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Select Jihadist Leadership Resources as of April 27, 2023

Islamic State

- Current leader: **Abu al-Hussein al-Husseini al-Quraishi** (since November 30, 2022)
 - o So far, nothing is known about this individual, no statements have been made, and there is no information about the selection process to choose this individual (Whiteside, 2023).
- Previous leaders:
 - o U.S. military stated that **Abu al-Hassan al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi** was killed mid-October 2022 during an operation by Syrian rebels. The Islamic State didn't release this news until the end of November 2022 (Mrou, 2022).
 - o U.S. military announced the death of **Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi** on February 3, 2022 during a U.S. raid in Syria (Mrou, 2022).
 - o U.S. military announced the death of **Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi** on October 27, 2019 during a U.S. raid in Syria (Garamone, 2019).
- Other recent deaths:
 - o U.S. military announced the death of **Khalid 'Aydd Ahmad al-Jabouri**, a senior leader, as part of a U.S. operation in Syria on Monday, April 3, 2023 (Al-Khalidi, 2023).

Islamic State in Africa

- **Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP)**
 - o Previous leaders:
 - Nigeria's army said it killed **Malam Bako** during a military operation October 28, 2021 (Reuters, 2021).
 - Nigeria's army said it killed **Abu Musab al-Barnawi** during a military raid October 14, 2021 (Asadu, 2021).
 - This came 5 months after al-Barnawi claimed responsibility for killing Abubakar Shekau.
 - **Abubakar Shekau** was the first leader of ISWAP. As the leader of Boko Haram, he pledged allegiance to ISIS in 2015 and the group became known as ISWAP. ISIS became concerned with Shekau's leadership and replaced him with al-Barnawi. Shekau began operating under Boko Haram

once again with his own faction which split from ISWAP (Warner & Hulme, 2018). In 2021, ISWAP claimed responsibility for his death.

- **Islamic State Central African Province (ISCAP)**

- Interesting links about ISCAP:
 - [State Department Terrorist Designations of ISIS Affiliates and Leaders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique](#)
 - [After Palma: Assessing the Islamic State's Position in Northern Mozambique](#) (Doctor, 2022 for POE)
 - [Breaking the Walls in Butembo: The Islamic State in Congo's Capabilities are Growing](#) (POE)
- ISIS-DRC (ADF) - Chapter of ISCAP
 - Current leader: **Seka Musa Baluku**
 - Previous leader: **Jamil Mukulu**, founder of ADF (Candland et al., Program on Extremism, 2019).
 - The group reportedly split due to tensions between their leadership - Baluku wished to become part of a global movement and receive financial and logistical support, thus pledging allegiance to ISIS in 2019 (Candland et al., 2019; United States Department of State, 2021).
- ISIS-Mozambique (Ansar al-Sunna) - Chapter of ISCAP
 - Current leader: **Abu Yasir Hassan**
 - Pledged allegiance to ISIS as early as 2018, acknowledged as ISIS Core as an affiliate in 2019 (NCTC, 2022).

- **ISIS-Somalia**

- Current leader: **Abdul al-Qadir Mumin**
- Founded by a group of defectors from al-Shabaab in 2015; gained official recognition in 2018 (NCTC, 2022).

- **ISIS-Sinai**

- Current leader: Has traditionally kept the identity of its leader a mystery (Mapping Militant Organizations, 2018).
- Previous leaders:
 - IS-Sinai claimed Israeli air strikes had killed prominent IS-Sinai military leader **Abu Omar al-Ansari** in April 2022 (Australian Government, 2022).
 - Prominent IS-Sinai leader **Salim Salma Said Mahmoud al-Hamadin** was killed in a security force operation in March 2021 (Australian Government, 2022).
- Formed as Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (ABM), had ties to al Qaeda, but pledged alliance to ISIS in 2014 (Australian Government, 2022).

- **ISIS-Libya**

- Current leader: As of November 2022, IS-Libya had not publicly named a new leader (Australian Government, 2022).
- Previous leaders:
 - **Abdul Qadr al-Najdi** led from 2015 - September 2020, when he was killed by the Libyan National Army (Australian Government, 2022).
 - **Abu Nabil al-Anbari** led IS-Libya until he was killed in a U.S. airstrike in November 2015 (Australian Government, 2022).
- Received Islamic State delegation in September 2014 and then pledged allegiance to al-Baghdadi (Australian Government, 2022).

