



**“The impact of ISIS on Muslim countries’ intelligence services”**

By Chloé Jamet

Under the supervision of Professors Agnès Levallois and Luc Batigne

Sciences Po

Spring 2021

This paper has received the Kuwait Program at Sciences Po Student  
Paper Award

The copyright of this paper remains the property of its author. No part of the content may be reproduced, published, distributed, copied or stored for public or private use without written permission of the author. All authorisation requests should be sent to [program.kuwait@sciencespo.fr](mailto:program.kuwait@sciencespo.fr)

# Introduction

The emergence of the (self-proclaimed) Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant from Syria's ruins led to an unprecedented international mobilisation from a military point of view : a broad coalition of both Arab and Western states was formed to respond to the rise of a proto-caliphate of disproportionate ambition, threatening both its geographical neighbours and countries further afield through military conquest and the use of terrorism. This threat has led the author of this report to question the role of intelligence services in the Muslim world and the impact that the emergence and rise of the Islamic State (ISIS) had on their role within the state apparatus, on their capabilities and on their internal organisation. This report does not aim to study the global impact of terrorism on Muslim intelligence services, but rather to focus on a particular threat and its differentiated impact on the countries in the area of interest, in order to highlight the commonalities and divergences between state responses, from Morocco to Iran and Turkey.

This research faces several difficulties: a lack of reliable and available sources, a lack of time and resources to research them, and finally the (Western) perspective of the author which presents an inherent bias.

The sources used in this report are of four kinds: journalistic, government websites, academic works, and interviews (conducted by videoconference). Most of these sources are open, and the elements - although interesting - that they provide are not sufficient to draw up a precise picture of the consequences of ISIS on the action of the intelligence services in the area under study. As several interviewees pointed out, this topic would require more research, fieldwork, and funding. The author's level of proficiency in Arabic, Farsi or Turkish does not allow her to exploit sources in these languages either.

Furthermore, the research approach of this report is motivated by the memory of the author of the attacks on Charlie Hebdo, the Bataclan or the destruction of Palmyra and Mosul. However, the 2001 attacks seem to have had a more significant impact on the intelligence services of the Arab-Muslim world than ISIS, which was not considered by the former as a very different threat from those of other armed Islamist groups, first and foremost al-Qaeda. The response of these services in the 2010s was therefore not fundamentally different from the previous decade in the context of the 'War on Terror'.

This report will first look at the perception of the threat posed by the various states under study; the second part of the report will look at intelligence priorities in relation to the ISIS and the organisational consequences of this threat; and finally, the political uses to which ISIS has been subjected will be discussed.

## I - A varying perception of the threat

The Islamic State is characterised by its rapid and vast territorial gains, its unprecedented recruitment capacities, and its significant resources. Its ambitions and resources therefore constitute threats that the states of the region perceive in different ways

depending on their geographical location, the departure of fighters and arrival of *returnees*, and the recrudescence of cells and *wilayats* on their territory.

## A- The self-proclaimed Islamic State: A local threat

For the *Sham* countries, ISIS has been (and still is) a close, direct threat. Thus, for **Iraq**, which is at war with the group on its own territory, ISIS is the main direct threat to the regime and the population.<sup>1</sup> The Islamic State is seen as an internal adversary that needs to be destabilised, devalued, and fought.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, many former Baath Party officers are found in its ranks, posing a threat in terms of political legitimacy to the current Iraqi regime. Moreover, former Baathists have contributed to build efficient security services and forces for ISIS (*amniyat*). Not only did ISIS still poses a security threat to the Iraqi security forces, and to the legitimacy of the regime through its suicide attacks, but it also controlled part of the Iraqi territory for several years. The advent of ISIS and its territorialisation has thus had a significant impact on the country's intelligence services. ISIS has also been present in **Syria** for several years and has challenged the control of Syrian territory by Bashar al-Assad and his regime. Despite the group's territorial retreat in 2019, there has been a recent upsurge in its takeover of areas (which are also sources of weapons and funding), particularly in the Badiya desert on the border with Iraq. The Islamic State is therefore still present on Syrian soil, which could continue to worry the regime - whose forces, Russian allies and pro-Iranian militias were also the targets of attacks by the group in 2020.<sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup>Iraq and Syria are therefore the two countries whose recent history has been most marked by ISIS, which explains the importance of the fight against the terrorist group in their security policies.

