolic targets linked to, for example, Israel, or individuals who are perceived as being anti-Islamic. It is likely that these types of targets will continue to be selected during 2025. Based on the developments observed over the past several years of young actors aiming to carry out terrorist attacks by way of relatively simple means, the most probable targets selected during 2025 will be public locations that are difficult to protect.

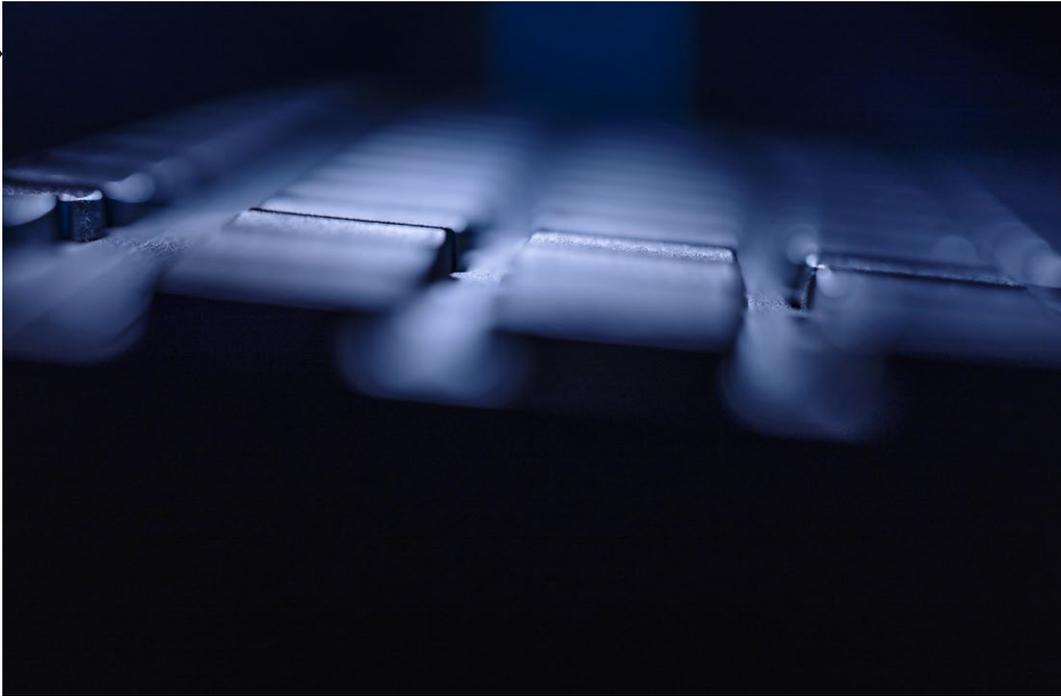
For violent right-wing extremists, it is probable that the highest priority targets will continue to be those that are Jewish, Israeli, and Muslim, LGBTQ+ individuals, non-European immigrants, and public officials such as political representatives or government agency officials.

During 2024, violent Islamist propaganda have called for terrorist attacks targeting arena events, such as concerts, the Olympic games in Paris, and the European Football Championship in Germany.⁷ However, all large-scale events in Europe could be held, even if a small number of terrorist attacks had been thwarted, among which an isolated number had been targeting larger events.

Love perpetrators tend to select targets based on personal motivating factors, networks, their own capability, and accessibility to the target. Furthermore, the planning phase for lone perpetrators is shorter compared to the planning of more complex terrorist attacks. The number of terrorist attacks motivated by specific, instigating factors, such as, for example, Qur'an burnings, has likely increased in recent years.

No development in capability-enhancement, or indications of a change in modus operandi which would affect the terrorist threat to Sweden in the short-term, has been noted over the course of 2024. The use of explosives continues to be of interest, but the number of cases in the West where the intent was concrete or materialized, are few. The interest in 3D-printed firearms remains for violent right-wing extremists, even if few cases indicating further development in the technology for this have been noted. The same applies to the usage of drones (UAS, Uncrewed Aerial Systems). Despite UAS being relatively accessible, and cost-efficient, they have not featured within the context of a terrorist attack in the West, even if an interest in the method has been noticed.

