

# TERRORISM AND ISLAMISM IN THE MENA REGION

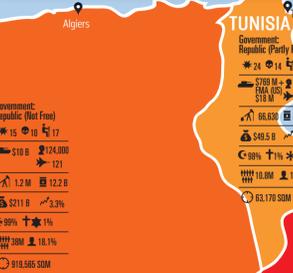
FROM 1ST AUGUST 2013 TO 31ST JANUARY 2014

## 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 (1989-1995), 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-Wahabiyyi, 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.



### 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.



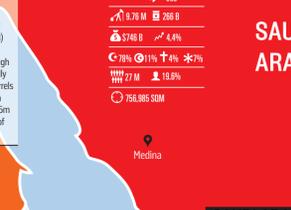
### IRAQ

**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.



### LEBANON

**Strength of Islamism**  
Lebanon is a multi-sectarian state with a complex political system. The country is divided into 16 municipalities, each with its own mayor and council. The political system is based on a power-sharing arrangement between the country's various religious groups. The country'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. Organized 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 the role of Islam in lawmaking, 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.



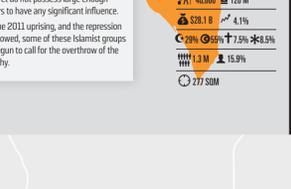
### ISRAEL

**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 (rabbinic) and Islamic (Sharia) courts, in which observant members of either faith may settle issues such as marriage and inheritance.



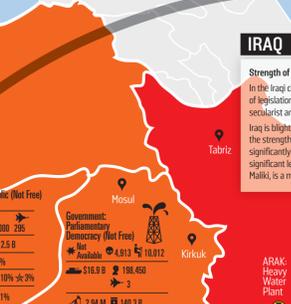
### LIBYA

**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 flag. 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, Sydr, and Derna.



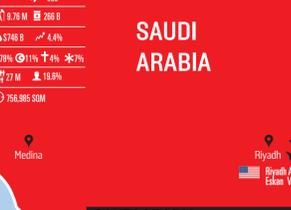
### YEMEN

**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-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula - 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 mirrored 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).



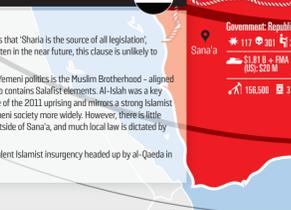
### OMAN

**Strength of Islamism**  
Islam is both the official state religion of Oman and the source of legislation, according to the country's constitution. In addition to this, the civil justice system contains Sharia courts which deal with issues including marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance, and which, human-rights groups claim, discriminate against women. Political parties are banned, and the elected Consultative Council has no powers other than to recommend changes to legislation proposed by the Sultan. As such, Islamists have little political power. In addition, Oman was the first Gulf state to approve female suffrage, and women can participate in politics. Oman is a conservative country, but "un-Islamic" activity is not restricted to the same extent as many of its neighbours.



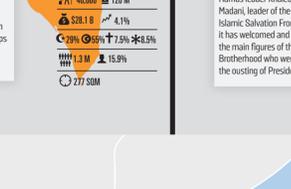
### QATAR

**Strength of Islamism**  
Qatar is a constitutional monarchy. The country's constitution states that 'Sharia is the principal source of 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.



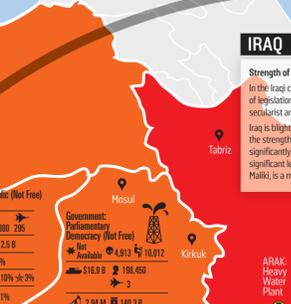
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### IRAN

**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 clergyman. The ruling regime has implemented its ideological apparatus throughout society, from the media to its educational curriculum. Organized opposition groups in Iran, such as the People's Mojahedin of Iran (MEK), have adopted a form of Islamist ideology.



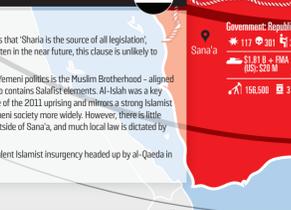
### SAUDI ARABIA

**Strength of Islamism**  
Islamism remains the primary ideology of Saudi Arabia. The kingdom's jurisdiction of Sharia law is stronger than all other Muslim countries and provides the basis of its legal system. Article 1 of its Basic Law of Governance states that 'God's Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet' are the kingdom's 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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