The countries bordering *Bilad-al-Sham* have also been affected by the rise of the proto-caliphate: the Islamic Republic of **Iran**, for example, is located at the crossroads of several terrorist groups and networks, some affiliated with al-Qaeda, but ISIS in Syria and Iraq poses a singular threat that the regime takes very seriously. Unlike other terrorist organisations operating in Iran's neighbourhood, the group's objectives go far beyond tactical threats or separatist ambitions: it aspires to the annihilation of the Shiites and the establishment of a politico-religious Islamic state. Moreover, the anti-Shiite agenda of ISIS does not allow the Iranian regime to maintain an ambiguous relationship with the group, on the model of its links with al-Qaeda.<sup>5</sup> Iran now considers the fight against terrorism as a top priority - especially since the advent of ISIS.<sup>6</sup> Its responses have been reactive as the group rose to power, and in particular when its advance into Iraq initially caught Tehran off guard. After a short phase of minimising the threat (the Iranian regime indicated before the summer of 2014 that the rise of ISIS would be rapidly reduced), the Iranian security apparatus gradually adapted to what it now perceives as the most worrying threat since the end of the Iran-Iraq war.<sup>7</sup> As for **Saudi Arabia**, while the kingdom supports the Free Syrian Army, it refuses to negotiate with the Islamic State organisation. ISIS is perceived as a threat in Saudi sphere of influence, an environment in which the kingdom seeks to control, particularly in the face of the challenged posed by the Islamic Republic of Iran. "In the struggle for influence between the Islamic Republic and Saudi

---

<sup>1</sup> Batigne L. Levallois A. (2017), p.22

<sup>2</sup> *Middle East*, No. 38, October-December 2017, p.16.

<sup>3</sup> Daraj.

<sup>4</sup> D.F. (2021).

<sup>5</sup> Esfandiary, D. & Tabatabai, A. (2015).

<sup>6</sup> Tabatabai, A.M. (2018).

<sup>7</sup> Esfandiary, D. & Tabatabai, A. (2015).

Arabia, misinformation is de rigueur<sup>8</sup>, especially as all the intelligence services aim both to guarantee the continuity of the system in place and to promote regional ambitions. In the logic of countering the regional ambitions of Iran, which would seek to position itself as a suitable actor in the fight against terrorism through its Shiite Iraqi proxies, Saudi Arabia and its intelligence and security services are engaged in the fight against ISIS.

Similarly, **Jordan**, located in the strategic area of *Bilad al-Sham*, has seen the expansion of ISIS stop at its northern and eastern borders, constituting an obvious threat, which has left it with no choice but to intervene within the international coalition and strengthen its military. Hard hit by the refugee flows caused by the war in Syria and then by the advent of a proto-caliphate, Jordan has every interest in seeing the situation stabilise in its neighbouring countries, in order to ease the demographic pressure it has been experiencing for the past 10 years. The involvement of the Hashemite Kingdom was reinforced after the murder of one of its pilots. The other country where the Syrian crisis spilled over, **Lebanon**, has seen the Earsal region destabilised by the activity of ISIS since 2014. However, it is Hezbollah, the Iranian proxy in Lebanon, which has invested the most militarily against ISIS: the Lebanese army remains in a posture of territorial defence.<sup>9</sup> Officially, the security and intelligence services in **Turkey** include the fight against the Islamic State as one of their prerogatives, as this threat is just at the Turkish border, or even inside the country. However, if the MIT has the reputation of being a very efficient intelligence and clandestine action service in its neighbouring countries (notably in Iraq and Syria), its actions mainly target Kurdish activities as well as members of the Gülen brotherhood before targeting ISIS<sup>10</sup>. Indeed, the ISIS is a lesser threat to the stability of the regime in the eyes of Turkey for the moment.

