

PETER BERGEN, DAVID STERMAN, ALYSSA SIMS, AND ALBERT FORD

# ISIS IN THE WEST

The Western Militant Flow to Syria and Iraq

UPDATED MARCH 2016

## About the Authors



**Peter Bergen** is a print, television and web journalist, documentary producer and the author or editor of seven books, three of which were *New York Times* bestsellers and three of which were named among the best non-fiction books of the year by *The Washington Post*. The books have been translated into twenty languages. Documentaries based on his books have been nominated for two Emmys and also won the Emmy for best documentary in 2013.

Mr. Bergen is vice president of New America, and directs the organization's International Security and Fellows programs. He is CNN's national security analyst, a Professor of Practice at Arizona State University and a fellow at Fordham University's Center on National Security.



**David Sterman** is a senior program associate at New America and holds a master's degree from Georgetown's Center for Security Studies. His work focuses on homegrown extremism and the maintenance of New America's datasets on terrorism inside the United States and the relative roles of NSA surveillance and traditional investigative tools in preventing such terrorism.



**Alyssa Sims** is a research assistant with the International Security Program at New America. She worked with the program as an intern for six months. Prior to New America, Alyssa worked as a Strategic Research Analyst in the Office of the President at Arizona State University, her alma mater.



**Albert Ford** is a research assistant with the International Security and Fellows Programs at New America. His work includes maintaining and expanding ISP's International Security Data Site, editing and assisting with *Foreign Policy's* South Asia Channel, and conducting research related to countries and issues in South Asia and the Middle East.

## About New America

New America is committed to renewing American politics, prosperity, and purpose in the Digital Age. We generate big ideas, bridge the gap between technology and policy, and curate broad public conversation. We combine the best of a policy research institute, technology laboratory, public forum, media platform, and a venture capital fund for ideas. We are a distinctive community of thinkers, writers, researchers, technologists, and community activists who believe deeply in the possibility of American renewal.

Find out more at [newamerica.org/our-story](http://newamerica.org/our-story).

## About the International Security Program

The International Security Program aims to provide evidence-based analysis of some of the thorniest questions facing American policymakers and the public. The program is largely focused on South Asia and the Middle East, ISIS, al-Qaeda and allied groups, the rise of political Islam, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), homeland security, and the activities of U.S. Special Forces and the CIA. The program is also examining how warfare is changing because of emerging technologies, such as drones, cyber threats, and space-based weaponry, and asking how the nature and global spread of these technologies is likely to change the very definition of what war is.

Find out more at [newamerica.org/international-security](http://newamerica.org/international-security).

## Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank Courtney Schuster, who co-authored the original version of this paper, Aleksander Ferguson and Elena Zinski, who contributed extensive research to the expansion of the database underlying this paper's findings, and Emily Schneider and Justin Lynch, who worked on the data for the original paper.

## **Contents**

Executive Summary	2
Key Findings	3
Who Are the West's Foreign Fighters?	7
Gender	7
Age	7
Active Online	8
Familial Ties with Other Jihadists	10
The American Profile	10
Death Rate	11
How Many Are at Large?	12
How Do They Reach Syria?	12
Who Are They Affiliated With?	12
What Threat Do They Pose to the United States?	13
The Severe Threat to Europe	19
Notes	23

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

On Tuesday, March 22, 2016, three coordinated terrorist bombings killed 31 people and wounded around 300 more in Brussels, Belgium.<sup>1</sup> Two brothers, Ibrahim el-Bakraoui, 29, and Khalid el-Bakraoui, 27, Najim Laachraoui, 25, and two other individuals who remain at large were responsible for the attacks.<sup>2</sup> 10 people were killed and roughly 100 were injured in two blasts—conducted by Ibrahim el-Bakraoui, Najim Laachraoui, and one of the unknown individuals—near the departures terminal at Brussels Airport. The third blast, occurring an hour later at the Maelbeek subway station in downtown Brussels and carried out by Khalid el-Bakraoui, killed 20 people and injured around 130 more. The fifth individual was reportedly an accomplice of el-Bakraoui at the subway station. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack via postings through their official account on Telegram (a mobile-messaging platform) and official Twitter accounts.<sup>3</sup>

Only four days prior to the attacks, Belgian police captured Salah Abdeslam, the only surviving attacker to have participated in the Nov. 13, 2015 Paris attacks that killed 130 people. Abdeslam told Belgian authorities after his capture that he was “ready to restart something from Brussels.”<sup>4</sup>

According to Belgian federal prosecutor Frédéric van Leeuw, there are direct connections between Salah Abdeslam and two other Paris attackers (Abdelhamid Abaaoud and Bilal Hadfi) and the el-Bakraoui brothers who undertook the Brussels attacks. Belgian authorities found Najim Laachraoui’s DNA in a Schaerbeek, Belgium home where remains of TATP explosives, commonly used by ISIS and discovered in the vests used by the Paris attackers, were recovered. The same home also had fingerprints from Salah Abdeslam.<sup>5</sup> The links between the Paris attackers and the Brussels terrorists raises the importance of understanding who the Western “foreign fighters” who have left for Syria are, how deep their networks run, and what threat they pose when they return to the West.

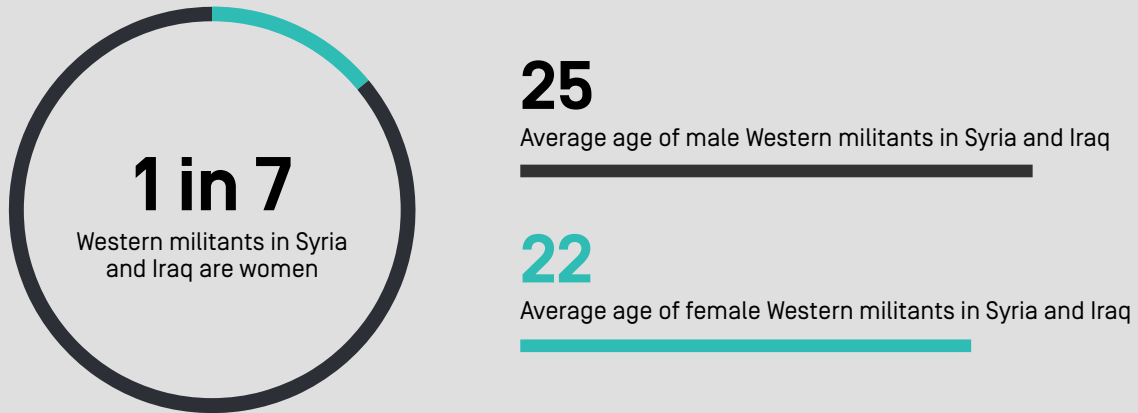
In order to answer these questions, New America has examined 604 militants from 26 Western countries who have been reported by credible news sources as having left their home countries to fight with ISIS or other Sunni jihadist groups in Syria or Iraq. (In this updated version of the “ISIS in the West” report that New America released in November 2015, we have added 130 more individuals to our dataset.)<sup>6</sup>

# KEY FINDINGS

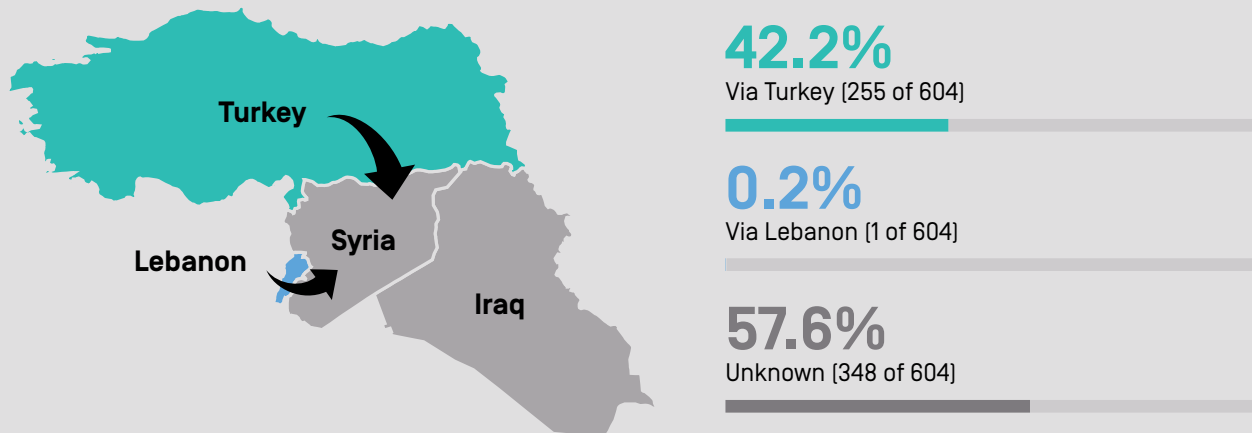
---

- **Western fighters in Syria and Iraq represent a new demographic profile, quite different from that of other Western militants who had fought in Afghanistan in the 1980s or Bosnia in the 1990s.**
  - **Women are represented in unprecedented numbers.** One in seven of the individuals in New America’s dataset are women. Women were rarely if at all represented among militants in previous jihadist conflicts.
  - **They are young.** The average age for individuals in New America’s dataset is 25. For female recruits, the average age is 22. Almost one-fifth of New America’s sample are teenagers, of whom more than a third are female.
  - **They are active online.** Over a quarter of the Western militants in New America’s dataset were reported either to have been active in online jihadist circles or to have radicalized via interaction online. However, there continue to be cases of physical in-person recruitment.
  - **Many have familial ties to jihadism.** One-third of the Western militants have a familial connection to jihad, whether through relatives currently fighting in Syria or Iraq, through marriage, or some other link to jihadists from prior conflicts or attacks. Of those with a familial link, over half have a relative fighting in Iraq or Syria, while almost one-third are connected through marriage, many of them new marriages conducted after arriving in Syria.
- **The Americans drawn to the Syrian jihad—250 have tried or have succeeded in getting to Syria, according to official estimates—share the same profile as the Western fighters overall: Women are well-represented, and the volunteers are young, they are active online, and many have family ties to jihad.** More than one in seven of the Americans who traveled, attempted to travel, or supported others’ travel to Syria are women. The average age of American militants is 25, with one-fifth still in their teens. Eight out of 10 of the Americans are active in online jihadist circles.
- **Only six American militants have returned from fighting or training with militant groups in Syria and been taken into custody, while another American militant returned to the United States and then left for Syria again where he conducted a suicide attack in 2014.**
- **This makes a total of seven American “returnees” to the States who have trained**

**Figure 1** | Demographics of Western Fighters



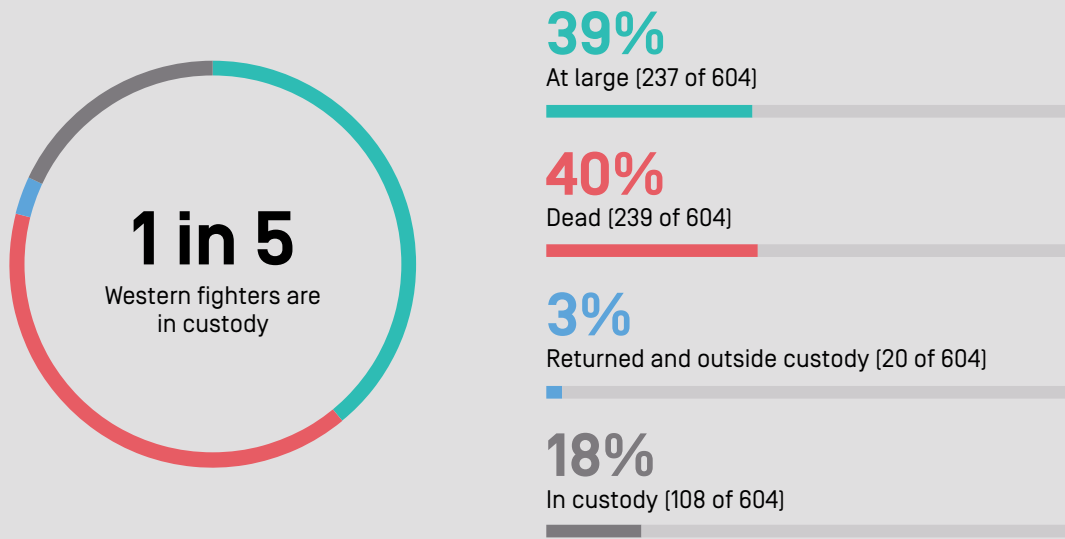
**Figure 2** | How Are Western Fighters Reaching Syria?



