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## Major Strikes on Three Continents Spark Fears of Growing ISIS Reach

By Jason Ditz

June 26, 2015



The first Friday of Ramadan was a bloody one indeed, with three major attacks on three continents, coming even as a major ISIS attack on the Kurdish city of Kobani was leaving nearly 200 civilians dead. A bombing claimed by an ISIS affiliate on a Shi'ite mosque in Kuwait killed 27, 39 more were killed in a strike by apparent ISIS gunmen at a Tunisia resort. Another attack, in Paris, left one man dead.

Of the three attacks, only the one in Kuwait has been conclusively linked to ISIS, and the suspect in the French strike was a Salafist, but killed his boss, so it may have been coincidental timing. Still, these attacks are fueling growing international fear about ISIS' considerable reach.

ISIS has made considerable territorial gains over the past two years, carving out a "caliphate" across both Iraq and Syria, and holding roughly half of the entire area of Syria. They hold oil-rich territory, cities of millions, and are about to issue their own currency.

Ramadan is a popular time for Islamist factions to launch attacks, particularly on foreigners. It is not, then, necessarily surprising for there to be a number of attacks during the first Friday of Ramadan, nor does it indicate any coordination amongst them.

ISIS did, however, issue a statement at the start of Ramadan calling for attacks throughout the holy month, in particular calling for attacks against Shi'ites and "apostates." Even those attacks they didn't necessarily launch directly, they may have provoked.

It's not clear, however, whether a coordinated series of ISIS attacks is any worse than the growing capabilities among Salafist factions simply leaving them able to casually launch their own major attacks seemingly anywhere in the world.

ISIS is by far the largest Salafist faction now, but by no means the only one. Al-Qaeda has been growing in recent months as well, carving out their own state-let in Syria, and using the Saudi war in Yemen to seize new territory within that country.

The capability of these factions to launch attacks anywhere, not just in Islamic countries but in Western nations as well, points to their growing capability the world over. As the number of wars against ISIS and the other factions grow, so too does their ability to recruit abroad, and their capability along with it.