

Section
7

Trends in International Terrorism and Regional Conflicts

1 General Situation

1 Recent Trends

In a global security environment, there is a growing risk that unrest or a security problem in a single country or region could immediately develop into a destabilizing factor that could affect the entire international community.

Conflicts or disputes concerning racial, religious, territorial, resources and other issues are occurring or continuing at various locations in the world. Particularly, there are cases where power struggles accompanying regime changes trigger or add fuel to racial, religious or partisan disputes that are prolonged or escalated against the backdrop of citizens' discontent with economic or social disparities or high unemployment rates. Human rights violations, refugees, famine, poverty, or any other consequences of conflicts or disputes can have impacts on not only parties to the conflicts or disputes but also a wide range of other countries.

There are prominent cases where power vacuums in some countries with political instability or weak governance have become a hotbed for activities of international terrorist organizations, such as Al Qaeda and ISIL. These organizations are leveraging inadequate border control to obtain personnel, weapons and money, and to send fighters to various locations to carry out organized terrorist attacks or give some instructions to local individuals or groups, expanding and stepping up their operations across national borders. In recent years, they have also been spreading their violent radical beliefs through the Internet and other means across the world. As a result, there were cases where young people in Western and other developed countries felt sympathy for the violent radical beliefs due to their social discontent, participating as fighters in international terrorist groups and carrying out terrorist attacks in their home countries. In this way, international terrorist groups' activities have remained a grave challenge for the international community. There were incidents where Japanese citizens were killed in Syria and Bangladesh, indicating that Japanese citizens have become targets for terrorist attacks.¹

In such situation, we Japanese must face up to the threat of international terrorism as our own problem.

2 International Community Initiatives

It has become increasingly important that the international community should examine the shape of tailored international frameworks and involvement measures and seek out appropriate responses to these complicated and diverse destabilizing factors. Amid these situations, in recent years, mandates of the UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKO)² have come to include a wide range of areas, including not only traditional roles like the monitoring of a ceasefire or military withdrawal but also activities by civilians and police such as the monitoring of disarmament, security sector reform, the monitoring of elections and administrative activities, and humanitarian assistance (e.g., return of refugees to their homeland). This also suggests that the importance of the roles related to the protection of civilians and peace-building missions, in particular, has been growing.

 Fig. I-3-7-1 (Peacekeeping Operations Currently Underway)

In addition to the UN PKO framework, multinational forces and regional organizations authorized by the UN Security Council have engaged in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. In Africa, regional organizations such as the African Union (AU)³ undertake their activities based on UN Security Council resolutions, and their activities are sometimes handed over to UN PKO later. The international community also offers recommendations and training assistance and supplies equipment, from a long-term perspective, prompting African nations self-help efforts to enhance local government organizations and improve the capabilities of their military and security organizations.

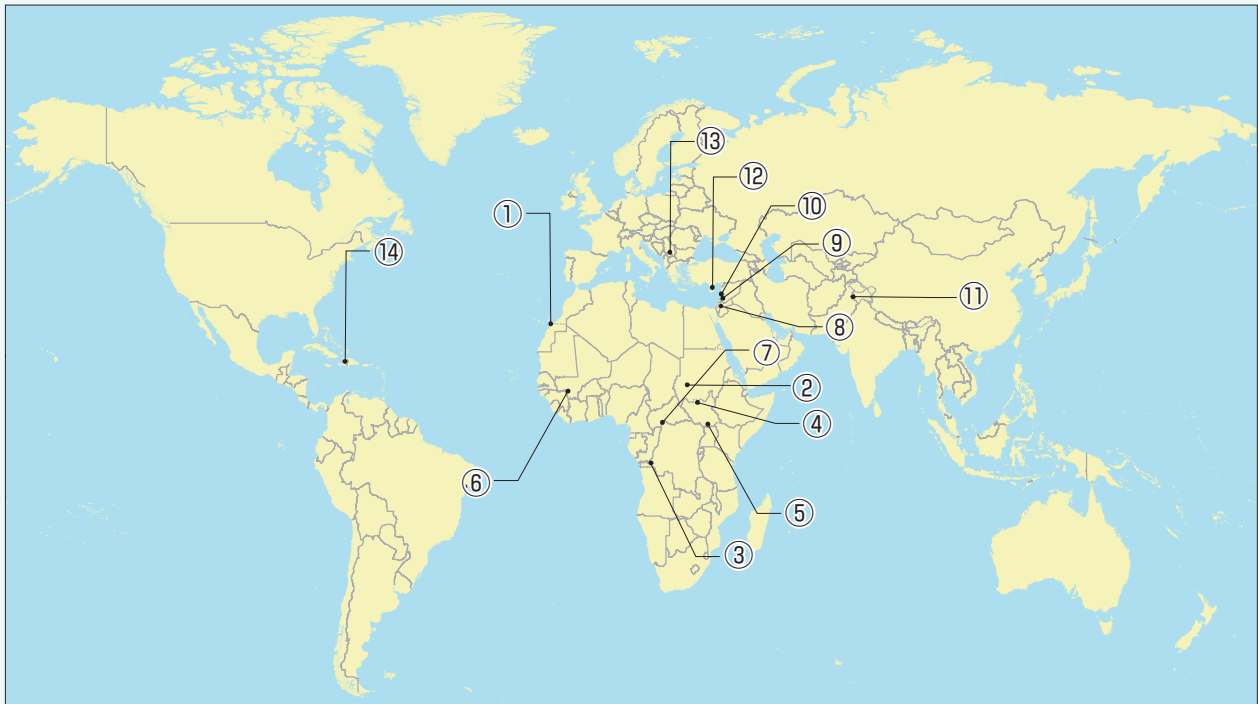
Concerning international counterterrorism measures, international cooperation has grown even more important as terrorism threats have diffused and deepened on the diversification of terrorist attacks and the improvement of

¹ In early 2015, ISIL murdered Japanese nationals in Syria, clearly declaring to subject Japanese nationals to terrorism. Furthermore, the seventh issue of the ISIL propaganda magazine Dabiq published in February 2015 included descriptions of the murder of the Japanese nationals in Syria and renewed a call for terror attacks on Japanese nationals and interests. In September of the same year, the 11th issue called for terror attacks on Japanese diplomatic missions in Bosnia, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The 12th issue (published in November 2015) described the murder of a Japanese national in Bangladesh in October 2015 and warned again that Japanese nationals and Japanese interests would be the targets of terror attacks.

