

TERRORISM AND ISLAMISM IN THE MENA REGION

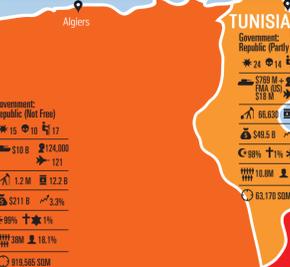
FROM 1ST AUGUST 2013 TO 31ST JANUARY 2014

STRENGTH OF ISLAMISM



TUNISIA

Strength of Islamism
In January 2014, the Tunisian National Constituent Assembly (NCA) rejected Sharia as the principal source of legislation and voted to guarantee religious freedom. Nevertheless, the constitution (2014) establishes Islam as the state religion, and the preamble acknowledges Tunisians' Arab-Muslim identity. The Muslim Brotherhood's party, Ennahda won 37% of the NCA vote in October 2011, following years of exile under former President Ben Ali. While there is support for Ennahda and conservative Salafist movements, Tunisia also has a strong secular tradition and a growing civil society, both of which act as an effective bulwark against Islamism. Islamism-inspired terrorism has increased since the revolution, with the country's most prominent Salafi-jihadist group, Ansar al-Sharia, linked to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).



ALGERIA

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Strength of Islamism
Algeria's constitution (1976) affirms Islam as the state religion and prohibits constitutional reforms that infringe upon that status. Decadal support for armed Islamist groups diminished during the civil war (1989-1998), as did support for Islamism-inspired insurgencies and Algerian security forces claimed 150,000 lives. Support for non-violent Islamism within Algerian society, however, remains high, and is rooted in the country's opposition to French colonialism and bolstered by poor socio-economic conditions in the 1980s and 1990s. In 2009, Algeria's principal armed group, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), aligned itself with global jihad and renamed itself al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). It currently operates throughout the Sahel and remains particularly strong in southern Algeria.

TERROR GROUPS

- AQIM** - Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is the latest manifestation of previously established terrorist groups (the Armed Islamic Group and Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat) integral to the Algerian civil war in the 1990s. The group operates throughout the Sahel region, although it is especially strong in Mali, Algeria, and - increasingly - Libya. AQIM has also helped spawn offshoot organizations - such as Ansar al-Din, the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa, and al-Murabitoun.
- HAMAS** - Hamas has killed hundreds of Israelis in years of suicide bombings, and is responsible for thousands of rockets fired on southern Israel. The US, Canada, and EU designate Hamas as terrorist organization.
- HEZBOLLAH** - Hezbollah is a Shia terrorist movement and political party based in Lebanon but with a global reach. Founded in 1982, its branch state over all of Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Hamas won a majority in the formation of an Islamic government in Lebanon. It has conducted dozens of deadly attacks across the world, prompting the EU to blacklist its so-called "military" wing in 2006. In Gaza, since then Hamas has steadily Islamised the Strip, deploying "village committees" and cracking down on dissent.
- ISIL** - The Islamic State of Iraq & the Levant (ISIL) is an al-Qaeda offshoot that operates in Iraq and Syria. ISIL tends to be based in the desert and valley areas of northwest Iraq, using desert caves and hills along the Syrian border in Anbar as a retreat. ISIL has carried out a frequent string of attacks in Iraq, leading to thousands of deaths. However, the group was recently downed by al-Qaeda's core leadership, after a dispute over its activities in Syria.
- ANF** - Al-Qaeda's Syrian affiliate, the al-Nusra Front (ANF), is one of the most effective fighting forces operating against the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria. The ANF is led by Abu Mohammad al-Golani, a former member of al-Qaeda in Iraq. The ANF has a presence throughout Syria and has up to 10,000 fighters supporting it. These fighters are primarily Syrians, yet there are also a significant number of foreigners - including those from the West.
- AQAP** - Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's (AQAP) creation was announced in January 2009, following a merger between al-Qaeda's Yemeni and Saudi branches. AQAP has operated in various remote parts of Yemen located to the east of Sana'a. The head of AQAP is Nair al-Wahayshi, a former secretary to Osama bin Laden. Regarded as the al-Qaeda group most operationally capable of striking within the West, it is known as al-Qaeda's 'operationally active' franchise.

