

**ANNUAL  
SLEEPER CELL  
REPORT (2021)  
FOR NORTH AND EAST SYRIA**



**ROJAVA  
INFORMATION  
CENTER**

## OVERVIEW GEOPOLITICAL SITUATION

The attack on Sina'a prison in Heseke at the end of January 2022 proved an explosive bookend to 2021, a year that had seen a decline in sleeper cell attacks in North and East Syria (NES). Though ISIS activity in general stayed low this year, security actors in the region were not beating any victory drums. The US Defense Intelligence Agency report in September suggested that ISIS was, "poised for increased activity", after a period of "consolidating" outside of AANES territory in the Syrian Arab Republic (SAR) controlled Baadia desert. This prophecy began to bear fruit at the end of 2021, as ISIS launched a series of attacks escalating in complexity and aggression against Iranian-backed militias and SAR forces in the Baadia outside of AANES territory. The strategic nature of these attacks was unclear at the time- in retrospect they may have been undertaken in order to practice more complex military operations in anticipation of the attack in Heseke. Since these attacks took place outside of SDF controlled territory, they are not counted in the numbers in this report. The Euphrates River, which serves as a de facto border between the AANES and SAR, is something of a smokescreen when it comes to ISIS activity and cuts the group's active area roughly in half. The SDF press office told RIC in May that the large presence of ISIS sleeper cells in Deir ez-Zor was exacerbated by co-Russian and SAR operations and exercises across the Euphrates, forcing many ISIS members into AANES territory. Local sources see strategy behind SAR moves to resituate ISIS, which can be used as a convenient proxy to destabilize AANES controlled areas.

In AANES territory, the vast majority of ISIS attacks took place in the relatively unstable, Arab-majority region of Deir ez-Zor. Though officially under SDF control, the security situation in Deir ez-Zor remains precarious. It is where ISIS lost the very last parts of its territory in 2019- and where many affiliates still live. ISIS in the area acts as a gang, intimidating the local population into silence. However, USCENTCOM estimates that "a majority of Arabs in Deir ez-Zor continue to provide support to [the SDF] as their preferred alternative to ISIS or the Syrian regime".<sup>1</sup> Though the vast majority of attacks took place in Deir ez-Zor, ISIS' influence continued to run north well into the Raqqa and Heseke regions, where SDF and Asayish raids uncovered dozens of sleeper cells.

<sup>1</sup> <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Nov/03/2002528608/-1/-1/1/LEAD%20INSPECTOR%20GENERAL%20FOR%20OPERATION%20INHERENT%20RESOLVE.PDF>

Marking a stark contrast to the large-scale coordinated attack on the prison in Heseke, ISIS attacks throughout 2021 in AANES were characterized by assassinations by pairs of attackers or IED attacks. The most common targets were SDF and AANES affiliated personnel and buildings associated with the local democratic civil and governmental organizations. Overall, attacks had actually gone down substantially in 2021 (274) when compared with 2020 (415).

However, attacks continued and ISIS remained a key security concern for the SDF and AANES. Part of the group's staying power was that it remains a well-funded organization in a region suffering from extreme economic distress. This year, the SDF tells RIC that many of the ISIS affiliates they arrested reported doing tasks for the organization for financial, rather than ideological reasons. A recent report from the UN Security Council Monitoring Team assessed that ISIS still has between \$25 million and \$50 million, "readily available...still leaving the group with significant resources."<sup>2</sup> Much of the financing apparatus exists outside AANES territory in Europe, Iraq and neighboring states. As a result, the financial wellspring is hard to control. Even so, SDF counterterrorism forces made this a priority in 2021, and many of the preeminent financiers based in NES were arrested in raids, including in al-Hol. ISIS also still terrorizes civilian populations by demanding taxes from them as a form of tribute, which helps them finance local operations and exert muscle over local institutions, especially in Deir ez-Zor. They also muscle locals into doing tasks for them, with the promise of financial reward, and the threat of bodily harm.

Throughout 2021, the Coalition continued to support the SDF and Asayish in raids against sleeper cells with ground and air support, though their involvement was affected by COVID-19 protocols in the first half of the year.<sup>3</sup> Overall in 2021, this cooperation resulted in more efficient operations, leading to a slight rise in arrests over 2020 (from 575 to 607) despite a decrease in raids. In December, the United States fulfilled its long-planned transition to remove U.S. forces from a combat role in Iraq. The Department of Defense (DoD) made clear that the transition will not affect counter-ISIS operations in Syria. US officials echoed this sentiment to SDC and AANES officials during visits in NES and Washington in the fall. For now, the continued US presence seems assured- even more so after the attack on the prison in Heseke which highlighted the continued threat posed by ISIS.

---

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S\\_2021\\_655\\_E.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_2021_655_E.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

Al-Hol camp in the Heseke region- which houses at least 56,000 people (ISIS affiliates living alongside other refugees) remains a difficult sticking point for the region. A spike of killings at the beginning of the year sparked a two-week raid by the Asayish into the camp, resulting in 158 arrests. Following this effort, murders in the camp dropped starkly in April, and stayed low through the year for the most part.