- **ISIS-Greater Sahara**

- Previous leader:
 - **Adnan Abu Walid Al-Sahrawi** was announced as killed by France in September 2021 (Price, 2021).
 - Walid Al-Sahrawi was a senior leader of al-Mourabitoun (aligned with al Qaeda) when he pledged allegiance to al-Baghdadi in 2015. The leader of al-Mourabitoun rejected this, and Walid Al-Sahrawi took a splinter group to form ISGS (Warner & Hulme, 2018).

Islamic State in South Asia and Central Asia

- **Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISIS-K, IS-K)**

- Current leader: **Sanaullah Ghafari** (Shahab al-Muhajir) appointed by the ISIS core to lead ISIS-K in mid 2020 (Blinken, 2021).
- Previous leaders:
 - **Abdullah Orakzai** was arrested by Afghan intelligence officials in April 2020 (Wilson Center, 2021).
 - **Abu Omar Khorasani** was killed by the Taliban in 2021 (Cullison, 2021).
 - **Abu Saad Erhabi** was killed in a joint ground and air operation by Afghan and foreign forces in August 2018 (Reuters, 2018).
 - **Abu Saeed Ghaleb** was killed less than one month after his appointment by a U.S. drone strike in July 2017 (Mapping Militant Organizations, 2018).
 - **Abdul Haseeb** was killed in a combined raid by Afghan and U.S. special forces in April 2017 (Mapping Militant Organizations, 2018).
 - **Hafiz Saeed Khan** defected from TTP and pledged allegiance to ISIS-K in 2015. He was killed in a U.S drone strike in July 2016 (Mapping Militant Organizations, 2018).
- The leaders of ISIS-K are not as well-known as in other regions, but the group and leadership model have a certain resilience (Abbas, 2023).

Al-Qaeda

- Current leader: widely believed to be **Saif al-Adel** (Price, 2023)
- Previous leaders:
 - o The United States announced that **Ayman al-Zawahiri** was killed in a special operation in July 2022 (The White House, 2022).
 - o The United States announced that **Osama bin Laden** was killed in a special operation in May 2011 (FBI, 2011).

Al-Qaeda in Africa

- **Al-Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)**
 - o Current leader: **Abu Ubaidah Youssef al-Annabi**
 - o Previous leader: **Abdelmalek Droukdel** - killed during French special operation on June 5, 2020.
 - o Became part of Al-Qaeda in 2007.
 - o Some have questioned whether Droukdel decided to become part of Al-Qaeda due to “global ambition”, instead claiming that this was due mainly to convenience, and possibly a desire to solidify his own power in the organization (Chivvis & Liepman, 2013).
 - o Feuding within leadership fragmented the group, with Droukdel leading the “main” group and Mokhtar Belmokhtar taking operations of breakaway southern segment (Chivvis & Liepman, 2013).
- **Jama’at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims—JNIM)**
 - o Current leader: **Iyad Ag Ghaly**
 - o Recent Deaths:
 - **Bah Ag Moussa**, a senior commander, was killed by French forces in February 2020 (Thomson, 2021).
 - **Yahya Abu al-Hammam**, a commander considered to be second-most senior leader, was killed by French forces in February 2019 (Thomson, 2021).
 - o Group was formed by merger of four Salafi-jihadist groups in the Sahel: Ansar Dine, Katibat Macina, al-Mourabitoun, and the Sahara branch of al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and **Iyad Ag Ghaly** pledged allegiance to al-Zawahiri in 2017 (Thompson, 2021).
- **Al-Shabaab (some ties to Al Qaeda)**
 - o Current leader: **Ahmed Umar Abu Ubaidah**
 - o Previous leader: **Ahmed Abdi Godane** - killed by U.S. drone strike on September 1, 2014 (Mapping Militant Organizations, 2018).

- Al-Shabaab has close ties with Al-Qaeda, especially after the group under Ahmed Abdi Godane pledged allegiance to Al-Qaeda in 2012.
- Many believed that al-Shabaab would struggle greatly following the death of Godane in 2014, however it seems to have remained largely cohesive (Klobucista et al., 2022).

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