⁷ During 2024, elections were also held for the European Parliament (June), in the UK (July) and in France (July).



Capability-enhancing conditions

During the year, there were a number of circumstances which could potentially affect the terrorist threat to Sweden and Swedish interests abroad.⁸ Factors which may affect the capabilities of actors are, for example, growth, radicalisation, recruitment, and financing.

Facilitators within transnational networks

A particular factor during the past few years is that international violent Islamist terrorist organisations are seeking out suitable perpetrators based in Sweden. However, foreign-based actors have a difficult time identifying and coming into contact with suitable individuals in Sweden. In a small number of cases, this led foreign actors to enable or encourage other actors to travel to Sweden in order to conduct a terrorist attack.

Sweden-based actors also continue to seek out and establish contact with violent Islamists abroad via encrypted communication channels. In a number of cases, contact was instigated by way of specific individuals acting as middlemen between actors in Sweden and violent Islamists either in the Middle East or the Horn of Africa. This facilitation establishes contacts between violent foreign-based Islamists, and generally younger actors based in Sweden and in the West. This likely has a radicalisation effect, as the facilitators can encourage and increase the intent to commit ideologically motivated crimes, including terrorist attacks.

Travellers to conflict zones

Violent Islamists continue to call for travelling to conflict zones or regions where international terrorist organisations are active. Mainly digital platforms are being used to recruit and encourage travelling, though there are a few physical platforms in Sweden continuing to serve as gathering points. These also make it possible for leading individuals to present narratives of violence, raise funds, plan activities and convey contacts to foreign actors.

Since a couple of years ago, when the IS's organisation called for its sympathisers to

⁸ Interests abroad refers to official representation abroad, in particular diplomatic missions and their associated personnel.

immigrate to regions in Africa where IS has a strong presence, there has been an increase in the number of travellers to the African continent, albeit from relatively low numbers. The majority of those individuals aligning themselves with the different Islamic State provinces in Africa, are locals from the region.

During 2024, a few Swedish violent Islamists attempted to travel to join up with terrorist organisations in Africa, with a small number of individuals succeeding. It has been assessed that such actions will continue to occur during 2025. A number of hindrances remain for travellers from the West, for example a deficient facilitation network, cultural and language barriers. It may also be possible that the ideological incitement is weaker due to the African continent having less significance within Islam.

As to actors who are returning from violent Islamist groups in conflict zones, these individuals are considered as posing a possible terrorist attack threat to the West. It is most probable, however, that these individuals will affect the terrorist threat in the long-term by actively being involved in radicalisation and recruitment.

It is unlikely that the remaining Swedish travellers, who are voluntarily in Syria, intend to return to Sweden. It is probable that the continued conflict and fractures in Syria will result in the imprisoned individuals with links to the Islamic State, being released or freed during 2025.

Financing of violent extremism and terrorism

Considering the development of lone perpetrators using relatively simple methods, the financing of terrorist attacks has been assessed as unlikely to currently have an effect on the terrorist threat to Sweden. The financing activities which are taking place in Sweden, however, should be seen as enabling violent extremists to sustain themselves, and make it possible for them to continue being active. It is likely that this type of financing will have a long-term effect on the terrorist threat to Sweden.

It is also likely that financial contributions to international terrorist organisations will not have a significant effect on their abilities to run activities. In general, however, international donations will likely have a further positive effect on the general finances of terrorist organisations.⁹

Religious platforms such as mosques are used by violent Islamists for fundraising, even if those collecting the funds are not necessarily being transparent about what the money will be used for.

In general, violent extremists use traditional methods for transactions, such as couriers and bank transactions, in combination with newer methods in the form of cryptocurrencies, fintech companies¹⁰ and neobanks.¹¹

⁹ In Sweden, the PKK continues to be the most prominent group regarding financing, particularly when it comes to fundraising and criminal activities. The PKK has a well-developed network of front organisations and support structures in Sweden, which spread and amplify the organisation's narratives, and finance the organisation through economic crime and diverse forms of racketeering. It is likely that this is partially being used for the financing of terrorism abroad, and the activities of the PKK in Sweden.

