



TERROR TRACKER

Newsletter by Counter Terrorism Centre



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES
मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान



BLASTS IN **KABUL GIRL'S SCHOOL** KILLS 68

India Condemns Attack on Schoolgirls in Shia Hazara Locality

ANTI-SEMITIC ATTACKS SWEEP US, EUROPE

Israel-Palestine conflict spurs attacks on synagogues, mosques

BOKO HARAM LEADER REPORTED DEAD

Breakaway faction ISWAP increases sway over West Africa

+ MORE NEWS & ANALYSES

AT LEAST 68 KILLED, 165 INJURED IN KABUL GIRLS' SCHOOL BLASTS

INDIA CONDEMNS RAMADAN ATTACK IN SHIA HAZARA LOCALITY



Notebooks of schoolgirls found strewn across a blood-stained road outside the school. - AP

On 9 May 2021, a car bomb and two mine explosions near a school in Kabul killed at least 68 people and injured 165 others, according to Afghan officials. Majority of deaths are reported to be of schoolgirls at the Dasht-e-Barchi neighbourhood of the capital city, home to a large community of Shia from the Hazara ethnic minority.

The car bombing took place in front of the Sayed Al-Shuhada school, while two more bombs subsequently exploded when students were rushing out in panic. The explosions were carried out by terrorist groups during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. President Ashraf Ghani blamed Taliban for the attacks but a spokesman for the group denied involvement and condemned any attacks on Afghan civilians.

In a strongly worded statement issued on 10 May 2021, India's Ministry of External Affairs said: "We strongly condemn the terrorist attack on Sayed al-Shuhada Girls school in Kabul yesterday, which killed more than 50 innocent girl students during the holy month of Ramadan. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends of the young girls who lost their lives in this barbarous attack".

The statement added: "This incident demonstrates, once again, the urgent need for dismantling terrorist sanctuaries and the immediate need for a comprehensive nation-wide ceasefire to make the peace process meaningful and sustainable". —

[Reuters](#), [WION](#)

PAKISTAN-BASED
SIKHS RECEIVE
THREATS FROM
TERROR GROUP



Gurdwara Darbar Sahib,
Kartarpur, Pakistan

On 24 May 2021, the Sikh community in Pakistan received a threatening message from a Taliban-affiliated terrorist group Baluchistan Republic Army (BRA).

Officials of the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) reportedly informed a Sikh leader by the name of Ranjit Singh, a Granthi of Gurdwara Guru Ramdas Ji in Chuna Mani in Lahore, about this warning. A voice message was then sent out to alert the Sikh community in Lahore and Nankana Sahib. The audio clip has now gone viral on social media.

The message says that "Sikhs living in Lahore and Nankana Sahib have received life threats so they should submit their details including residential address, contact numbers etc with the police so that necessary security measures could be taken."

— [Times of India](#), [OpIndia](#)



RIGHT-WING CRIMES AT 20-YEAR HIGH IN GERMANY

Germany's Interior Minister Horst Seehofer presented the official statistics for politically motivated crimes committed in 2020 in May 2021.

The minister expressed concerns over increasing incidences of politically motivated crimes, especially those carried out by right-wing extremists, such as the murder of 11 young people with immigrant heritage in the Hanau city in February last year. The number of incidents recorded as being driven by right-wing extremism increased to its highest point since the German police started keeping records of politically-motivated crimes in 2001. A total of 23,064 crimes were counted as right-wing extremist, an increase of 5.7% over the previous year, the interior minister said. — [Deutsche Welle](#)

ISRAEL-GAZA FIGHTING STIRS VIOLENCE IN U.S. AND EUROPE

Biden denounces violent extremism as vandals attack synagogues and mosques



Violence and harassment targeting mainly American Jews spread across the US during the 11 days of fighting between Israelis and Palestinians in West Asia that culminated in a ceasefire on 20 May 2021. Incidents of anti-Semitic violence in the US included a daylight brawl in New York City's Times Square, physical attack on outdoor diners in Los Angeles by a group carrying Palestinian flags and Nazi imagery posted on a synagogue in Alaska.

