



# Terrorism Index in the Arab Region

During the First Quarter of 2022



Prepared by: Ali mohammed -Ahmed Essa  
Editing by: Sherif AbdEl Hamid

## Introduction

Adopting an approach based on human rights, rule of law, and gender sensitivity remains an effective tool for preventing and combating terrorism, in the long term. By this statement, Secretary-General António Guterres concluded his speech at the Aqaba Process meetings in Jordan on March 25, 2022.<sup>1</sup> In the Arab region, the response to the calls for adopting this approach varied markedly, which undermined the efforts of these countries to ward off terrorism and build sustainable economies. Perhaps the key obstacle that faced most Arab countries where terrorism has spread is the continued control of sub-state actors over part of the lands, such as the Al-Shabab movement in Somalia and the Houthis in Yemen, and the critical political situation that opened the door for terrorist groups that took advantage of this political rivalry to plan and carry out a wide range of operations and attacks.

Terrorist operations in the Arab region increased in the first quarter of 2022 by about 209 terrorist operations, compared to 169 terrorist operations in the first quarter of 2021, which killed 463 people and injured 560 others. Maat documented the killing of 141 civilians, including women and children, which represents 30.4% of the total number of terrorist deaths in the first quarter of 2022. 236 civilians were injured, or 42% of the total casualties. The top Arab countries suffering from armed conflicts, namely Somalia, Syria and Yemen, remained the most vulnerable to terrorist operations, as terrorist groups claimed 115 terrorist attacks, which represents 55% of the total terrorist operations in the Arab region.

Somalia topped the terrorism index in the Arab region during the first three months of 2022, with 68 terrorist attacks carried out in its territories, while Iraq came second in the index, followed by Syria. Terrorist groups such as Al-Shabab in Somalia and ISIS in Syria and Iraq remained able to move freely and maneuver, which allowed them to plan, execute, plant explosives, set ambushes and recruit other individuals.

---

<sup>1</sup> اجتماعات العقبة هي مبادرة أطلقها الملك الأردني عبد الله الثاني في عام 2015، لتعزيز التنسيق والتعاون الأمني والعسكري وتبادل الخبرات في مكافحة الإرهاب والتطرف.

Only eleven Arab countries have maintained a terrorism-free record thanks to the elaborate strategies and approaches to combating terrorism and the intelligence and security cooperation between them, the Arab countries, and the UN member states. Pre-emptive strikes have contributed to the fall down of dangerous terrorist leaders.

There were several efforts to combat terrorism in the first quarter of 2022. The Egyptian military's most prominent Special Forces units, the Thunderbolt Forces (Quwwat al-Sa'iqa) trained an elite unit in the Mauritanian army to combat terrorism in the Mauritanian state of Tekent. In one way or another, these countries have adopted the four pillars of the United Nations global counter-terrorism strategy at the heart of policies and activities aimed at combating terrorism within their territory. These four pillars are: addressing conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism; measures to prevent and combat terrorism; measures to build states' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in that regard; and measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism.

## Methodology

The report is based on a monitoring mechanism for all terrorist acts published in the local and international media and newspapers that occurred in the Arab countries during the first quarter of 2022, using the **descriptive-analytical method**, to monitor and analyze the impact of the variables that affect terrorism and dismantle it in a way that produces new hypotheses and unbiased and logical conclusions about terrorism, and thus the ability to predict the challenges standing as a stumbling block against countering terrorism and to ensure an accurate understanding of the phenomenon and a solid diagnosis of it. The report also uses **systems thinking approach** to better understand the dynamics of terrorism and its impact on Arab societies. Scientific honesty requires referring to the coefficient of error (CE) that may have occurred as a result of the monitoring process, which may lack accuracy of the statistics published by the media and local and international newspapers, which sometimes provide variable data on the number of victims,

whether they were injured or killed. Therefore, accuracy and objectivity must be stressed.

### **First Theme: Statistics and indications of terrorism in the Arab region during the first quarter of 2022**

The first quarter of 2022 recorded an increase in terrorist operations in the Arab region by about 209 terrorist operations compared to 169 terrorist operations in the same period last year, which killed 463 people and injured 560 others. The top Arab countries suffering from armed conflict, namely: Somalia; Syria; Yemen remained the most vulnerable to terrorist operations, as terrorist groups have claimed responsibility for 115 terrorist attacks in the three countries, which is 55 % of the total terrorist operations in the Arab region.

As for the Arab countries experiencing a faltering political transition process, they have also been affected by terrorist operations, such as Iraq, Libya, Tunisia and Sudan. These four countries were targeted by 62 terrorist attacks, or 29.6% of the total terrorist attacks, of which 43 terrorist attacks took place in Iraq alone, which is 20.6% of the total number of terrorist attacks. The four countries are getting through a critical period of transition to stability amidst overwhelming power struggle, whether between basic political components, as is the case in Somalia between the current President Mohamed Abdullah and Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Robley, and in Libya between Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, the former leader of the national government and Fathi Pasha Agha, or between sectarian components, as is the case in Iraq, between the Sunni and the Iran-backed Shia militia groups.

Only eleven Arab countries have maintained a terrorism-free record thanks to the elaborate strategies and approaches to combating terrorism and the intelligence and security cooperation between them that led to the fall down of more extremist elements, which neutralized these elements by counter-terrorism forces and contributed to curbing terrorism in these countries. Mauritania remained far from any terrorist operations during the first quarter and, in addition to security cooperation with neighboring countries, established a special EU-backed force to combat terrorism in the African Sahel called "Haggana". In the same context, Jordan pledged to enact more legislation and policies in order to comply with the

standards of the Working Group (FATF) on combating money laundering and terrorism, after it was placed in October 2021 on the gray lists. The group praised the efforts of the UAE as well in this context. During the reporting period, Jordan strengthened its cooperation with the International Coalition to Combat ISIS. Only 10 Arab countries are members of this global coalition, which enables partner countries to ward off ISIS dangers and combat its financing.