¹⁰ Fintech companies are companies which combine financial services with software technology. They often put considerable focus on growth, digital solutions, and low costs. Therefore, there is an inherent risk that they have not allotted resources for practically implementing control functions.

¹¹ The term neobank is used to describe fintech companies which challenge traditional banks by, among other things, focussing on innovation, fluidity, and fast implementation of new technology.

Acts of violence that are plausibly deniable by a state

During the spring of 2024, there were a number of successful and thwarted attacks in the vicinity of the Israeli Embassy in Stockholm, where information emerged that criminal actors were acting on behalf of foreign state actors.¹² State actors continue to have an interest in using non-state actors as proxies, as well as their own personnel who act undercover, to carry out acts of violence.

Acts of violence against targets in the West that may be plausibly denied by states, have been mainly directed towards specific individuals or buildings of symbolic value. State actors do not necessarily consider these types of violent acts as being attacks on the country where the target is located, but rather as attacks on those critical of the regime, dissidents, or as attacks on another state perceived as being hostile. There have also been an isolated number of incidents indicating that foreign powers are likely prepared to take actions which could be tried as terrorist offences.

State actors are adaptable when it comes to exactly which proxy they will use in order to carry out acts of violence for which maintaining a front of plausible deniability is an important aspect. Such a front may be held, for example, by taking advantage of individuals already active in criminal networks. Individuals within criminal networks may be used, both on an opportunistic basis, and to achieve longer-term strategic objectives. Even networks or individuals with links to violent Islamist extremism may serve as potential proxies for foreign powers.

It is probable that during 2025, Iranian state actors, either themselves or by using proxies, intend to conduct attacks against targets in Sweden which could be then be tried in accordance with Swedish terrorism legislation. A potential target would likely be one associated with Judaism or Israel, or Iranian dissidents and other individuals perceived as ideological opponents.

It is probable that using proxies against targets in Europe will be a feature of the security-threatening activities carried out by state actors during 2025. It is possible that during the assessment period, state actors will have the intent to conduct attacks against and within Sweden, as well as acts of sabotage via proxies. Dependent upon the exact modus operandi used, and the outcome, these could be tried in accordance with Swedish terrorism legislation. Potential first-choice targets would likely include those associated with the military equipment industry, and related infrastructure; second-choice targets would be individuals perceived as being dissidents.

¹² In January 2024, a hand grenade was found at the Israeli Embassy in Stockholm (the incident is being investigated as a suspected terrorist crime); in May there was a shooting in close proximity to the Israeli embassy in Stockholm; in the beginning of October there was a shooting at the Israeli Embassy in Stockholm as well as explosions in the vicinity of the Israeli Embassy in Copenhagen. During 2024, there were also a number of attacks and actions carried out targeting Israeli companies, for example, shots fired at the Israeli company, Elbit, in Gothenburg, where it had also emerged in the media, information that the actors were acting on behalf of Iranian state actors.



Intent-driving circumstances

The intent to commit a terrorist attack can often be traced back to a specific event or circumstance, either real or perceived, and which serves as a catalysing factor. Conspiracy theories, campaigns of influence, or an increase in polarisation can therefore affect the terrorist threat to Sweden and Swedish interests abroad, for example by affecting what targets are selected.

Disinformation, campaigns of influence, and propaganda

The portrayal of Sweden as anti-Islamic, which culminated in 2023, has in part continued to be threat-inducing. Even foreign powers have taken advantage of the image of the Swedish state being behind the Qur'an burning demonstrations in Sweden.¹³ Although Sweden, during 2024, has reverted to being viewed as a legitimate target as part of the West, previous experiences¹⁴ have shown that incidents perceived as being anti-Islamic may be used even several years later to legitimise terrorist attacks.

Also, throughout 2024, both violent right-wing extremists and violent Islamists have continued to spread disinformation, conspiracy theories, and anti-government narratives¹⁵, sometimes in conjunction with certain incidents or in connection with topical issues that

13 The development of the negative image of Sweden throughout 2023 coincided with Sweden's application to join NATO.

14 For example, the consequences of the caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed in France and Denmark, as well as Lars Vilks' depictions of the Prophet Mohammed as a dog, and the attempted murder of Salman Rushdie, in which the perpetrator claimed that the attack was motivated by Rushdie's book, "The Satanic Verses", which, according to the perpetrator, was an attack on Islam.