Smugglings of ISIS affiliates out of the camp into Turkish-occupied territory, and the consistent inclusion of former ISIS fighters in to the highest ranks of Turkish-backed SNA factions, highlight Turkey's continued tolerance for ISIS. This trend has continued into 2022; in January, for example, Mehmud el Salim, a former al-Qaeda emir and ISIS member was appointed police chief of Serekaniye by the Turkish military authorities- directly before the attack on Heseke prison in which many of the attackers came from Serekaniye into Heseke. Turkey's actions during the battle, including bombing an SDF military vehicle on the way to provide reinforcements to the fighters in Heseke, make clear that they are willing to allow ISIS to undermine the SDF and AANES.

Additionally, SDF and Asayish raids consistently brought to light Turkish intelligence cells and agents as well as Syrian-government linked agents functioning in the region, planning attacks and assassinations. Many of the non-ISIS claimed attacks in this report can likely be attributed to these sources, as they do not claim them publically as ISIS does. They also highlight the various security threats faced by the SDF and AANES.

Overall, the SDF and AANES remain hemmed in by a dire humanitarian situation, exacerbated by drought and a lack of adequate international cooperation and recognition, antagonistic neighbors, and the burden of supporting tens of thousands of refugees, IDPs and ISIS affiliates. Undoubtedly, the lack of future clarity around the political situation and the disjointed military control in the region are allowing ISIS to capitalize off of the instability in the region, and to be used by state actors to achieve their political goals.

## METHODS

We publish a sleeper cell report each month throughout the year. This report collates all of those reports into an easily digestible format, shortening the explanatory sections, and adding the data together to provide an analysis of the full year. Our monthly reports -[accessible here](#)- include additional detail (excepting December which we have incorporated into this larger report).

We collect our data through local news sources, ISIS' news channels, OSINT research, and our own on the ground research. We confirm our numbers with the SDF and the Asayish monthly, as they do not put out a joint statement of their raids.

### *A note on the numbers*

**Overall attacks versus ISIS claimed attacks:** ISIS is not the only group that launches attacks in NES. However, ISIS also does not always officially claim all of attacks that are likely attributable to it. Therefore, we include all attacks that resemble insurgency and terrorism (including assassinations against civilian and military personnel, bombings, and coordinated attacks on military positions). While some of the attacks unclaimed by ISIS were indeed carried out by ISIS, many of them are likely attributable to Turkish cells and Syrian government cells as well as others. However, sometimes the difference between a Turkish intelligence cell and an ISIS cell is not completely clear, as raids consistently uncover links between the two, and many of ISIS' high command are located in Turkey and Turkish occupied territory. Keeping this in mind helps paint a more accurate picture of the destabilizing forces the SDF contends with on their territory.

**Al-Hol:** Al-Hol camp sees many attacks and deaths monthly. We do not include these in the overall number of attacks and deaths for each month (though we do mention deaths in the monthly write-ups). However, we do keep track of them, and at the end of the report you can find a graph showing attacks versus deaths in al-Hol specifically. We do not generally include arrests in al-Hol in our overall count either- except for when there were large raids against ISIS affiliates in particular in the camp. In these cases we specify that we have included al-Hol arrests in our total.

# MONTHLY BREAKDOWN

## JANUARY

### Top Trends

- Spike in al-Hol murders, including 10 beheadings
- Kidnapping and beheading of two female AANES town council leaders

- ☀️ 31 attacks (29 claimed by ISIS)
- 💀 26 deaths (+20 in Al Hol)
- 👮 13 SDF/Asayish raids (27 arrests)

### In Depth

In January attacks stayed steady from the last quarter of 2020. Attacks were characterized primarily by assassinations against civilians and military personnel working with the AANES and SDF in various capacities- a trend which was carried over from 2020 and continued throughout 2021. Notably, in January this included the kidnapping and execution of two female leaders of the Tel Shire town council. Sleeper cells kidnapped the women from their house and their bodies were later found beheaded near Shaddadi, sparking outrage. Also notable were home invasions targeting a mayor and a judge in the Deir ez-Zor region.

January also saw a spike in killings in al-Hol camp, including ten beheadings. The increase came as the UN decried the situation in the camp as representing one of the most “pressing dangers to humanity,” and AANES representatives continued to lobby abroad for additional international focus on the humanitarian crisis in the camp. January saw the highest level of murders in al-Hol all year, and going forward assassinations were characterized primarily by gun and knife violence rather than beheadings.

## FEBRUARY

### Top Trends

- Massive arrest campaign in Deir ez-Zor by the SDF following assassination of female AANES members
- Attacks concentrated exclusively in predominately Arab regions of Raqqqa and Deir ez-Zor
- ISIS collecting “taxes” from civilians under threat of violence

- 🌟 28 attacks (22 claimed by ISIS)
- 💀 30 deaths (+19 in Al Hol Camp)
- 🇸🇩 16 SDF/Asayish raids (124 arrests)

### In Depth

In February all of the attacks were concentrated in the predominantly Arab regions. In Deir ez-Zor in particular, attacks continued to mount. Again this month, the attacks primarily targeted those working with the AANES and SDF, as well as tribal leaders. Also in February, ISIS declared that bakers were fair game for assassination if they failed to make a contribution to ISIS’ civilian tax. The announcement targeting bakers in particular sparked fear and discord in a region where bread is considered a cultural and dietary requirement for every meal.

In early February, the SDF launched a ten day long operation to comb the Deir ez-Zor region for ISIS sleeper cells after the assassination of the two women killed in January. During the raid, 87 people were detained including the killers of the two women. At the close of the month the SDF had captured 124 persons suspected of sleeper cell activity. This was the second highest numbers of arrests to date since RIC began collecting monthly data in 2019, but subsequent months in 2021 saw even higher arrests.