Terrorist groups focused their operations primarily on national armies and security forces, relying on their ability to recruit individuals to carry out the tasks of installing and manufacturing explosive devices, with which terrorist groups launched 16.7% of the total terrorist operations, in addition to committing suicide operations targeting government officials or military personnel.

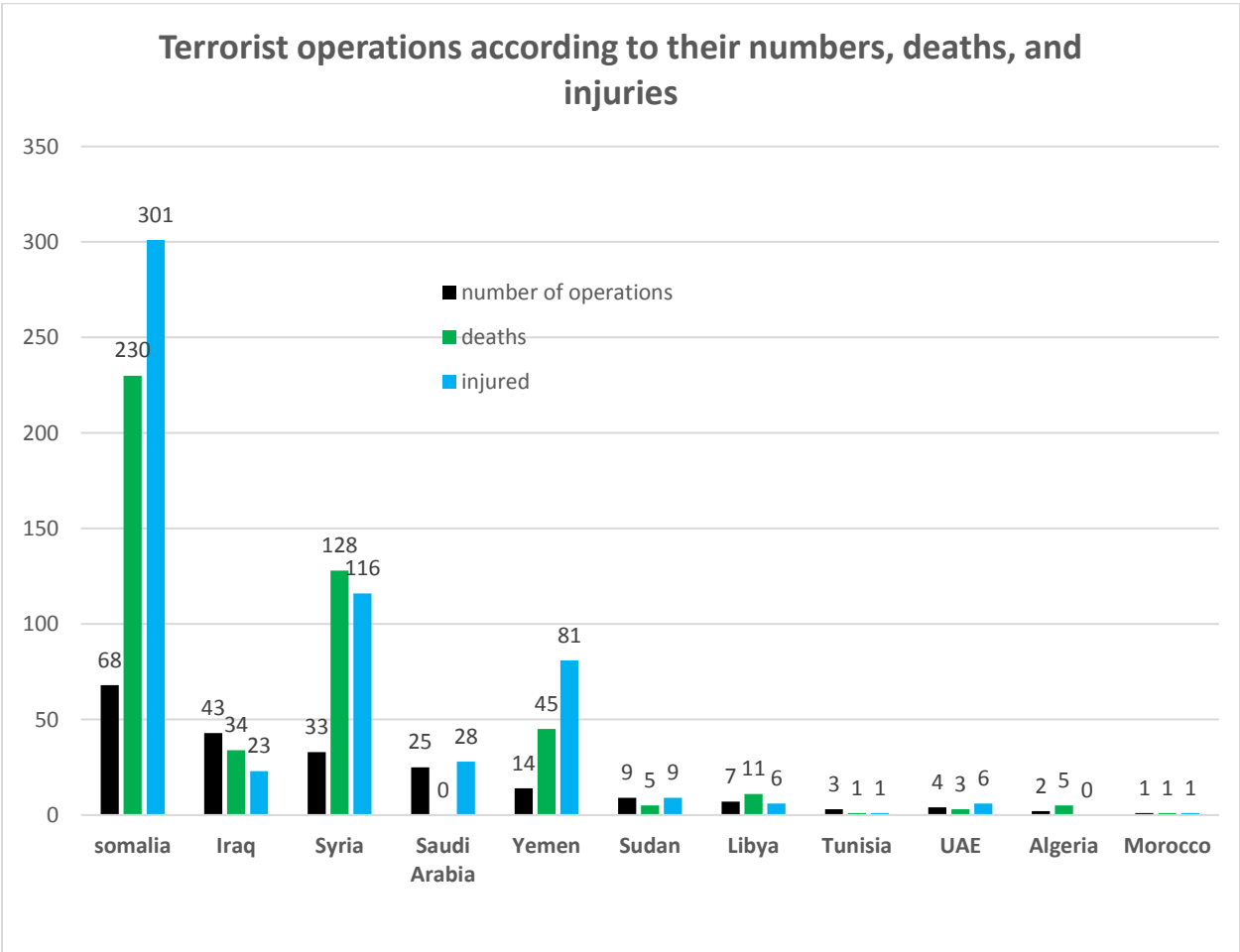
**Table No. (1): Arab Countries Most affected by Terrorism VS. Terrorism-Free Countries**

<b>Countries Most Affected by Terrorism</b>	<b>Terrorism-Free Countries</b>
Somalia	Egypt
Iraq	Kuwait
Syria	Oman
Saudi Arabia	Jordan
Yemen	Mauritania
Sudan	Lebanon
Libya	Bahrain
Emirates	Palestine
Tunisia	Qatar
Algeria	Djibouti
Morocco	Comoros

Somalia topped the index of terrorist operations in the Arab region in the first quarter of 2022, with 68 terrorist attacks. Similarly, it topped the index of deaths and injuries, with about 230 dead and about 301 injured. Iraq came second in the index, with about 43 terrorist operations, and fourth in the index of the dead and injured, with about 34 dead and 23 injured, which may indicate a decline in the ability of terrorist organizations in Iraq to adopt operations with a wide impact or

inflict severe damage, whether to individuals or civilian and military facilities. In the same vein, Syria came third in the index of the terrorist operation, with more than 33 terrorist incidents, and second in the dead and injured index, with 128 dead, and about 116 wounded. The Houthis targeted Saudi Arabia with about 25 terrorist attacks documented by researchers in Maat. Therefore, Saudi came fourth on the index of the terrorist operation. However, these operations did not lead to any deaths, only 28 civilians were injured. Yemen came fifth in the index of terrorist operations in the Arab region, with 15 terrorist attacks, and third in the index of dead and injured, with 45 dead and whose lives were lost as a result of ballistic missiles and drones, in addition to the injury of 81 others.