Iran, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, due to their different threat perceptions, have therefore put in place different strategies against ISIS, the intelligence aspects of which will be explored below.

## B - Departures and returns: importing the threat

The countries mentioned above also face the threat of some of their citizens deciding to join the ranks of ISIS, sometimes without being detected, and then returning to their country of origin to commit violence and attacks. This internal threat is therefore taken into account by the intelligence services of the countries studied.

**Jordan** provides the second largest foreign contingent in ISIS ranks (between 1,500 and 3,000 fighters), despite effective border controls, thus posing a real long-term problem for the kingdom. While several jihadists have been detected and arrested by Jordanian intelligence services and then brought to justice, some of them should be released from prison in the next few years, posing an obvious security issue. It should be noted that all the attacks in the country have been committed by nationals.<sup>11</sup> **Lebanon** witnesses the contrary: experts agree that the Lebanese Sunni population is not very radicalised, causing few departures to

---

<sup>8</sup> *Middle East*, No. 38, October-December 2017, p.17.

<sup>9</sup> Marteu E (2016.)

<sup>10</sup> Rodier A. (2018)

<sup>11</sup> Marteu E (2016.)

Syria or Iraq. However, as the borders between Syria and Lebanon are extremely poorly controlled, there has been an increase in attacks since the summer of 2013 in the regions controlled by Hezbollah (southern suburbs of Beirut, north-eastern Bekaa or the Alawite district of Tripoli). In addition, two deadly suicide attacks, probably organised from Syria, hit Iranian interests (embassy in November 2013, Iranian cultural centre in February 2014).<sup>12</sup>

In the Maghreb, the problem of *returnees* also exists. **Libya**, first, is a special case, as it has produced a large number of young Libyans who left for *Bilad al-Sham* and then returned to join groups affiliated to ISIS. The state of civil war and the government inability to provide the minimum of security and territory's control has led Libya (and in particular the region of Derna, which is also affected by organised crime) to become a giant training camp for jihadists, destabilising all of its neighbours: the French Minister of Foreign Affairs has even described the country as a "terrorist hub". Thus, many young Maghrebians did not need to go to Syria to train for jihad, as Libya is easier to reach despite the efforts of its neighbours to control the borders. **Tunisia** is also a case worth studying, since the smallest country in the Maghreb has provided the largest quota of foreign fighters to both *Sham* and Libya: estimates of departures are difficult, but they could reach thousands. Thus, according to the Tunisian Ministry of the Interior in 2015, around 6,000 people, including 700 women, joined the Islamic State, and at least 650 returned to Tunisian territory.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the people who have been prevented from leaving require significant police surveillance, which is costly in terms of personnel and resources. The threat posed by these people is real: dozens of police officers and soldiers have died as a result of their operations. 2015, for example, was marked by three major attacks claimed by ISIS, which resulted in a total of 72 deaths.<sup>14</sup> **Morocco** presents a similar profile to Tunisia, but in lesser proportions. Still, there are at least 1,500 departures and 550 *returnees*. According to the authorities, there are only a few departures to (and therefore returns from) Syria and Iraq, which could be explained by the traumatic memory of the black decade that cost the lives of more than 200 000 people.<sup>15</sup>

The Islamic State is therefore not only a territorial threat for the countries of the Muslim world: the flow of nationals joining and then leaving Syria and Iraq has become a real concern for the regimes (first and foremost Tunisia, Jordan and Morocco) and their intelligence services.

## C - Local establishments: the threat of cells and *wilayats*

The final threat to the states studied is that of their nationals who have never left for Syria, Iraq or even Libya, but who have been radicalised there and form sleeper cells. Since the beginning of 2019, *wilayats* have been renewing their allegiance to al-Baghdadi one by one as part of the "*Wal-Aqibatu lil-Muttaqin*" (victory over traitors) campaign.<sup>16</sup> Some countries are more affected than others by this phenomenon of radicalisation at home.