This month in al-Hol 9 people were killed by assassins, including one member of Doctors Without Borders. RIC was told by sources in the security services of the camp that the attacks were being carried out by young men between the ages of 17 and their mid-20s. A further 10 people died in a fire.

## MARCH

### Top Trends

- Attack on a Newroz festival in Deir ez-Zor
- Massive arrest campaign in al-Hol by SDF/Asayish begins

🌟 27 attacks (20 claimed by ISIS)

💀 33 deaths (+16 in Al Hol Camp)

🇸🇩 16 SDF/Asayish raids (158 arrests, including a large sweep in al-Hol)

### In Depth

Attacks stayed steady from the first two months of the year. Attacks continued on prominent community figures, including the assassination of a tribal elder and a leading religious figure. In the village of Jezrah, in Deir-ez-Zor countryside, a Newroz festival was attacked, resulting in 1 death and 2 injuries. Newroz is a traditional Kurdish/Persian holiday celebrating the spring New Year, with roots in ancient Zoroastrian rites. It's targeting by ISIS speaks to ethnic tensions that persist and the group's ideology of religious purity.

After the spike of deaths in al-Hol in February that included the murder of a foreign NGO staffer with Doctors without Borders, international pressure grew on internal security forces to provide better security in the camp. As a result, 6000 SDF and Asayish (Internal Security Forces) launched a cleanup operation in al-Hol Camp dubbed the "Humanity and Security Campaign". In March, the campaign resulted in the arrest of 70 people, and it continued into April.

## APRIL

### Top Trends

- Spike in IED attacks, and SDF/Asayish raids uncover vast explosive stores
- Continuation of the massive arrest campaign in al-Hol

💣 40 attacks (36 claimed by ISIS)

💀 26 deaths (+1 in Al Hol Camp)

🇸🇩 23 SDF/Asayish raids (93 arrests, including from sweep in al-Hol)

### In Depth

From March to April attacks rose, but were less deadly. However, two humanitarian workers from Heseke were shot in their car outside of al-Hol in a rare attack on civil society organizations. Attacks were again concentrated in the Deir ez-Zor countryside, and along the Euphrates river up until Raqqa. 15 of the attacks this month included the use of IEDs against SDF positions and other infrastructure.

In al-Hol, only one murder of an Iraqi woman was recorded, following the massive arrest campaign during Operation Humanity and Security. Over both March and April, the operation led to the arrest of 158 people. A further 17 arrests were made in the camp after the closure of the operation, including of an IED expert, and of a Dutch citizen.

Outside of al-Hol camp, SDF and Asayish raids also resulted in the seizure of an ISIS-owned warehouse which stored around 140 explosive devices.

## MAY

### Top Trends

- SDF launches extensive raids in Deir ez-Zor and sets curfew, leading to retaliation attacks from ISIS
- ISIS posters shops in Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor, warning civilians from working with SDF and AANES

- ☀️ 42 attacks (30 claimed by ISIS)
- 💀 13 deaths (+5 in Al Hol Camp)
- 🇸🇩 13 SDF/Asayish raids (177 arrests)

### In Depth

Roughly half of the attacks this month targeted Asayish and SDF members, checkpoints and headquarters, with IEDs or automatic weapons, while others continued to target community figures working with the AANES, including sheikhs and members of the legislative council. In tandem with the killings, ISIS posted leaflets on shop-doors in Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor warning civilians from approaching SDF headquarters, and more generally from working with “apostates”.

In response to the high number of attacks, SDF carried out a large-scale security operation in the Deir ez-Zor region. With Coalition air and ground support, SDF also realized a 4-day combing operation to uncover ISIS smuggling routes.

The majority of those killed in al-Hol this month, as usual, were Iraqi. On a visit to al-Hol, camp authorities told RIC that at least 8,000 Iraqis still living in the camp arrived there fleeing ISIS’ advance between 2016 and 2018- and are now living side-by-side with those they were trying to escape. In 2018, the Iraqi government agreed to take back 5,000 of their non-ISIS affiliated nationals from al-Hol. The first of these repatriations finally took place this May when 381 individuals left for Iraq.

## JUNE

### Top Trends

- Attacks overall begin to decline precipitously, while attacks in al-Hol rose, including retributions for going to the hospital in the camp
- ISIS sets up “flying checkpoints” in Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor

🔥 25 attacks (15 claimed by ISIS)

💀 19 deaths (+ 9 in al-Hol)

🇸🇩 12 SDF/Asayish raids (69 arrests, including sweep in al-Hol)

### In Depth

June marked the beginning of a sharp decline in attacks that would continue throughout the year. This decline followed a series of successful SDF raids in Deir ez-Zor, but also coincides with when ISIS claims they began planning and consolidating for the attack on Sina’a prison in Heseke, which took place in January 2022.

This month, western Deir ez-Zor and Raqqa also saw a series of ‘flying checkpoints’ (temporary fake checkpoints set up by ISIS), and ISIS bombing the home of a civilian accused of witchcraft. Attacks also continued to target SDF, Asayish and individuals working with the AANES in various capacities, including the assassination of the head of the Farmer’s Union in Raqqa.