**Figure No. (1): Classification of Terrorist Operations According to the Indicators of Operations, Dead and Injured**



## Second Theme: Terrorism According to Geographical Distribution in the Arab Region

Terrorism has strengthened its geographical presence in the Arab region in specific areas, where terrorism has affected Arab countries located in the Horn of Africa more than others. Terrorist groups, or rather, Al-Shabab movement in Somalia and unknown armed men, whether in Somalia or Sudan, carried out about 77 terrorist operations, which is 36.8 % of all terrorist operations. However, some Arab countries located in the Horn of Africa remained far from terrorist operations, such as Djibouti and the Comoros Islands, thanks to the efforts to combat terrorism in the two countries and the military bases of the major countries in Djibouti in particular, which contributed to curbing terrorism in this small country that covers an area of 23,200 km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>2</sup>

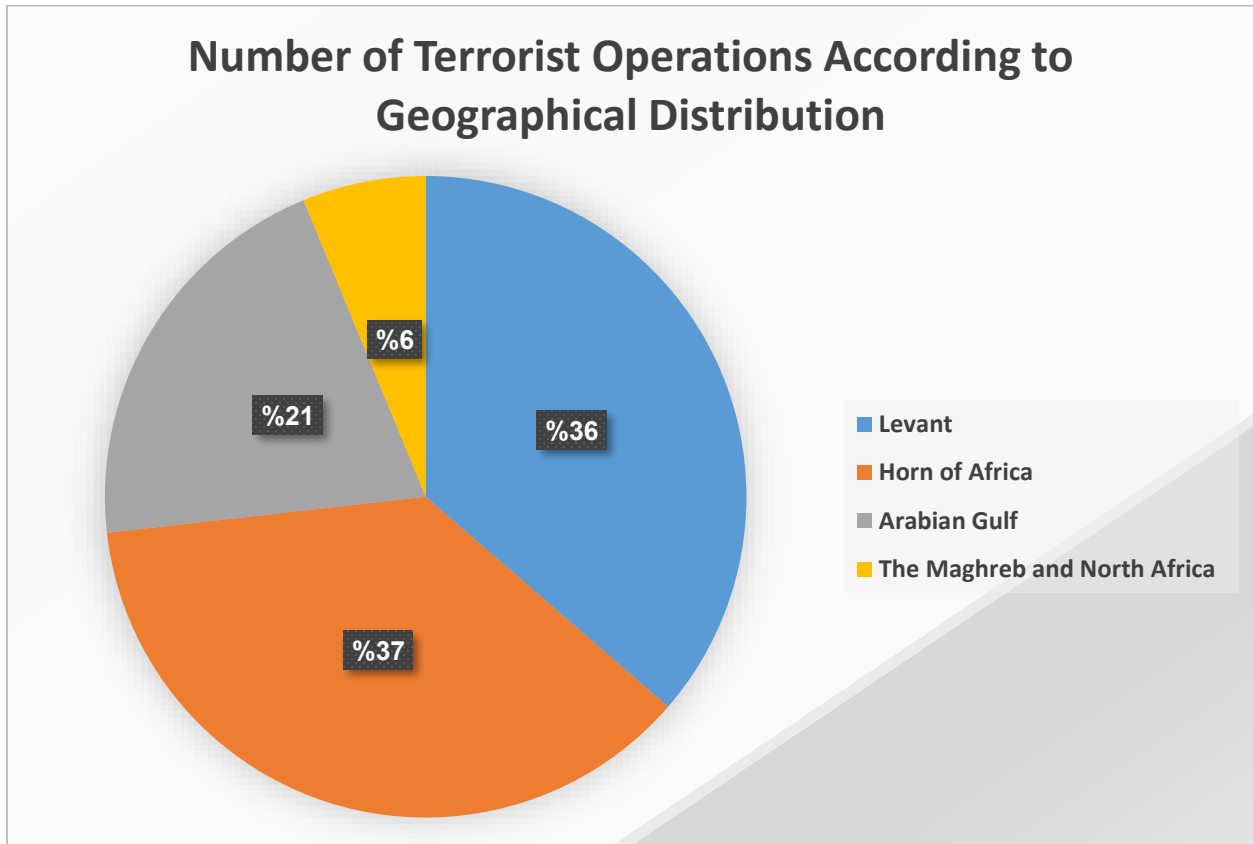
Terrorism, especially practiced by ISIS, has maintained its geographical spread, it became rampant in the Levant region and these groups have carried out 76 terrorist operations, or 36.4% of the total terrorist operations in the Arab region. Most of the operations took place in Iraq and Syria, whereas Lebanon and Palestine remained free from attacks in the first quarter of this year. During the period covered by the report, the Internal Security Forces in Lebanon thwarted more than one terrorist operation, the last of which was three operations that were planned to be carried out on February 24, 2022 in the southern suburbs of Beirut.

The Maghreb and North Africa region remained the least vulnerable to terrorist operations in the Arab region in the first quarter of 2022, as terrorist groups carried out only 13 terrorist operations in the Maghreb and North Africa, which is 6.2% of the total terrorist operations in the Arab region, while the Arab Gulf region was the second least affected by terrorist operations, with 43 terrorist attacks, which is 20.6% of the total terrorist operations in the Arab region. In Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, Yemeni army forces, infrastructure and civilians have been targeted.