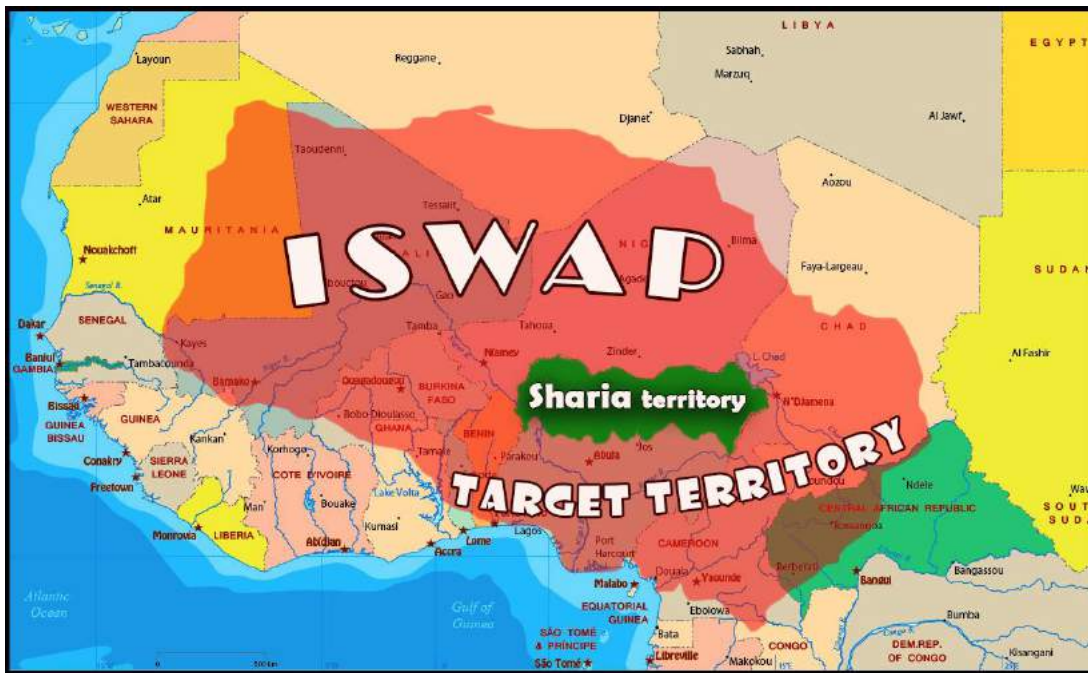
Incensed, President Joe Biden wrote on Twitter on 24 May 2021: “The recent attacks on the Jewish community are despicable, and they must stop”. Experts point out that the recent anti-Semitic attacks were driven more from the political left in the US, and not so much by the far-right groups, like the gunman who killed 11 people at a synagogue in Pittsburgh in 2018. For four years it seemed to be stimulated from the political right, with devastating consequences,” the Anti Defamation League's Jonathan Greenblatt told the *New York Times*, but not so much this time. Meanwhile, Muslims in the US also faced extremist violence and several mosques were reportedly desecrated, such as the Long Island mosque that was vandalized and its religious flag burnt.

The wave of anti-Semitism also spread to Europe, notably in the UK, Germany and Austria. However, the perpetrators of violence and vandalism here were not just pro-Palestinian supporters. There were several reports of right-wing supremacists shouting hate from loudspeakers in Jewish neighborhoods and daubing swastika signs on synagogues.

In fact, some pro-Palestinian institutions, such as the Palestinian Mission to the UK, and Muslim religious leaders in Europe condemned efforts by radical elements to exploit the grim situation in Middle East to vent their hatred towards Jews in Europe. — [New York Times](#), [BBC](#), [Human Rights Watch](#)

BOKO HARAM CHIEF ‘KILLED’ IN INTERNECINE FIGHTING

Abu Bakar Shekau’s death, yet unconfirmed, may enhance ISIS’ sway



Influence of Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), Boko Haram splinter, increasing security challenges. – Lower Niger Congress

On 19 May 2021, Nigerian media reported longtime Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau as dead. Citing intelligence sources, reports claimed that Shekau had detonated his suicide vest, when fighters from Boko Haram’s breakaway faction — Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) — tried to capture him in his hideout in Simbisa forest in northeastern Nigeria.

However, the reports were not accepted by Nigerian authorities as Shekau has been falsely reported dead on several occasions in the past, and as Nigerian military is still carrying out investigations to verify the news. Still, *New York Times* sources claim that “this time feels different”.

Curiously, the possible killing of Shekau would not necessarily come as welcome news for Nigerian security forces, who have faced setbacks in fighting against Boko Haram’s rival faction ISWAP in recent months. Still, Shekau led Boko Haram for more than a decade and spread its menace not only across Nigeria but in neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and Niger. More than 30,000 people are estimated to have been killed and about 3 million forced from their homes because of conflicts started by Boko Haram.