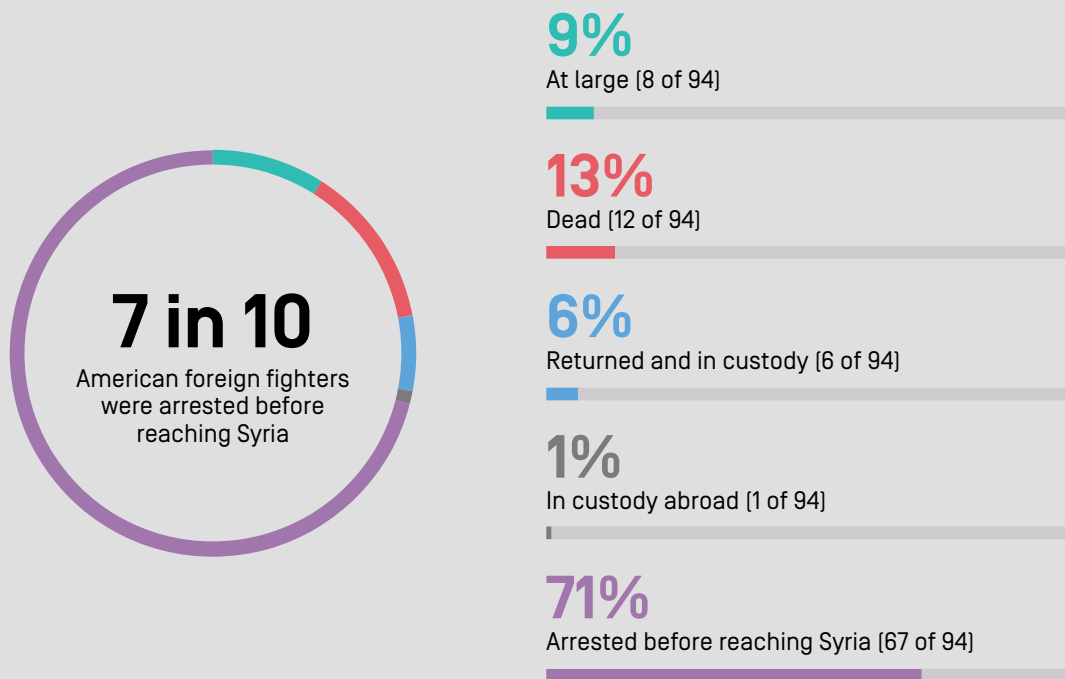
with militant groups in Syria. The numbers of returnees to European countries are orders of magnitude greater.

- **Around two-fifths of Western militants in New America's dataset have died in Syria or Iraq. Almost half of the male foreign fighters and 7 percent of female militants have been killed.**
- **Europe faces a severe threat from well-developed jihadist networks linked to Syria that have demonstrated their ability to conduct repeated attacks in Europe.**
- **The Paris attacks succeeded because the 10 key perpetrators relied on a network of 21 militants that New America has identified who aided the attackers both in Belgium and France.**
- **The threat to Europe is driven by the large numbers of Europeans who have traveled to fight in Syria and Iraq and who have returned to the West.**
- **The threat to the United States from returning fighters is low and will likely be manageable.** So far, no "returnee" from Syria has committed an act of violence in the United States and only one returnee has been arrested for plotting a domestic attack. Of the 27 Americans militants identified by New America who reached Syria, twelve have died, eight are at large, and seven are in custody.
- **The United States should be aware of the threat posed by Western returnees from Iraq and Syria - many of whom come from Western countries that are part of the United States' visa waiver program and therefore can enter the States without a visa. These militants can also pose a threat to American targets in Europe.**
- **ISIS-inspired violence will pose the most likely threat to the United States. ISIS directed violence is also a possibility in the States.**
- **Few of the Western fighters who have traveled to Syria or Iraq are in government custody.** One-fifth of Western fighters in New America's dataset are in custody and almost two-fifths of the individuals are still at large, presumably in Syria or Iraq. (Almost all of the remaining two-fifths have been reported as dead.)
- **The most popular route to Syria is through Turkey.** Forty-two percent of the Western foreign fighters made their way to Syria or Iraq via Turkey. Only one has been documented as using an alternative route—via Lebanon. For the rest of the Western militants, it's not clear from the public record how they arrived in Syria.
- **The majority of Western fighters have joined ISIS.** Only one-tenth have joined Jabhat al-Nusra, al-Qaeda's Syrian affiliate, and only seven percent have joined other smaller militant groups.

**Figure 3 | The Status of Western Foreign Fighters**



**Figure 4 | The Status of American Foreign Fighters**





# WHO ARE THE WEST'S FOREIGN FIGHTERS?

---

Any assessment of the threat to the West posed by Western fighters drawn to the Syrian conflict must begin with an examination of who those fighters are. New America gathered names and information for 604 Western fighters from 26 Western countries: Albania (4), Australia (35), Austria (6), Belgium (111), Bosnia (5), Canada (26), Denmark (14), Finland (4), France (63), Germany (38), Ireland (7), Italy (6), Kosovo (4), Luxembourg (2), Macedonia (4), Montenegro (1), Netherlands (29), New Zealand (1), Norway (13), Portugal (3), Serbia (2), Spain (3), Sweden (24), Switzerland (2), the United Kingdom (165), the United States (30), and two other Westerners whose country affiliations are unknown.

## Gender

**Women are represented in unprecedented numbers. One in seven of the militants in New America's dataset are women.** While Western women are not going to fight in the war in Syria, they are playing supporting roles, often marrying frontline fighters and sometimes working as a kind of police force that enforces ISIS's draconian laws.

These are women like Sally Jones from the United Kingdom, who traveled to Syria in 2013 to join ISIS and her husband Junaid Hussain, another British

militant, and Emilie Konig who left France in 2012 to join ISIS. Both Jones and Konig were designated as foreign terrorist fighters by the United States.<sup>7</sup> Other cases of women joining militant groups include 20-year-old Minnesotan Yusra Ismail who is charged with stealing a friend's passport allegedly enabling her to travel to Syria in August 2014 and U.K. medical students Lena Maumoon Abdulqadir, Nada Sami Kader, and Rowan Kamal Zine El Abidine, who reportedly left for Syria in March 2015.<sup>8</sup>

By contrast, Thomas Hegghammer, in his 2013 study of Western foreign fighters who fought in Bosnia, Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and elsewhere between 1990 and 2010 found that "practically all Western jihadists are male."<sup>9</sup>

## Age

**Western foreign fighters in Syria are young, with an average age of 25.** The females who have left for Syria are even younger; the average age of female militants is 22; ages range from 15 to 53 years old. Males are reported to have joined between the ages of 13 and 75, with an average age of 25.

**New America has documented 103 cases of teenagers who went to join the fight in Syria,**

**constituting more than a sixth of the Westerners who have gone. More than a third of these teenagers are girls.** Hans-Georg Maassen, the head of Germany’s domestic security agency, said in March 2015 that nine female German minors left for Syria and that of 70 confirmed cases of women leaving, 40 percent were under 25.<sup>10</sup> Discussing the arrest of 19-year-old American Mohammed Hamzah Khan, who was charged with attempting to join ISIS in Syria, a senior U.S. official told the *Washington Post*: “You will see more young and juvenile cases in the future.”<sup>11</sup> In 2015, the United Kingdom arrested 16 people under the age of 18 for terrorism related crimes - a record number.<sup>12</sup>

**Western children younger than 16 have been involved in violence, including as executioners.**

ISIS makes no secret of its exploitation of teenagers and even children, featuring them in propaganda. A 2016 report by Mia Bloom, John Horgan, and Charlie Winter identified 89 instances of children and teenagers eulogized in ISIS propaganda.<sup>13</sup> One ISIS propaganda video titled “Cubs of the Khilafah” features images of young children receiving military training and religious teaching.<sup>14</sup> For a December 2014 documentary reporting from within ISIS-held territory and guided by an ISIS press officer, *Vice* recorded interviews and footage of fighters, including at least one Westerner, and their children involved in indoctrination; the accompanying press officer, Abu Mosa, proudly claimed that children 15 and younger attend indoctrination camps while those 16 or older are allowed to fight.<sup>15</sup> Abu Mosa told the *Vice* reporter that those over the age of 16 participate in military operations “because Usama Ibn Zaid [the adopted son of the Prophet Mohammed] led an army when he was 17 or 18 years old.”<sup>16</sup>

Western children younger than 16 have been involved in violence, including as executioners. In March 2015, ISIS released a video of a French child shooting a Palestinian hostage in the forehead.<sup>17</sup>

## Active Online

**More than a quarter of the Western militants in New America’s dataset were reported either to have been active in online jihadist circles or to have radicalized via interaction online.** This is likely an undercount for many of the individuals in the dataset the details of their radicalization path have not been reported.

ISIS relies on a multifaceted online strategy to recruit and advise potential foreign fighters and supporters. This includes both active efforts by individuals with social media accounts to recruit and organize other individuals as well as a more broad-based dissemination of propaganda. In the fall of 2014, J.M. Berger and Jonathon Morgan estimated that there were “no fewer than 46,000 Twitter accounts supporting ISIS” overtly and a maximum of 90,000 ISIS supporter accounts on Twitter.<sup>18</sup>

New America has identified several individuals acting as online recruiters based on court records and press reports. Sometimes these individuals are involved in recruiting strangers and sometimes they recruit individuals with whom they share previous in-person or even familial ties. Among the individuals reported as having engaged in online recruitment activity are several Americans:

- Mujahid Miski, believed to be American Muhammed Abdullahi Hassan, who was charged with leaving to fight for al-Shabaab, al-Qaeda’s Somali affiliate, along with several other Somali-Americans from Minnesota.<sup>19</sup> In 2015, Miski interacted with Elton Simpson, one of the shooters in the May 2015 attack on the Prophet Mohammed cartoon contest in Garland, Texas, via Twitter urging violence against the event.<sup>20</sup> At one point, Simpson and Miski shared direct messages via Twitter—a form of communication on the platform that is not public.<sup>21</sup>
- Abdi Nur, who is charged with having left to fight in Syria, took on the role of online recruiter after leaving for Syria. A complaint charging six

other Minnesota men with trying to join ISIS alleges that Nur acted as an online recruiter and provided encouragement and advice to the men via Kik and other social media platforms from Syria.<sup>22</sup>

- Hoda Muthana, a 20-year-old American woman from Alabama, was identified by *BuzzFeed* as the individual behind the Twitter account “Umm Jihad,” which encouraged Americans to leave for Syria.<sup>23</sup>
- Abdifatah Aden, who lived in Columbus, Ohio, until he left in May 2013 for Syria, where he died fighting for Nusra, helped recruit his brother Abdirahman Sheik Mohamud and guided him into Syria in April 2014 by communicating privately online according to the criminal complaint charging Mohamud with providing material support to terrorists.<sup>24</sup>
- Ali Shukri Amin, a 17-year-old Northern Virginia high school student who ran a pro-ISIS Twitter account that provided in-depth technical information on anonymization techniques as well as promoting his jihadist ideas.<sup>25</sup> Amin pleaded guilty to putting his 18-year-old friend Reza Niknejad in contact with an ISIS supporter outside the United States using surespot, an encrypted messaging tool; that individual help facilitate Niknejad’s successful travel to Syria.<sup>26</sup>

There are also a number of British citizens engaged in online recruitment:

- Junaid Hussain, a 20-year-old British hacker who is believed to have left in 2013 for Syria was reportedly engaged in online recruiting of hackers for the CyberCaliphate, the group that hacked the Pentagon’s Twitter account in January 2015.<sup>27</sup> Hussain, who was killed in a U.S. airstrike in August 2015, was among those with whom Elton Simpson interacted with on Twitter prior to his attack in Garland, Texas.<sup>28</sup>
- Aqsa Mahmood, a 20-year-old British woman, left for Syria in 2013 and became a prominent

online recruiter for ISIS.<sup>29</sup> On one of her Twitter accounts she tweeted: “Wallah one of the things most loved to me is when a sister sincerely kiks me because she wants me to help her make hijrah [pilgrimage for jihad].”<sup>30</sup>

Other individuals have been identified either anonymously or pseudonymously. For example, an unnamed co-conspirator is mentioned in the court documents in the case of Shannon Conley, a 19-year-old Colorado woman, who pleaded guilty in 2014 to conspiring to join ISIS.<sup>31</sup> According to the plea, the man, who identified himself as a fighter in Syria, met Conley online and the two planned to become engaged.<sup>32</sup>

However, not all recruitment relies upon social media and online communication. The United Nations Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team noted in their 2015 report on jihadist groups that “most Member States indicate that direct personal contact remains a core ingredient of most radicalization and recruitment processes for foreign terrorist fighters.”<sup>33</sup>

Indeed, New America identified several cases in which in-person recruitment played an important role. For example, Jehoan Bontinck, a 19-year-old Belgian traveled to Syria as a result of ties he developed to the Sharia4Belgium radical Islamist group through a neighbor.<sup>34</sup> Bontinck was eventually invited to visit the headquarters of Sharia4Belgium where he eventually attended a 24-week ideological training program that included watching videos by American radical cleric Anwar al-Awlaki.<sup>35</sup> Bontinck began to spend most of his time with members of Sharia4Belgium while the group deliberately sought to isolate him from his parents.<sup>36</sup> Bontinck reportedly left for Syria after receiving a call from a neighbor who was in Syria.<sup>37</sup> Bontinck’s story provides a reminder that while online social media in many ways defines recruiting in the West by ISIS and other Syrian militant groups, physical in-person networks continue to operate in some locations.

## Familial Ties With Other Jihadists

**Just under a third of the Western militants have a familial connection to jihad**, whether through relatives currently fighting in Syria or Iraq, marriage, or some other link to jihadists from prior conflicts.

Of those with a familial link, one-third are through marriage, many of them new marriages conducted after the militants have arrived in Syria.