---

<sup>2</sup> Fighting a losing battle? Countering terrorism financing in Nigeria and Somalia, South African Journal of International Affairs, 10 May 2021, Available at the following: <https://bit.ly/3xBRGuQ>

Figure No. (2) Number of Terrorist Operations According to Geographical Distribution



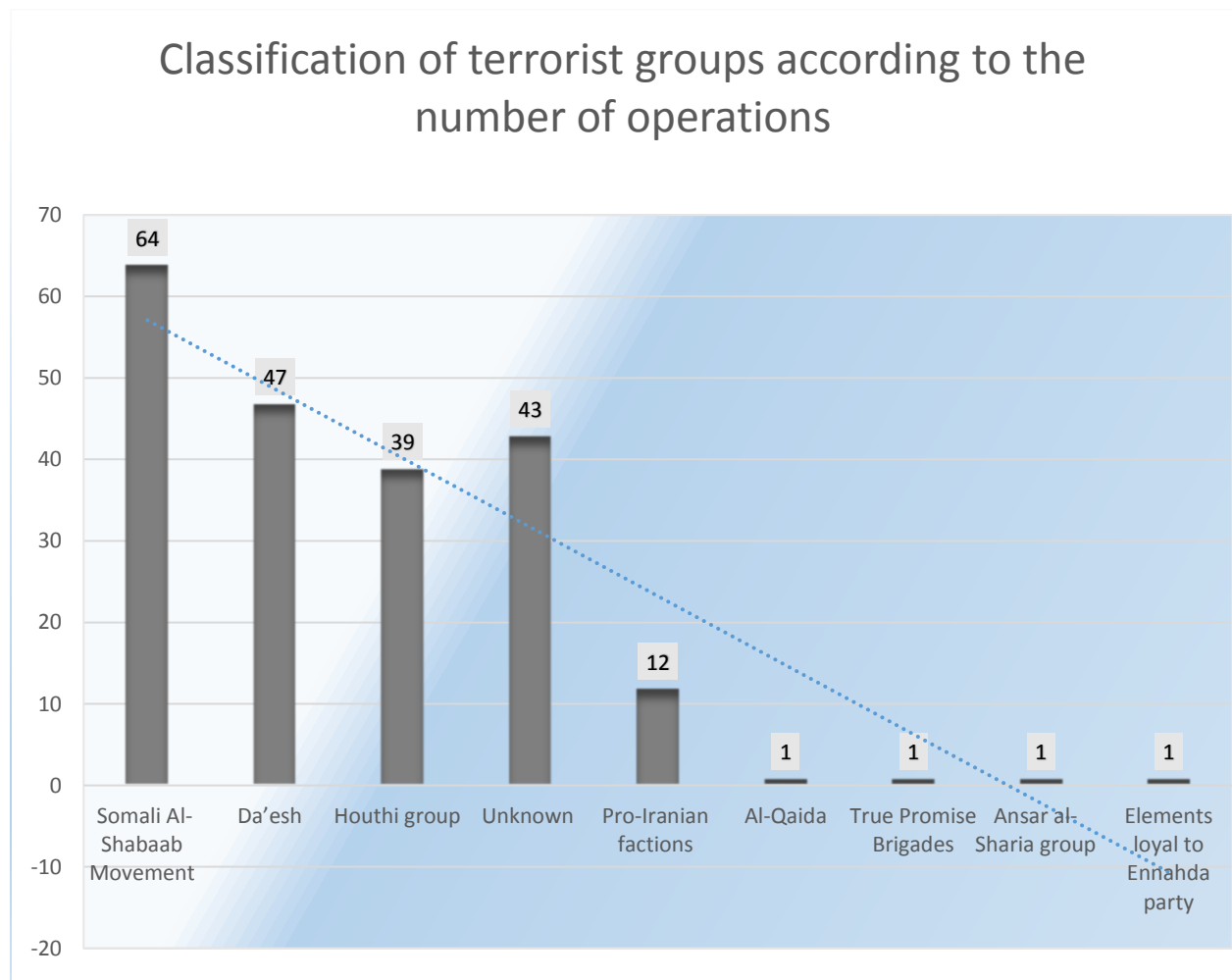
**Third Theme: the most active terrorist organizations in the first quarter of 2022**

Al-Shabaab movement in Somalia adopted the majority of terrorist operations in the Arab region during the first quarter of 2022, estimated at 64 terrorist attacks, or 30.6% of the total terrorist operations in the Arab region, which were carried out in the states of Somalia as a whole. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant “Da’esh” came second, with about 47 operations, including 23 terrorist operations in Syria, 21 terrorist operations in Iraq, and three terrorist operations in Libya. The Houthis continued to practice cross-border terrorism in the first three months of 2022, which prompted the Security Council to adopt Resolution No. 2624 of 2022, under which the group was designated for the first time as a terrorist group. The Houthis came third in the terrorism index in the Arab region during the reporting period



with 39 terrorist operations, divided into 25, 11, and 3 in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and the United Arab Emirates, respectively, according to Maat monitoring and documentation. The pro-Iranian militias in Iraq and Syria came fourth on the terrorism index in the Arab region, with 12 terrorist attacks, 10 in Iraq and two in Syria, the majority of these operations were carried out against US forces and the international coalition forces to combat Da'esh. Only one terrorist attack was attributed to Al-Qaida, which was carried out on February 12, 2022, in the Abyan governorate, southern Yemen.

