

The Global Coalition - Working to Defeat ISIS

Fact Sheet, March 22, 2017

Since its formation in 2014, the Global Coalition has worked diligently to reduce the threat ISIS poses to international security and our homelands. Coalition members are united in common cause to defeat ISIS through a robust approach, including working by, with, and through local partners for military operations; supporting the stabilization of territory liberated from ISIS; and, enhancing international cooperation against ISIS' global objectives through information sharing, law enforcement cooperation, severing ISIS' financing, countering violent extremist recruitment, and neutralizing ISIS' narrative. The Coalition is also engaged in broad-based civilian efforts to provide humanitarian aid to communities suffering from displacement and conflict, and supporting stabilization efforts in territory liberated from ISIS. The Coalition's combined efforts have diminished ISIS' military capability, territorial gains, leadership, financial resources, and on-line influence.

The **68-member Global Coalition is the largest international coalition in history**. It is a diverse group, in which each member makes unique contributions to a robust civilian and military effort.

THE MILITARY CAMPAIGN

Twenty-three Coalition partners have over 9,000 troops in Iraq and Syria in support of the effort to defeat ISIS. Working by, with, and through our local partners, the Coalition has made significant progress in denying ISIS safe haven and building the military capacity of those engaged in direct action against ISIS.

Coalition operations have **liberated 62 percent of the terrain ISIS once controlled in Iraq and 30 percent in Syria**, including key cities in both countries. The number of ISIS fighters in Iraq and Syria is at its lowest level since the group declared its "caliphate," down by more than half since its peak in 2014.

Coalition air assets have conducted **more than 19,000 strikes on ISIS targets**, removing tens of thousands ISIS fighters from the battlefield and **killing over 180 senior to mid-level ISIS leaders**, including nearly all of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's deputies, his so-called ministers of war, information, finance, oil and gas, and his chief of external operations. Beyond fighters, these precision airstrikes are targeting ISIS external attack plotters, military commanders, administrative officials, facilitators, and communicators, as well as its energy assets, command and control facilities, and bulk cash storage facilities.

The Coalition has supported our Iraqi partners to achieve significant progress in the fight to retake Mosul. Iraqi Security Forces officially liberated eastern Mosul on January 24, 2017 and now are making significant territorial gains in the western portion of the city. To date, **Coalition efforts have trained nearly 90,000 Iraqi Security Forces members**,

including Iraqi Army soldiers, Counterterrorism Services soldiers, Kurdish Peshmerga, federal police and border security soldiers, and tribal volunteers. Coalition members have also **donated some 8,200 tons of military equipment** to our Iraqi and local Syrian partners in the fight against ISIS.

With the support of the Coalition, our Syrian partners have **liberated over 14,000 square kilometers of terrain in Syria**, including **more than 7,400 square kilometers of territory since isolation operations around Raqqa** began on November 5. We are now pressuring ISIS in Raqqa, its external operations headquarters, from where ISIS is plotting against Coalition member interests around the globe. Turkish-led and Coalition-supported operations **have also cleared more than 2,000 square kilometers of territory**, including removing ISIS off the remainder of the Turkey-Syria border, cutting off a critical transit route for foreign fighters to Europe. As part of these efforts in Syria, the Coalition has helped train thousands of Syrians who have joined the fight to defeat ISIS.

THE CIVILIAN EFFORT STABILIZATION, HUMANITARIAN, AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

Since 2014, Coalition members have **provided more than \$22.2 billion in stabilization, demining capabilities, economic support, and humanitarian assistance in Iraq and Syria** – all of which guard against a resurgence of ISIS. Last July, at the Iraq Pledging Conference held in Washington, partners pledged more than \$2.3 billion for humanitarian assistance, stabilization, and demining in Iraq. **The Coalition expects to raise approximately \$2 billion** for these efforts in Iraq and Syria for 2017.

Coalition support for stabilization programs is crucial as we seek to hold terrain taken from ISIS and provide for people in liberated areas. Support for stabilization efforts is a strategic investment in the fight against ISIS. As a result of this support, local partners in Iraq are **holding ground against ISIS, restoring services, clearing schools and clinics of explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, helping families return home once they are ready, providing security, and contributing to re-establishing the rule of law in liberated areas**. ISIS criminals have perpetrated some of the worst international crimes the world has seen in decades and **members of the Coalition are documenting these atrocities and working toward holding members of ISIS accountable**. Iraq has requested additional assistance to support domestic capacity in pursuing accountability. Internationally, coalition partners are exploring ways to also hold ISIS members accountable for international crimes such as genocide and crimes against humanity with international investigative mechanisms.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), working on the ground in Iraq with local partners, has **implemented more than 350 projects to date**, all of which have achieved their intended objectives on time and at cost. The first projects for Mosul have already started in the outskirts, and **\$43 million in prepositioned equipment** is being deployed. The provision of civilian security by trained police is also critical to the stabilization effort. Five countries

have joined the **Italian-led effort to train more than 7,000 Iraqi police** to date, now graduating approximately 900 new police officers each month.