15 An example of how misleading information can have violent consequences is the attack against a dance class for children in Southport, UK on 29 July 2024. Three young girls were killed, and a further eight children were seriously injured. Initially information was spread that the perpetrator was a Muslim asylum seeker. A lot of the social media posts made in connection with the incident had an anti-government narrative mixed with an anti-Islamic rhetoric; this contributed to extensive fall-out, criminal damage, and violence throughout the UK.

can be opportunistically exploited and serve as mobilisation forces to encourage violent actions by a wide range of actors. Additionally, several actors have refined the narrative used in their propaganda, and have re-launched websites and media accounts that had been previously shut down.

Terrorist organisations such as IS and al-Qaida (AQ) produce and distribute their own, official propaganda. In addition, support networks, that are not a part of the official structure, produce propaganda, spreading the ideology of terrorist organisations. It is unlikely that isolated features in propaganda are crucial for the intent of particular individuals to carry out terrorist attacks. It is however probable that propaganda consumed over time contributes to the radicalisation of an isolated number of individuals, and, in certain cases, strengthens the intent to carry out a terrorist attack. It is also possible that the choice of target and modus operandi are influenced in individual cases if specific targets and modi operandi appear frequently in the propaganda.

Young perpetrators of violence – network criminality and fascination with violence

The number of underage individuals who were perpetrators of terrorist attacks, regardless of ideological motivation, has increased during the past year.

Young perpetrators of violence have been a multi-year trend within the criminal network environment. This development has been ongoing since the start of the 2000s, and entails that more teenagers are featured in cases involving firearm violence. The hierarchical structure of network criminality entails that certain individuals, often young ones, end up in a position of dependence in relation to more experienced actors. It is probable that a prominent and influential individual within the network who develops an ideological conviction can also steer others towards a particular ideological direction.

The common denominator for many radicalised underage actors is partly that they share a fascination for violence, and partly that their convictions and knowledge tend to be more superficial than those of radicalised adults. Ideology seems rather to serve, in many cases, as a way to legitimise acts of violence rather than as the primary motivation. Young individuals that strive to vent their fascination for violence can, currently, try to join a criminal network, with such networks continuing to greatly attract individuals wanting to conduct acts of violence. It is likely that actors engaged in both contexts have access to capability-enhancing material, in particular in the form of weapons and explosives.

In recent years, a fascination for violence has also been manifested in Sweden, the USA, Canada, and the UK. The ideological driving force behind these is assessed as being linked to nihilism and misanthropy; examples are 764 and No Lives Matter.¹⁶ The violence is often of central importance for these sorts of groups, and hate is directed at society as a whole. These types of contexts may therefore offer young individuals a framework within which a joint view of the world and independently-formed ideological convictions can be developed.

¹⁶ Nihilism is a philosophical standpoint in which all knowledge is denied, and human life is considered to have no value. Misanthropy entails that an individual holds strong feelings of hate or disdain towards the human species. 764 is based on occult and accelerationist ideas. Members try to induce individuals – often young and vulnerable ones – to overturn the existing societal system by violent means. No Lives Matter (NLM) encourage violence targeting civilians in order to create chaos and accelerate society's collapse. Three manuals have been published in NLM's name on modus operandi for acts of violence and terrorist attacks; one was published in collaboration with the group Maniacs Murder Cult (MMC).

Ideological diversification

In the West, during 2024, a number of violent acts were conducted in which the modus operandi was similar to a terrorist attack. These acts implemented a relatively simple modus operandi and targeted unprotected locations. However, no clear ideological motivations ever emerged for these attacks.¹⁷ An example of this phenomenon is individuals who seem to have been motivated to carry out violence partly because of an ideological narrative such as misogyny and anti-feminism, and partly because of their feeling of having been subjected to personal injustices. Occasionally these are integrated into the narratives of more traditional violent extremist environments, not seldom referring to several simultaneously.¹⁸ The use of violence may also have elements of anti-establishment extremism.