In al-Hol Camp, female camp residents affiliated with ISIS continue to terrorize other female residents, including beating a woman for going to the, “unbelievers’ [i.e. run jointly by NGOs and the AANES] hospital too often.” The SDF arrested four Iraqis in the camp involved in recent killings, who confirmed receiving instructions from ISIS leaders through mobile devices using Turkish numbers. They also arrested 15 smugglers who were helping people escape into Turkish occupied areas of North and East Syria where the escapees intended, “to re-join ISIS”.

## JULY

### Top Trends

- Attacks overall continued to decline, and the SDF conducted fewer raids
- SDF raid met with violent resistance from ISIS sleeper cell, one of many such instances this year

- ✨ 14 attacks (9 claimed by ISIS)
- 👤 8 deaths (+8 in al-Hol)
- 👮 10 raids by SDF/Asayish (24 arrests)

### In Depth

Attacks continued to drop sharply this month, marking the lowest level since RIC began reporting in 2019. As usual, most attacks took place on the border region of the Euphrates river between Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor countryside, the area where sleeper cells are most present and active. The attacks claimed by ISIS consisted of attacks on police posts and checkpoints, as well as assassinations killing 5 Asayish/SDF members. ISIS also claimed an attack on an oil tanker, and beheaded a civilian accused of being a spy.

There was also a notable attack in Qamishlo carried out by a Syrian Government linked militant cell in al-Tay neighborhood, an area that was captured by the SDF from the Damascus-backed NDF militia in April. Two bombs exploded injuring two women.

The SDF also conducted fewer raids this month, though with the support of Coalition aircraft. In one raid in the Heseke countryside, one of the ISIS militants opened fire in an attempt to escape and killed an SDF soldier. The Coalition aircraft targeted the house with a missile, killing two ISIS members and facilitating the arrest of two others. This is just one example of SDF raids that faced violent resistance from ISIS members this year.

The situation in Hol Camp remained steady. While 9 murders were documented in June, this number went down to 8 in July. All 8 were shot. An attempt to smuggle people out of the camp was stopped and 5 people arrested.

## AUGUST

### Top Trends

- Continued decline in attacks, and lowest level of attacks claimed by ISIS ever
- Increased SDF and Coalition raids

 6 attacks (2 claimed by ISIS)

 7 deaths (+8 in al-Hol)

 17 raids (89 arrests)

### In Depth

In August, media activity on ISIS channels dropped substantially. This could have been for a number of reasons, including a change in ISIS media strategy, a disruption in their media team, or decentralization in planning and execution, or other causes. Regardless, they only officially claimed two attacks in NES territory this month, both executions of individuals in their homes in Deir ez-Zor. This is the lowest since RIC began recording data in 2019. However, Deir ez-Zor was also shaken by a series of protests around the deteriorating security situation in the area, which put increased pressure on the SDF.

Attacks also decreased again overall by over half. This was likely related to an increase of raids, including a sweep of a makeshift IDP camp along the road between Raqqa and Tabqa, which resulted in the arrest of 35 people. In another raid in Deir ez-Zor, 18 people connected to both ISIS and Turkish-backed SNA groups were arrested. SDF forces found weapons and documents proving that “intelligence centers in Turkey” and the occupied territories ordered bombings and assassinations in NES.

Al-Hol saw 8 murders this month, once again all gunshots to the head. In addition, a masked and armed man threatened employees in the Norwegian Refugee Council to pay “tribute” for their staff operating inside and outside the camp. This resulted in the NRC’s withdrawal of their staff. While the masked man was thought to be connected with ISIS, ISIS did not officially claim involvement.

## SEPTEMBER

### Top Trends

- Arrested ISIS affiliates admit to extorting civilians and planning prison breaks
- SDF says estimated 12,000 ISIS affiliates remain in NES

☀ 11 attacks (6 claimed by ISIS)

💀 8 deaths (+4 in al-Hol)

🇸🇩 18 raids (80 arrests)

### In Depth

In September, ISIS claimed more attacks on their official channels, but the number was still low. Security officials on the ground told RIC that nowadays they are more worried about ISIS 'hit lists', including the names, faces and (if available) addresses of local security officials or other officials on social media sites and groups – which signal future assassinations. This month assassinations included a member of Asayish Deir ez-Zor's organized crime department, three members of AANES institutions, and a failed attempt on SDF leader.

ISIS affiliates arrested in raids this month admitted to extorting civilians for zakat (a corruption of the Islamic practice of almsgiving to the needy), and planning prisons breaks for other ex-ISIS fighters. ISIS also launched attacks against the SAR-linked militia NDF in the Baadia and Iranian-backed militia Liwa al-Quds in NES. SDF told RIC that according to their latest estimate 12,000 ISIS affiliates remain in North and East Syria (out of a population of ~4 million), and most of them are in Deir ez-Zor and Heseke.

Raids in al-Hol resulted in the arrest of three people connected with a Hawala money exchange network within the camp and a smuggler. The second batch of 487 Iraqi refugees was repatriated bringing the total to 868.

In September, SDF claimed that a raid in Tabqa led to the arrest of 20 people from a Turkish intelligence sleeper cell, as well as raids of ISIS sleeper cells that brought to light documents showing links between ISIS and Turkish intelligence.