Over half of Western fighters with familial ties to jihad are individuals who have a relative who has also left for Syria. For example,

- Abdelhamid Abaaoud, the chief planner of the Paris attacks, joined ISIS in early 2014 and recruited his 13-year-old brother Younes to join him later in the year. French authorities killed Abdelhamid in a raid on November 18, 2015. Younes reportedly remains in Syria.<sup>38</sup>
- The Deghayes family in the United Kingdom had three sons leave for Syria. The oldest told his father that he had joined Jabhat al-Nusra.<sup>39</sup>

A much smaller group—fewer than one in 12—were related to jihadists from prior conflicts or attacks. For example: French citizen Abdelouahab el-Baghdadi, whose brother-in-law Mohammed Merah killed seven people in a 2012 attack on Toulouse and Montauban, was arrested and accused of joining militants in Syria; and British ISIS recruit Abdel-Majed Abdel Bary, whose father, Adel Abdel Bary, was convicted for the role he played in the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings conspiracy in Kenya and Tanzania.<sup>40</sup>

## The American Profile

**The Americans drawn to the Syrian jihad—250 have tried or have succeeded in getting to Syria, according to FBI Director James Comey—share the same profile as the Western fighters overall: Women are well-represented, and volunteers are**

**young, they are very active online, and many have family ties to jihad.**<sup>41</sup>

New America examined 94 American militants who traveled to Syria or Iraq to fight, or attempted to do so, or provided support to others traveling or seeking to travel to Syria. Seven out of ten of the militants were arrested before they could get to Syria.

**More than one in seven of the Americans were women.** Among the women were three teenage girls from Colorado, who allegedly sought to join ISIS but were stopped in Germany and returned to the United States after their fathers reported them missing; Shannon Conley, a 19-year-old also from Colorado who was arrested after plotting to travel to Syria to join a foreign fighter she had met online; and Hoda Muthana, a 20-year-old Alabama woman who succeeded in traveling to Syria and then helped ISIS's online recruitment efforts.<sup>42</sup>

**The average age of the Americans drawn to militant groups in Syria and Iraq is 25 and more than one in five are teenagers.** They include Conley; the three girls from Colorado; Mohammed Hamzah Khan, a 19-year-old who pleaded guilty to attempting to join ISIS in Syria; and his younger brother and sister, who allegedly joined him in the effort.<sup>43</sup>

Online activity was ubiquitous among the Americans, with eight in 10 active in online jihadist circles.

Beyond the increasing representation of women and teens and the ubiquitous online activity, little in the way of a profile ties the Americans in Syria together, posing a challenge for law enforcement. Those accused include Joshua Van Haften, a 34-year-old white man and registered sex offender from Wisconsin; Hoda Muthana, the 20-year-old Alabama woman from a Yemeni-American family; and Tairod Pugh, a 47-year-old African-American convert to Islam who once served in the Air Force.<sup>44</sup> Among the 94 American citizens and residents there is no ethnic profile – they are Caucasian, Somali-American,

## Of those with a familial link, one-third are through marriage, many of them new marriages conducted after the militants have arrived in Syria.

Vietnamese-American, Bosnian-American, and Arab-American, among other ethnicities and nationalities.

Americans drawn to the militant groups fighting in the Syrian conflict hail from all over the United States. According to FBI Director James Comey, the FBI is investigating cases in all 50 states.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, among the 94 individuals in the United States that we examined there were residents of 21 states: Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

This is in sharp contrast to an earlier wave of jihadist recruitment from the States that began in 2007, in which a cohort of U.S. militants were drawn to the Somalia civil war and fought alongside the Somali terrorist group al-Shabaab. Those militants were overwhelmingly Somali-Americans, most of whom were from Minnesota.

### Death Rate

**For Western militants, the wars engulfing Syria and Iraq have often proven deadly. Almost half of the male fighters and seven percent of the female recruits have been killed in Syria or Iraq.**








In total, almost four in ten of the militants in our dataset have been reported as dead in Syria or Iraq.

The difference in death rates between the genders is unsurprising, as women do not take part in combat. According to an ISIS female recruit: “There is not a single women fightin in IS. The womens place is in her house looking after her kids & fulfilling her duty to her husband.”<sup>46</sup> Given that women are not fighting on the front lines for ISIS, that seven percent of them are still reported to have died illustrates how dangerous Syria is for Western fighters.

Few countries report the number of their foreign fighters who have died, but among those that do report those death rates, they have generally been between 8 to 18 percent.

There are many contributing factors to the high death toll for individuals fighting in Syria. ISIS reportedly uses foreign fighters as cannon fodder, placing them on the front lines in Syria and utilizing them as suicide bombers.<sup>54</sup> In March 2016, Brett McGurk placed the number of ISIS fighters killed by coalition air strikes in the “low tens of thousands.”<sup>55</sup> ISIS has also reportedly executed foreign fighters who sought to return home. In December 2014, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights claimed that ISIS had executed 116 foreign fighters who had sought to return home.<sup>56</sup> In 2015, ISIS released a video showing a child shooting Mohamed Musallam, a 19-year-old Palestinian citizen of Israel who ISIS claimed was an Israeli spy—a claim Musallam’s family denies, saying he was instead a foreign fighter who was killed after he sought to leave the group.<sup>57</sup>

**Table 1 | Foreign Fighter Death Rates**

Country	Official Death Count	Official Count of Foreign Fighters	Death Rate
 Australia <sup>47</sup>	20	110	18.2%
 Denmark <sup>48</sup>	19	115	16.5%
 Finland <sup>49</sup>	6	50	12.0%
 France <sup>50</sup>	119	1,450	8.2%
 Germany <sup>51</sup>	100	720	13.9%
 Netherlands <sup>52</sup>	21	180	11.7%
 Norway <sup>53</sup>	15	80	18.8%

### How Many Are at Large?

**Few of the Western fighters who have traveled to Syria or Iraq are in government custody.** One-fifth of the Western militants in New America’s dataset are in custody and almost two-fifths of the individuals are still at large, while almost all of the remaining two-fifths have been reported as dead. A small number—3 percent—returned home without being taken into custody.

### How Do They Reach Syria?

**The most popular route to Syria is through Turkey.** 42 percent of the Western foreign fighters made their way to Syria or Iraq via Turkey. Only one militant is documented as using an alternative route—via

Lebanon. For the rest of the Western militants, it is not clear from the public record how they arrived in Syria.

### Who Are They Affiliated With?

**Where an affiliation can be determined, the majority of the Western fighters have joined ISIS:** Over three-fifths have joined ISIS, while one tenth have joined al Qaeda’s affiliate in Syria, known as the Nusra Front, and 7 percent have joined other smaller militant groups.

# WHAT THREAT DO THEY POSE TO THE UNITED STATES?

---

**The threat to the United States from returning fighters is low and will likely be manageable. So far, no returnee from the Syrian conflict has conducted an attack in the United States. However, the United States will have to remain aware of the threat from European returnees—many of whom come from countries that are part of the United States' visa waiver program. ISIS-inspired violence will pose the most likely threat to the United States.**

Five years into the Syrian civil war, there is little evidence that American militants pose a significant threat of returning to conduct attacks inside the United States. Of the 94 cases of Americans that we found who have been drawn to the Syrian war, only 27 actually reached Syria. For 49 of the 94 American cases, their attempts to reach Syria did not succeed. In 18 cases the criminal activity consisted of providing support to other militants fighting in Syria or those militants attempting to fight there.

Of the 27 Americans who managed to reach Syria, twelve died there. For example, Floridian Moner Abu Salha died in 2014 conducting a suicide bombing in northern Syria (he made a brief return to the United States before traveling back to Syria to conduct the suicide attack).<sup>58</sup> Douglas McAuthor

McCain, a Muslim convert from California, was killed fighting for ISIS in a battle against the Free Syrian Army.<sup>59</sup> A third American, Massachusetts man Ahmad Abousamra was reportedly killed in an Iraqi airstrike while he was fighting for ISIS.<sup>60</sup>

Eight Americans remain at large.

Six American militants have returned and been taken into custody, while another American returned to the United States and then left for Syria again, making for a total of seven American “returnees.”

In only one of these cases, that of Abdirahman Sheik Mohamud, a 23-year-old Ohio man, is the returnee accused of plotting an attack inside the United States. Much remains unclear about Abdirahman Sheik Mohamud’s case, complicating efforts to determine how serious the plot was. Court documents allege that Mohamud exchanged communications with his brother Abdifatah Aden, who left in May 2013 for Syria, where he later died fighting for Nusra. On April 18, 2014, Mohamud left the United States and fought in Syria before returning to the United States two months later.<sup>61</sup> The government alleges that a cleric in Syria told Mohamud that he should return to the United States to conduct an act of terrorism.<sup>62</sup> Mohamud allegedly

discussed a desire to kill American soldiers execution-style at a military base in Texas, and he went to a firing range to practice shooting, though his defense attorney says there is no evidence that he sought to stockpile weapons.<sup>63</sup> Mohamud came to the government's attention before he left for Syria and the FBI tried to intervene to prevent him from traveling overseas.<sup>64</sup> After his return to the United States, he was monitored by an informant, leading to his arrest.<sup>65</sup> In addition, the owner of the gun range where he practiced shooting reportedly provided a tip to the police.<sup>66</sup> Mohamud has pleaded not guilty.

Five other American fighters returned to the United States from Syria and were taken into custody. Eric Harroun returned to the United States after discussions with American officials.<sup>67</sup> He was arrested and charged with conspiring to use rocket-propelled grenades that he claimed to have fired in Syria.<sup>68</sup> In a second case, Sinh Vinh Ngo Nguyen, who had returned from Syria where he fought with Nusra, al-Qaeda's Syrian affiliate, was arrested in an informant-led operation and pleaded guilty to a terrorism charge in December 2013.<sup>69</sup>

In a third case, Mohamad Saeed Kodaimati of California was arrested in March 2015 in Ankara, Turkey and charged with making false statements involving international terrorism.<sup>70</sup> According to the complaint, Kodaimati, a naturalized American citizen, had worked with a sharia court in Syria that involved working with ISIS and other militant groups and had participated in an attack in coordination with Jabhat al-Nusra and then lied about it to American officials.<sup>71</sup> Kodaimati was interviewed by government officials prior to his return to the United States, monitored after his return, and arrested a month after returning to the United States.<sup>72</sup> Kodaimati pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI in October 2015.<sup>73</sup>

In a fourth case, Bilal Abood, a naturalized American citizen from Iraq, was arrested and charged with making false statements regarding never having pledged allegiance to ISIS.<sup>74</sup> Abood had been on the government's radar since at least 2013,

when it stopped him from traveling to his native Iraq and in an interview he admitted planning to fight with the Free Syrian Army.<sup>75</sup> On a subsequent trip in 2013, Abood did successfully travel to Syria, spending time at an armed opposition camp, though he denies supporting ISIS.<sup>76</sup> In July 2014, the FBI searched Abood's computer, finding a pledge of allegiance to ISIS's leader on Twitter.<sup>77</sup> Ten months later, in the wake of the attack in Garland, Texas, the FBI arrested Abood.<sup>78</sup> Abood pleaded guilty to one count of making a false statement to the FBI in October 2015.<sup>79</sup>

In a fifth case in January 2016, the United States charged Aws Mohammed Younis al-Jayab, a 23-year-old Palestinian born in Iraq who came to the United States as a refugee, with making false statements regarding having gone to Iraq and Syria to fight.<sup>80</sup> The government alleges that "On Nov. 9, 2013, he flew from Chicago to Turkey, and then traveled to Syria. Between November 2013 and January 2014, Al-Jayab allegedly reported on social media that he was in Syria fighting with various terrorist organizations, including Ansar al-Islam, a designated foreign terrorist organization since 2004. He returned to the United States on Jan. 23, 2014, and settled in Sacramento."<sup>81</sup> U.S. Attorney Benjamin B. Wagner commented, "While he represented a potential safety threat, there is no indication that he planned any acts of terrorism in this country."<sup>82</sup>

One American is currently in the custody of Kurdish forces after surrendering to them in Iraq. Mohamad Jamal Khweis, a 26-year-old from Alexandria, Virginia surrendered to Kurdish forces near Sinjar, Iraq on March 14, 2016 after reportedly fighting for ISIS.<sup>83</sup> Khweis says he defected from ISIS because he objected to the way it was ruling in the Iraqi city of Mosul.<sup>84</sup>

These cases do not paint a picture of a highly organized returnee threat inside the United States. Indeed, speaking before the Council on Foreign Relations in March 2015, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper said that about 40 individuals had returned from Syria, and: "We have



since found they went for humanitarian purposes or some other reason that don't relate to plotting."<sup>85</sup>

However, one case does raise real concern regarding existing security measures. Floridian Moner Abu Salha managed to travel to Syria and train with Jabhat al-Nusra before returning undetected to the United States in 2013.<sup>86</sup> Rather than preparing an attack in the United States, Abu Salha returned to Syria after unsuccessfully trying to recruit a few friends to join him, and died conducting a suicide bombing against the troops of Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad.<sup>87</sup> Abu Salha's undetected return presents an important warning sign, particularly as the November 13, 2015 mass-casualty attacks in Paris demonstrate an increased intention by ISIS to emphasize attacks in the West rather than the recruitment of more Western fighters to serve in the Syrian civil war.