² As of the end of March 2019, 14 UN PKO were operating globally, including about 88,480 military and police personnel and about 12,930 civilian personnel from 122 countries. Out of these UN PKO, there were 10 operations in the Middle East and Africa (See Fig. I-3-7-1).

³ The AU is one of the world's largest regional organizations, consisting of 55 countries and regions in Africa. The AU has established the Africa Standby Force (ASF) for peacekeeping operations, developing an ASF brigade for each of Africa's five component regions. In 2016, the AU declared the acquisition of complete ASF capabilities for the four regions excluding the northern region. However, no ASF operations have been implemented.

Fig. I-3-7-1 Peacekeeping Operations Currently Underway



Note: According to the United Nations (as of the end of March 2019).

Africa

	Mission	Date Established
①	United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO)	Apr 1991
②	African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)	Jul 2007
③	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)	Jul 2010
④	United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)	Jun 2011
⑤	United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS)	Jul 2011
⑥	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)	Apr 2013
⑦	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)	Apr 2014

Middle East

	Mission	Date Established
⑧	United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO)	May 1948
⑨	United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF)	Jun 1974
⑩	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)	Mar 1978

Asia

	Mission	Date Established
⑪	United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP)	Jan 1949

Europe/CIS

	Mission	Date Established
⑫	United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)	Mar 1964
⑬	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)	Jun 1999

The Americas

	Mission	Date Established
⑭	United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH)	Oct 2017

terrorist groups' attack capabilities. Currently, countries are cooperating not only in military measures but also in initiatives in various other fields to cut off funding sources

for terrorist organizations and prevent the international movement of terrorists and the diffusion of violent radical beliefs.⁴

⁴ In September 2014, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2178 on the issue of foreign terrorist fighters. The resolution requested member states to make exits from their countries for the purpose of executing acts of terrorism punishable under domestic laws. The resolution also includes measures obligating member states to prevent entry or transit through their territories of any individual about whom that state has credible information that demonstrates reasonable grounds for believing that the individual is attempting to enter or transit through its territory for the purpose of participating in acts of terrorism. In addition, at the G7 Summit held in Germany in June 2015, the leaders reaffirmed their commitment to effectively implement the established international framework for the freezing of terrorists' assets. In June 2017, four major U.S. information technology companies including Facebook Corp. and Microsoft Corp. announced the formation of a new forum to prevent the spread of violent radical beliefs.

2 Trends surrounding International Terrorism

1 Trends in ISIL-related International Terrorist Organizations

(1) Organizational Objectives and Overview

The objective of ISIL as an organization is to outright reject the conventional system of national governance in the region and claim the establishment of the caliphate based on its own interpretation of Sharia law and the protection of Sunni Muslims. In June 2014, ISIL unilaterally declared the establishment of the “Islamic State” with its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as “caliph,”⁵ and effectively controlled certain areas spanning Iraq and Syria through its well-developed organizational structure and the issuance of its own currency.

ISIL has used social media and other means under a sophisticated public relations strategy taking advantage of cyberspace to skillfully issue propaganda for the organization and recruit fighters. As a result, it has been noted that more than 40,000 people, including foreign fighters, moved to Iraq and Syria from other countries in response to ISIL propaganda.

ISIL is believed to have seized weapons and ammunition from Iraqi military and other facilities it occupied and obtained others through illegal trafficking and looting. Furthermore, it has been noted that ISIL has also begun producing and modifying weapons. It has been pointed out that they are manufacturing improvised explosive devices (IEDs) from chemicals obtained through legal channels and using them in suicide bombings.⁶ It has also been pointed out that ISIL has utilized drones. The terrorist organization has apparently modified small commercial drones so that they can carry hand grenades and the like.⁷ ISIL has published videos claiming that drones were used for dropping explosives on enemy vehicles.⁸ It has been noted that ISIL attempted to expand damage by using camera-equipped drones to skillfully guide suicide-attack vehicles.⁹

(2) Progress in Military Operations against ISIL and the Current Status of ISIL

ISIL expanded its presence from 2013 in Iraq and Syria, which had been destabilized through religious disputes and civil war, and took control of northern and eastern Syria and northern Iraq from January 2014. In response to the expansion of ISIL’s reach, the Coalition forces led by the United States have been conducting air strikes in Iraq and Syria since August and September of the same year, respectively.¹⁰ The coalition forces have also engaged in education and training of local forces, supply of weapons, and rescue of hostages by the special forces.

In cooperation with such military operations, the Iraqi Security Forces (including paramilitary troops and police in addition to Iraqi government forces) and the Peshmerga military organ of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) tried to recapture key cities from ISIL. As a result, the Iraqi Government announced in December 2017 that all Iraqi territory had been liberated from ISIL. In Syria, meanwhile, the Syrian Democratic Forces, composed mainly of local Kurd and Arab forces, recaptured Raqqa, the putative capital of “Islamic State,” and other ISIL bases in the northern and eastern parts of the country with support from the United States and other countries. As the Syrian Democratic Forces took control of ISIL’s last base in eastern Syria in March 2019, U.S. President Trump in his statement declared that the United States and other Coalition countries had liberated all ISIL-controlled territory in Syria and Iraq.

Russia launched its military operations in Syria in September 2015 with the purpose of the survival of the Assad administration and protection of Russian bases in Syria.¹¹ In the military operations, the Russian forces carried out air strikes and launched cruise missiles from the sea, dropped precision satellite-guided bombs from strategic bombers, and temporarily deployed an aircraft carrier to conduct air strikes.¹² With this support from Russia, the Assad administration conquered ISIL strongholds mainly

5 The term means “successor” in Arabic. After Prophet Muhammad died, the term has been used to refer to those who led the Islamic community. Since then, a number of the heads of hereditary dynasties, including the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties, utilized this title.

