
GSI GUIDES: **ISLAMIC STATE OF KHORASAN PROVINCE** **(IS-K)**



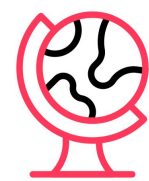


Islamic State Khorasan Province (IS-K)



Description

- In 2016, the US State Department designated the **Islamic State of Khorasan Province (IS-K)** a foreign terrorist organization. In addition, the Global Terrorism Index (2019) listed IS-K as one of the world's deadliest groups within three years of its founding in 2015.
- IS-K has claimed responsibility for several deadly attacks, including the 2024 Moscow Crocus City Hall attack and the 2021 attack on Kabul Airport (see timeline on next page).
- The IS affiliate has emerged as a significant threat to the Taliban, but has also proven capable and motivated to pursue attacks targeting Western interests. For example, social media accounts associated with IS-K threatened attacks on the European Cup in Germany (June 14 through July 14, 2024) and the Paris Olympic Games (July 26 through August 28, 2024).



Geography of Activity

- IS-K originated in Afghanistan and activity was initially concentrated in **Central Asia** and **Pakistan**. In recent years, IS-K has attempted to expand outside of Central Asia, especially in **Europe** and the **United States**.
- Khorasan is a historical area that includes eastern Iran, Afghanistan and parts of other Central Asian countries.



Motivations

- After an initial focus on regional operations in Pakistan and Afghanistan, IS-K has attempted to shift strategic direction and expand its footprint into Iran, Türkiye, and Europe.
- Incite violence against the West and Jewish populations.
- Exploit geopolitical tensions, e.g., the Israel-Gaza war.



Recent Developments

- On **July 6**, French authorities announced they thwarted two separate terror plots in recent days. Some media outlets later linked the plans to IS-K, but without official confirmation.
- IS-K strategy has intentionally shifted to fewer but higher impact attacks. By February 2023, US intelligence identified 15 IS-K-linked attack plots that targeted embassies, churches, business centers, and the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar.
- Concern is growing about a IS-K plot that could act up its stated desire to target a European sporting event such as the Paris Olympic Games.



Targets & Tactics

- IS-K has targeted Afghan security forces, politicians and ministries, the Taliban, religious minorities, US and NATO forces, and international agencies, including aid groups.
- The group has urged sympathizers to target **large gatherings** of people in locations such as universities, religious and tourist sites, Jewish communities, Western business interests, and Westerners themselves.
- Notable tactics include:

IEDs and Rockets

Targeted Killings

Firearms and Knives

Violent Abductions

Military-style Assaults

Vehicle Rammings

IS-K Alleged Activity in Europe



Timeline of key events

July 6, 2024

TERROR ARREST [FRANCE]

Police arrested “would-be ISIS suicide bombers” after French intelligence foiled two terror plots.

June 10, 2024

TERROR ARREST [UNITED STATES]

Eight Tajik nationals with links to IS-K arrested in Los Angeles, New York City, and Philadelphia.

APRIL 24, 2024

TERROR ARREST [GERMANY]

German authorities charged seven foreign nationals for planning attacks in Western Europe.

March 22, 2024

MOSCOW TERROR ATTACK [RUSSIA]

IS-K claimed responsibility for the attack on Moscow’s Crocus City Hall.

Result: 140 casualties; 500 injuries

January 28, 2024

TÜRKIYE TERROR ATTACK [TÜRKIYE]

Masked gunmen opened fire during church service in Istanbul. **Result:** One casualty.

December 25, 2023

TERROR ARREST [AUSTRIA]

Disrupted terror attacks on Catholic churches in several EU cities prompted officials to heighten security.

January 3, 2023

IRAN TERROR ATTACK [IRAN]

Double suicide bombing in Kerman, Iran.

Result: approx. 89 casualties; 280 injuries.

August 26, 2021

KABUL TERROR ATTACK [AFGHANISTAN]

Attack at Kabul airport.

Result: 100+ casualties, including 13 US troops.