**Figure No. (3) Classification of terrorist groups according to the number of operations**



## Fourth Theme: terrorism in the Arab region: analytical vision

The shortcomings such as the fragility of the countries of armed conflict and the inability of the national armies to control all the lands they rule, along with the faltering political process in some Arab countries, open the door for terrorism, hindering any efforts towards achieving the sustainable development goals. Somalia topped the terrorism index in the Arab region in the first quarter of 2022, and the political crisis and the faltering procedure for the parliamentary elections in Somalia prompted more attacks adopted by Al-Shabaab. The movement still controls by force of arms part of the territory in Somalia, and it is able to rule the population by de facto force and impose taxes and levies.

Da'esh remained contained in the Syrian desert and in remote areas in Iraq, from which it launched to the outskirts of Baghdad to pose a security threat for the first time since 2019 in the Iraqi capital, while US forces in Iraq and Syria remained a target for militias loyal to Iran, especially after the expiry of the deadline announced by these forces to withdraw and did not start implementing this withdrawal. Although Morocco has remained far from terrorism in previous years, a new strategy developed by pro-Da'esh elements targeting youth under the age of thirty through social media aimed at terrorist operations against tourists who go to rural areas who seek their comfort. The following is what Maat noted based on the operations documented in the Arab region in the first quarter of 2022.

### 1. Somalia

Somalia came at the top of the index of terrorist operations in the Arab region in the first quarter of 2022. Terrorist groups in Somalia claimed responsibility for 68 terrorist operations, 64 out of them were only carried out by Al-Shabaab, which is 94% of the total terrorist operations. Maat, however, is not sure about the terrorist groups that have adopted the remaining four operations. This rate shows an increase in the index of the operations compared to the first quarter of 2021, in which terrorist universities in Somalia adopted only 43 operations. In the first quarter of 2022, the victims of these attacks were estimated at 230 people, while 301 others were injured. Thus, Somalia topped the index of operations, deaths, and injuries, as we mentioned in the first quarter.

It can be noted that terrorism prevailed in Somalia during the first quarter of 2022 on more than one level which can be identified as follows:

### **First: Return to Mogadishu**

Al-Shabaab noticed the political differences between Somali President Mohamed Abdullah and the interim Prime Minister to return again to Mogadishu. During the period covered by the report, the movement adopted more than 20 terrorist attacks in the capital and direct confrontation with the security and military forces, and this return to Al-Shabaab comes after its expulsion from the capital Mogadishu 10 years ago, as the movement was carrying out operations only in the areas adjacent to the capital, except for the qualitative operations that it carried out of course in Mogadishu, but they did not live up to a permanent goal for the movement's operations, a situation that seems to be changing.

### **Second: Attempts to disrupt the parliamentary elections**

Looking at the geographical distribution of Al-Shabaab operations in Somalia during the first quarter of 2022, it can be said that the movement intensified its operations in the states where parliamentary elections were held, and the best example of this is the bombing led by the Al-Shabaab movement in the Baldwin area, one day before the city hosted the elections for 6 parliamentary seats on February 20, 2022, and as is the case with the bombings that the movement claimed in Bosaso, which were attacks that coincided with the announcement of the first parliamentary seats to be contested in the city, the movement sought from these operations to postpone the electoral process, as the movement is considered the most beneficiary of the crippled political situation in Somalia. It is worth noting that the parliamentary elections were postponed more than once and were supposed to end by February 25, 2022, before being extended until March 15 by an executive decision announced by the Somali Minister of Information. But by March 15, the elections in the states of Herbiishli and Jubaland had not been completed, which called on a number of UN member states to call on the Somali government to complete the elections. In the same context, the US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, stated on February 9, 2022, imposing sanctions that included restricting the issuance of US visas to a number of current and former Somali officials, due to

undermining the electoral process and not adhering to the deadline set for the end of the parliamentary elections.

### **Third: Al-Shabaab movement's renewable ability to seize resources**

Al-Shabaab has always had a renewed ability to acquire resources from the manifold and different sources, perhaps the most important of which are taxes, which it collects in an amount that exceeds the capacity of the Somali government itself, which made Stephen Townsend, commander of the African sector in the US forces “AFRICOM” consider the movement the richest armed group closely related to Al-Qaida in the world, he also described the movement as the richest and the largest in terms of fighters, in East Africa. Al-Shabaab movement receives about \$15 million per month, and although it does not possess natural resources such as oil or natural gas, it relied on different ways to finance itself. The secondary budget of the movement, according to a United Nations report, ranges between 70 and 100 million dollars, and the movement's resources are represented in the taxes it gets from the checkpoints that the illegal charcoal trade passes through and other goods such as food commodities, which reach 100 checkpoints.

In addition to illegal taxes on goods in the port of Mogadishu, where the movement, according to the expert group on Somalia, is blackmailing companies that import and export goods through the port, by hacking shipments data, in addition to the movement's resources imposing real estate taxes on local residents, and other fees for protection besides the zakat that the movement collects annually from Somali traders, farmers and livestock owners in the areas under the movement's control. While the movement can also collect money by blackmailing the local population by imposing real estate taxes and so on in exchange for protection, and other types of levies that the movement obtains annually from Somali traders, farmers, and livestock owners<sup>3</sup>. In a related context, the terrorist Al-Shabaab movement exploits the sea lanes off the eastern coast of Africa in maritime piracy, kidnapping, and ransom operations to enrich its operational budget.