In this way, the actors create their own, self-tailored, model of legitimisation based on individual factors such as a fascination with violence, mental health issues, and social isolation in combination with external influences such as terrorist propaganda, violent material and connections – both digital and in-person. This is in line with the ideological diversification that has become ever more prevalent, and which is touched on in several of NCT's annual reports. It is also possible that the attention surrounding a certain topical issue may also lead to the mobilisation of a larger number of actors who would not necessarily view violence as a valid tool for change, but who sympathise with the subjective frustrations related to a particular point of issue, or criticism of a perceived establishment.¹⁹

17 According to Europol, the number of violent incidents where there emerged some form of political or religious conviction without any clear link to violent extremism has somewhat increased over the past few years. Europol, Terrorism and Violent extremism of unclear ideology, 7 July 2023.

18 The attack targeting the Christmas market in Magdeburg in 2024 serves as a more recent example where the motive is unclear, and possibly a mix of different ideologies, mental health issues, and being under the influence of drugs.

19 In December 2024, the CEO of a health insurance company was shot and killed in New York. The motive is still unclear, though the murder has received considerable reactions online including, for example, the perpetrator being praised by the general public.



International circumstances

Sweden is part of the West, and Western interests continue to serve as legitimate and prioritised targets for a number of violent Islamist organisations abroad. In 2025, it is likely that a number of international developments and conflicts will have an effect mainly on the terrorist threat to Sweden and Swedish interests abroad, through actors who are motivated and inspired by the propaganda of violent Islamist terrorist organisations.

Development of the conflict in the Middle East

Ever since the large-scale terrorist attack by Hamas on Israel in October 2023, several terrorist attacks which had been motivated by the development of the conflict in the Middle East were conducted or thwarted in Europe. Several of the perpetrators expressed pro-Palestinian sympathies and they were likely inspired by the conflict, though the planning of the terrorist attacks could not be linked directly to Hamas. The war in Gaza has been a unifying force for international terrorist organisations. There have been instances in propaganda from AQ, for example, about how this development is a contributing factor in the expanding collaboration between AQ and other groups, such as the Houthi movement in Yemen. However, it is likely that AQ will continue to create propaganda that targets a Western violent Islamist audience, in order to inspire them to armed conflict both within and outside Europe.

During 2024, the continued conflict was taken advantage of in order to call others to conduct terrorist attacks and acts of violence mainly targeting Israeli and Jewish interests; this resulted in several acts of violence against, among other places, synagogues and other symbolic targets in the West.²⁰ Developments in Israel and the surrounding region will continue to play a significant role for the threat assessment, even in the event of a peace or ceasefire agreement between the warring parties.

As for Hizbullah, the war with Israel has resulted in a significant loss of leadership for

²⁰ One example of this is the explosion in La Grande-Motte in southern France on 24 August 2024. During 2024, there were in total three conducted and three thwarted acts targeting Jewish people.

the organisation. Hizbullah's limited capability to attack Israeli territory probably contributes to a stronger intent to attack Israel outside of the conflict zone, possibly even in the West. Carrying out a terrorist attack in Europe would, however, risk that the whole of Hizbullah, and not just their military branch, would become classified as a terrorist organisation which, in turn, would negatively affect Hizbullah and its activities.

Syria

It is unlikely that Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)²¹ coming to power in Syria will affect the terrorist threat to Sweden in the short-term. In the past, HTS has always had a geographically limited agenda, and the need to rebuild the country and establish a functioning transfer to a new power structure indicates that HTS has little interest in conducting terrorist attacks against the West. However, it is possible that the unstable situation in the country and the vacuum of power which may have resulted in connection with the transition to a new regime, could lead to the expansion of terrorist organisations which are active in the country. In the long-term it is possible that this will affect their capability to direct and guide attacks in the West and Sweden.