## OCTOBER

### Top Trends

- Attacks exclusively concentrated in Deir ez-Zor
- Sixth anniversary of the founding of the SDF
- No murders in al-Hol

- ☀ 13 attacks (9 claimed by ISIS)
- 💀 8 deaths (+0 in al-Hol)
- 🇸🇩 21 SDF/Asayish raids (69 arrests)

### In Depth

Attacks this month took place exclusively in Deir ez-Zor, consolidating a trend from the summer and fall. The attacks included assassinations of civilians- a doctor shot inside a hospital while on duty, and an unsuccessful attempt on the life of Muhammad al-Badr, the sheikh of al-Bu Salih of al-Bakkara tribe, a large and diverse tribe with great influence across the region.

October 11th was the sixth anniversary of the founding of the SDF. In a statement SDF spokesman Ferhad Shami clarified three goals for the SDF going forward, “liberating the [Turkish] occupied areas, eliminating ISIS sleeper cells, achieving community development, and maintaining security and stability in the liberated [Arab-majority] areas.” On the same day, the Women’s Asayish of Deir ez-Zor opened a headquarters to further coordinate their activities across the region, a reminder of the strong female presence in the security forces of the region.

This month saw no killings in al-Hol, a welcome respite. Outside the camp the SDF captured another individual involved in the Hawala network. An SDF raid on Deir ez-Zor resulted in the arrest of a Turkish intelligence agent who confessed to planning operations against SDF forces and providing Turkish intelligence with SDF military coordinates.

Outside of SDF territory, hostilities between ISIS cells and Iranian-backed militias continued to escalate, and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-backed Hashemiyoun faction also opened five new recruiting offices in SAR-controlled Deir ez-Zor- bringing the total in the area to 30. This heavy recruitment could have played a part stoking anti-Shia sentiments in the region- likely rallying ISIS supporters in turn, who crisscross from SAR to AANES territory.

## NOVEMBER

### Top Trends

- HAT (internal counterterrorism forces) discover a concrete plot to attack Sina'a prison and seize a large cache of weapons
- Murders rise again in al-Hol including the head of the Iraqi [Refugee] Council

☀️ 19 attacks (11 claimed by ISIS)

💀 23 deaths (+5 in al-Hol)

🛡️ 10 SDF/Asayish raids (42 arrests, including sweep in al-Hol)

### In Depth

Attacks began to rise slightly this month, as a seemingly emboldened group of ISIS affiliates launched a series of attacks on SDF bases and headquarters in the region. Gunman attacks on SDF and Asayish members continued throughout the month, resulting in the death of several individuals, as well as civilians and members of the Autonomous Administration. Notably, a car bomb from an unknown source was detonated in Manbij, killing a family.

Murders targeting Iraqi refugees continued in al-Hol- including the head of the Iraqi Council in the camp. As a part of the AANES' 2018 agreement with Iraq to repatriate 5,000 individuals, the third batch of 490 Iraqis was repatriated this month, bringing the total to 1,358.

This month, Asayish and SDF/Coalition forces also raided a sleeper cell planning an attack on al-Sina'a prison in the city of Heseke. During the raid they confiscated a large stock of cash, weapons, and ammunition, which resembled those used in the attack on Sina'a prison in January. In other raids they also arrested an ISIS financier in Deir ez-Zor and two Turkish intelligence agents in Raqqa.

## DECEMBER

### Top Trends

- SDF arrests more people involved in the plot against Sina'a prison, including the chief planner
- Raids in al-Hol uncover ISIS minor Sharia education tents and tunnels used for training and escape during raids

🌟 18 attacks (13 claimed by ISIS)

💀 14 deaths (+4 in al-Hol)

🇸🇩 7 SDF/Asayish raids (17 arrests)