---

<sup>3</sup> Fighting a losing battle? Countering terrorism financing in Nigeria and Somalia, South African Journal of International Affairs, 10 May 2021, Available at the following: <https://bit.ly/3xBRGuQ>

## 2. Iraq

Iraq came as the second Arab country in the terrorism index in the Arab region in the first quarter of 2022. Terrorist groups carried out 43 terrorist operations in Iraq, showing a slight decrease from the number of operations adopted by these groups in the first quarter of 2021, which amounted to 45 terrorist operations. Da'esh and its affiliated militias adopted 21 operations, which is 48.8% of the total terrorist operations in Iraq in the first quarter of this year, while 10 operations were attributed to pro-Iranian militias in Iraq, and 12 other operations to unknown persons. Da'esh focused its attacks during the reporting period to target the Popular Mobilization Forces alongside the Peshmerga forces and the security ambushes of the security forces and the Iraqi army, but it is noted that the impact capacity of these attacks adopted by Da'esh is no longer as strong as the previous operations and remained limited in effectiveness, this can be read in the total deaths and injuries as a result of terrorist operations in the first quarter. Maat noted the following

### **First: Intensification of attacks on US forces in Iraq**

The pro-Iranian militias used drones and rocket-propelled grenades to target the headquarters of the American forces in Iraq, and these militias had warned the American forces to intensify their attacks if they did not fulfill the promise they made to withdraw from Iraq by the end of 2021, which was not achieved, especially after the announcement of the spokesman for the Commander in Chief of the armed forces in Iraq Yehia Rasool on December 31, 2021, that Iraq continued to need about 2,500 American soldiers to help them in the fight against terrorism, the same number of soldiers that the United States intended to withdraw by the end of 2021 from Iraq and the decline of their role in providing training and advice, which is the withdrawal that was not completed, and these militias carried out about 21 operations, most of them against the forces stationed at the Victoria base near Baghdad airport and the headquarters of the US embassy in the Green Zone in Baghdad governorate and Ain al-Asad base in Anbar governorate.

## **Second: Targeting the Sunni Taqaddum Coalition and Azm Alliance**

On January 5, 2022, the merging of the Taqaddum Coalition and Azm Alliance, a Sunni bloc that includes about 64 deputies in the Iraqi parliament, was announced after the recent elections. However, the leaders and offices of this coalition were a legitimate target for terrorist operations on January 14, 2022, when armed men attacked with an explosive device targeting the headquarters of the “Progress Alliance” in the Adhamiyah area north of Baghdad, and coincided with this operation, which did not leave victims, targeting the headquarters of the "Azm" alliance in the Yarmouk area, west of Baghdad. In addition to targeting the headquarters, pro-Iranian militias carried out specific operations to target some parliamentarians belonging to the aforementioned alliance. For example, on January 25, 2022, these militias carried out a terrorist attack using 3 missiles that targeted Karma district, the birthplace of the Iraqi parliament speaker and head of the Progress Alliance, Mohammed al-Halbousi in Anbar governorate. Despite the alliance's request to prosecute the elements that carry out these operations, it did not open an investigation into these operations, and attributed all the operations to unknown persons, while some reports suggested that pro-Iranian militias are behind these operations.

## **Third: Soft borders in the triangle of death**

Da’esh and its decentralized cells carried out the most number of operations in the governorates of Diyala, Kirkuk, and Salah Al-Din, which are known as the triangle of death, where the organization adopted more than half of the operations attributed to it in the first quarter of 2022, and Da’esh takes the desert hinterland of those governorates as a safe haven to plan its operations due to the geographical nature of these governorates, where the Hamrin mountain range and the Great Aquarium are located in which Da’esh considers safe places to hide away from the Iraqi security forces<sup>4</sup>. What enhances the ability of Da’esh’ to carry out terrorist operations in these governorates is the presence of multiple security agencies. For example, the Diyala governorate has more than one security agency, such as the

---

<sup>4</sup> Iraq Security Situation Country of Origin Information Report January 2022, EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR ASYLUM COI REPORT – IRAQ, SECURITY SITUATION, page 31, <https://bit.ly/3NnRpEi>

Federal Police, the Popular Mobilization, the Tribal Mobilization, and Diyala operations, all of these agencies are not compatible with a unified strategy to combat Da'esh, which creates a defect in confronting Da'esh in these governorates<sup>5</sup>. In Kirkuk specifically, the social, political, and religious conflict, which is attributed to the overlapping demographic structure, sectarian and clan, which includes both Sunnis and Shiites, is a catalyst for the growth of terrorism in Kirkuk governorate, particularly if we note that the areas through which terrorist operations are carried out are the eastern and northeastern regions that are characterized by their diverse population and overlapping composition.

### 3. Syria

Syria witnessed 33 terrorist attacks in the first quarter of 2022, which is an increase in the number of terrorist operations compared to the operations that took place on Syrian territory in the first quarter of 2021, which amounted to 36 terrorist operations. During the reporting period, Da'esh adopted 23 terrorist operations, while 8 operations were attributed to unknown persons, and two operations were attributed to militias loyal to Iran. Perhaps the most important event in the fight against terrorism in Syria during the reporting period is the targeting of the Emir of Da'esh in Syria and Iraq, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, also known as al-Hajj Abdullah. The latter detonated an explosive belt, killing him, his wife, and his children in a qualitative operation launched by US military forces in Idlib governorate, northwest Syria. The decline of the organization's ability to carry out operations of wide resonance can be read during the subsequent period of neutralizing the organization's leader and waiting for the affiliate branches of the organization to pledge allegiance to the organization's emir, Abu al-Hassan al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, whom the organization announced his allegiance in March 2022.