That the Islamic State has lost territory from what was previously their core region in Iraq and Syria has led to a heightened focus on their external provinces. The ambition to re-establish control in these core regions remains, and the number of attacks that are attributed to IS in Syria has increased during 2024. An explicit goal for IS is also to free their members who remain imprisoned in camps controlled by the Kurds in north-eastern Syria.²²

It is possible that the security situation in the region may be affected by the migration flows both to and from Syria. Developments regarding migration are dependent on how the shift of power continues, and to what extent the country will be divided into enclaves controlled by actors based on ethnic, religious, and political incentives, as well as to what extent support from state actors continues.

Africa as an arena for international terrorist organisations

It is likely that both IS and AQ have been able to take advantage of the unstable security situation characterising several states on the African continent. The military coups over the past years in countries within the Sahel region, combined with the fact that several Western countries have pulled out of international operations, has likely been advantageous to the growth of Islamist groups. The African continent, for IS, is demonstrative of several aspirational examples of how individual IS provinces may establish and control territory, as well as administer that territory and increase their influence. The focus of AQ is that these groups will lead to a future African emirate, with Afghanistan serving as an example. The Sahel region, as well as the Horn of Africa, will continue to be of interest in this context, based on, for example, the regions possible development in the future as a platform for planning and conducting terrorist attacks targeting the West. Also of interest is its possible potential to develop into new destinations for travellers from other continents.

IS provinces as well as AQ branches in Africa conduct kidnappings largely in the regions where they are active, as part of their revenue. Even more important, however, is that the kidnappings are used as a means of recruitment, information gathering, and instilling fear within the population who are resistant to the control and presence of these groups. Kidnappings of Westerners occur, but over the past years they have occurred less frequently, as fewer tourists make their way to the unsafe regions.

21 HTS is still classified as a terrorist organisation by several Western countries, including the EU, based on the fact that it was founded as a branch of AQ in Syria under the name Jabhat al-Nusra.

22 During the spring of 2024 an IS spokesperson declared that imprisoned members must be freed from the camp in north-eastern Syria and called for an intensified revenge campaign targeting SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces).

The Islamist terrorist organisations in Africa have, thus far, not been known for conducting terrorist attacks outside of the regions in which they are already active. It has been observed, however, how several armed Islamist groups have started to develop equipped drones to use against their rivals. This development also includes USV, Uncrewed Surface Vessels, colloquially called drone boats, which have been used by the Houthi movement to attack vessels in the Red Sea.

Afghanistan

On 22 March 2024, the IS Khorsan province (ISKP, the IS branch in Afghanistan) conducted a terrorist attack in Moscow targeting the concert house, Crocus City Hall, resulting in the death of 143 people. The terrorist attack indicates how individual IS provinces still have the intent, and in part, the capability, to conduct complex terrorist attacks outside of their geographic regions resulting in mass casualties.

The ISKP has been featured on IS propaganda channels since the Taliban's takeover of power in Afghanistan in 2021, for example, by posting messages in several languages. The core regions of the ISKP are along parts of the Afghanistan-Pakistan borderlands, but they do not command any control over the territory. Despite local challenges, and conflicts with the Taliban regime, the ISKP has been the IS province that has conducted the most terrorist attacks over the last few years, although the number of attacks from the ISKP has declined in Afghanistan and Pakistan during 2024. During 2024, the ISKP has conducted one terrorist attack targeting Westerners in Afghanistan.²³

The threat that AQ poses to the Western world remains. The organisation continues to call for sympathisers to conduct attacks in the West. The presence of AQ in Afghanistan remains constant, and it is probable that the organisation provides opportunities for training at different locations in the country. AQ is keeping a relatively low profile in Afghanistan in order to maintain good relations with the Taliban movement which, in accordance with the Doha Accord, stipulates that no terrorist groups can be active in, train, or conduct terrorist attack planning in or from Afghan soil. During 2024, the senior leading members of AQ called for Muslims worldwide to make their way to Afghanistan in order to learn how an Islamic state may be practically implemented. It is probable that the purpose of this was primarily to encourage Muslims to live in what AQ regard as a true Muslim state, rather than to call for foreign fighters to join up with the Taliban regime.

²³ In May 2024 the ISKP attacked a group of tourists in Bamiyan, resulting in the deaths of four individuals, and injuring seven.

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