Iraq's central government has proven its improved capacity to handle a range of important issues, to include supporting local governance, maintaining security, providing electricity and other essential services, managing the economy, defending its territorial integrity, and upholding the rights of all Iraqis irrespective of their ethnicity, gender, religion, or beliefs. Iraq's success in rehabilitating liberated communities is due in part to the partnership it forged with Coalition members that has enabled the UNDP to provide **more than \$240 million in stabilization programs over the last two years.**

In Iraq, the Coalition supports and enables Government of Iraq-led military operations to ensure that cities are liberated and secured in a sustainable manner. By working with the United Nations and in partnership with the Government of Iraq, aid organizations have worked to ensure that humanitarian assistance is staged prior to military operations and in preparation for outflows of internally displaced persons (IDPs). By pre-positioning emergency assistance, identifying local hold forces to provide post-ISIS security, establishing a demining capacity, and implementing quick-impact stabilization projects, we have seen a significant reduction in Iraq's IDP population and helped create conditions that facilitate voluntary, safe, and dignified IDP returns. In total, **more than 1.5 million Iraqis have returned to their homes.** UN stabilization projects, funded by Coalition partners, have helped set the conditions for the **return of more than 500,000 IDPs to Anbar Province** alone, including to the cities of Ramadi and Fallujah. In **eastern Mosul and surrounding areas, more than 70,000 IDPs have returned** voluntarily to their homes, the Ninewa Provincial Council has also returned, and the UN has initiated stabilization operations. We will continue to provide humanitarian assistance to those in need throughout the country while stabilization programs are ongoing.

Ten Coalition Members are on tap to meet one-third of Iraq's demining costs through 2018. Canada, Denmark, and Germany provided generous funding that has allowed Janus Global Operations to **clear an estimated 1.7 million square meters of at least 21,248 kilograms of explosive hazards in Iraq's Anbar Province.** UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) is similarly working to demine liberated areas, while also focusing on building local demining capacity. Janus and UNMAS have coordinated closely with UNDP and the Government of Iraq to support stabilization planning for Mosul.

As the Coalition-backed forces make rapid progress in military operations to isolate Raqqa, we are applying lessons learned from Mosul to facilitate the stabilization of liberated territories in Syria. Since the start of the Coalition-supported Raqqa campaign last November, military operations have generated approximately **35,000 IDPs. Approximately 27,000 have already returned** home following expeditious clearance operations by Coalition-supported C-ISIS forces. The majority of IDPs continues to flee towards, and seek refuge in, areas cleared by Coalition-supported forces, where they have been assisted by host communities and supported by NGOs. The UN and NGO partners have provided assistance to tens of thousands of IDPs in this area since November.

Humanitarian and stabilization efforts are also reaching civilian populations in the liberated cities of Jarabulus and Manbij. In Manbij alone, the Coalition facilitated the **delivery of more than 200 metric tons of food to 2,400 families**. With Coalition support, **over 200 schools have been cleared of explosive remnants of war, 400 schools have reopened, over 70,000 children are back in school**, markets are open and bustling, and local medical and social services have resumed. There is now a longer-term effort by a commercial partner to survey, mark, and clear key infrastructure areas in Manbij, while simultaneously training a local Syrian capacity. We intend to expand this project to cover the road to Raqqa and, eventually, Raqqa City.

MULTILATERAL INITIATIVES TO COUNTER A GLOBAL THREAT

ISIS has deliberately fostered interconnectedness among its scattered branches, networks, and supporters, seeking to build a global organization. It continues to provide guidance and funds its branches and networks, has carried out attacks well beyond the territory it directly controls, and retains a robust online presence. Coalition partners have recognized the importance of being networked together to effectively counter this global threat and coordinate efforts to disrupt and degrade ISIS activities. Coalition members and other partners have taken steps to strengthen their capacity to share information, while building and reinforcing partnerships with multi-national organizations like INTERPOL and EUROPOL, and among national agencies like Financial Intelligence Units.

In addition to humanitarian and stabilization assistance, the United Nations has developed a Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, and nations around the world are working to implement its recommendations. The Coalition is also pressing for full implementation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions requiring states to take certain actions against ISIS, such as preventing arms transfers or the provision of funds. The Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) has developed a series of initiatives, training programs, and global good practices to address the lifecycle of a violent extremist. Such steps are essential to curbing ISIS' ability to operate freely across international borders.

COUNTER-MESSAGING

Building resistance to extremist propaganda and countering terrorist use of the internet is vital to our effort. **Counter ISIS content is now more prevalent online and pro-ISIS content is declining** in open forum social media channels. This is a terrorist group that is increasingly struggling in the face of an increasingly organized and sophisticated set of initiatives by the Coalition.