TERRORIST INCIDENTS



MILITARY



COUNTRY DATA



TURKEY

Strength of Islamism
The ruling AK Party (AKP) of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is a full-blown Islamist party. It is more market-oriented and diplomatically savvy than major Islamist organisations elsewhere, but, domestically, has stayed true to typical Islamist form, imposing strict social mores and curbing individual liberties. The AKP has majorly eroded the secular tradition of Mustafa Ataturk, by, for instance, lifting the ban on headscarves. It has also curbed basic freedoms. Turkey is now the country with the highest number of journalists imprisoned in the world. It has banned websites that it finds objectionable and has taken steps to limit public alcohol consumption. Meanwhile, another Islamist organisation once allied to the AKP - the Gulen movement - is in the midst of a bitter breakup with the ruling party. Between the AKP and the Gulenists, Turkey's future still remains firmly Islamist.



SYRIA

Strength of Islamism
Prior to the revolution in 2011, Syria was a secular state, and Islamist groups such as the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood and Hizb-ur-Rahmi were heavily repressed by the Assad regime. The ongoing civil war has increased greatly the strength of Islamist groups in the country, however, and has resulted in the militarisation of Islamist politics. The largest rebel group today (the Islamic Front) is a hard-line Islamist organisation which aims to see Syria become an Islamic state. In addition to this, the increasing strength of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) has meant that some areas in the north and east of Syria are now administered under strict Islamic law, something rejected by many other rebel groups.

LIBYA

Strength of Islamism
Libya's temporary constitution is based on Sharia law, this is not surprising since the Islamist parties - and especially the Muslim Brotherhood - have a great influence on the political scene. Some of these Islamist groups have become so powerful that they have refused to become part of the al-Qaeda network, as they would rather act independently under their own name. Furthermore, Ansar al-Sharia and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) are actually controlling large swaths of territory in the south of the country, some territories in the east, and some districts of Benghazi, Syrtre, and Derna.

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EGYPT

Strength of Islamism
The strength of Islamism in Egyptian politics has weakened, as a result of the ousting of the Muslim Brotherhood's President Morsi from power. Egypt's largest Islamist group, the Muslim Brotherhood, has recently been labeled a terrorist organisation by the interim government. A constitution - banning religious political parties - was recently voted through by the public. However, some religious parties such as al-Nour have got round this by denying that they are religious parties. However, most Egyptians continue to want religion to play a prominent role in public life, and for Egypt's laws to be based on the teachings of the Quran. Furthermore, the newly drafted constitution has related Islam's fundamental role in Egypt's political and legal frameworks, stating that the principles of Sharia are the basis for Egyptian legislation. Islamist militants and terrorist groups are gaining strength and increasing levels of terrorist activity, particularly in the Sinai Peninsula.

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THE SUEZ CANAL

Approximately 7% of all seaborne traded oil and 13% of liquefied natural gas (LNG) traded worldwide transits through the Canal. Over 17,000 vessels passed through the Canal in 2012, and oil tankers typically account for 10% of traffic. 2.4 million barrels of oil are shipped through the Canal each day, which the SuHed pipeline carries 2.5m barrels (although accounting for 5.5% of world output).

YEMEN

Strength of Islamism
The Yemeni constitution states that 'Sharia is the source of all legislation', and while it is due to be rewritten in the near future, this clause is unlikely to significantly change. The main opposition group in Yemen (al-Islah) is the Muslim Brotherhood - aligned al-Islah party, a group that also contains Salafist elements. Al-Islah was a key force against Saleh at the time of the 2011 uprising and mirrors a strong Islamist and Salafist movement in Yemeni society more widely. However, there is little central government control outside of Sana'a, and much local law is dictated by religious tribal groups. Yemen also suffers from a violent Islamist insurgency headed up by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).