6 It has been noted regarding the IEDs that ISIL used between July 2014 and February 2016 that parts and components manufactured and/or exported by approximately 50 firms in 20 countries fell into the hands of ISIL, who used them within a year after it acquired them.

7 In recent years, drone terrorist attacks (including attempted ones) have occurred. In November 2018, for example, the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) reportedly attempted drone attacks on multiple government facilities in southeastern Turkey. Research and development on technologies to counter such threats are recognized as important for the future. To counter threats from small UAVs, for example, radar systems capable of detecting and identifying small UAVs are under development. The U.S. Army is testing laser and jamming systems to intercept small UAVs.

8 It has been noted that the purpose is to destroy some vehicles and force them out of the frontlines through such attacks.

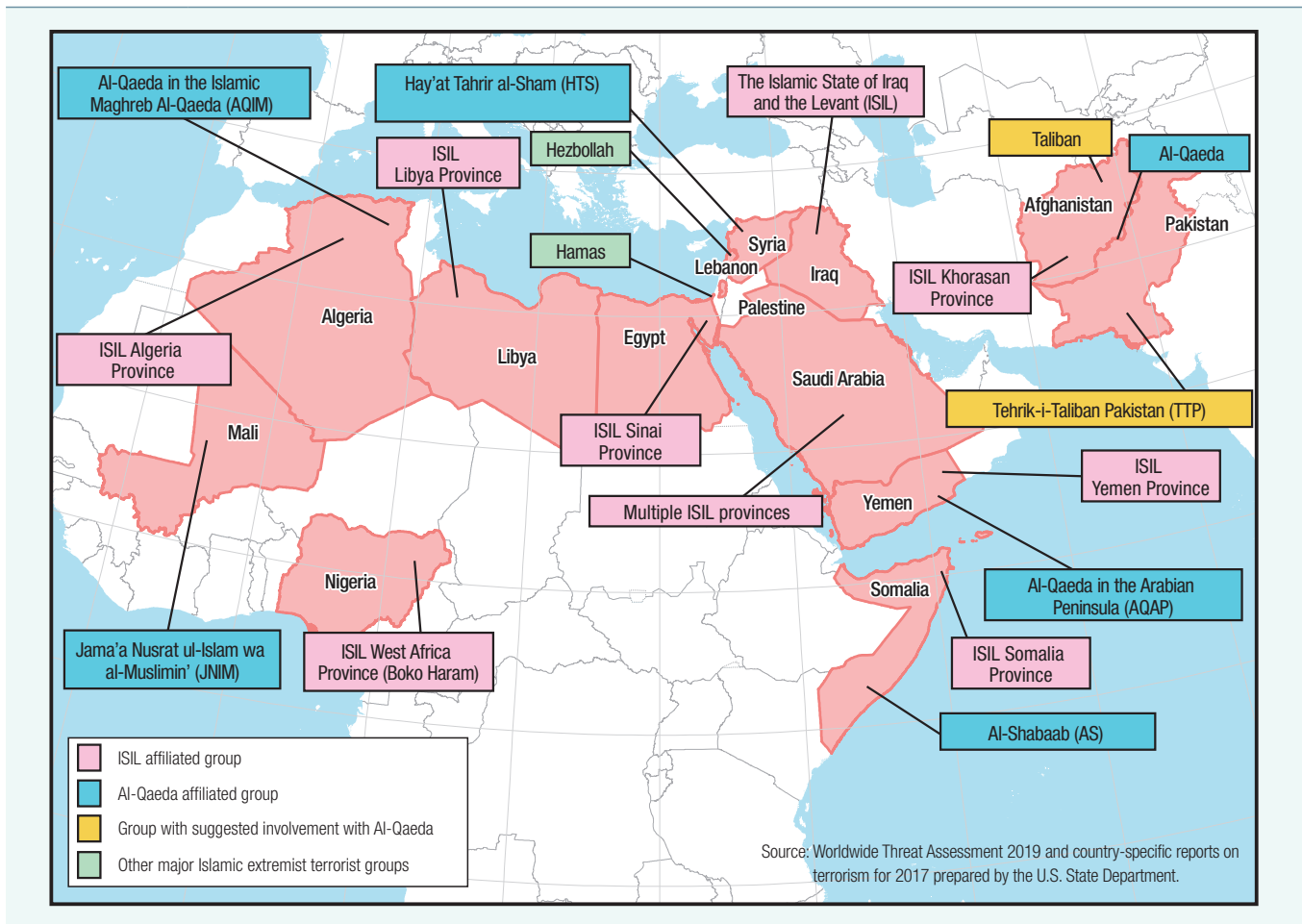
9 It has been noted that ISIL amplifies the effect of its attacks by using drones to find targets from the air and providing instructions to suicide bombers at the ready on the ground and instructing optimal paths for them.

10 As of August 2017, the Coalition had conducted 13,331 and 11,235 air raids in Iraq and Syria respectively.

11 Tartus is the only Russian naval base facing the Mediterranean Sea in Syria, reportedly having a dockyard that can provide fuel and food to and repair military ships.

12 It is pointed out that the series of military actions by Russia was intended to display its military capabilities and to demonstrate those capabilities through operations. Some note that the target of the military operations is not ISIL but the opposition forces confronting the Assad administration.

Fig. I-3-7-2 Major Terrorist Groups Based in Africa and the Middle East



in southern and eastern Syria. In December 2017, Russia declared that Syria's entire territory had been liberated from ISIL and announced that it would pull out some of its troops deployed in Syria while maintaining its bases there.

While anti-ISIL military operations have made progress, it is believed that thousands of ISIL fighters remain in hiding, mainly around the Iraq-Syria border.¹³ In this regard, terrorist attacks believed to be conducted by ISIL are occurring in various regions of Iraq and Syria, targeting security forces, the Coalition forces,¹⁴ citizens and others, indicating that ISIL remains still active.