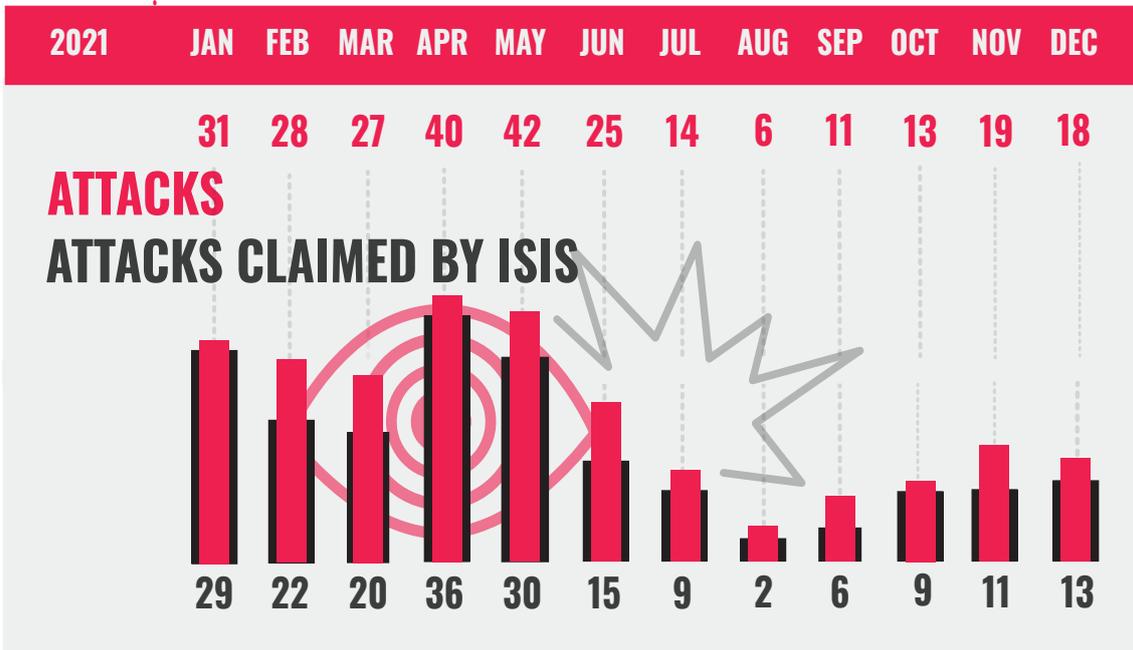
### In Depth

Attacks stayed steady this month, but diversified, including missiles fired on the US base near Shaddadi, and a number of attacks on oil infrastructure in Deir ez-Zor in the Konoko, Omar and Daar oil fields, as well as an attack on a bus that killed 10 oil workers.

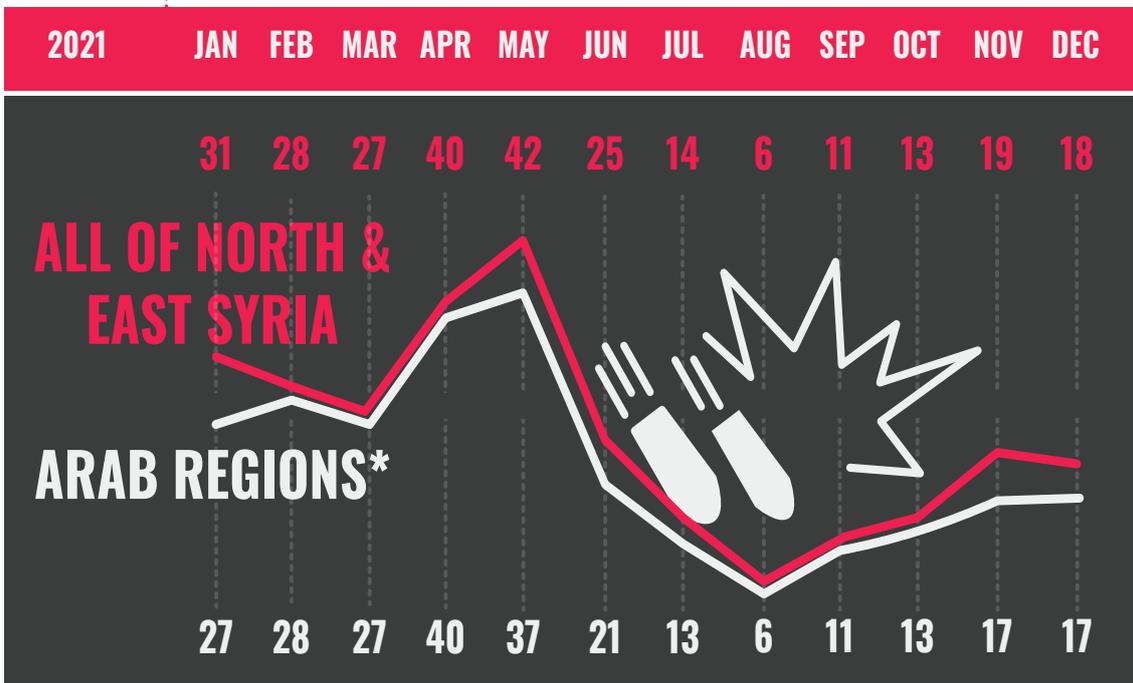
In al-Hol, the Asayish discovered a hidden tunnel inside a tent in the Annex section of the camp, which houses all non-Syrian and non-Iraqi residents. The Asayish found that third-country minors between the ages of 13 and 15 received Sharia education as ISIS "Cubs of the Caliphate" in the tent and that the tunnel was used for training purposes and to escape during raids. Minors of French, Indonesian, Turkmenistani, and Russian nationality were arrested during the raid and removed from the camp. Camp authorities tell RIC that within the camp UNICEF runs the education system outside of the Annex. However, within the Annex due to security concerns, they don't operate, leaving ISIS to fill in the gaps.

SDF raids in December also continued to uncover details about the planned attack on Sina'a Prison. A raid on Christmas resulted in the arrest of the chief planner of the operation, ISIS leader Mohammad Abd Al-Alawad. He was a well-known ISIS leader for many years, and participated in the attacks on Kobani in 2014.