**Five years into the Syrian civil war, there is little evidence that American militants pose a significant threat of returning to conduct attacks inside the U.S.**

However, even in the case of Moner Abu Salha, a tip put him on the U.S. government's radar, demonstrating the obstacles that returnees must still navigate if they are plotting an attack inside the United States.<sup>88</sup>

In assessing the threat posed by returning American fighters, it is worth putting the current Syrian conflict into historical perspective. While it was the Afghan war against the Soviets and the ensuing civil war that caused thousands of foreign fighters to flock to Afghanistan—and helped launch Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda—much has changed since then that makes it a weak comparison for how “blowback” from foreign jihads might affect Western countries.<sup>89</sup> For example, on 9/11, there were 16 people on the U.S. “no fly” list.<sup>90</sup> Today, there are about 48,000.<sup>91</sup> In 2001, there were 32 Joint Terrorism Task Force “fusion centers,” where multiple law

enforcement agencies work together to chase down leads and build terrorism cases.<sup>92</sup> Now there are 104 centers.<sup>93</sup> Prior to 9/11, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, National Counterterrorism Center, Transportation Security Administration, Northern Command, and Cyber Command didn't exist. In 2016, all of these new post-9/11 institutions make it much harder for terrorists to operate in the United States. The U.S. intelligence budget also grew dramatically after 9/11, with Congress giving the government substantial resources with which to improve its counterterrorism capabilities. In 2013, the United States allocated \$72 billion to intelligence collection and other covert activities.<sup>94</sup> Before 9/11, the budget was around one-third of that figure: \$26 billion.<sup>95</sup>

Perhaps of most relevance to the issue of returning fighters is that prior to 9/11, the law enforcement community demonstrated little interest in investigating or prosecuting individuals who traveled abroad to fight in an overseas jihad.<sup>96</sup>

A post-9/11 American fighter flow to jihadist groups abroad that sparked fears but turned out to be an exaggerated threat to the United States was al-Shabaab's recruitment of American fighters to wage war in Somalia. According to a review by New America, no American fighter who fought in the conflict in Somalia returned to plot an attack in the United States.<sup>97</sup> Instead, about one-third of the individuals known to have traveled to fight in Somalia died there, either as suicide bombers or on the battlefield, while others were taken into custody upon their return.<sup>98</sup>

There are, however, counterexamples of returning militants to the United States since 9/11 who attempted serious attacks. The United States' experience with Americans fighting or training in Pakistan provides an illustration of what a more serious returnee threat might look like. Najibullah Zazi, Adis Medunjanin, and Zarein Ahmedzay, who all grew up in New York City, traveled to Pakistan, where they ended up receiving training from al-Qaeda, and were sent back to the United States in January 2009 where they were part of a serious

plot to bomb the New York City subway in the fall of 2009.<sup>99</sup> On May 1, 2010, Connecticut-based Faisal Shahzad, who was trained in bomb-making techniques in Pakistan by the Pakistani Taliban, left a car bomb undetected in New York City's Times Square that failed to properly explode.<sup>100</sup>

## The ISIS-Inspired Homegrown Threat in the United States

Acts of violence by individuals with no direct connection to the terrorist groups in Syria but who are inspired by them pose a more immediate challenge than attacks by returning fighters. As FBI Director James Comey noted in September 2014 while referring to the arrest of Terry Loewen, who radicalized online and was accused of plotting an attack on Wichita Airport in Kansas: "We have made it so hard for people to get into this country, bad guys, but they can enter as a photon and radicalize somebody in Wichita, Kansas."<sup>101</sup> At the time, Comey also noted that ISIS lacked the capability for a sophisticated attack in the United States.<sup>102</sup>

On May 3, 2015, the United States saw its first actual attack inspired by ISIS along the lines of similar ISIS-inspired attacks in Ottawa and Copenhagen.<sup>103</sup> Two men were killed by police after opening fire at a contest to draw cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed in Garland, Texas. The event was organized by the American Freedom Defense Initiative and featured right-wing Dutch politician Geert Wilders, who had been named on an al-Qaeda hit list. One of the shooters, Elton Simpson, had been convicted in 2011 of making a false statement to the FBI regarding plans to travel to Somalia. Before conducting the attack, Simpson tweeted his allegiance to ISIS.<sup>104</sup> Simpson, a 30-year-old resident of Phoenix, Arizona, who was born in Illinois and converted to Islam during his youth, was joined in the attack by his roommate Nadir Soofi, a 34-year-old who was born in Garland.<sup>105</sup>

On December 2, 2015, Syed Rizwan Farook, an American citizen born in the United States, and his wife Tashfeen Malik, who entered on a K-1 visa that

allows spouses of citizens to enter the U.S., killed 14 people and wounded another 22 in a shooting at a county health department holiday party in San Bernardino, California.<sup>106</sup> According to a criminal complaint that charged a third individual, Enrique Marquez, with having helped acquire the weapons used in the plot, a post on a Facebook page associated with Malik pledged allegiance to ISIS stating, "We pledge allegiance to Khalifa bu Bkr al bhaghdadi al quraishi" on the day of the attack.<sup>107</sup> However, it is worth noting that Farook allegedly had radicalized and engaged in plotting before he was drawn to ISIS.<sup>108</sup>

**Prior to 9/11, the law enforcement community demonstrated little interest in investigating or prosecuting individuals who traveled abroad to fight in an overseas jihad.**

In the fall of 2014, Zale Thompson allegedly attacked police officers with a hatchet in New York.<sup>109</sup> He is believed to have been inspired in part by ISIS.<sup>110</sup> And in November, a student at the University of California, Merced stabbed four people on campus, after visiting ISIS websites.<sup>111</sup> In January, Edward Archer allegedly shot Philadelphia police officer Jesse Hartnett. Archer allegedly told police, "I pledge my allegiance to the Islamic State, and that's why I did what I did."<sup>112</sup>

In addition to these five ISIS-inspired attacks, on July 16, 2015, Mohammad Abdulazeez killed five people in shootings at two military facilities in Chattanooga, Tennessee. In December 2015, the FBI confirmed that Abdulazeez was inspired by foreign terrorist organization online propaganda. FBI Director James Comey told reporters, "There is no doubt that the Chattanooga killer was inspired, motivated by foreign terrorist organization propaganda."<sup>113</sup> However, many of the details regarding Abdulazeez's motivation remain unclear. He did reportedly have material linked to Anwar

al-Awlaki, the American cleric who became a leader in Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>114</sup> He was also reportedly suicidal and wrestled with drug use.<sup>115</sup> Regardless of the details of which group and what other factors influenced his decision to commit violence, his actions further demonstrate the potential for deadly inspired violence.

The United States has seen a number of plots that were inspired by ISIS in addition to the deadly attacks in Garland, Texas and San Bernardino, California.

- In January 2015, the United States filed a criminal complaint charging Christopher Lee Cornell in relation to an alleged plot to attack the U.S. Capitol.<sup>116</sup> According to the complaint, Cornell posted material supportive of ISIS online, which led to his eventual arrest.<sup>117</sup> He has pleaded not guilty.
- In February 2015, the United States charged three Brooklyn men with conspiring to provide material support to ISIS, and in the complaint alleged that the men had discussed potential attacks inside the United States.<sup>118</sup> Two other men were charged in April and June 2015 for helping to fund other group members' alleged plans to travel to fight in Syria.<sup>119</sup>
- In March 2015, the United States unsealed charges against Hasan Edmonds, a 22-year-old member of the National Guard, and his cousin Jonas Edmonds, alleging that Hasan Edmonds had sought to travel to fight with ISIS and that the two had plotted to have Jonas Edmonds conduct an attack against a military facility in the United States.<sup>120</sup> Both men pled guilty to conspiracy to provide material support in December 2015.<sup>121</sup>
- In April 2015, the United States charged John T. Booker and Alexander Blair with an alleged plot to bomb Fort Riley, in Kansas, in support of ISIS.<sup>122</sup> Booker pleaded guilty to attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction and attempting to destroy government property by fire or explosion in February 2016.<sup>123</sup> Blair pleaded not guilty.
- The same month, the United States charged two New York City women, Noelle Velentzas and Asia Siddiqui, in relation to a domestic attack plot in support of ISIS.<sup>124</sup> According to the complaint, Siddiqui had regular contact with members of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>125</sup> When FBI agents arrested Velentzas and Siddiqui in Queens, they seized propane tanks, soldering tools, a pressure cooker, fertilizer, and bomb-making instructions.<sup>126</sup> They have pleaded not guilty.
- Also in April, the United States filed a complaint charging Miguel Moran Diaz, a 46-year-old resident of Miami, with possession of a firearm as a felon.<sup>127</sup> The complaint alleges that he discussed conducting an attack in support of ISIS.<sup>128</sup> The investigation involved an informant.<sup>129</sup> Diaz pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 10 years in prison.<sup>130</sup>
- On June 2, 2015, Boston police shot and killed Usaamah Rahim, a 26-year-old Massachusetts resident who had a knife when the officers approached him.<sup>131</sup> The exact circumstances of the encounter are disputed.<sup>132</sup> Rahim had been under 24-hour surveillance as part of a terrorism investigation into his activity.<sup>133</sup>
- On June 3, 2015 the United States filed a criminal complaint charging David Wright, a 25-year-old relative of Rahim's, with conspiracy with intent to obstruct a federal investigation by destroying evidence.<sup>134</sup> The complaint alleged that Wright and Rahim had plotted to behead Pamela Geller, the organizer of the Garland, Texas, cartoon drawing contest, but that Rahim had become impatient and planned to attack police officers in Massachusetts. On June 12, the United States filed a second criminal complaint adding Nicholas Rovinski, a 24-year-old Rhode Island man who met Wright online last year, to the alleged conspiracy and charging Wright and Rovinski with conspiring to provide material

support to ISIS through the plot.<sup>135</sup> Wright and Rovinski have pleaded not guilty.

- On July 4, 2015, the United States arrested Alex Ciccolo, a 23-year-old Massachusetts resident and son of a Boston police captain, and charged him with possessing firearms as a felon.<sup>136</sup> Documents filed in the case allege that Ciccolo was inspired by ISIS and was plotting to conduct attacks.<sup>137</sup> Ciccolo was monitored by an informant.<sup>138</sup> He has pleaded not guilty.
- On July 28, 2015, the United States charged Harlem Suarez, a 23-year-old Floridian, with attempting to explode a backpack bomb at a public beach in support of ISIS.<sup>139</sup> Suarez was monitored by an informant.<sup>140</sup> Suarez has pleaded not guilty.

In most of the above cases, the alleged plotters were monitored by an informant or undercover officer, which suggests that U.S. law enforcement is doing a good job of staying on top of plots as they develop. However, the San Bernardino, Garland, and Chattanooga attacks reveal the limits of these investigative efforts as do incidents that involve less sophistication, for example the attacks by Zale Thompson, Edward Archer, and at the University of California, Merced.

### **Threat to the United States by European Returnees**

Western fighters from countries other than the United States have traveled to fight in Syria and could pose a threat to the United States. So far we have not seen a case of a foreign fighter from another Western country traveling to the United

States to conduct an attack; however, it is not beyond the realm of possibility. Since 9/11, two of the most serious al-Qaeda plots against the United States have been infiltration attacks from abroad – the 2001 attempt to bring down a U.S. airliner by British “shoe bomber” Richard Reid and the 2009 Christmas Day bombing attempt against another U.S. airliner by Nigerian “underwear bomber” Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab.

**The large number of foreign fighters traveling to fight in Syria from other countries magnifies the potential threat of an infiltration attack, especially from countries that enjoy the “visa waiver” program with the United States.**

The large number of foreign fighters traveling to fight in Syria from other countries magnifies the potential threat of an infiltration attack, especially given the high numbers of foreign fighters from countries that enjoy the “visa waiver” program with the United States, such as Australia, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. The program allows citizens of participating countries to enter the United States without a visa.

Tracking the many foreign fighters from Western countries who have gone to Syria and have returned to the West poses a greater challenge than tracking the handful of returning American fighters.

# THE SEVERE THREAT TO EUROPE

---

The threat facing Europe is severe. Well-developed jihadist networks in Europe—particularly in France and Belgium—have demonstrated their capability to conduct deadly attacks. This is particularly true of the Brussels neighborhood of Molenbeek, where, according to New America research, 13 of the 31 people associated with November’s Paris attacks are from.<sup>141</sup> The threat is also driven by the large number of Europeans who have traveled to fight in Syria and the existence of more developed jihadist networks in Europe.

## Well-Developed Jihadist Networks

The attacks that shook Paris on the evening of November 13, 2015 were conducted by 10 individuals. Two were responsible for planning and logistics, three individuals carried out the attacks at the Stade de France soccer stadium, three more were responsible for the Bataclan theatre tragedy, and two undertook the shootings at the collection of restaurants. (It should be noted that two of the three Stade de France attackers, known alternatively as Ahmad al-Mohammed and M. al Mahmod, entered Europe via Greece under false or stolen identities. Hence, their history and general profiles—outside of the locations of their deaths and their dates of entry into Greece—are still unknown.)<sup>142</sup> Excluding these two men and the recently-captured Salah Abdeslam, seven of the 10

Paris attackers had spent time fighting for ISIS in some capacity in Syria.<sup>143</sup>

**The Paris attacks succeeded because the 10 key perpetrators relied on a network of 21 militants that New America has identified who aided the attackers both in Belgium and France.** Mohamed Bakkali, for instance, owned a safehouse in the Belgian town of Auvelais that was used as a hideout.<sup>144</sup> Mohamed Amri and Hamza Attou, who are both from Molenbeek, had spent time there with Salah and Ibrahim Abdeslam. Amri and Attou were arrested in Belgium shortly after the Paris attacks and were accused of transporting Salah Abdeslam by car over the French border and back to Brussels.<sup>145</sup> Salah Abdeslam was able to avoid capture for four months because of the network that had been built by ISIS upon which Abdeslam could rely when he returned to Brussels after he had fled from Paris.