(3) Dispersion beyond Iraq and Syria

After ISIL declared the establishment of the "Islamic State," multiple "provinces" have been established outside of Iraq and Syria as the "Islamic State" territories, and these "provinces" have been conducting terrorist acts in various regions.

See Fig. I-3-7-2 (Major Terrorist Groups Based in Africa and the Middle East)

In Afghanistan, particularly, the Islamic State-Khorasan Province has conducted frequent terrorist attacks in its capital Kabul and elsewhere.¹⁵ The Islamic State-Khorasan Province claimed responsibility for a raid on a military parade in southwestern Iran in September 2018 and a suicide bombing attack on a market in northwestern Pakistan in November 2018. Terrorist attacks for which ISIL "provinces" have claimed responsibility have also been confirmed in Yemen, Egypt, Libya, Nigeria and elsewhere. It is believed that the threat of terrorist acts by such organizations will continue in the future.

Furthermore, organizations supporting ISIL exist in Southeast Asia and have conducted terrorist attacks targeting security forces and citizens. In the Philippines in May 2017, organizations pleading allegiance to ISIL occupied part of the city of Marawi on the island of Mindanao. In October of the same year, the Philippine Government declared an end to

¹³ According to the Worldwide Threat Assessment announced by the U.S. Director of Intelligence in January 2019, ISIL still has thousands of fighters in Iran and Syria.

¹⁴ In Syria, for example, ISIL claimed responsibility for suicide bombing and other attacks in the southern province of Suwayda in July 2018, which killed 221 people. ISIL also claimed responsibility for a vehicle bomb explosion in the northern Iraqi province of Nineveh in December 2018.

¹⁵ ISIL-Khorasan Province claimed responsibility for suicide bombings on House of Representatives election candidates' campaign meetings and election committees in October 2018, as well as for earlier terrorist attacks on government agencies, believers in the Shiite and other religions, education facilities and others.

its fighting with them. However, the search for individuals connected to the organizations has continued. ISIL claimed responsibility for an attack on government forces in November 2018 and a bombing on a church in January 2019 in the southern Philippines. As for Indonesia, ISIL claimed responsibility for serial family suicide bombings in May 2018 in Surabaya, East Java Province. There is concern that the threat posed by ISIL is permeating Southeast Asia as well.¹⁶

Moreover, in April 2019, large-scale explosions occurred simultaneously in Sri Lanka, a South Asian country, claiming the life of a Japanese national. The Sri Lanka authority exposed a local Islamic extremist organization as the perpetrator while referring to possible support for the organization from a foreign terrorist organization. The United States points out that the terrorist attacks may have been inspired by ISIL.

(4) Foreign Fighters

It is believed that the number of foreign fighters flowing into Iraq and Syria in response to the rise of ISIL since 2014 has been falling, in line with a decline in ISIL's strength.¹⁷ Meanwhile, it has been a concern that foreign fighters who have accumulated combat training and experience would return to their countries and conduct terrorist attacks there. It is believed that at least 5,600 foreign fighters had returned from Iraq and Syria to their home countries by October 2017.¹⁸ Terrorist attacks in which ISIL fighters with fighting experience in Syria have allegedly engaged have taken place in Europe, including simultaneous attacks in Paris in November 2015 and serial bombings in Belgium in March 2016.¹⁹ The international community is required to continue to take various initiatives going forward in order to prevent such terrorist acts by foreign fighters.

2 Trends of Al Qaeda-related International Terrorist Organizations

(1) Al Qaeda

Al Qaeda is believed to have weakened as the group's previous leader Osama Bin Laden as well as many executives were killed in U.S. operations. However, it is considered

that it continues its activities as a core organization such as issuing instructions and recommendations to its affiliates in North Africa and the Middle East. In addition, its current leader Zawahiri has repeatedly issued statements calling for terrorist acts against the West.²⁰ The possibility of Al Qaeda attacks has not disappeared.

(2) Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)

Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), a Sunni extremist organization based in Yemen, is active mainly in south Yemen, continuing their fight against the Yemeni security forces and the opposition insurgent group Houthis. The United States has continued air strikes using UAVs²¹ and killed many AQAP leaders. However, AQAP has taken advantage of the instability in Yemen to maintain a certain level of force there. It also spreads violent extreme ideology utilizing propaganda videos and magazines.

(3) Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), a Sunni extremist organization based in Algeria and also active in Mali, Tunisia, and Libya has mainly conducted terrorist attacks and kidnapping against Algerian security forces, and European and U.S. nationals.²² Although it is believed that the frequency and scales of AQIM terrorist attacks have been declining due to the French-led military intervention from 2013 and Algerian authorities' enhanced crackdown, AQIM affiliates have conducted terrorist attacks in countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso, and Cote d'Ivoire.

(4) Al-Shabaab

"Al-Shabaab," a Sunni extremist organization based in Somalia, has continued terrorist acts against Somali military forces and police, mainly in the Somali capital of Mogadishu, as well as the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the peacekeeping forces stationed for the purpose of stabilizing the situation in Somalia after the civil war. As indicated by an attack on a hotel in neighboring Kenya's capital of Nairobi in January 2019,²³ Al-Shabaab has conducted terrorist acts against foreigners and other targets, posing threats not only to Somalia but also to its neighboring

¹⁶ It is believed that Indonesians and Malaysians as well as Filipinos participated in an organization supporting ISIL in the fighting in the city of Marawi.

¹⁷ In an October 2017 press conference, the spokesperson for the Coalition expressed the understanding that there were virtually no foreign fighters flowing into Iraq and Syria at the time.

¹⁸ According to the Soufan Center, the numbers of foreign fighters returning to their home countries are approximately 800 in Tunisia, 760 in Saudi Arabia, 425 in the United Kingdom, approximately 300 in Germany, 271 in France, and so on.