**Egypt**, because of its historical, demographic and political weight, represents a stake for the jihadist movement: the ISIS has added to its targets the Coptic Christian minority and

---

<sup>12</sup> Murgue, B. (2015)

<sup>13</sup> Bourgou, T. (2015)

<sup>14</sup> France 24. (2016)

<sup>15</sup> Ghanem D., 2015

<sup>16</sup> Rodier A. (2019)

Sufi Muslims, in addition to the Egyptian security forces.<sup>17</sup> The Egyptian regime also has an interest in combating terrorism because it reduces the country's attractiveness as a tourist destination, as well as posing a threat to the smooth flow of trade through the Suez Canal, and has been affected by numerous terrorist attacks as a result. The polarisation resulting from the post-revolutionary situation between 2011 and 2013 has encouraged violence use by ISIS and other violent groups.<sup>18</sup> For example, Egypt is now faced with the activity of ISIS in Sinai (which is estimated to have around 1500 fighters<sup>19</sup>) in the east, and that of the *wilaya* near the Libyan border in the west.<sup>20</sup> The logic of *wilayats* that have pledged allegiance to ISIS can also be found in **Tunisia** and **Algeria**, countries for which the main threat comes from these small groups that have pledged allegiance to ISIS in the Levant, such as *Jund al-Khilafa* (operating between Tunisia and Algeria, in the mountains of Kasserine<sup>21</sup>), which carried out Constantine and Tيارت attacks in 2017. These groups can be found in areas poorly controlled by the Algerian army: in the Sahel, mountainous areas of Kabylia, and of course the Libyan borders. Both Tunisia and Algeria regularly announce the dismantling of ISIS affiliated cells, located near their common border. These cells are often linked to organised crime and drug trafficking.<sup>22</sup> Finally, in **Lebanon**, radicalisation can be observed in territories not controlled (by virtue of agreements) by the state: the refugee camps, particularly Palestinian but also Syrian.<sup>23</sup>

Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt and, to a certain extent, Lebanon have one thing in common: their jihadist cells linked to ISIS are mostly located in territories poorly controlled by the state.

But other countries that control their territory also face the internal threat of terrorist cells : for Lebanon, the main threat is located in the region of Tripoli, the main Sunni city of the country whose standard of living is lower than the national average. The region around Saida is also concerned for the same reasons. The bulk of counter-terrorist operations in the country take place in these two regions.<sup>24</sup> **Morocco** also faces cells linked to ISIS in the poorest areas of the country, with the particularity that several of these cells are female.<sup>25</sup> **Jordan**, on the other hand, has been concerned for several years about radicalisation among the Transjordanian population and in particular among low-ranking members of the law enforcement agencies, a population that is downgraded and impoverished.<sup>26</sup>

While ISIS appears to be expanding its networks across *wilayats*, the terrorist organisation does not appear to be making progress in **Saudi Arabia** and **Yemen**, although it does pose an occasional threat. A *wilaya* was proclaimed in **Turkey** during al-Baghdadi's 29 April 2019 audio-visual speech.<sup>27</sup>

The two explanatory factors for the presence of cells, or even more organised *wilayats* on the national territory, are therefore insufficient control of the territory and the impoverishment of the population.

---

<sup>17</sup> International Crisis Group. (2018, 2021). Note, for example, the December 2016 attacks on a Christian church in North Sinai or the November 2017 attack on the Bir Abed mosque.

<sup>18</sup> International Crisis Group. (2021).

<sup>19</sup> Hecker, M. & Tenenbaum, E. (2019).

<sup>20</sup> Middle East Institute. (2015).

<sup>21</sup> Ammour L. (2019)

<sup>22</sup> Bourgou, T. (2015)

<sup>23</sup> Marteu E. (2016.)

<sup>24</sup> Corbeil, A. (2014)

<sup>25</sup> Fokina, L. (2019)

<sup>26</sup> Crisis 24. (2021)

<sup>27</sup> Rodier A. (2019)

We can therefore see that the three types of threat are not exclusive, but that they intersect depending on the national context.