Global Coalition member countries are producing national responses and coordinating counter ISIS communications efforts regionally and globally. The Global Counter ISIS Coalition Communications Working Group (led by the UAE, UK, and U.S.) **regularly convenes over 30 member countries with media and tech companies** to share information and strategies to

counter violent extremist messages online and present positive alternative narratives: its **last meeting in London on February 28 was attended by a record 38 countries**.

The Communications Working Group also supports a network of messaging centers that expose, refute, and combat online terrorist propaganda. These centers harness the creativity and expertise of local actors to generate positive content that challenges the nihilistic vision of ISIS and its supporters. The Counter-ISIS Communications Cell in London and the Sawab Center in Abu Dhabi lead the Coalition's efforts to tackle ISIS propaganda.

The Global Coalition is actively engaged with the private sector in these efforts. For example, the Global Engagement Center, an interagency entity within the State Department, uses online technology to target potential recruits of terrorist organizations and redirect them to counter ISIS content. In addition, videos developed by partners across the Coalition for **a recent campaign targeting vulnerable audiences in Tunisia, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia were watched more than 14 million times**. The effort has since expanded to other nations, including Libya, Jordan, and France. And **Twitter has suspended more than 635,000 ISIS-related or affiliated accounts** that have been shown to abuse their platforms since the middle of 2015. We are making it increasingly difficult for ISIS to spread its poisonous ideology among vulnerable audiences.

We remain focused on growing our online presence. Global Coalition Twitter accounts in Arabic, French, and English continue to increase their number of followers. The Coalition Communications Cell in London, with staff from 10 countries, guides our public global messaging through daily media packs that are distributed to 850 government officials in 60 countries worldwide.

COUNTER-FINANCE

Coalition collaboration on financial intelligence and broad-spectrum information sharing has supported our military effort to **damage or destroy more than 2,600 ISIS energy targets**. Coalition airstrikes against energy assets have impeded ISIS's ability to produce, use, and profit from oil. Coalition airstrikes have also **targeted more than 25 ISIS bulk cash storage sites**, destroying tens of millions—and possibly hundreds of millions—of dollars.

Additionally, the Coalition has worked closely with the Government of Iraq in its efforts to prevent ISIS from abusing its financial system. The Government of Iraq has **cut off over 90 bank branches in ISIS territory from the financial system** and Iraq's central bank has created a list of over 100 exchange houses and money transfer companies operating in ISIS-held areas or with links to ISIS. The entities on this list are now banned from accessing U.S. banknotes through the central bank's currency auctions, and the list has been shared with regional regulators and through FIU channels. The Government of Iraq, with the support of Coalition partners, also banned the distribution of government salary payments in ISIS-held areas, denying ISIS the ability to tax these funds.

The Coalition's Counter-ISIS Finance Group (CIFG)—made up of nearly 40 members and observers—has also adopted an assessment of cross-border financial flows into Iraq and Syria that will enable Coalition members to better prevent ISIS from exploiting money transfer mechanisms. CIFG is finalizing a report on ISIS branch financing that will provide Coalition members with a baseline understanding of financial linkages between ISIS core and its global branches, and of branch financing mechanisms. CIFG is also leading global efforts to ensure full implementation of the multiple UN Security Council resolutions that prohibit all forms of financial support to ISIS, including funds raised from kidnapping for ransom, illicit trade in stolen cultural heritage objects, and sale of natural resources.

COUNTERING FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS (FTF)

The flow of foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) to Iraq and Syria, many of which joined ISIS, is down significantly over the last year after peaking in 2014. This decline has been dramatic, prolonged, and geographically widespread. Significant milestones include: 1) **Securing of the Syria-Turkey border** as of November 2016; 2) the **EU's adoption of a Passenger Name Recognition (PNR) protocol**; 3) **31 non-EU members implementing enhanced traveler screening measures**; and 4) countries enacting measures in UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014) to strengthen their response and abilities to counter foreign fighters and prosecute related crimes.

- **More than 60 countries** have laws in place to prosecute and penalize FTF activities and create obstacles to traveling into Iraq and Syria.
- **At least 65 countries** have prosecuted or arrested foreign terrorist fighters or FTF facilitators.
- **At least 60 countries** and the UN now pass fighter profiles to Interpol.
- There were **more searches of Interpol databases** in November 2016 than in all of 2015.
- At least **26 partners share financial information** that could provide actionable leads to prosecute or target FTFs.
- At least **31 countries use enhanced traveler screening measures**.

Since the flow of foreign terrorist fighters has diminished, the challenge has evolved. Now, countries are grappling with foreign terrorist fighters returning home as well as coping with those individuals who aspire to travel, but cannot get to Iraq and Syria and thus aim to initiate attacks in their home countries. A key component to addressing returning foreign terrorist fighters is rehabilitation and reintegration. Countries are focused on strengthening their capacity to assess, classify, house and manage returning foreign terrorist fighters within their prison systems.

Source: <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/03/268609.htm>