¹⁹ It is pointed out that participants in terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015 included those who took advantage of refugee and immigrant flows to enter Europe. It is also noted that participants in serial terrorist attacks on an airport and a subway station in the Belgian capital of Brussels in March 2016 consulted about the attacks with an alleged commander in Syria.

²⁰ On September 11, 2018, it published a statement calling on Muslims to attack the United States as 17 years passed since Al Qaeda's attacks on the United States on the same day of 2001.

²¹ The U.S. Central Command announced that it conducted 10 air strikes on AQAP and ISIL targets in Yemen in January 2018 and 26 air strikes on AQAP targets between February and September.

²² The January 2013 terrorist attack in Algeria resulting in victims of Japanese nationality is believed to have been executed by the "Masked Brigade," which had broken away from AQIM. In 2015, the Brigade merged with other organizations to form "Al-Murabitoun" and returned to the AQIM fold. Furthermore, in 2017, the Brigade merged with yet other organizations to form Jama Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM; literally, protector of Islam and Muslims).

²³ Multiple Japanese companies had offices in a building at the attacked hotel site, but no Japanese nationals were victimized.

countries.

3 Trends of Other International Terrorist Organizations

(1) Taliban

The Taliban, a Sunni extremist organization based in Afghanistan, substantially reduced its strength temporarily due to mop-up operations launched by the United States in 2001. After the U.S.-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) ended its mission in Afghanistan and withdrew from that country in December 2014, however, the Taliban has been stepping up its offensive again and expanding its control within Afghanistan.²⁴ Even during talks with the United States since July 2018, the Taliban bombed and raided Afghan military facilities in eastern Afghanistan in January 2019,²⁵ indicating that the possibility of the Taliban continuing suicide bombing and shooting attacks on the Afghan Government and foreigners cannot be denied.

(2) Boko Haram

Boko Haram is a Sunni extremist organization based in Nigeria, pleading allegiance to ISIL, part of which is conducting activities as the "ISIL's West Africa Province." Boko Haram might have lost most of the areas under its control due to mop-up operations by Nigerian forces cooperating with neighboring countries. However, it has repeated terror attacks on citizens and government troops

mainly in northeastern Nigeria,²⁶ which continues to be a matter of security concern in Nigeria.

4 The Threat of "Home-grown" Terrorism

Terrorist organizations such as ISIL and Al Qaeda have been using propaganda magazines and other means to introduce specific methods for terrorist acts to their supporters, urging them to conduct terrorist acts. For example, ISIL gives detailed examples of specific methods and targets for terrorist acts using knives and vehicles in its magazine *Rumiyah* and others. Al Qaeda also has used its magazine to publish how to make a bomb using materials close at hand.

In such situation, what is called "home-grown" terrorism, in which residents are inspired by violent extremism spread by terrorist organizations to conduct terrorist attacks at home, continues to be a threat. In recent years, particularly, "lone-wolf" terrorist attacks, planned and committed by individuals or groups who have no official relations with international terrorist organizations but have become influenced by them in some ways, have occurred in Western and other countries. "Lone-wolf" terrorist attacks characteristically use knives, vehicles and guns that are easy even for individuals to acquire, as indicated by an attack in the Australian city of Melbourne in November 2018 and a raid on a Christmas market in France in December 2018.²⁷ These attacks are also difficult to anticipate or forestall.

3 Current Situation of Regional Conflicts and the International Response (mainly in the Middle East and Africa)

1 Situation in Syria

Violent clashes in Syria since March 2011 pit four parties, the Syrian government forces, opposition forces, Islamic extremist forces, and Kurdish forces against each other. However, government forces have gained the upper hand overall with support from Russia, recapturing Aleppo, which was once the largest stronghold of rebel forces, the suburbs of the Syrian capital of Damascus and areas close to the Syria-Jordan border.

In August 2018, Syrian government forces launched shelling and other attacks on Idlib, a rebel stronghold even at present, leading to concern that large-scale military attacks there could be conducted. In September 2018, however,

Russia, which had been supporting Syrian government forces, and Turkey, which had been backing up rebels, agreed to establish a demilitarized zone around Idlib and withdraw heavy artillery and rebels from the zone, averting large-scale military attacks for the immediate future. However, extremist rebels have yet to withdraw from the zone, while relevant countries have continued talks to stabilize Idlib.

The peace talks have so far made little progress. The talks have been conducted between the government and opposition forces under UN auspices since January 2016. However, fighting has failed to abate on either side, forcing the talks to make a rough going. Under these circumstances, peace talks led by Russia, Turkey, and Iran have continued in Astana, Kazakhstan, since January 2017. In January 2018, the Syrian National Dialogue Congress was held in Sochi, Russia,

²⁴ The Taliban has been expanding its control, mainly in the northern and southern parts of Afghanistan, conducting terrorist attacks throughout the country.

²⁵ While the United States held talks with the Taliban between January 21 and 26, 2019, the Taliban attacked a military base in central Afghanistan on January 21, killing more than 100 people.

²⁶ Attacks came on a military base and citizens in northeastern Nigeria in November 2018. An attack on citizens in a town of the region in February 2019 killed more than 60 people.

²⁷ In one of the recent "lone-wolf" terrorist attacks, a vehicle hit pedestrians in front of the Houses of Parliament Building in London in August 2018. In November 2018, a knife attack occurred on passersby in Melbourne, Australia. In December 2018, a shooting incident occurred at a Christmas market in eastern France.

agreeing to establish a constitutional committee towards the enactment of a new constitution. In December 2018, Russia, Iran and Turkey agreed to hold the first meeting of the committee as early as possible in 2019. However, as there are some points regarding which no agreement has been reached among relevant parties, including the selection of committee members, no schedule has been set for the meeting.