Western European countries face a much greater threat from ISIS than the United States does because militants can draw upon these established jihadist networks that can give rise to more sophisticated and deadly attacks.

The network involved in the Paris attacks is not the only example. In Belgium, the Sharia4Belgium radical Salafist group actively encouraged and aided members’ travel to Syria. A total of 46 group

members were eventually tried in Antwerp and convicted in February 2015.<sup>146</sup> Six returnees from Syria (Bilal El Makhoukhi, Elias Taketloune, Hakim Elouassaki, Michael Delefortrie, Mohamed El Youssefi, and Walid Lakdim) were given sentences ranging from one to five years in prison.<sup>147</sup> Returnee Jejoen Bontinck testified for the prosecution and received a 40-month suspended sentence.<sup>148</sup> An estimated 10 percent of the Belgian fighters in Syria were connected to Sharia4Belgium.<sup>149</sup>

**Salah Abdeslam was able to avoid capture for four months because of the network that had been built by ISIS upon which Abdeslam could rely when he returned to Brussels.**

The one confirmed deadly attack in the West by a returnee from Syria prior to the November 13 Paris attacks was the May 24, 2014 shooting rampage at a Jewish museum in Brussels that killed four.<sup>150</sup> Returnee Mehdi Nemmouche was arrested around one week later by customs officials at a train station in Marseille, France, where they discovered in his luggage a Kalashnikov rifle wrapped in a sheet bearing the name ISIS, ammunition, and a tape in which he admitted to the shooting.<sup>151</sup> Nemmouche currently awaits trial in Belgium for murder and attempted murder.<sup>152</sup> Nemmouche, a French national, left for Syria at the age of 28 in January 2013, around one month after he was released from a five-year French prison sentence for robbery, his seventh conviction—although none were for terrorism-related crimes.<sup>153</sup> Nemmouche, whose nom de jihad was Abu Omar the Hitter, reportedly spent time as an ISIS prison guard in Aleppo where he beat and tortured hostages.<sup>154</sup> He returned to France from Syria in March 2014, despite being on French watch lists, avoiding detection by exploiting Europe's open borders.<sup>155</sup>

Prior to the Paris attacks, a total of seven other returnees were either arrested for plotting violence

or killed during a police raid. Three are Belgian and four are French.

- A French returnee only known as Reda was arrested in August 2015 after spending one week in Syria, where he was instructed to carry out an attack killing as many people as possible, potentially at a concert hall.<sup>156</sup>
- In Belgium, a dozen simultaneous raids in multiple cities, including Brussels and Verviers, in January 2015 resulted in the arrests of 13 jihadists, including returnee Marouane El Bali, and the deaths of two returnees, Sofiane Amghar and Khalid Ben Larbi.<sup>157</sup> In December 2014, Amghar and Larbi had returned to Belgium after half a year in Syria fighting with ISIS.<sup>158</sup> The two were under 24-hour surveillance by Belgium's secret service upon their return in an investigation that involved other members of their cell in Belgium, Greece, and Syria, including individuals who had never traveled to Syria.<sup>159</sup> When police raided their safe house on January 15, 2015, Amghar, Larbi, and El Bali were in the final stages of planning a major terrorist attack against police, according to a senior Belgian counterterrorism official.<sup>160</sup>
- France arrested Mohamed Ouharani, 20, in Paris in July 2014 for plotting to carry out an attack on Ile-de-France after he returned from Syria via Lebanon, where he initially planned to carry out an attack.<sup>161</sup>
- French national Ibrahim Boudina was arrested in Italy in January 2014 for an imminent attack, and police discovered bomb-making materials in his French apartment building after his arrest.<sup>162</sup>
- Frenchman Lyes Darani, 23, was arrested in Lille in October 2013 and was reported to have had on him a manual explaining how to make a bomb and a religious pledge to commit a suicide attack.<sup>163</sup> While it was reported that he was arrested for plotting violence, details of the alleged plot are not available.

## Larger Numbers of Fighters

There are an estimated 6,900 Western fighters who have gone to fight in Syria.<sup>164</sup> According to a statement from French Prime Minister Manuel Valls in March 2016, there are more than 600 French fighters in Syria and Iraq. 170 French nationals have been killed in Iraq and Syria, while 300 have returned to France. Philip Hammond, the UK foreign secretary, said in January 2016 that there are roughly 800 Britons who have fought in Syria, half of whom are still there. The German Federal Criminal Police (or BKA as it is known in Germany) noted that there are 800 Germans who have gone to fight with ISIS and other extremist networks in Syria. Of those, 260 have returned to Germany and some have faced legal ramifications. Jan Jambon, the minister of Belgium's interior ministry, released figures in January 2016 that showed 464 Belgians were fighting in Syria.<sup>165</sup>

According to the House Homeland Security Committee's March 2016 "Terror Threat Snapshot," there have been 1,900 European foreign fighters who have returned from Iraq and Syria.

With large numbers of Europeans traveling to fight in Syria, several nations including France, Belgium, and Germany are reporting strains on their ability to effectively monitor returnees. According to officials interviewed by the *New York Times*, each French individual placed under surveillance requires 25 agents to maintain round the clock monitoring.<sup>166</sup> French terrorism expert Jean-Charles Brisard estimates that France has 3,000 to 5,000 people under surveillance and only 3,000 people to do that work.<sup>167</sup> The strain on resources produced by ever increasing numbers of foreign fighters who need to be monitored was in part behind the failure to maintain surveillance of the Kouachi brothers, who conducted the attack on the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris.<sup>168</sup> Similarly, one of the attackers in the November 13, 2015, Paris attacks was already known to police.<sup>169</sup>

In December 2014, German Federal Prosecutor General Harald Range stated that given the

large number of terrorism cases being prosecuted in Germany, "We are at the limits of our capacity," adding that new cases kept emerging: "What worries me is the speed with which people are radicalizing, or being radicalized. We are facing a phenomenon which needs a broad strategy of prevention."<sup>170</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of the Brussels attacks, one Belgian counterterrorism official told BuzzFeed News that the small size of the Belgian government and the high quantity of open terrorism investigations have strained the ability to investigate effectively. Speaking anonymously, the official said, "We just don't have the people to watch anything else and, frankly, we don't have the infrastructure to properly investigate or monitor hundreds of individuals suspected of terror links, as well as pursue the hundreds of open files and investigations we have."<sup>171</sup>

## ISIS-Inspired Threats

In addition to terrorism by returnees and those they organize, Europe and the West more broadly continues to face threats from individuals inspired but not trained or directed by ISIS.

In the aftermath of the Paris attacks in November, many other individuals have been inspired by ISIS to carry out terrorist attacks or recruit on behalf of the group.

On February 26, 2016 a Macedonian man living in a village near Venice, Italy was arrested by Italian anti-terror police in connection to his role as an active ISIS recruiter in northeastern Italy. The recruiter, Ajhan Veapi, was radicalized by a Bosnian imam.<sup>172</sup>

The most significant act of ISIS-inspired violence in the West was the attacks conducted by Amedy Coulibaly in Paris, where on January 8, 2015, he shot and killed a Parisian policewoman and the next day killed four people he took hostage at a kosher supermarket.<sup>173</sup> The attacks coincided with

the attack on *Charlie Hebdo*'s offices by Said and Cherif Kouachi, which killed 12 people, and in his martyrdom video, Coulibaly said he coordinated the attack with the Kouachis.<sup>174</sup> While the Kouachis declared themselves followers of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Coulibaly declared allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in the video.<sup>175</sup> Coulibaly was not a veteran returnee of the Syrian conflict but he was inspired by ISIS propaganda.

### Europe and the West more broadly continues to face threats from individuals inspired but not trained or directed by ISIS.

On February 6, 2015, Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein, a 22-year-old born in Denmark, shot and killed two people in Copenhagen, one victim in an attack on the Krudttoenden Cafe, which was hosting a free speech event that included Swedish artist Lars Vilks, who had been targeted by jihadists because of his drawings of the Prophet Mohammed, and the second victim in a later attack at a synagogue.<sup>176</sup> According to the Danish government, El-Hussein had never been to Syria.<sup>177</sup> El-Hussein had pledged fealty to ISIS in a Facebook post before the attacks, writing that he gave his “allegiance to Abu Bakr in full obedience in the good and bad things. And I won’t dispute with him unless it is an outrageous disbelief.”<sup>178</sup> He had been previously active in Denmark’s violent gang scene, was known to police as a result, and had been released from prison two weeks before the attacks.<sup>179</sup> Denmark’s prison service had sent a warning regarding El-Hussein’s potential for radicalization to Danish intelligence.<sup>180</sup>

On December 15, 2014, Man Haron Monis took dozens of people hostage in a Lindt Cafe in Sydney, Australia, triggering a 16-hour siege that resulted in the deaths of two hostages in addition to himself.<sup>181</sup> Monis displayed a black Islamic flag—not the ISIS flag—and demanded a proper ISIS flag during his attack; he further demanded that politicians call his action an ISIS attack.<sup>182</sup> Monis also pledged allegiance to ISIS in a post on his website just days before his attack.<sup>183</sup>

Other plots inspired by or linked to ISIS include:

- On February 11, 2015, two Australian men, Omar Al-Kutobi, 24, and Mohammad Kiad, 25, were arrested for allegedly plotting an attack to take place later that day that Australia Prime Minister Tony Abbott said was inspired by ISIS.<sup>184</sup>
- On March 10, 2015, Spanish authorities announced that they had arrested two men who were plotting an attack in Spain or neighboring countries.<sup>185</sup> The men apparently had contact with ISIS members online and were involved with four men arrested in January who were preparing an attack.<sup>186</sup>
- Even teenagers have been inspired by ISIS to commit violence. In October 2014, a 14-year-old Austrian boy was arrested for planning to bomb a major Vienna train station in the name of ISIS.<sup>187</sup> According to the charging document, the boy made “concrete enquiries into about buying ingredients” for a bomb and planned to travel to Syria to join ISIS after the bombing.<sup>188</sup> The boy was convicted in May 2015 of belonging to a terrorist organization and sentenced to eight months in jail.<sup>189</sup>



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Jan Strupczewski, Julia Fioretti, and Alastair Macdonald, “Belgium names Brussels bomber brothers, says key suspect on run,” Reuters, March 23, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-belgium-blast-idUSKCN0W00LB>.

<sup>2</sup> Angélique Chrisafis and Jon Henley, “Brussels suicide bombers identified as police hunt suspect caught on CCTV,” *Guardian*, March 23, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/23/brussels-suicide-bombers-named-el-barkaoui-brothers>; Ingrid Melander, “Suicide bomber Laachraoui was model student at Brussels Catholic school,” Reuters, March 24, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-belgium-blast-laachraoui-idUSKCN0WQ1NY>; Raf Casert and Angela Charlton, “Officials: Brussels bombers may have rushed attack,” Associated Press, March 23, 2016, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/7d170ea35cdb429581272120d8dde3b7/belgian-broadcaster-identifies-2-suspects-attacks>.

<sup>3</sup> Rukmini Callimachi, “ISIS Claims Responsibility for Brussels Attacks,” *New York Times*, March 22, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/live/brussels-airport-explosions-live-coverage/isis-claims-re/>.

<sup>4</sup> Emily Shapiro, “Accused Paris Attacker Was Allegedly ‘Ready to Restart Something’ From Brussels,” ABC News, March 20, 2016, <http://abcnews.go.com/International/accused-paris-attacker-allegedly-ready-restart-brussels-official/story?id=37793108>.

<sup>5</sup> Lilia Blaise, “Belgian Police Name Man Suspected of Being Salah Abdeslam’s Accomplice,” *New York Times*, March 21, 2016, [http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/22/world/europe/paris-attacks-accomplice-najim-laachraoui.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/22/world/europe/paris-attacks-accomplice-najim-laachraoui.html?_r=0).

<sup>6</sup> Information gathered on each individual includes their name, age, gender, country of origin, last known location, group they joined or attempted to join, their current status (dead, at large, in custody, etc.), familial ties to jihad, and social media use. The data was last updated March 23, 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Office of the Spokesperson, “Designations of Foreign Terrorist Fighters,” U.S. Department of State, September 29, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/09/247433.htm>.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Attorney’s Office District of Minnesota, “Minnesota Woman Charged with Stealing Passport to Travel to Syria,”

Department of Justice, December 2, 2014, <http://www.justice.gov/usao-mn/pr/minnesota-woman-charged-stealing-passport-travel-syria>; Katrin Bennhold, “Medical Students from Britain are Sought in Syria,” *New York Times*, March 22, 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/23/world/europe/british-families-seek-medical-students-thought-to-be-in-syria.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/23/world/europe/british-families-seek-medical-students-thought-to-be-in-syria.html?_r=0).

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Hegghammer, “Should I Stay or Should I Go? Explaining Variation in Western Jihadists’ Choice between Domestic and Foreign Fighting,” *American Political Science Review*, February 2013, [http://hegghammer.com/\\_files/Hegghammer\\_-\\_Should\\_I\\_stay\\_or\\_should\\_I\\_go.pdf](http://hegghammer.com/_files/Hegghammer_-_Should_I_stay_or_should_I_go.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> “Mehr als 70 deutsche Frauen in IS-Gebiet ausgereist,” *Zeit*, March 29, 2015, <http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2015-03/frauen-deutschland-islamischer-staat>.

