

**ACSRT/Incident-Analysis-010-2015**

Algiers, 26 June 2015

**Incident Preliminary Analysis****Terrorist Attacks in Somalia, Tunisia, France and Kuwait****26 June 2015****I. The Incidents:**

Friday, 26 June 2015, has seen four bloody attacks in three continents perpetrated by terrorists. Two of these attacks took place in Africa, "Somalia and Tunisia", one in Europe, "France", and the other in Asia, "Kuwait".

1) The attack in Somalia targeted a military base of the Burundian contingent of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in Leego Village, 100Km north east of Mogadishu. It started at dawn with the explosion of a booby-trapped vehicle at the entrance of the base followed by its invasion by men armed with automatic rifles and grenade launchers. After several hours of confrontation the assailants were able to overrun the base. So far, it has not yet been possible to ascertain the exact number of dead and injured on either side. Al Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack.

2) A Tunisian government spokesperson announced that a gunman killed at least 39 people and injured 36 in the beach front of Hotel Riu Imperial Marhaba in the resort town of Sousse. Security forces said he was a student not previously known to the authorities. He managed to gain access to the hotel disguised as a swimmer and started firing on the tourists who were bathing at the beach and in the swimming pool. He went on firing into the main building of the hotel as he pursued his victims before being shot dead by the police in an exchange of gunfire.

3) In France, in Saint Quentin Fallavier town of Isère, Yassine SALHI, a van driver, 35 years of age, known to the police for his radical views, rammed his car into an area containing flammable liquids in a gas factory causing an explosion and injuring several people. The owner of a delivery firm for whom Yassine worked, was found beheaded nearby, amid Islamist flags with his head hanging near the entrance gate.

4) In the Middle East, the Kuwaiti Interior Ministry spokesperson announced that a suicide bomber attacked the Al Imam Al SADEQ Mosque in Kuwait City. Abou Souleymane Al MOUWAHHID, detonated his explosives during Friday prayers in a Shia Mosque in the country's capital, killing at least 27 people and injuring 227 others.

## **II. The perpetrators:**

The Kuwait City suicide attack was formally claimed by the Islamic State affiliate "Najd Province". In accordance with the communiqué issued by the group, the attack was justified by the need to block the road to the "heretical Shiites" who are poisoning the society with the propagation of their harmful teachings to the sunny communities.

Regarding the Saint Quentin attack, much as nobody has yet claimed responsibility for it, it bears the hallmark of the international jihad. The fact that Jihad flags were spread around the body of the beheaded French businessman is a solid enough evidence to link the attack to international Jihad.

The Leego Attack has been claimed by Al Shabbab while no group has so far claimed responsibility for the Sousse attack.

## **III. Analysis**

1) The month of Ramadhan has normally been the month in which terrorist attacks experience a hike in frequency. In this specific case, it's worth remembering that Aboubakar Bagdadi has appealed his followers to intensify jihad during the month of Ramadhan. These attacks could, in part, be viewed as zealous implementation of Bagdadi's appeal.

2) These attacks take place three days before the first anniversary of the proclamation of the Islamic State. They could also be viewed as an important symbolic gesture in preparation for the celebration of the date, a uniquely assertive way to confirm IS continued exuberant existence, a powerful show of force and determination to remain alive and relevant despite recent adversities.

3) it's interesting to note that the timing and the quasi-simultaneous succession of these attacks, as well as the choice of the location of the targets, seem to

want to replicate the recent American incursions against Moktar Belmoktar and Nassir Al Wuhayisi. Almost all these attacks took place in North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula (Libya-Tunisia, Yemen-Kuwait).

4) In the eventuality that these attacks were centrally coordinated, we should be prepared to admit the disturbing fact that the Islamic State or Al Qaida have tremendously enhanced their communication system and coordinating capacity, as no terrorist group had, before, been able to embark on such a complicated exercise of planning and executing multiple and simultaneous attacks in three different continents without being detected or disrupted.

5) Traditionally, terrorist groups take revenge or declare that they will do so in case any of their so called martyrs is killed. Indeed, each time an important terrorist leader is killed, the survivors seek to retaliate with accrued violence or spectacularly deadly action. The events of today could also be looked at in this perspective.

6) The operational modalities used in the attacks of Saint Quentin in France, and Sousse in Tunisia, are very similar to those applied by Mohammed Merah, the Kouachi brothers, Amedy Coulibali and the Bardo Museum assailants: Lone wolves or very tiny terrorist cells who, capitalizing on the surprise factor, choose and aim at a carefully selected, unsuspecting, defenseless and vulnerable target(s) which they can engage sustainably and cause maximum damage before they can be stopped by law enforcement agents.

7) Until recently, simultaneous terrorist attacks would happen either in the same place or in its immediate neighborhood, or even in different places but aiming at similar targets (such as the American Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam for instance), But the present attacks, though simultaneous, they were aimed at targets which are different in nature: a factory, a place of worship or a tourist resort. Indeed, anything, any place and any person can be a target of a terrorist attack. This is a clear demonstration that the counter terrorism battle front is anywhere, anytime, everywhere.

8) Tourism, a key sector in the Tunisian economy, has just been hit the second time in a space of three months. The aim of this attack can hardly be different from the one that dictated the Bardo Museum attack of 18 March 2015. The terrorist groups operating in Tunisia Libya and the neighboring countries are not at ease with the current process of democratization of the country and will

do everything to derail it. The destruction of the economy is the fastest and most direct avenue to attain this goal.

9) The growing number of Tunisians and other north African returnees from Syria and Iraq with proven military skills and extreme radicalization, and those who are locally radicalized and recruited, will, increasingly, be used to do this job. These, therefore, are not the last incidents we will hear about, both in Tunisia and in Somalia.

10) There are no easy ways with terrorism. Governments are heavy, slow, and conditioned in the type of action they can take to stop terrorist suspects. They are, in many cases vulnerable before a terrorist threat. They hardly can be everywhere at the same time, yet they have the entire country to protect, secure and develop, while terrorists have the entire country, its people and its infrastructure to destroy, maim and destabilize without regard to any laws, any values or any political or economic considerations. Terrorists have the element of surprise on their side and the ability to choose their targets and the time to carry out their deadly attacks. The government is, more often than not, one step behind.

11) The solution must continue to be that of a multipronged and multi-stakeholder approach aimed at befriending the people and winning them to the government side, protecting them from the radical ideological narrative, reduce and eliminate the possibility of their recruitment for terrorist purposes. To this effect, the Government must make a drastic effort to reduce the factors that may contribute to their feeling socially excluded and economically disenfranchised. On the other hand, the effort to enhance the capacity of defence forces, Intelligence, security services and law enforcement agencies to protect national critical infrastructure and sensitive sites, conduct robust and successful operations when attacked and develop the capacity to monitor, investigate, intercept and disrupt terrorists' planning, networks and activities, cut off terrorists' funding and access to equipment and training and bring terrorist leaders and their supporters to justice, must be a permanent feature.

12) The transnational nature of the present terrorist threat demands that governments develop special channels of mutual interstate interaction, support, border control, information exchange, cooperation and coordination. North Africa and the Sahel will not be able to stabilize while the situation in Libya remains as volatile as it is today.