Furthermore, disputes between relevant forces over the status of Kurds in Syria have been emerging. Kurds expanded their control mainly in northern Syria through anti-ISIL operations. In reaction, Turkey, which sees Kurds' Democratic Union Party (PYD) as a terrorist organization, carried out military operations in northwestern Syria to block Kurds' expansion, stationing Turkish forces in the area and indicating the possibility of expanding military operations to Kurd-controlled areas in northeastern Syria. In response, the United States, which supported Kurds in anti-ISIL operations, agreed with Turkey in June 2018 to withdraw Kurds from Manbij in northern Syria and implement joint patrol there. They launched the joint control in November 2018. In December 2018, however, Turkish President Erdogan claimed that Kurds had not withdrawn from Manbij, announcing his intent to launch military operations in northeastern Syria within a few days. In response, the United States has continued talks with Turkey. While Turkey has not launched military operations, the different stances on Kurds between the two countries remain unresolved. In such situation, Syrian government forces expanded into suburban Manbij at the request of Kurds, indicating cooperation between Kurds and the Syrian government in countering Turkish military operations.

Moreover, concerning Iranian presence in Syria, confrontation between Iran and Israel has come to the surface. In January 2019, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu announced an attack on a weapon storage facility at Syria's Damascus Airport, expressing his determination to take resolute actions against Iranians in Syria. It is a concern that the escalation of confrontation between Israel and Iran would affect Syrian and regional stability.

Amid the still unstable situation in Syria, in December 2018, U.S. President Trump announced the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the country, declaring that ISIL had been toppled. As for potential implications of the withdrawal of

U.S. troops under the current circumstances, some pointed out the possibility of ISIL's resurgence, Iran's expansion of influence in Syria, and Turkey's attacks on Kurds, about which concerns were expressed inside and outside the United States. In January 2019, ISIL conducted multiple terrorist attacks in northern Syria, the victims of which included U.S. military personnel. Under the circumstances, the situation regarding the withdrawal of U.S. troops will continue to attract attention.

As shown thus far, relations between various forces over the Syrian situation have been complicated, with peace talks being stalled. Further initiatives from the international community towards the stabilization of Syria are required.

2 The Situation Surrounding Middle East Peace

Since the foundation of Israel in 1948, there have been four wars between Israel and Arab countries. The 1993 Oslo Agreement was signed between Israel and Palestine and a peace process made temporary progress but has fallen short of achieving peace.²⁸ In the Palestinian territories, the moderate Fatah, which governs the West Bank of the Jordan River, and the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas, which effectively controls the Gaza district, are in conflict, splitting the area. Since October 2017, the Fatah and Hamas have continued direct negotiations on the transfer of the administrative control of the Gaza Strip to the Fatah under Egyptian auspices, but the talks have remained stalled.²⁹

In such circumstances, the U.S. Trump administration announced its recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in December 2017 and moved the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in May 2018. In reaction, protests have been repeated mainly in Gaza, with protesters killed and injured through their clashes with Israeli forces. Tensions have increased intermittently as Israel carried out air strikes on Gaza to counter rocket attacks from Gaza. In addition, in March 2019, the Trump administration recognized Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, drawing criticism from various Middle Eastern countries. While the United States is reportedly working out a new Middle East peace proposal,³⁰ future developments regarding the Middle East peace process, including the United States' engagement, will attract attention along with the fate of negotiations on the transfer of

²⁸ Between Israel and Palestine, a peace process through full-fledged negotiations started through the 1993 Oslo Agreement. In 2003, both Israel and Palestine accepted a roadmap for realizing a peace initiative featuring the peaceful coexistence of two countries. However, its implementation has made little progress. Later, following rocket attacks on Israel from the Gaza Strip, Israeli forces launched large-scale military actions from late 2008 to early 2009 that included airstrikes on the Gaza Strip and the mobilization of ground forces. In November 2012, Israeli forces again conducted airstrikes on the Gaza Strip. By 2012, Israel thus conducted two major military operations against the Gaza Strip. In both cases, fighting ceased under mediation by Egypt and others.

²⁹ In September 2017, the Hamas announced its intent to accept the administrative control of the Gaza Strip by the Fatah. In October of the same year, direct negotiations were held through the mediation of Egypt, in which the two parties agreed on the transfer of the administrative control by December 1 of the same year. However, their negotiations have been stalled over the transfer of the security control of the Gaza Strip and other issues.

³⁰ In September 2018, U.S. President Trump vowed to release a Middle East peace proposal within four months. In January 2019, however, U.S. Ambassador to Israel Friedman said that the release would be delayed for several months. On the other hand, the United States announced an economic support plan for the Palestinians, titled "Peace to prosperity."

the administrative control of the Gaza Strip.

3 Situation in Yemen

In Yemen, following anti-government protests that occurred from February 2011 and international pressure afterward, the then President Ali Abdullah Saleh agreed to resign in accordance with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) initiative. Through the election held in February 2012, the then Vice President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi was elected new President.

Meanwhile, the confrontation intensified between the government and the opposition insurgent group Houthis, based in northern Yemen. As the Houthis invaded the Yemeni capital of Sana and the southern Yemeni city of Aden to which President Hadi evacuated, the president requested support from Arab countries. In response, in March 2015, coalition forces led by Saudi Arabia began air strikes against the Houthis.

A series of peace talks mediated by the UN took place between April and August of the same year, but no final peace agreement was reached, with the talks suspended. Peace talks in September 2018 were planned but failed to be implemented with the Houthis refusing to participate. In December 2018, however, peace talks were held in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, leading to the signing of an agreement on a ceasefire in Hodeidah, which has the biggest port in the country, and the exchange of prisoners. In January 2019, the UN Security Council decided to send a ceasefire monitoring group to Hodeidha.

Despite the progress in the peace talks, negotiations on specific measures toward the ceasefire made a rough going, with the terms of the agreement, including the ceasefire in Hodeidah, failing to be implemented. Military clashes between the legitimate government troops and the Houthis, and air strikes by the coalition forces have continued. In addition, attacks by the Houthis with drones and ballistic missiles on Saudi Arabia have frequently occurred.³¹ In January 2019, for example, the Houthis conducted a drone bombing attack on a Yemeni military parade in suburban Aden. In May 2019, Saudi Arabia announced that a crude oil pipeline located in the middle of the country had been attacked by drones, and the Houthis claimed responsibility for it. In the following month, the Houthis intermittently conducted missile attacks on civilian airports in southwestern Saudi Arabia.