<sup>11</sup> Kevin Sullivan, “Three American teens, recruited online, are caught trying to join the Islamic State,” *Washington Post*, December 8, 2014, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/three-american-teens-recruited-online-are-caught-trying-to-join-the-islamic-state/2014/12/08/8022e6c4-7afb-11e4-84d4-7c896b90abdc\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/three-american-teens-recruited-online-are-caught-trying-to-join-the-islamic-state/2014/12/08/8022e6c4-7afb-11e4-84d4-7c896b90abdc_story.html).

<sup>12</sup> Alan Travis, “Terror Arrests Fall, but Record Number of Teenagers Held,” *The Guardian*, March 17, 2016, [http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/mar/17/terror-arrests-fall-record-number-teenagers-held-home-office-figures?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/mar/17/terror-arrests-fall-record-number-teenagers-held-home-office-figures?CMP=share_btn_tw)

<sup>13</sup> Mia Bloom, John Horgan, and Charlie Winter, “Depictions of Children and Youth in the Islamic State’s Martyrdom Propaganda,” *CTC Sentinel*, February 18, 2016, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/depictions-of-children-and-youth-in-the-islamic-states-martyrdom-propaganda-2015-2016>

<sup>14</sup> “Cubs of the Khilafah,” accessed via Jihadology.net.

<sup>15</sup> “The Islamic State,” *Vice*, December 26, 2014, <https://news.vice.com/video/the-islamic-state-full-length>.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Elise Labott and Abeer Salman, “New ISIS video claims to show child executing Palestinian captive,” CNN, March 10, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/03/10/middleeast/isis-video-israeli-killed/>.

<sup>18</sup> J.M. Berger and Jonathon Morgan, *The ISIS Twitter Census* (Center for Middle East Policy, 2015).

<sup>19</sup> Press Release, “Fourteen Charged with Providing Material Support to Somalia-Based Terrorist Organization al Shabaab,” Department of Justice, August 5, 2010, <https://www.fbi.gov/news/pressrel/press-releases/fourteen-charged-with-providing-material-support-to-somalia-based-terrorist-organization-al-shabaab>.

<sup>20</sup> Rukmini Callimachi, “Clues on Twitter Show Ties Between Texas Gunman and ISIS Network,” *New York Times*, May 11, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/12/us/twitter-clues-show-ties-between-isis-and-garland-texas-gunman.html>.

<sup>21</sup> Tim Lister, “The cheerleaders and the freelancers: the new actors in international terrorism,” *CNN*, May 7, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/07/world/cheerleader-freelancer-terror/>; *United States v. Yusuf et al.*, Case No. 0:14-mj-01024-MJD, Criminal Complaint (D. Minn., Nov. 24, 2014).

<sup>22</sup> *United States v. Farah, et al.*, Case No. 0:15-mj-00312-MJD, Criminal Complaint (D. Minn., April 17, 2015).

<sup>23</sup> Ellie Hall, “Gone Girl: An Interview With an American in ISIS,” *Buzzfeed*, April 17, 2015, <http://www.buzzfeed.com/ellievhall/gone-girl-an-interview-with-an-american-in-isis#.sjNQIX5wPY>.

<sup>24</sup> *United States v. Mohamud*, Case No. 2:15-cr-00095-JLG, Indictment (S.D. Ohio, April 16, 2015).

<sup>25</sup> *United States v. Amin*, Case No. 1:15-cr-00164, Defendant’s Stipulation of Facts (E.D. Va., June 11, 2015).

<sup>26</sup> Matt Zapposky, “Va. teen admits he was secret voice behind a pro-ISIS Twitter account,” *Washington Post*, June 11, 2015, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/crime/northern-va-teen-admits-running-pro-islamic-state-twitter-and-helping-man-join-terrorist-group/2015/06/11/1d0cb33e-0eef-11e5-9726-49d6fa26a8c6\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/crime/northern-va-teen-admits-running-pro-islamic-state-twitter-and-helping-man-join-terrorist-group/2015/06/11/1d0cb33e-0eef-11e5-9726-49d6fa26a8c6_story.html); *Amin*, Case No. 1:15-cr-00164, Defendant’s Stipulation of Facts 4.

<sup>27</sup> Mark Hosenball, “British hacker linked to attack on Pentagon Twitter feed: sources,” *Reuters*, January 13, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/14/us-cybersecurity-pentagon-cybercaliphate-idUSKBN0KN00X20150114>; Elliott C. McLaughlin, “ISIS Jihadi Linked to Garland Attack Has Long History as Hacker,” *CNN*, May 7, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/06/us/who-is-junaid-hussain-garland-texas-attack/>;

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/28/world/middleeast/junaid-hussain-islamic-state-recruiter-killed.html>.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Kimiko de Freytas-Tamura, “Teenage Girl Leaves for ISIS, and Others Follow,” *New York Times*, February 24, 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/25/world/from-studio-teenager-to-isis-recruiter.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/25/world/from-studio-teenager-to-isis-recruiter.html?_r=0).

<sup>30</sup> Ellie Hall, “Inside The Chilling Online World of the Women of ISIS,” *Buzzfeed*, September 11, 2014, <http://www.buzzfeed.com/ellievhall/inside-the-online-world-of-the-women-of-isis#.lt5g2WRb5J>.

<sup>31</sup> Office of Public Affairs, “Arvada Woman Pleads Guilty to Conspiracy to Provide Material Support to a Designated Foreign Terrorist Organization,” Department of Justice, September 10, 2014, <http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/arvada-woman-pleads-guilty-conspiracy-provide-material-support-designated-foreign-terrorist>.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Letter dated 19 May 2015 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council, S/2015/358, p. 18, [http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/docs/2015/N1508457\\_EN.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/docs/2015/N1508457_EN.pdf).

<sup>34</sup> Ben Taub, “Journey to Jihad: Why are teen-agers joining ISIS?” *New Yorker*, June 1, 2015, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/06/01/journey-to-jihad>.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> David A. Graham, “The Mysterious Life and Death of Abdelhamid Abaaoud,” *The Atlantic*, November 19, 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/11/who-was-abdelhamid-abaaoud-isis-paris/416739/>.

<sup>39</sup> Shiv Malik, “Father of UK teenager killed in Syria implores his other sons to return,” *Guardian*, April 20, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/>

[apr/20/british-teenager-killed-syria-father-interview-abubaker-deghayes.](#)

<sup>40</sup> Dan Bilefsky, “3 Suspected French Jihadists Give Up After Botched Arrest,” *New York Times*, September 24, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/25/world/europe/french-islamic-militant-suspects-expelled-by-turkey.html>; Christopher Dickey, “ISIS, Hip-Hop Jihadists and the Man Who Killed James Foley,” *Daily Beast*, August 25, 2014, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/08/25/isis-hip-hop-jihadists-and-the-man-who-killed-james-foley.html>.

<sup>41</sup> James Comey, “Statement Before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs,” Federal Bureau of Investigation, October 8, 2015, <https://www.fbi.gov/news/testimony/threats-to-the-homeland>.

<sup>42</sup> Ben Brumfield, “Officials: 3 Denver girls played hooky from school and tried to join ISIS,” CNN, October 22, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/10/22/us/colorado-teens-syria-odyssey/>; Michael Martinez, Ana Cabrera, and Sara Weisfeldt, “Colorado woman gets 4 years for wanting to join ISIS,” CNN, January 24, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/01/23/us/colorado-woman-isis-sentencing/>; Hall, “Gone Girl: An Interview With An American In ISIS.”

<sup>43</sup> “Illinois Man Pleads Guilty to Attempting to Provide Material Support to ISIL,” Department of Justice, October 29, 2015, <http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/illinois-man-pleads-guilty-attempting-provide-material-support-isil>; Jason Meisner, “Bolingbrook teen accused of trying to join Islamic State indicted on terrorism charge,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 9, 2015, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/bolingbrook-plainfield/ct-bolingbrook-teen-terrorism-indictment-met-20150109-story.html>.

<sup>44</sup> Todd Richmond, “Wisconsin Man Pleads Not Guilty to Trying to Join Terrorists,” AP, April 24, 2015, <http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/man-accused-join-terrorists-pleads-guilty-30557944>; Hall, “Gone Girl: An Interview With An American in ISIS;” Dan Lamothe, “Picture emerges of Tairod Pugh, U.S. veteran accused of trying to join the Islamic State,” *Washington Post*, March 18, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2015/03/18/picture-emerges-of-tairod-pugh-u-s-veteran-accused-of-trying-to-join-the-islamic-state/>.

<sup>45</sup> Jesse Byrnes, “FBI Investigating ISIS Suspects in All 50 States,” *The Hill*, February 25, 2015, <http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/233832-fbi-investigating-isis->

[suspects-in-all-50-states.](#)

<sup>46</sup> Hall, “Inside The Chilling Online World of the Women of ISIS.”

<sup>47</sup> Stephanie Anderson, “20 Australians killed fighting with IS, 90 passports cancelled: Bishop,” *SBS News*, February 10, 2015, <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2015/02/10/20-australians-killed-fighting-90-passports-cancelled-bishop>; “Number of Aust jihadists increases to 110,” *Sky News*, June 5, 2015, <http://www.skynews.com.au/news/top-stories/2015/06/05/number-of-aust-jihadists-increases-to-110.html>.

<sup>48</sup> “Danish national jailed for fighting with Isis,” August 6, 2015, *The Local*, <http://www.thelocal.dk/20150806/danish-national-jailed-for-fighting-with-isis>.

<sup>49</sup> “50 leave Finland for Syria fighting, 6-8 killed: Supo,” *FTimes*, November 30, 2014, <http://www.finlandtimes.fi/national/2014/11/30/12068/50-leave-Finland-for-Syria-fighting,-6-8-killed:-Supo>.

<sup>50</sup> “Paris says 100 jihadists from France killed in Iraq and Syria,” AFP, June 2, 2015, <http://news.yahoo.com/paris-says-100-jihadists-france-killed-iraq-syria-171924537.html>; Paule Gonzales, “Vera Jourova: «Près de 6000 Européens sont partis faire le djihad»,” *Le Figaro*, April 12, 2015, <http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2015/04/12/01003-20150412ARTFIG00128-vera-jourova-pres-de-6000-europeens-sont-partis-faire-le-djihad.php>.

<sup>51</sup> Berlin says 100 Germans killed fighting alongside ISIL,” *Al Jazeera*, August 23, 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/08/berlin-100-germans-killed-fighting-isil-150823143624855.html>; “Fewer Germans going to Syria, Iraq to fight for Islamic State: spy chief,” Reuters, August 4, 2015, <http://mobile.reuters.com/article/idUSKCN0QA04C20150805?irpc=932>.

<sup>52</sup> Janene Pieters, “Amsterdam Jihadist Killed in Syria Bombing,” *NL Times*, January 20, 2015, <http://www.nltimes.nl/2015/01/20/amsterdam-jihadist-killed-syria-bombing/>.

<sup>53</sup> “At least 80 have left Norway to fight in Syria,” *The Norway Post*, June 22, 2015, <http://www.norwaypost.no/index.php/news/latest-news/30933>.

<sup>54</sup> Eli Lake, “Foreign Recruits Are Islamic State’s Cannon Fodder,” *Bloomberg*, February 11, 2015, <http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2015-02-11/foreign->

[fighters-are-islamic-state-s-cannon-fodder](#).

<sup>55</sup> Robin Wright, “Is the Islamic State Hurting? The President’s Point Man on ISIS Speaks Out,” *New Yorker*, March 3, 2016, <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/is-the-islamic-state-hurting-the-presidents-point-man-on-isis-speaks-out>

<sup>56</sup> “ISIL ‘killed foreign fighters in its ranks,’” *Al Jazeera*, December 28, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/12/isil-killed-foreign-fighters-ranks-2014122816195774477.html>.

<sup>57</sup> Elise Labott and Abeer Salman, “New ISIS video claims to show child executing Palestinian captive,” CNN, March 10, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/03/10/middleeast/isis-video-israeli-killed/>.

<sup>58</sup> Peter Bergen, “The all-American al Qaeda suicide bomber,” CNN, July 31, 2014, <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/07/31/opinion/bergen-american-al-qaeda-suicide-bomber-syria/>.

<sup>59</sup> Cassandra Vinograd and Ammar Cheikh Omar, “American Douglas McAuthur McCain Dies Fighting for ISIS in Syria,” *NBC*, August 26, 2014, <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/american-terrorist/american-douglas-mcauthur-mccain-dies-fighting-isis-syria-n189081>.

<sup>60</sup> “Mass. man accused of aiding ISIS killed in Iraq, reports say,” *Boston Globe*, June 3, 2015, <http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2015/06/03/mass-man-accused-aiding-isis-killed-iraq-reports-say/MABevJO6Pm4beu1B8M1yHI/story.html>.

<sup>61</sup> *United States v. Mohamud*, Case No. 2:15-cr-00095, Indictment pp. 7, 15 (S.D. Ohio, Apr. 16, 2015).

