BEYOND *the* CALIPHATE
Islamic State Activity Outside the Group's Defined Wilayat

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This project documents and identifies activity linked to and inspired by the Islamic State outside of the territory it claims as part of its Caliphate. In doing so, it seeks to provide insights into how the influence, operational reach, and capabilities of the Islamic State are changing in certain locales over time.

The temporal starting point for the data collection was June 2014, when the group's Caliphate was officially created. Since that point in time, open-source data regarding the Islamic State's operational activity has been collected by Combating Terrorism Center (CTC) researchers in select locations outside of the physical territory claimed by the group. This means that as new groups in different places become formally integrated into the Caliphate, they are no longer counted. For example, activity carried out on behalf of the Islamic State in Nigeria would have been included in our dataset up until the time that the group accepted the bay`a of Boko Haram and renamed the organization to reflect that it was now the province of the Islamic State in West Africa. On the other hand, activity carried out in the name of the group in Bangladesh continues to be collected, as no formal renaming of groups has occurred there (as of the launch of this page in March 2017).

To provide a nuanced analysis of the group's operational activity, the CTC has created a database that categorizes different indicators of such activity. The three types of operational activity coded by CTC researchers include:

- Attack: An operation that was successfully executed.

- Plot: A plan to conduct an operation that was thwarted.

- Support activity: Any type of support an individual expresses towards the Islamic State, which ends in an arrest in a country outside of the Islamic State's Caliphate. This includes, but is not limited to recruitment, travel facilitation, monetary, or materiel support. (When multiple arrests occur in the same operation, they were typically coded as one support "event," as opposed to individual coded lines for each arrest.)

Beyond these main categories, CTC researchers also coded a number of variables for each of the events in the dataset, including information such as casualty counts, the type of weapons employed, the number of perpetrators involved, and any indication of connection back to the Islamic State's central organization in Iraq and Syria. To compile all of this data, CTC researchers relied entirely on open source search engines, media sources, and databases (i.e. Lexis Nexis). Each event was coded and updated as new information became available. While relying on open-source information has its drawbacks, the CTC is confident that the data used in this project provides a useful metric for understanding the Islamic State's operational activity around the world.

As collection and analysis continues, the CTC plans to release a number of short, country-specific and regional reports that leverage the data CTC has collected.