Furthermore, Saudi Arabia and others have repeatedly



Yemen peace talks held in Sweden
[courtesy of the Government of Sweden]

criticized Iran for providing ballistic missiles, drones and other goods to the Houthis. Indications are that no plans have been made for any nationwide ceasefire in Yemen or a final peace agreement.

4 Situation in Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, the Taliban intensified its offensive as the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission (RSM) launched education, training and advice for the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) in the wake of ISAF's withdrawal in December 2014. Meanwhile, the ANDSF faces challenges regarding logistics, morale, air capabilities, and troop-commander leadership, allowing the Taliban to expand its control in Afghanistan. Furthermore, ISIL has established "Khorasan Province" and sustained terrorist attacks mainly in the capital city of Kabul and eastern Afghanistan since 2015. As a result, suicide bombing and other attacks in which the Taliban or ISIL is believed to be involved have occurred one after another across the country, leaving Afghanistan in an unstable security situation. According to a report released by the U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) in October 2018, the areas controlled or influenced by the Afghan Government accounted for approximately 55.5% of Afghan territory, the lowest since December 2015, when the survey started.

The first peace talks between the Afghan Government and the Taliban were held in May 2015, but have been suspended due to the subsequent change in the supreme Taliban leadership. Since July 2018, the Taliban has continued talks with senior U.S. officials. In January 2019, it was reported that they broadly agreed to withdraw U.S. and other foreign troops from Afghanistan and prevent Al Qaeda, ISIL and other terrorist organizations from using Afghan territory for

³¹ Since June 2015 when the Houthis and military forces supporting former President Saleh fired a Scud missile at Khamis Mushait in southern Saudi Arabia, ballistic missile attacks have reportedly been repeated on the region. While the Houthis reportedly fired ballistic missiles at the Saudi capital of Riyadh from November 2017, Saudi Arabia claimed that it intercepted these missiles. Meanwhile, it has been suggested that part of the Yemeni forces cooperated with the Houthis, engaging in some Houthis military operations including missile firing.

their strongholds. However, challenges remain, including different views between the United States and the Taliban on a timetable for the withdrawal. Future talks between the United States and the Taliban will attract attention along with moves towards the resumption of peace talks between the Afghan Government and the Taliban.

5 Situation in Libya

In Libya, following the collapse of the Gaddafi regime in 2011, elections for a General National Congress were held in July 2012, establishing a congress consisting mainly of Islamists. In June 2014, elections for a Council of Representatives were held to establish a new congress to replace the General National Congress. However, since secularists became the majority, the confrontation between Islamic and secular groups intensified, and consequently, Libya became fragmented between east and west with two assemblies existing in parallel – the Islamic groups' General National Congress based in the capital city of Tripoli and the secular groups' Council of Representatives based in Tobruk in eastern Libya. In December 2015, the UN mediated a political agreement for Libya and a national consensus government was established in March 2016. However, as Islamic groups took control of the new government, secular groups turned their back and refused to join the national consensus government. As a result, Libya remains divided between the east and the west. Furthermore, militias supporting either the east or the west have continued sporadic military clashes. In September 2018, militias active in the west clashed, leading to an emergency declaration. In April 2019, Commander Haftar's troops, the largest forces in eastern Libya, marched into a suburb of the capital city of Tripoli and clashed with militias subordinate to the unified national government in western Libya, leading to an exchange of air strikes. Under these circumstances, there are no prospects for establishing domestic governance or security.

Furthermore, ISIL, Al Qaeda, and other terrorist organizations are taking advantage of the unstable situation to expand into Libya, clashing with militias across the country. In particular, ISIL is believed to have been divided into small groups and in hiding, conducting suicide bombing and

other terrorist attacks in such cities as Tripoli, the capital,³² indicating that terrorist attacks may continue in the future.

6 Situation in Egypt

In Egypt, where then President Mubarak, who had been serving as the president for approximately three decades, resigned in 2011, and then President Mursi, who had been a member of the Muslim Brotherhood,³³ was inaugurated. However, in June 2013, large-scale protests of the people occurred amidst the poor economic situation and the deterioration of security. The military intervened in response and dismissed the president. In May 2014, then Defense Minister Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi was inaugurated as president. Since its inauguration, the el-Sisi administration has undertaken economic reforms including a shift to a floating exchange rate system and the abolition of subsidies. However, enhancing domestic security measures is still a major challenge. In particular, the country's mainland was subject to sporadic large-scale terrorist attacks from 2013, when political turmoil took place, to 2017, and in November 2018, a terrorist attack occurred in the central part of the country, targeting Egypt's minority Coptic Christians.³⁴ Moreover, in the Sinai Peninsula, terrorist attacks on military and police forces have occurred sporadically mainly in the northern part, while the southern part is overall peaceful. Since February 2018, Sinai 2018, a counter-terrorism operation conducted by the Egyptian Armed Forces, has been underway in the northern part of the Sinai Peninsula.

7 Situation in South Sudan

(1) Political Turmoil

The North-South civil war in Sudan, which had continued since 1983, came to an end in 2005 with the entry into force of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). In July 2011, the Republic of South Sudan was separated and gained independence from the Republic of the Sudan. At the same time, the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) was established.³⁵

After the independence, a political confrontation emerged between a mainstream faction led by President Salva Kiir

³² For example, ISIL claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing attack on the Foreign Ministry in the Libyan capital of Tripoli in December 2018, which killed at least three people.

³³ A Sunni political organization established in Egypt in 1928 as a public organization seeking to "revive Islam." In the 1950s, it became a target of a clampdown for plotting the assassination of President Gamal Abdel Nasser. However, by the 1970s, the organization became moderate to the extent of conducting political activities through parliament. Meanwhile, extremist organizations were derived, with Muslim Brotherhood serving as the parent organization.