**COMPARED : SLEEPER-CELL ATTACKS IN NORTH AND EAST SYRIA & CLAIMED ISIS ATTACKS**

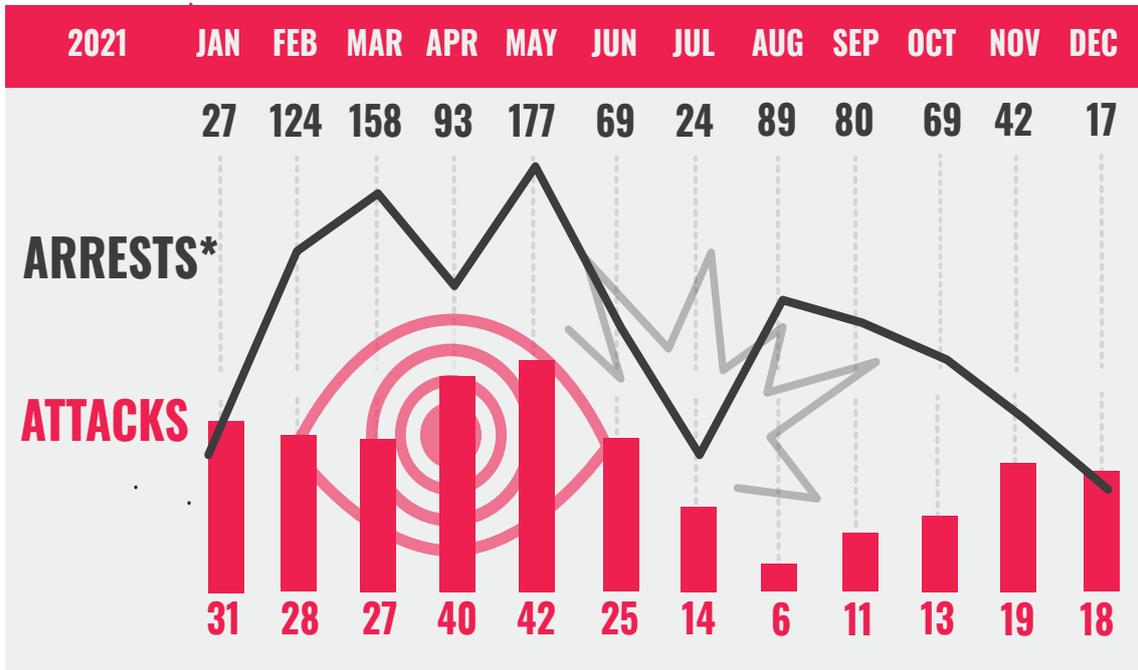


**COMPARED : SLEEPER-CELL ATTACKS ALL OF NORTH & EAST SYRIA AND ARAB REGIONS 2021**



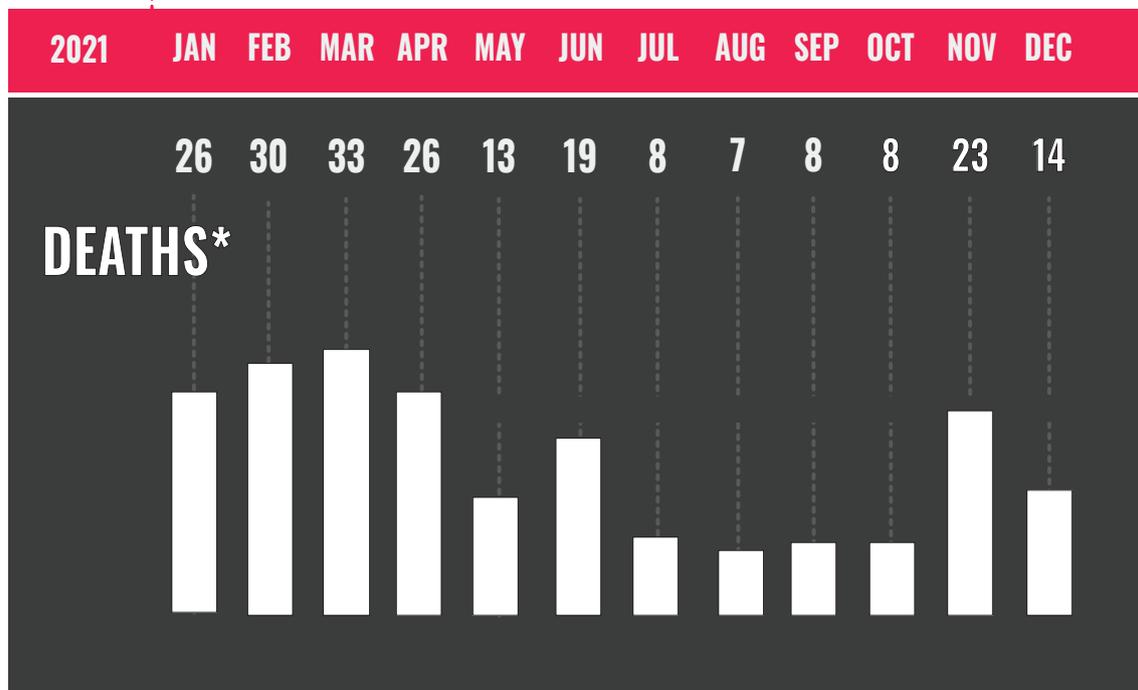
\* Arab Regions includes: Tabqa, Manbij, Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor

**COMPARED : SLEEPER-CELL ARRESTS AND ATTACKS IN NORTH & EAST SYRIA**



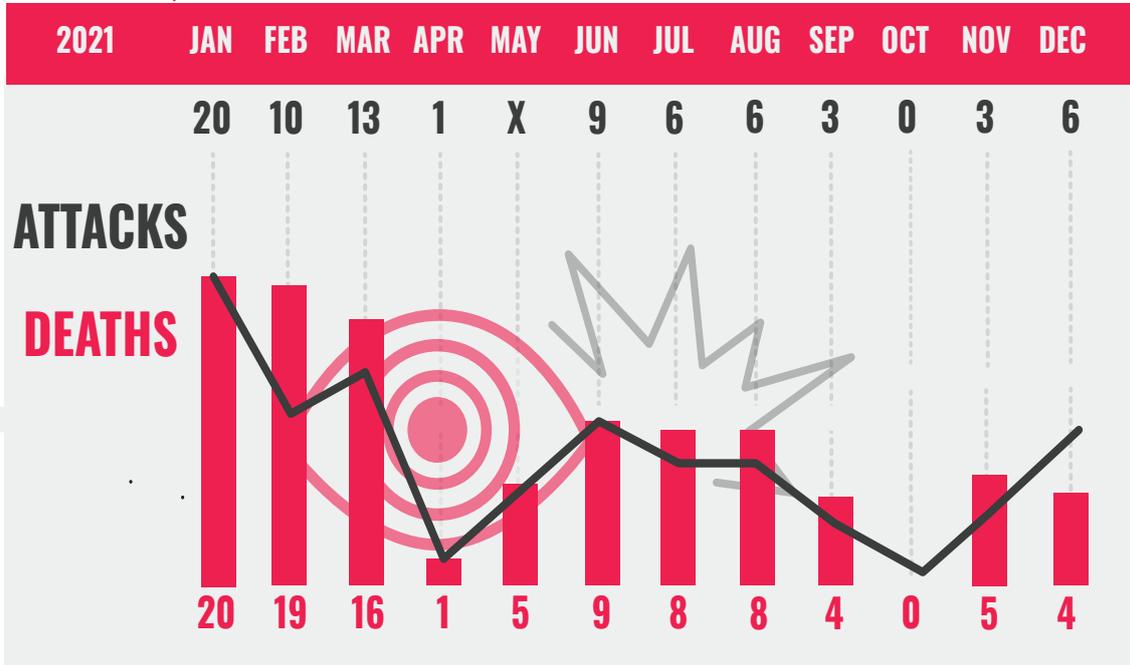
\* Carried out by SDF, HAT & Asayish

**IN NUMBERS : DEATHS CAUSED BY SLEEPER-CELL ATTACKS IN NORTH AND EAST SYRIA**



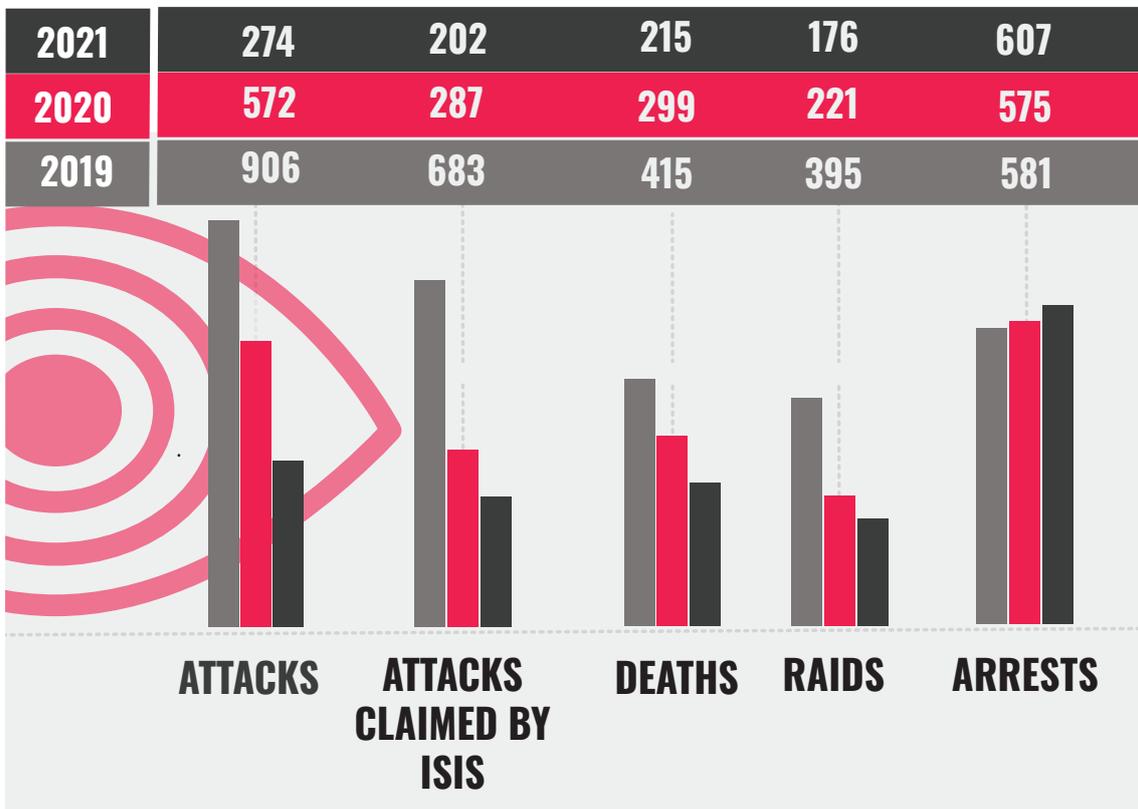
\* Not including al-Hol

**COMPARED : ATTACKS AND DEATHS IN AL-HOL CAMP**



X - No data available

**COMPARED : SLEEPER-CELL ACTIVITY IN NORTH & EAST SYRIA 2019/2020/2021**



**ROJAVA INFORMATION CENTER  
FEBRUARY 2022**

**WWW.ROJAVAINFORMATIONCENTER.COM  
PRESS@ROJAVAINFORMATIONCENTER.ORG  
TEL +963 932 160 108**



**ROJAVA  
INFORMATION  
CENTER**