Terrorist operations in Syria did not stop during the first quarter, but their impact remained limited. The researchers at Maat noted that the enclaves affiliated with Da'esh continued to remain in the desert as a safe haven. What continues to find

---

<sup>5</sup> تصاعد المطالب لإصلاح المنظومة الأمنية العراقية، Independent عربي، 28 يوليو 2021، على الرابط التالي:

<https://bit.ly/3wH2RFg>

in this vast and sprawling region a safe haven for planning and implementing a wide range of terrorist operations, where the adoption of Da'esh has carried out at least 15 terrorist operations in the desert of Deir El-Zur, Raqqa, Homs, and in rural and remote areas surrounding the two governorates?

Da'esh used light and medium machine guns and RBG shells in the attacks, which resulted in a number of civilian deaths, including shepherds, in the arid region. This desert region still represents a gap in counter-terrorism efforts due to the factors that characterize it, such as its low population and rugged terrain, which suits the hiding of Da'esh cells, such as mountains, valleys, very deep natural limestone caves, and daily rainstorms that obscure the aerial view and remove traces of the movements of terrorist elements very quickly, these areas are called dark or invisible areas due to the difficulties in monitoring them by the anti-terrorist forces.

It seems that Da'esh decided in the first quarter of 2022 to implement what it had planned throughout 2021, which is to remove its mercenaries from prisons controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces. From January 20 to 30, clashes continued between Da'esh militants and Kurdish forces with light and medium weapons targeting Gwiran prison, one of the largest prisons in which Da'esh fighters are detained in al-Hasakah, northeastern Syria, which are clashes that claimed the lives of 88 people from Kurdish forces and civilians. The dilemma of al-Hol camp, which houses about 56,000 families of terrorists, women, and children, will remain an explosive situation at any time if the member states, including the Arab states, do not put in place non-traditional and final solutions to the situation in the camp.

#### **4. Saudi Arabia**

The Houthis targeted the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with about 25 terrorist operations, a wide range of these operations directed towards the southern region of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which is adjacent to northern Yemen, which is the closest point from which the Houthis can launch drones and ballistic missiles. Perhaps what is remarkable about the operations carried out by the Houthis in the first quarter is the intensification of the attack on civilian areas and objects, which left 28 injured. For example, on January 18, the Houthis carried out a terrorist



operation using 8 booby-trapped drones that were launched towards separate areas inside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, <sup>6</sup> but it did not result in casualties. On February 12, the Houthis led an attack by a drone targeting Abha International Airport, in which 12 civilians were injured. This attack was followed by another operation by a drone targeting civilians at King Abdullah Airport in Jizan in southern Saudi Arabia killing 18 civilians, some of them in serious condition. The researchers at Maat previously said that the Houthis are seeking to intensify attacks against civilian objects to create a public opinion within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia calling for an end to the war in Yemen, the Houthis did not observe the protection granted under international humanitarian law to schools as they are among the civilian objects prohibited from being targeted in armed conflicts, whether international or non-international.

## 5. Yemen

Yemen came fifth in the terrorism index in the Arab region, where terrorist groups carried out 15 terrorist operations, the Houthis adopted 11 operations, attributed three operations to unknown persons, and one terrorist operation was attributed to Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. In general, more than 90% of terrorist operations occurred in governorates that are located in southern Yemen, the purpose of these operations is to inflame the anger of the population, who originally complain about the crisis economy, the interruption of wages and salaries, and the recognition of the ineffectiveness of managing those who control the institutions in southern Yemen and then refusing to comply with their rule, which is the goal of the Houthis.

## 6. Sudan

Sudan came sixth in the terrorism index in the Arab region, where unknown persons adopted 9 terrorist attacks in Sudan in the first quarter of 2022, which is an increase of about five terrorist attacks, as Sudan witnessed 4 terrorist attacks in the first quarter of 2021, which were documented by Maat. 5 victims of these operations were killed, and nine others are still injured, some of them seriously.

---

<sup>6</sup> التحالف يدمر 8 مسيرات مفخخة ويكبد الحوثيين خسائر في مأرب، الشرق الاوسط، 18 يناير 2022، <https://bit.ly/3IBUahM>

The researchers at Maat attributed the increase of these operations to the interaction of the political blockage in Sudan with terrorism with the transnational organization and the complete inability to control these borders, in addition to tribal violence, especially in Darfur, and social and economic grievances, especially in eastern Sudan, where about four terrorist operations were carried out. Although Sudan established a special force to combat terrorism on January 17, 2022, terrorist operations continued, which portends a fragile control over the presence and planning of these groups in the second half of this year. Perhaps the increase in the number of operations is part of the recent trend of terrorist groups to spread in East Africa, including Sudan.

## **7. Libya**

Libya came seventh in the terrorism index in the Arab region, where 7 terrorist attacks were carried out on its soil, ISIS adopted 3 of them. Maat couldn't confirm the identity of the other groups responsible for the remaining terrorist attacks. The ultimate goal of the terrorist operations adopted by ISIS in Libya was the Libyan army forces in the regions of Sabha and Umm al-Aranib, and this coincides with what Maat's researchers suggested in previous publications on terrorism in the Arab region, that ISIS aims to establish a foothold in southern Libya. To stabilize or as a base to move its elements to North and West Africa, within the framework of a new strategy for the organization to establish 4 states in Lake Chad, or what is known as the West African Region.

## **8. UAE**

The United Arab Emirates remained immune to the Houthis' missiles and drones, but after the giant brigade forces achieved successive field gains in Shabwah Governorate and in some districts of Ma'rib Governorate in Yemen, the Houthis tried to send a message that the UAE is not safe after the group claimed that the UAE supported these forces, and although the UAE does not have direct borders with the areas under the control of the Houthis, it was targeted with three terrorist operations, while another operation was carried out by a faction called the Promise Al-Haq Brigade, a faction loyal to Iran. The outcome of these operations damaged a number of civilian and economic facilities, killing and wounding civilians. Perhaps

the most violent terrorist attack carried out by the Houthis was on January 17, 2022, when five ballistic and winged missiles and a large number of drones targeted fuel tanks in the ICAD Mussafah area, near the ADNOC tanks and in the new construction area of Abu Dhabi International Airport.<sup>7</sup> As a result, three civilians were killed and six others were injured.