³⁴ ISIL claimed responsibility for a shooting attack on buses on their way to a Coptic Christian monastery in central Egypt, which killed seven people.

³⁵ The UNMISS mandate had initially covered peacebuilding, nation-building and enhancing national functions. In 2014, however, the mandate was changed to cover protecting civilians and fostering an environment for human rights protection and humanitarian aid. In December 2015, support for the implementation of the conflict resolution agreement was added to the mandate, and the March 2019 resolution includes the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict and support for implementing the peace process. As of April of the same year, UNMISS consisted of about 16,740 military and police personnel from 71 countries.

Mayardit, a Dinka, and a nonmainstream faction including Vice President Riek Machar, a Nuer.³⁶ In July 2013, President Kiir dismissed Vice President Machar and all other cabinet ministers. In December 2013, clashes that broke out between the government and the pro-Machar faction in the capital city of Juba and violent acts targeting specific ethnic groups spread to different areas of the country in a short span of time, resulting in a large number of casualties, refugees, and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The “Intergovernmental Authority on Development” (IGAD)³⁷ assisted by the UN and the AU initiated efforts to start dialogues among South Sudanese leaders and enable their reconciliation. In January 2014, the government and the pro-Machar faction signed an agreement on ceasing hostile activities.

In August 2015, the government, the pro-Machar faction and others reached the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS), the key elements of which include the establishment of a transitional government. In April 2016, the Transitional Government of National Unity was established, in which Mr. Kiir serves as president and Mr. Machar as first vice president.

In July 2016, a shooting occurred in Juba between the security forces of President Kiir and First Vice President Machar. After First Vice President Machar fled the country, and President Kiir dismissed First Vice President Machar, clashes started to occur again between the government and the Machar faction.

In response to the situation, in August 2016, the UN Security Council created the Regional Protection Force (RPF)³⁸ for the purpose of maintaining security in Juba and surrounding areas. The RPF launched its operations in April 2017. In December 2017 and February and May 2018, the High-Level Revitalization Forum³⁹ was held under the leadership of IGAD, where the government agreed with the pro-Machar faction and others on the cessation of hostilities.

As a result of the efforts, in June 2018, President Kiir, former First Vice President Machar and others signed the “Khartoum Declaration of Agreement on South Sudan,” which includes a permanent ceasefire. They agreed on security arrangements in July 2018 and on provisional government arrangements in August, before signing the

“Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan” in September. Although a new provisional government was to be established by May 2019, the government and representatives of the pro-Machar faction agreed on the extension of the pre-transitional period by six months.

 Part III, Chapter 3, Section 5-2-3 (United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan)

8 Situation in Somalia

Somalia plunged into anarchy on the collapse of its government in 1991,⁴⁰ facing a serious humanitarian crisis with massive refugees generated. In 2005, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was inaugurated through the intermediation of the neighboring countries. In 2012, a unified government was established for the first time in 21 years.

Even after the establishment of the unified government, Somalia has faced two major issues—terrorism and piracy. Al-Shabaab, a Sunni extremist organization based in the central south, has repeatedly conducted terrorist attacks against the government and other targets. In 2007, the AMISOM⁴¹ was established with the approval of the UN Security Council. As a result of attacks by the AMISOM forces and the Somali government forces under reconstruction with support from Western countries, Al-Shabaab lost its control on major cities and weakened to some extent. However, its threat has still existed. Al-Shabaab frequently stages attacks against the bases of the Somali and AMISOM forces and terrorist attacks within Somalia and in AMISOM member countries.⁴² It has been pointed out that ISIL fighters have been flowing into Somalia in recent years. Since March 2017, counterterrorism operations by U.S. forces have intensified.

In Somalia, especially in its northeastern part, there are believed to be outposts of pirates who are active off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. The international community has continued anti-piracy operations and implemented a series of initiatives to enhance the security capabilities of Somalia based on the perception that instability of Somalia has caused the piracy issue. As a result, the number of reported pirate attacks has remained low.

³⁶ Hereinafter, the anti-mainstream faction and anti-government forces formed around Machar is referred to as the pro-Machar faction.

³⁷ IGAD was established in 1996. Its members are the eight East African nations of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Eritrea, and South Sudan.

³⁸ The RPF is authorized to use all necessary means to achieve the following three mandates: (1) facilitation of conditions for safe and free movement in Juba and its vicinity; (2) protection of the airport and key facilities; (3) engagement in any actor that is credibly found to be preparing attacks, or engagement in an attack against UN protection-of-civilians sites or civilians, etc.

³⁹ It was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, bringing together the various factions in South Sudan, to revitalize the 2015 Agreement on The Resolution of The Conflict.

⁴⁰ In 1991, “Somaliland” located in the Northwest declared its independence. In 1998, “Puntland” located in the Northeast declared the establishment of an autonomous government.

⁴¹ Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya, and Ethiopia supply most of the troops. Security Council Resolution 2372 (August 2017) determined that the troops would be reduced from 22,126 members to 21,626 by December 31, 2017 and further reduced to 20,626 by October 31, 2018.

⁴² In October 2017, a terrorist attack using a vehicle borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) occurred in Mogadishu, killing more than 500 people. In January 2019, a terrorist attack came on a hotel in neighboring Kenya’s capital of Nairobi, killing 21 people.

In 2018, Eritrea resumed diplomatic relations with Ethiopia⁴³ and Somalia⁴⁴, indicating signs of stabilization in the Horn of Africa. It is hoped that Somalia will stabilize its

situation with further support from neighboring countries.



Part III, Chapter 3, Section 2-1 (Counter-Piracy Operations)

Chapter 3

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- ⁴³ Ethiopia and Eritrea severed their diplomatic relations due to their armed conflict over their border demarcation issue in 1998 but signed a joint declaration in July 2018 to terminate their war and normalize their relations.
- ⁴⁴ Since gaining independence in 1993, Eritrea had no diplomatic relations with Somalia, but the two countries signed a joint declaration in July 2018 to establish bilateral diplomatic relations.