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* at 16.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* at 17; Matthew Dolan, “Ohio Gun-Range Owner Says Terror Suspect’s Visit Was Suspicious,” *Wall Street Journal*, April 21, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/more-details-in-the-fbis-probe-of-ohio-terror-suspect-1429589161>; Matthew Dolan and Andrew Grossman, “Ohio Man Pleads Not Guilty to Terror Charges,” *Wall Street Journal*, April 17, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/ohio-man-pleads-not-guilty-to-terror-charges-1429293238>.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Tracey Connor, “Abdirahman Sheik Mohamud, Ohio

Terror Suspect, a ‘Normal Kid’: Lawyer,” *NBC*, April 17, 2015, <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/ohios-syria-trained-terror-suspect-pleads-not-guilty-n343486>.

<sup>66</sup> Dolan, “Ohio Gun-Range Owner Says Terror Suspect’s Visit Was Suspicious.”

<sup>67</sup> Nicholas Schmidle, “Lost in Syria,” *New Yorker*, February 16, 2015, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/02/16/lost-syria>.

<sup>68</sup> It is worth noting that while Harroun was indicted for fighting with Nursa, it appears he may have actually fought with a different group. *United States v. Harroun*, Case No. 1:13-cr-00272 (E.D. Va, June 20, 2013); Robert Young Pelton, “The All-American Life and Death of Eric Harroun,” *VICE*, April 11, 2014, <https://news.vice.com/article/the-all-american-life-and-death-of-eric-harroun>; Schmidle, “Lost in Syria.”

<sup>69</sup> “Sinh Vinh Ngo Nguyen Pleads Guilty To Terror Count,” AP, December 27, 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/12/27/sinh-vinh-ngo-nguyen\\_n\\_4509490.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/12/27/sinh-vinh-ngo-nguyen_n_4509490.html).

<sup>70</sup> *United States v. Kodaimati*, Case No. 75-mj-1257, Complaint (S.D. Calif., April 23, 2015).

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Tony Perry, “Syrian immigrant, 24, admits links to Islamic State and pleads guilty to lying to FBI,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 29, 2015, <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-islamic-state-links-suspect-guilty-20151029-story.html>.

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.fbi.gov/dallas/press-releases/2015/iraqi-born-u.s.-citizen-arrested-for-making-false-statement-to-the-fbi>

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Scott Shane, “Iraqi Who Worked for the U.S. Military Is Arrested in Texas in Link to Islamic State,” *New York Times*, May 14, 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/15/us/iraqi-who-worked-for-the-us-military-is-arrested-in-texas-in-link-to-islamic-state.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/15/us/iraqi-who-worked-for-the-us-military-is-arrested-in-texas-in-link-to-islamic-state.html?_r=0).

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Monica Hernandez, “Mesquite man pleads guilty to lying to FBI about ISIS,” *WFAA Dallas*, October 13, 2015, <http://www.wfaa.com/story/news/crime/2015/10/13/mesquite-man-pleads-guilty-lying-fbi-isis/73866818/>.

<sup>80</sup> Department of Justice, “California Man Arrested for Making False Statements in a Terrorism Investigation,” *Office of Public Affairs*, January 7, 2016. <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/california-man-arrested-making-false-statements-terrorism-investigation>

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Kamil Kakol and Nicholas Fandos, “Amid ISIS Battles, American Surrenders in Iraq,” *New York Times*, March 14, 2016. <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/15/world/middleeast/american-isis-fighter.html>

<sup>84</sup> “Exclusive interview with the American born ISIS fighter,” *Kurdistan24*, March 17, 2016. <http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/bf92b765-a474-4f3b-8dcd-d90446a60f9c/EXCLUSIVE-interview-with-the-American-born-ISIS-fighter>

<sup>85</sup> James Clapper, “James Clapper on Global Intelligence Challenges,” Council on Foreign Relations, March 2, 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/homeland-security/james-clapper-global-intelligence-challenges/p36195>.

<sup>86</sup> Adam Goldman and Greg Miller, “American suicide bomber’s travels in U.S., Middle East went unmonitored,” *Washington Post*, October 11, 2014, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/american-suicide-bombers-travels-in-us-middle-east-went-unmonitored/2014/10/11/38a3228e-4fe8-11e4-aa5e-7153e466a02d\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/american-suicide-bombers-travels-in-us-middle-east-went-unmonitored/2014/10/11/38a3228e-4fe8-11e4-aa5e-7153e466a02d_story.html).

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> David Sterman, “This is the biggest mistake people make about an ISIS attack in America,” *The Week*, September 8, 2014, <http://theweek.com/articles/444016/biggest-mistake-people-make-about-isis-attack-america>.

<sup>89</sup> The section below is drawn from Peter Bergen, et al. “2014 Jihadist Terrorism and Other Conventional Threats,” *Bipartisan Policy Center*, September 2014.

<sup>90</sup> Steve Kroft, “Unlikely Terrorists on No Fly List,” *CBS News*, October 5, 2006, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/unlikely-terrorists-on-no-fly-list/>.

<sup>91</sup> Eileen Sullivan, “No-Fly List Rules Get Changes,” AP, August 20, 2014, <http://news.yahoo.com/ap-exclusive-us-changing-no-fly-list-rules-223919022--politics.html>.

<sup>92</sup> “Protecting America from Terrorist Attack: Our Joint Terrorism Task Forces,” Federal Bureau of Investigation, [http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/terrorism/terrorism\\_jtfts](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/terrorism/terrorism_jtfts).

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Intelligence Resource Program, “Intelligence Budget Data,” Federation of American Scientists, <http://fas.org/irp/budget/>.

<sup>95</sup> Ken Dilanian, “Overall U.S. intelligence budget tops \$80 billion,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 2, 2010, <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/oct/28/nation/la-na-intelbudget-20101029>.

<sup>96</sup> J.M. Berger, *Jihad Joe: Americans Who Go to War in the Name of Islam* (Washington: Potomac Books, 2011): pp. 30-32; J.M. Berger, “Boston’s Jihadist Past,” *Foreign Policy*, April 22, 2013, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/04/22/bostons\\_jihadist\\_past](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/04/22/bostons_jihadist_past).

<sup>97</sup> Peter Bergen and David Sterman, “ISIS Threat to U.S. Mostly Hype,” CNN, September 5, 2014, <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/09/05/opinion/bergen-sterman-isis-threat-hype/>.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Press Release, “Al Qaeda Operative Sentenced to Life Imprisonment in One of the Most Serious Terrorist Threats to the United States Since 9/11,” U.S. Attorney’s Office, November 16, 2012, <http://www.fbi.gov/newyork/press-releases/2012/al-qaeda-operative-sentenced-to-life-imprisonment-in-one-of-the-most-serious-terrorist-threats-to-the-united-states-since-9-11>.

<sup>100</sup> Anne Kornblut and Karin Brulliard, “U.S. blames Pakistani Taliban for Times Square bomb plot,” *Washington Post*, May 10, 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/05/09/AR2010050901143.html>.

<sup>101</sup> Brent Kendall and Jay Solomon, “FBI Cites Online Terror Recruiting, Training, Damps Subway-Plot Claim,” *Wall Street Journal*, September 25, 2014, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/fbi-director-cites-online-terror-recruiting-training-damps-subway-plot-claim-1411688762>.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Saeed Ahmed, Ed Lavendera, and Joe Sutton, “Two killed outside Mohammed cartoon contest in Garland, Texas,” CNN, May 4, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/04/us/garland-mohammed-drawing-contest-shooting/>.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Adam Goldman and Mark Berman, “FBI had known about suspected Texas shooter for years,” *Washington Post*, May 4, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2015/05/04/fbi-had-known-about-suspected-texas-shooter-for-years/>; Holly Yan, “Texas attack: What we know about Elton Simpson and Nadir Soofi,” CNN, May 5, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/05/us/texas-shooting-gunmen/>.

<sup>106</sup> “San Bernardino Massacre: How the Key Figures Converged,” *New York Times*, December 18, 2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/19/us/san-bernardino-massacre-how-the-key-figures-converged.html>

<sup>107</sup> *United States v. Marquez*, Case No: 5:15-mj-498, Complaint (Central District of California., December 17, 2015).

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Shimon Prokupez and Kevin Conlon, “NYPD: Hathcet Attack an Act of Terror,” *CNN*, November 5, 2014. <http://www.cnn.com/2014/10/24/us/new-york-police-attacked/>

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Michael Pearson, “Attacker who stabbed students at UC Merced had ISIS flag, FBI says,” *CNN*, March 18, 2016. <http://www.cnn.com/2016/03/18/us/university-of-california-merced-stabbings-terror-inspired-fbi/>

<sup>112</sup> Ray Sanchez, Jason Hanna, Shimon Prokupez, “Police: Suspect in officer’s shooting claims allegiance to ISIS,” *CNN*, January 8, 2016. <http://www.cnn.com/2016/01/08/us/philadelphia-police-officer-shot/>

<sup>113</sup> Kristina Sgueglia, “Chattanooga shootings ‘inspired’ by terrorists, FBI chief says,” *CNN*, December 16, 2015. <http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/16/us/chattanooga-shooting-terrorist-inspiration/>

<sup>114</sup> Manny Fernandez, et al., “In Chattanooga, a Young Man in a Downward Spiral,” *New York Times*, July 20, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/21/us/chattanooga-gunman-wrote-of-suicide-and-martyrdom-official-says.html>.

[html](#).

<sup>115</sup> Scott Zamost, et al., “Chattanooga shooting: New details emerge about the gunman,” CNN, July 20, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/07/20/us/tennessee-naval-reserve-shooting/>

<sup>116</sup> *United States v. Cornell*, Case No. 1:15-mj-00024, Criminal Complaint (S.D. Ohio, Jan. 14, 2015).

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. at 8.

<sup>118</sup> *United States v. Juraboev*, Case No. 1:15-m-00172, Complaint and Affidavit in Support of Arrest Warrant (E.D.N.Y., Feb. 24, 2015).

<sup>119</sup> “Fourth Brooklyn, New York, Resident Charged With Attempt and Conspiracy to Provide Material Support to ISIL,” Department of Justice, April 6, 2015, <http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/fourth-brooklyn-new-york-resident-charged-attempt-and-conspiracy-provide-material-support>; “Fifth Defendant Charged with Attempt and Conspiracy to Provide Material Support to ISIL,” Department of Justice, June 11, 2015, <https://www.fbi.gov/newyork/press-releases/2015/fifth-defendant-charged-with-attempt-and-conspiracy-to-provide-material-support-to-isil>

<sup>120</sup> “US Army National Guard Soldier and his Cousin Arrested for Conspiring to Support Terrorism (ISIL),” Department of Justice, March 26, 2015, <http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/us-army-national-guard-soldier-and-his-cousin-arrested-conspiring-support-terrorism-isil>.

<sup>121</sup> Department of Justice, “U.S. Army National Guard Soldier Pleads Guilty to Attempting to Provide Material Support to ISIL,” Office of Public Affairs, December 14, 2015. <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/us-army-national-guard-soldier-pleads-guilty-attempting-provide-material-support-isil>

<sup>122</sup> “Second Topeka Man Charged in Connection with Car Bomb Plot,” U.S. Attorney’s Office, April 10, 2015, <http://www.fbi.gov/kansascity/press-releases/2015/second-topeka-man-charged-in-connection-with-car-bomb-plot>.

<sup>123</sup> Justin Wingerter, “John Booker Jr. pleads guilty to terrorism charges stemming from 2015 Fort Riley bomb plot,” *CJOnline*, February 3, 2016. <http://cjonline.com/news/2016-02-03/john-booker-jr-pleads-guilty-terrorism-charges-stemming-2015-fort-riley-bomb-plot>

<sup>124</sup> “Two Queens Residents Charged with Conspiracy to Use a Weapon of Mass Destruction,” U.S. Attorney’s Office, April 2, 2015, <http://www.fbi.gov/newyork/press-releases/2015/two-queens-residents-charged-with-conspiracy-to-use-a-weapon-of-mass-destruction>.

<sup>125</sup> *United States v. Velentzas*, Case No. 1:15-mj-00303-VVP (E.D.N.Y., Apr. 1, 2015).

<sup>126</sup> Velentzas, Case No. 1:15-mj-00303-VVP, Letter to Judge Pohorelsky at 2.

<sup>127</sup> *United States v. Diaz*, Case No. 1:15-mj-0244-JG, Criminal Complaint (S.D. Fl., April 6, 2015).

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> “Miami Resident and ISIL Sympathizer Sentenced to 10 Years in Prison for Illegally Possessing a Firearm,” U.S. Attorney’s Office, July 28, 2015, <https://www.fbi.gov/miami/press-releases/2015/miami-resident-and-isil-sympathizer-sentenced-to-10-years-in-prison-for-illegally-possessing-a-firearm>.

<sup>131</sup> Jess Bidgood and Dave Philipps, “Boston Terror Suspect’s Shooting Highlights Concerns Over Reach of ISIS,” *New York Times*, June 3, 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/04/us/usaama-rahim-boston-terrorism-suspect-planned-beheading-authorities-say.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/04/us/usaama-rahim-boston-terrorism-suspect-planned-beheading-authorities-say.html?_r=0).

<sup>132</sup> Officials said Rahim was fired on when he lunged at officers with a knife. Initially Rahim’s family, however, claimed that he was shot in the back but backed down from those claims two days later at a press conference saying they did not want to make substantive claims until more evidence emerged. Ibid.; Zenninjor Enwemeka, “Usaamah Rahim’s Family ‘Did Not See Any Signs Of Radicalization,’ Attorney Says,” *WBUR Boston*, June 5, 2015, <http://www.wbur.org/2015/06/04/usaamah-rahim-family-press-conference>.

