

Militancy/Terrorism

14

OCT
11:53 UTC

Global Alert (UPDATE): Al-Qaeda on October 13 praises Hamas' attack against Israel, calls for targeting of Jewish, Western communities; maintain heightened vigilance

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW PREVIOUS REPORT](#)

Current Situation:

- On October 13, al-Qaeda's (AQ) Central Command released a statement praising the Hamas-led "Operation al-Aqsa Flood" against Israel on October 7, and called to undertake a violent campaign against the country.
- The statement also directs sympathizers to target Christian and Jewish individuals, while also calling to attack US and Israeli embassies and assets linked to both countries worldwide.

Assessments & Forecast:

1. The follows statements from AQ factions across the world since the Hamas attack, including from AQ in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), AQ in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), AQ in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and al-Shabaab. This is therefore part of the anti-West/Israel rhetoric currently being employed by terrorist outfits globally amid the ongoing Israel-Gaza conflict.
2. AQ has frequently published communiqués pertaining to the longstanding Israel-Palestinian Territories conflict. The AQ Central Command's latest call for jihadist attacks remains consistent with the group's ideological position to target Jewish communities and Western nationals. However, the impact of the latest statement is likely to vary globally, in sync with various AQ factions' tactical competencies, organizational structure, and presence in their respective regions.
3. To use the latest Israel-Gaza conflict as a rallying point speaks to the Islamist outfit's persisting strategies to capitalize on religious fault lines and collective grievances among Muslim communities around the world, especially considering the deep sensitivities associated with the conflict. While the uptick in targeted propaganda is primarily intended to gain sympathizers, there have been no recent reports suggesting a rise in AQ's global recruitment.
4. **FORECAST:** Considering AQ's use of social media to disseminate propaganda in recent years, the group is expected to intensify its communication over the issue across several online platforms to reach a global audience in the coming days with the aim of inciting followers to conduct attacks. Simultaneously, authorities worldwide are expected to maintain fortified security arrangements outside US and Israel diplomatic missions, as well as near Jewish institutions and tourist or business areas frequented by Western nationals.

AFRICA

1. AQ affiliate Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam waal Muslimeen militant group (JNIM) operates across West Africa's Sahel Region in **Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger**, with a limited presence in **Benin, Ivory Coast, and Togo**. JNIM has previously attacked and abducted followers of Christianity in **Burkina Faso and Mali**. However, these attacks generally take place in outlying areas. Capital cities, where the majority of US assets are located, have a heavy security presence and the threat is relatively limited. Nonetheless, the threat against Christians and Jews persists across the Sahel.
2. Al-Shabaab has pledged allegiance with AQ operations in East Africa, particularly in **Somalia** and its border areas with **Kenya**, and has expressed its support for Hamas, with the Kenyan and Somali authorities warning of an increase in "solidarity attacks". The US Embassy in **Nairobi, Kenya** has issued a nationwide security alert warning of potential attacks in locations frequented by US citizens and other foreign nationals. However, the last militant attack in Nairobi took place in January 2019. While there remains an underlying threat of militancy in Nairobi, any potential attacks targeting Christian communities are likely to remain mostly limited to the northeastern counties bordering Somalia. In **Somalia**, the capital **Mogadishu** remains under persistent threat from militant attacks and is likely to remain so.

AMERICAS

1. Considering that no attacks attributed to Islamist groups have been recorded in the **USA** since 2022, the possibility of mass-casualty attacks remains limited following AQ's call for attacks. This is further buttressed by the fact that on October 13, US Intelligence agencies reported the absence of "any indication of a threat" to the USA. However, the potential for lone wolf attacks by self-radicalized individuals in both **Canada** and the **USA** manifesting as active shootings or stabbings near US Embassies, military bases, and Jewish sites of worship, cannot be ruled out.
2. In the rest of the Americas region, the threat of violent attacks by individuals affiliated with terrorist groups, AQ or Hamas, remains low, given the absence of militant attacks or indication of active operational cells in the region in recent years.

ASIA

1. On October 7, AQIS celebrated Hamas' attack on Israel and called for a violent campaign against the country. While the statement remains consistent with AQIS' ideological position, the outfit's relatively limited operational abilities and the inaccessibility of sophisticated weapons, particularly in **Bangladesh, India, and Maldives**, will lead to a comparatively lower-level threat of targeted attacks by AQ radicalized individuals against Jewish or Western interests and nationals in the broader South Asia. Nevertheless, the potential for low-scale explosions or vandalism by Islamist radicals cannot be ruled out.
2. The dormant operations and currently weakened organizational structures of AQ-aligned groups such as Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) in **Indonesia**, and Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in the **Philippines** also limit the threat of organized plots in Southeast Asian nations in this regard. As of writing, there is no evidence of AQ radicalism in East Asian countries, including **China** and **Japan**.

EUROPE

1. AQ and Hamas' call for jihad in the wake of hostilities in the ongoing Israel-Gaza conflict has heightened the terrorist threat in Europe, with **France** already reporting an Islamist-motivated attack targeting a school in Arras on October 13. This comes amid already increased calls for attacks in Europe concerning ongoing issues. The threat is especially heightened in countries with larger Muslim communities, including **Belgium, France, Germany, Spain, Sweden, and the**

UK.

2. While there have been increasing attempts to organize coordinated, higher-sophistication attacks in Europe in recent months, the primary threat will stem from lone actors, considering the lower planning required and the lower likelihood of detection. Such actors are more likely to resort to rudimentary methods such as stabbing and vehicular ramming and target Israeli, Jewish, and US targets, although typical targets such as public areas, schools, and transport hubs remain plausible.

MENA

1. AQ's operational capabilities in the Middle East and North Africa region have significantly declined, as evidenced by the lack of a major attack claimed by the terror outfit in recent years. Therefore, despite the latest statement explicitly calling for attacks in various MENA countries, it is unlikely that the group will execute a pre-planned, organized attack against US and/or Israel-linked assets or individuals in the region.
2. That said, it cannot be ruled out that al-Qaeda's statement could motivate lone-wolf attacks against certain targets, as was seen in [June](#) when a gunman targeted the US Consulate in **Saudi Arabia's** Jeddah ahead of the US's Independence Day. This risk is likely to be higher in countries where al-Qaeda's two main affiliates (AQAP and AQIM) operate, particularly **Algeria, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen**. This was most recently recorded on [October 10](#), when AQAP claimed to have attacked a base allegedly hosting US troops in Yemen's Shabwa.

Recommendations:

Israeli and Jewish travelers

1. Reconsider nonessential travel globally, especially to countries that [Israel's NSC](#) has designated as high risk.
2. Keep a low profile in the public sphere due to the tensions resulting from the Israel-Gaza conflict. Avoid revealing your identity and religious and political inclinations.

General

1. Maintain heightened vigilance worldwide for potential attacks near Israeli and US embassies, synagogues, and other Jewish establishments.
2. Alert authorities immediately upon witnessing suspicious items or behavior.
3. Public, private, and third-sector organizations are advised to increase awareness of threats on social media using threat monitoring services. Increased awareness of an organization's political footprint and perceptions from online fringe groups can help uncover potential violent actors and plots before they occur.
4. For any questions and risk assessments, please contact intel@max-security.com.