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IRANIAN MISSILE RANGE



IRAQ

Strength of Islamism
In the Iraqi constitution of 2005, Islam is enshrined as the 'fundamental source of legislation' (however, the fractured nature of Iraq's political system allows for secularist and nationalist groups to compete for power alongside Islamists). Iraq is plagued by high levels of terrorist attacks by Islamist insurgents, and the strength of both Shia and Sunni Islamist parties in Iraq has also grown significantly in the wake of Saddam Hussein's overthrow. Shia Islamists wield significant levels of power; for example, the current Iraqi Prime Minister, Nouri al-Maliki, is a member of the Shia Islamist party known as the Islamic Dawia Party.



IRAN

Strength of Islamism
Iran is a theocracy and an Islamic Republic, basing its legal code on Sharia law. Iran's constitution mandates that Shia Islam is the country's official religion, and the Iranian establishment is largely governed by religious clerics and senior clergy members. The ruling regime has implemented its ideological apparatus throughout society, from the media to its educational curriculum. Organised opposition groups in Iran, such as the People's Mujahedin of Iran (MEK), have adopted a form of Islamist ideology.

STRAIT OF HORMUZ

The Strait is the world's most important oil-transit choke-point, with an oil flow of approximately 17 million barrels of oil per day. This translates as roughly 35% percent of all seaborne traded oil, or almost 20% of all oil traded worldwide. Iran has repeatedly threatened to close the vital oil trade route, and, in 2012, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Martin Dempsey, admitted that Tehran has the naval capabilities to do so. An outright closure is a high-impact, low-probability event that would cause historically unprecedented disruption to global oil supply. Some experts believe that it is more likely that Iran would employ low-intensity tactics and operations to threaten and harass traffic, as happened during the Iran-Iraq war. Even without taking action, Iranian threats raise energy-market tensions and oil prices. Iranian capabilities in the Strait of Hormuz
Iran can deploy submarines; coastal cruise missiles; mines; and thousands of small warcraft, to implement its threats.
Submarines: Three Russian-made Kilo-class submarines and dozens of mini-submarines. The Kilo-class submarines are based outside the Strait, suggesting that they would be used in a confrontation to threaten surface ships in the Gulf of Oman.
Coastal Cruise Missiles: The Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy (IRGC Navy) has several batteries of CSS-C-2 'Seaersuders' and the Chinese-made C-801 and C-802 anti-ship cruise missiles.
Mines: Iran possesses as many as 65,000 mines - including moored mines and advanced mines such as the MDM-3 that can be dropped by aircraft.
Small Boats: The IRGC Navy specialises in asymmetric warfare and has been developing unconventional tactics, such as 'swarming', since the end of the Iran-Iraq war. Swarming is the deployment of hundreds of small armed boats, including those with cruise missiles, to converge on and attack a target such as an oil tanker or other vessel.

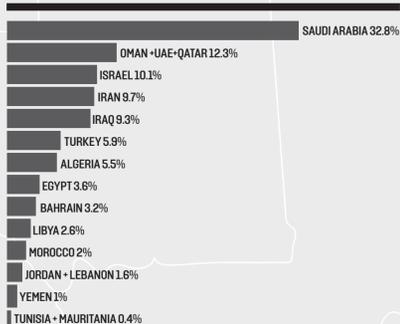
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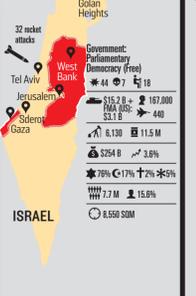
REGIONAL MILITARY EXPENDITURE



(Analysis excludes Syria and Palestinian Territories, due to insufficient data availability. Figures for Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar are estimates.)

1 ISRAEL

Strength of Islamism
The Islamic Movement in Israel (AMI) is the Islamic Movement in 48 Palestine (the Muslim Brotherhood's Israeli franchise). The Movement has two branches: Northern (covering the Israeli-Arab Galilee heartland) and Southern (Arab towns in central Israel, and the Negev Bedouin). The Northern branch is generally deemed more radical, having opposed Israel's Dohi Accords with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). The Movement is actively anti-Zionist - but its Southern branch participates in the Israeli political process (Knesset Member Ibrahim Sarraf formerly headed the branch). Israel's Basic Laws, which function as the country's de facto constitution, define Israel as a Jewish state, but also protect freedom of all religion for all faiths. Israel has state-sanctioned Jewish (halakha) and Islamic (Sharia) courts, in which observant members of either faith may settle issues such as marriage and inheritance.