## 9. Tunisia

Tunisia came ninth in the terrorism index in the Arab region, with three terrorist attacks, a slight increase compared to the first quarter of 2021, in which one terrorist attack took place in Tunisia. The three operations during the reporting period resulted in the assassination of a captain in the National Guard, Mohsen bin Mohammed, and the wounding of a soldier in a patrol in the Bir Sultan area, Kebili province, southern Tunisia. The third operation was carried out on March 20, 2022, when gunmen attacked a barracks for the National Guard in Kairouan, central Tunisia, but no casualties resulted from the accident. The file of returnees from Syria remains the most dangerous in dealing with the fight against terrorism in Tunisia, especially in light of the fragility of the political situation in light of the exceptional decisions taken by Tunisian President Kais Saied on July 25, 2021, based on the text of Article 80 of the Constitution, which is to suspend parliament and lift immunity on all its members. The President himself has taken over the preparation of bills. The ability to curb terrorism in Tunisia remains linked to the vigilance of the security forces, and careful dealing with the file of ISIS returnees, who constitute about 2,000 people and to rehabilitate their children and women.

## 10. Algeria

Algeria experienced two terrorist attacks in the first quarter of 2022, the first operation was carried out on January 28, 2022, when a terrorist with machine guns attacked Algerian soldiers on the border strip in the Hassi Messaoud region, in Ain Guezzam border with Niger. As for the second operation, it was detonated, when gunmen attacked the machine guns, Algerian soldiers in the Timiawain area in the Burj Mukhtar Ali Burj Ali border with Mali. Perhaps the most important indicator in

---

<sup>7</sup> مقتل ثلاثة أشخاص في انفجار صهاريح محروقات بأبوظبي والإمارات تتدد بـ"اعتداء حوثي أتم"، france24، 17 يناير 2022، <https://bit.ly/3wCc55k>

this context is the cross-border terrorist activity, which some have suggested is due to the security tension in the Sahel region, especially in light of the French forces' willingness to leave Mali.<sup>8</sup> The most important indicator in this context is cross-border terrorism which is attributed to instability in the coast area, especially in light of the French forces' preparation to establish a foothold and exploit the security vacuum created by the exit of the French forces. It is worth noting that Algeria has 1,359 km of borders with Mali, 951 km with Niger, and about 1,000 km with Libya, which makes it a necessary to activate counter-terrorism operations and the vigilance of security forces in these areas.

## 11. Morocco

Morocco witnessed one terrorist attack in the first quarter of this year, and the operation was carried out on January 15, 2022, after a terrorist attack with white weapons targeted a French and a Belgian tourist inside a market in the city of Tiznit near the Agadir region.<sup>9</sup> The 79-year-old victim was shopping in the city of Tiznit, when she was hit in the head by the terrorist before the attack on another woman in the city of Agadir, before the Moroccan security forces arrested him and, after interrogation, he was transferred to a psychiatric hospital.

Morocco did not witness any terrorist operation in the past year and maintained its record free of terrorist operations thanks to intelligence cooperation with neighboring countries and preemptive strikes. During the period covered by the report, researchers in Maat noted that pro-ISIS terrorist operations had focused on youth in populated desert areas, after they were destinations of terrorist groups for recruiting and persuading young people of extremist ideas, which was revealed by the Central Office of Judicial Research in Morocco. On January 26, 2022, two people under the age of 23 were arrested after being suspected of having links with the terrorist organization ISIS, who were recruited through the Internet and trained to manufacture improvised explosive devices for operations in the Moroccan countryside.

---

<sup>8</sup> الجزائر تعلن مقتل 3 عسكريين في اشتباك مع "إرهابيين" على حدود مالي، الاناضول، 20 مارس 2022، <https://bit.ly/3qDwbIG>

<sup>9</sup> شبهة دوافع إرهابية" بمقتل سائحة فرنسية في المغرب، sky news Arabia، 19 يناير 2022، <https://bit.ly/35cRidk>

## Recommendations

- ☞ Strengthening intelligence cooperation between Arab countries and external powers in a manner that ensures that proactive steps are taken to limit the occurrence of terrorist attacks.
- ☞ Imposing strict international control over the movement of international funding provided to terrorist groups in a way that enables these groups to carry out their subversive plans.
- ☞ Imposing strict international control over the movement of weapons and equipment used by these organizations in carrying out their terrorist acts against civilians and military personnel in Arab countries.
- ☞ Working to promote religious tolerance and combating hate speech, investing in women's rights programs and religious minorities, as well as providing social services to deserving groups, all of which are solutions that reduce the conditions that promote terrorism;
- ☞ Expanding the conduct of scientific and academic studies that identify the causes of extremism and terrorism, applying their results on the ground, revising educational curricula, and working on developing tools to monitor hate speech in Arab countries.
- ☞ Participation in global counter-terrorism forums in a way that allows the exchange of expertise, information and good experiences, and in a manner that enhances the ability of countries to curb terrorism.
- ☞ Preventing and countering terrorism must not be used as a tool to silence dissent and impose restrictions on civil society and human rights defenders.
- ☞ Request UNODC support in capacity building on financial investigations.
- ☞ Strengthening the judicial system in Arab conflict areas in a way that contributes to combating the spread of impunity and strengthening the rule of law.