Meanwhile, Nigerian army continues to suffer setbacks against jihadists and on 21 May, Nigerian Chief of Army Staff Gen. Ibrahim Attahiru died in a plane crash along with 10 other officers. – [Al Jazeera](#), [New York Times](#), [Lawfare](#)

PROFILE OF ABUBAKAR SHEKAU



Abubakar Shekau was the deputy of Muhammed Yusuf, the founder of Boko Haram in the 2000s. Boko Haram, which broadly translates as ‘Western education is forbidden’ has been fighting the Nigerian state for the implementation of Shariah law in northeast Nigeria.

After Yusuf was shot dead in police custody in 2009, Shekau took the reins of his ragtag prayer group and turned into a terrorist group to launch violence across Nigeria. Known for his brutality, Shekau used to send women and children on suicide missions, often targeting markets and mosques.

In 2014, Boko Haram abducted 276 schoolgirls in the northeastern town of Chibok, of which over 100 are still missing. In 2015, he reluctantly joined ISIS and in the following year Boko Haram split and its breakaway faction ISWAP rapidly expanded at its expense. — [Al Jazeera](#)

Former Maldivian President Nasheed Survives Terror Bombing

At 8:30pm on 6 May 2021, an explosion in Male injured former President of Maldives and present Speaker of its Majlis (parliament) Mohammad Nasheed. The IED blast injured four other people accompanying him, which was planted to a motorcycle near Nasheed's car.

In the initial hours after the attack, the 53-year-old leader was in a critical condition and underwent multiple surgeries to his head, chest, abdomen and limbs. On recovering, he was flown to Germany for further treatment. In a tweet, India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar wished him a speedy recovery and said that Nasheed 'can never be intimidated'. Authorities suspect Islamist groups like ISIS to be behind the attack, but nobody has so far claimed responsibility. Considered spearhead of democracy in the country, Nasheed is hated by radical Islamists in Maldives. — [ANI](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [The Guardian](#)

Bangladesh arrests popular preacher

On 25 May 2021, Bangladesh police arrested one of the country's most popular preachers, whose rallies draw tens of thousands of people, on charges of inciting "militants". Amir Hamza was detained in a raid at his home in the western city of Kushtia and then transferred to Dhaka, police said. Earlier in the month, a militant named Sakib from Ansar al-Islam group was arrested for planning an attack on Bangladesh parliament. — [Al Jazeera](#), [IANS](#)

Taliban will cut all terror links: Khalilzad

On 18 May 2021, Zalmay Khalilzad, Special Representative on Afghanistan Reconciliation said at a US House Committee on Foreign Affairs meeting that the Taliban seems determined on fulfilling its commitments under the Afghan Peace Deal to cut ties with terrorist groups, including Al Qaeda. He also argued that fears of Taliban conquering Kabul after US withdrawal from Afghanistan are overblown.— [AP](#), [Eurasian Times](#)

Man with ISIS-links held in Tamil Nadu

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) arrested an ISIS terror suspect in Mayiladuthurai (Tamil Nadu) on 27 May 2021. He was wanted for a criminal conspiracy in 2018 allegedly aimed at a few leaders in Coimbatore. Identified as Mohammed Ashiq, the youth had reportedly sworn allegiance to the terror organisation ISIS in 2018 and was a prime suspect in a plot to kill prominent leaders in Coimbatore. — [The Indian Express](#)

French radical killed after stabbing cop

On 29 May 2021, a French ex-prisoner on a watch list of potential terrorist threats stabbed a policewoman in western France before being killed in a shootout with police, a government minister said. The policewoman was seriously injured but was expected to survive, French Interior Minister has said. — [Reuters](#), [NBC](#)

Narco-terror module busted in Kupwara

On 23 May 2021, The Jammu and Kashmir Police busted a Pakistan-sponsored narco-terror module in Kupwara district and seized 8 kilogram heroin worth Rs 50 crore. During the operation, a militant associate identified as Mudasir Ahmad Lone, a resident of Karen Bala area of the north Kashmir district, was arrested, a police official said. Incriminating material and eight kilograms of heroin worth Rs 50 crore were recovered from his possession. — [DNA](#), [Indian Express](#)

Three LeT terrorists killed in police encounter

On 11 May 2021, three terrorists belonging to Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) were neutralised after a six-hour gun battle with security forces in south Kashmir's Anantnag district. On receiving a tip-off on the presence of terrorists in a residential house at village Sheikhpura, Vailoo area of Kokernag, a joint cordon and search operation was launched by police, 19RR and CRPF.

Security forces gave an opportunity to terrorists to surrender, however they fired on security personnel that led to a protracted gun battle. Arms and ammunition were also recovered at the site which included one AK-47 rifle and two pistols. — [WION](#)