2 LEBANON

Strength of Islamism
Lebanon is governed by a multi-party confessional political system in which most parties are secularist, including the main Sunni party, Tayyar al-Mustaqbal ('Future'). The constitution does not mandate an official state religion. However, both the Shia Islamist organisation - Hezbollah - and smaller Sunni-Salafist movements have stated desires to increase Islam's role in society. Despite this ostensible commitment to pluralism, Hezbollah's military power and political influence mean that it is able to exert significant influence over Lebanon's society. For now, Lebanese society remains largely secular and unaffected by Islamism, though some areas of the country are more religious than others, including districts of Tripoli and the Bekaa Valley.



3 JORDAN

Strength of Islamism
The Muslim Brotherhood's Jordanian wing, the Islamic Action Front (IAF), is the largest opposition group in the Jordanian Parliament. Still, new government structures have dropped the IAF's parliamentary contingent to just 5.5% of seats, down from a peak of 25% a decade ago (the rules require parties to have at least 500 founding members in the legislatures, for example). Most parliamentary candidates, even those of Islamist bent, are therefore forced to run as independents. Despite its seemingly small presence in Parliament, the IAF has considerable clout in Jordan - particularly among the Jordanians of Palestinian origin who comprise two-thirds of the population. The IAF opposes relations with Israel and supports Hamas (the Brotherhood's Palestinian branch) - but, unlike Islamist groups in most other Arab states, it publicly backs Jordan's Western-oriented monarchy.



4 KUWAIT

Strength of Islamism
Kuwait's constitution declares that the religion of the state is Islam and the Sharia shall be a main source of legislation'. The country does not police religious activity such as praying - but, 'un-Islamic' activities such as drinking alcohol, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, and dancing in public are either illegal or seen as indecent behaviour. Organised political parties are banned in Kuwait - but, a bloc of Islamist politicians exists and is seen as one of the more influential groups despite frequent dissolutions of Parliament. In recent years this bloc has attempted to increase its role in Islamism, by making Sharia the sole source of legislation, and introducing the death penalty for blasphemy. These calls have been vetoed by the Emir on several occasions, however, highlighting an executive check on the power of these Islamist groups - which reduces their strength.



5 BAHRAIN

Strength of Islamism
The Bahraini constitution states that 'Sharia is a principal source for legislation'. However, compared with many other Middle East nations where this is the case, Bahrain has enjoyed relative social freedoms. The al-Khalifa monarchy's rule is threatened by regular protests. Small Islamist groups (primarily Shia) also operate, and are represented in Bahraini elections. Such groups tend to mix Islamist demands with calls for greater social justice. The Muslim Brotherhood are represented by the al-Asala group, yet do not possess large enough numbers to have any significant influence. Since the 2011 uprising, and the repression that followed, some of these Islamist groups have begun to call for the overthrow of the monarchy.



6 QATAR

Strength of Islamism
Sharia law is the main source of legislation in Qatar. Even though Qatar is portraying itself as a very liberal state, it remains, in reality, a very Wahhabi religious conservative society. Qatar is also the largest backer of Islamist groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, and has been known for funding al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) - especially recently in Mali - among others. The country also happens to be hosting a who's who of Islamist extremists, such as Hamas leader Khaled Meshal, and Abulhasan Ali Nadwi, leader of the Algerian-based Islamic Salvation Front (ISF), and recently it has welcomed and is paying handsomely the main figures of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood who were able to escape after the ousting of President Morsi.



7 UAE

Strength of Islamism
The Constitution of the United Arab Emirates cites Islam as the country's official religion, Sharia as its main source of legislation, and its foreign policy as supporting Arab and Islamic causes. The Muslim Brotherhood's local branch, al-Islah ('Reform'), has spoken out against women's rights and the presence of churches in the UAE for Islamic causes. Al-Islah is believed to have at least 20,000 adherents, out of a native Emirati population of 1 million. The theoretic rulers of Iran (the Islamic Republic) have been viewed as immune to the threat of terrorism, authorities there broke up an al-Qaeda ring last year, and UK authorities warn that the country represents a 'high threat' for terrorism.