<sup>133</sup> Ashley Fantz, Ben Brumfield, and Shimon Prokupecz, “Usaamah Rahim’s Boston terror plot: How deep does his network run?,” CNN, June 4, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/06/04/us/boston-police-shooting/index.html>

<sup>134</sup> *United States v. Wright*, Case No: 1:15-mj-0624-MPK, Complaint (D. Mass., June 3, 2015).

<sup>135</sup> *United States v. Wright et al*, Case No: 1:15-cr-10153-WGY, Complaint (D. Mass., June 12, 2015).

<sup>136</sup> *United States v. Ciccolo*, Case No. 3:15-mj-03054-KAR, Criminal Complaint (D. Mass., July 4, 2015).

<sup>137</sup> *United State v. Ciccolo*, Case No. 3:15-mj-03054-KAR, Affidavit of Special Agent Paul Ambrogio (D. Mass., July 13, 2015).

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> “Florida Resident Charged with Attempting to Use Weapon of Mass Destruction,” Department of Justice, July 28, 2015, <http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/florida-resident-charged-attempting-use-weapon-mass-destruction>.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> They include Salah Abdeslam, three other suicide bombers (including Salah’s brother and roommate, Ibrahim, and the chief planner, Abdelhamid Abaaoud) and individuals who aided or transported Abdeslam in the immediate aftermath of the attack.

<sup>142</sup> “Paris attacks: Who were the attackers?” BBC, Updated March 18, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34832512>.

<sup>143</sup> “Unraveling the Connections Among the Paris Attackers,” *New York Times*, Updated March 18, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/11/15/world/europe/manhunt-for-paris-attackers.html>.

<sup>144</sup> “Belgium charges two new suspects in Paris attacks,” AFP, December 2, 2015, <http://news.yahoo.com/two-suspects-charged-belgium-paris-attacks-case-114524263.html>

<sup>145</sup> Lizzie Dearden, “Paris attacks: Two Belgian men arrested for driving Salah Abdeslam out of France ‘could be bomb-makers,’” *Independent*, November 17, 2015, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/paris-attacks-two-belgian-men-arrested-for-driving-salah-abdeslam-out-of-france-could-be-bomb-makers-a6737496.html>.

<sup>146</sup> “Sharia4Belgium trial: Belgian court jails members,” BBC, February 11, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31378724>.

<sup>147</sup> “OVERZICHT. Deze straffen kregen de beklaagden in het terrorismeproces,” *Het Nieuwsblad*, February 11, 2015, [http://www.nieuwsblad.be/cnt/dmf20140930\\_01295313](http://www.nieuwsblad.be/cnt/dmf20140930_01295313).

<sup>148</sup> “Sharia4Belgium trial: Belgian court jails members.”

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> “Brussels Jewish Museum killings: Suspect ‘admitted attack,’” BBC, June 1, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27654505>; and Christopher Dickey, “French Jihadi Mehdi Nemmouche Is the Shape of Terror to Come,” *Daily Beast*, September 9, 2014, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/09/09/the-face-of-isis-terror-to-come.html>.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> BBC, “Brussels Jewish Museum killings: Suspect ‘admitted attack.’”

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.; Dickey, “French Jihadi Mehdi Nemmouche Is the Shape of Terror to Come;” John-Thor Dahlburg and Elaine Ganley, “French suspect held in Belgian Jewish museum shootings spent a recent year in Syria, prosecutor says,” *Washington Post*, June 1, 2014, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/french-suspect-held-in-belgian-jewish-museum-shootings-spent-a-recent-year-in-syria-prosecutor-says/2014/06/01/d27e0428-e9c2-11e3-93d2-edd4be1f5d9e\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/french-suspect-held-in-belgian-jewish-museum-shootings-spent-a-recent-year-in-syria-prosecutor-says/2014/06/01/d27e0428-e9c2-11e3-93d2-edd4be1f5d9e_story.html).

<sup>154</sup> Dickey, “French Jihadi Mehdi Nemmouche Is the Shape of Terror to Come.”

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.; BBC, “Brussels Jewish Museum killings: Suspect ‘admitted attack.’”

<sup>156</sup> “Arrestation d’un homme revenu de Syrie qui aurait projeté des attentats contre une salle de concert,” *Le Monde*, September 18, 2015, [http://www.lemonde.fr/police-justice/article/2015/09/18/arrestation-d-un-ex-djihadiste-qui-aurait-projete-des-attentats-contre-une-salle-de-concert\\_4762141\\_1653578.html#OCUJryGSCWkDw0xu.99](http://www.lemonde.fr/police-justice/article/2015/09/18/arrestation-d-un-ex-djihadiste-qui-aurait-projete-des-attentats-contre-une-salle-de-concert_4762141_1653578.html#OCUJryGSCWkDw0xu.99).

<sup>157</sup> Paul Cruickshank, “Inside the ISIS plot to attack the heart of Europe,” February 13, 2015, *CNN*, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/02/13/europe/europe-belgium-isis-plot/>; “Belgium’s jihadist cells: A terror plot apparently foiled,” *Economist*, January 15, 2015, <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21639787-just-europe-was-recovering-paris-police-brussels-battle-returned-jihadists-another-gun>; Bruno Waterfield, “Belgian police admit seeking wrong man as Vervier shootout jihadists named,” *Telegraph*, January 22, 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/belgium/11362093/Belgian-police-admit-seeking-wrong-man-as-Vervier-shootout-jihadists-named.html>

<sup>158</sup> Waterfield, “Belgian police admit seeking wrong man as Vervier shootout jihadists named.”

<sup>159</sup> Cruickshank, “Inside the ISIS plot to attack the heart of Europe.”

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> “Revelations sur un attentat déjoué en Ile-de-France,” *Le Parisien*, November 3, 2014, <http://www.leparisien.fr/faits-divers/revelations-sur-un-attentat-dejoue-en-ile-de-france-03-11-2014-4261807.php>; Damien Delseny, “Plusieurs projets d’attentats terroristes déjoués en France, selon une note de la DGSI,” *RTL Radio*, November 3, 2014, <http://www.rtl.fr/actu/societe-faits-divers/un-attentat-terroriste-dejoue-lors-du-dernier-carnaval-de-nice-7775148816>.

<sup>162</sup> Paul Cruickshank, “Raid on ISIS suspect in the French Riviera,” *CNN*, August 28, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/08/28/world/europe/france-suspected-isis-link/>.

<sup>163</sup> Damien Delseny, “Plusieurs projets d’attentats terroristes déjoués en France, selon une note de la DGSI,” *RTL Radio*, November 3, 2014, <http://www.rtl.fr/actu/societe-faits-divers/un-attentat-terroriste-dejoue-lors-du-dernier-carnaval-de-nice-7775148816>.

<sup>164</sup> House Homeland Security Committee, “Terror Threat Snapshot—March 2016,” <https://homeland.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/March-TTS.pdf>.

<sup>165</sup> John Irish and David Goodman, “French prime minister says 600-plus people have left France for Syria or Iraq,” *Reuters*, March 20, 2016, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-france-shooting-jihadists-idUKKCN0WM0V2>; Patrick Wintour and Shiv Malik, “Hundreds of Britons caught trying to join jihadis, says foreign secretary,” *Guardian*, January 15, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/15/foreign-secretary-600-uk-citizens-isis-syria-philip-hammond>; “Mehr als 800 “Dschihad-Reisende” aus Deutschland,” *Die Welt*, February 23, 2016, <http://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article152534510/Mehr-als-800-Dschihad-Reisende-aus-Deutschland.html>; Ruth Bender, “Germany Says It Has Files on Islamic State Members,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 10, 2016, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/germany-says-it-has-files-on-islamic-state-members-1457613695>; Laurens Cerulus, “Molenbeek isn’t Belgium’s only extremist hotspot,” *Politico*, January 20, 2016, <http://www.politico.eu/article/molenbeek-belgium-problem-terrorism-radicalization-figures-foreign-fighters->



[jambon/](#).

<sup>166</sup> Katrin Bennhold and Eric Schmitt, “Gaps in France’s Surveillance Are Clear; Solutions Aren’t,” *New York Times*, February 17, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/18/world/gaps-in-surveillance-are-clear-solutions-arent.html>.

<sup>167</sup> Anthony Faiola, “Fears of terrorism mount in France,” *Washington Post*, June 27, 2015, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/terror-fears-mount-in-france/2015/06/27/0160c498-1c4d-11e5-bed8-1093ee58dad0\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/terror-fears-mount-in-france/2015/06/27/0160c498-1c4d-11e5-bed8-1093ee58dad0_story.html).

<sup>168</sup> Bennhold and Schmitt, “Gaps in France’s Surveillance Are Clear; Solutions Aren’t.”

<sup>169</sup> Bergen, Schuster, and Sterman, “How ISIS threatens the West.”

<sup>170</sup> “Jihadist cases stretch German justice to the limit: prosecutor,” Reuters, December 11, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/11/us-mideast-crisis-germany-prosecutor-idUSKBN0JP1DI20141211>.

<sup>171</sup> Mitch Prothero, “Belgian Authorities Overwhelmed By Terror Investigations,” BuzzFeed News, March 22, 2016, [http://www.buzzfeed.com/mitchprothero/belgian-authorities-overwhelmed-by-terror-investigations?utm\\_term=.mm4N5Pvg4#.njZXk4vP](http://www.buzzfeed.com/mitchprothero/belgian-authorities-overwhelmed-by-terror-investigations?utm_term=.mm4N5Pvg4#.njZXk4vP)

<sup>172</sup> “Police arrest Macedonian,” Ansa, February 26, 2016, [http://www.ansa.it/english/news/politics/2016/02/26/police-arrest-macedonian\\_68a8e326-b913-4539-b150-6190aaf4223b.html](http://www.ansa.it/english/news/politics/2016/02/26/police-arrest-macedonian_68a8e326-b913-4539-b150-6190aaf4223b.html).

<sup>173</sup> Julian Borger, “Paris gunman Amedy Coulibaly declared allegiance to Isis,” *Guardian*, January 11, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/11/paris-gunman-amedy-coulibaly-allegiance-isis>

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ralph Ellis, Holly Yan, and Susanne Gargiulo, “Denmark terror suspect swore fidelity to ISIS leader on Facebook page,” CNN, February 23, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/02/16/europe/denmark-shootings/>.

<sup>177</sup> Laura Smith-Spark, “Who was Copenhagen gunman Omar Abdel Hamid El-Husseini?” CNN, February 27, 2015, <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/02/17/europe/denmark-copenhagen-gunman/>.

<sup>178</sup> Ellis, Yan, and Gargiulo, “Denmark terror suspect swore fidelity to ISIS leader on Facebook page.”

<sup>179</sup> Smith-Spark, “Who was Copenhagen gunman Omar Abdel Hamid El-Husseini?”

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> “Sydney Siege: Three Dead after Commandos Storm Cafe,” BBC, December 15, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-30485355>.

<sup>182</sup> Hamish Macdonald, Rym Momtaz, and Lee Ferran, “Sydney Hostage Taker Man Haron Monis Had History of ‘Mental Instability’,” ABC, December 15, 2014, <http://abcnews.go.com/International/sydney-hostage-taker-identified-man-haron-monis/story?id=27607179>.

<sup>183</sup> Michael Safi, “Sydney siege gunman Man Haron Monis praised in ISIS publication,” *Guardian*, December 29, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/30/sydney-siege-gunman-man-haron-monis-praised-in-isis-publication>.

<sup>184</sup> Rachel Olding and Paul Bibby, “Sydney Terror Raids: Police Foil ‘death cult terrorist attack’,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, February 12, 2015, <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/sydney-terror-raids-police-foil-death-cult-terrorist-attack-20150211-13c4hj.html>.

<sup>185</sup> Dan Bilefsky, “Spain Says Arrested Pair Were Part of Terrorist Plot,” *New York Times*, March 10, 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/11/world/europe/spain-says-arrested-pair-were-part-of-terrorist-plot.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/11/world/europe/spain-says-arrested-pair-were-part-of-terrorist-plot.html?_r=0).

<sup>186</sup> Loulla-Mae Eleftheriou-Smith, “Spanish national police arrest four suspected jihadists in country’s North African territory of Ceuta who were ‘ready to carry out attack,’” *The Independent*, January 25, 2015, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world3/africa/spanish-national-police-arrest-four-suspected-jihadists-in-countrys-north-african-territory-of-ceuta-who-were-ready-to-carry-out-attack-10001135.html>.

<sup>187</sup> Philippe Schwab, “Austria convicts 14-year-old on ‘terror’ charges,” *Agence France-Presse*, May 26, 2015, <http://news.yahoo.com/austrian-14-old-jailed-terrorism-charges-100516593.html>.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.



This report carries a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license, which permits re-use of New America content when proper attribution is provided. This means you are free to share and adapt New America's work, or include our content in derivative works, under the following conditions:

- **Attribution.** You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

For the full legal code of this Creative Commons license, please visit [creativecommons.org](https://creativecommons.org).

If you have any questions about citing or reusing New America content, please visit [www.newamerica.org](https://www.newamerica.org).

All photos in this report are supplied by, and licensed to, [shutterstock.com](https://www.shutterstock.com) unless otherwise stated. Photos from federal government sources are used under section 105 of the Copyright Act.