These different issues have an impact on the priorities and strategies of the intelligence services studied, which we will detail below. It should be noted, however, that the perception of the terrorist threat has not been revolutionised by the entry of ISIS into the geo-political arena: the terrorist mode of action has already been an issue for the states studied here for at least 20 years, as evidenced by the definition of 'terrorism' in the 1998 *Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism*, adopted by the Arab League. In this text, terrorism means:

*Any use of force, threats, or intimidation by the perpetrator to carry out an individual or collective criminal plan to disturb the peace or endanger the security of society, which is likely to cause harm or fear to persons or endanger their lives, the environment, to damage or seize means of communication, to prevent or hinder the public authorities in the performance of their duties or to frustrate the enforcement of the Constitution or laws and regulations.*

Like many others, the states studied have joined the global 'war on terror' logic, for immediate security reasons just mentioned, but also for other reasons detailed below.

## II - Different priorities for the intelligence services

Faced with the urgency of the fight against ISIS, some services have seen their powers re-established, reorganised, and restructured. Here we analyse the consequences of the rise of ISIS on intelligence services' internal organisation of, their financial resources and their participation in inter-service cooperation with other regional or Western states.

### A - Internal reorganisations?

While the emergence of ISIS has exposed the deficiencies of many intelligence services of the region (insufficient analytical or counter-insurgency capabilities, deleterious competitive dynamics, lack of inter-service coordination, etc.), it does not seem to have caused any significant upheaval in their organisation. Although their respective organisational charts are opaque, it appears that only some states have undertaken a restructuration of their counter-terrorism system.

The different countries can be classified in three groups: immobilist systems (Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon), systems evolving for unrelated-ISIS reasons (Iran, Turkey, Algeria) and reactive systems (Morocco, Tunisia).

Thus, it is interesting to note that the practices of the **Iraqi intelligence services** have not changed much since the former regime of Saddam Hussein. The advent of ISIS has not led to major changes in the structure of the organisations either, and overall it is noted that the services remain rather poorly coordinated, not least because of rivalries between service leaders. The result of these deficiencies is "tangible after a terrorist attack. The various services

of the Ministries of Defence and the Interior are referred to at the same time by their respective hierarchies, in parallel with the investigation entrusted to the competent judge. Therefore, two or three separate investigations for the same case are concurrent. The fight against ISIS has not led to better coordination between the domestic and defence services. The aim was that only the Prime Minister (Nouri al-Maliki at the time) could have a complete picture of the situation in Iraq. As under Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi intelligence community is still organised around a mosaic of services, despite the threat of ISIS. The Ministry of Interior has its own intelligence service: the Federal Agency for Intelligence and Investigations. Competent only for terrorism cases such as INIS and crime, it remains, like the other services, rather opaque and dysfunctional. One service that has grown in power with the advent of the Iraqi Islamic State is the Iraqi counter-terrorism service. Actively engaged in the fight against ISIS, it is deployed in the areas controlled by the group (Tikrit, Fallujah, Ramadi, Mosul) and carries out special operations and intelligence gathering. It reports directly to the Prime Minister and its members are recruited from Shiite tribes. The equivalent missions of intelligence and military security are carried out by the General Directorate of Intelligence and Security (attached to the Ministry of Defence). Like the Iraqi army, it is mainly deployed in the interior of the country against ISIS. While this service is not free of the organisational shortcomings of the Iraqi intelligence community (centralisation, compartmentalisation, and lack of coordination), Gilles Chenève notes that its fight against ISIS has been "a catalyst for progress". Previously employed mainly for political purposes, from 2014 onwards this service was confronted with a real enemy: ISIS. Its mission changed: the service is now used for the benefit of military units fighting against the Islamic state. Moreover, the advent of ISIS on Iraqi territory has only reinforced the confessional (Shiite, Sunni) and clan-based system on which the Iraqi intelligence community was already organised. If there was progress in the Iraqi army, it is above all because of its previous incompetence.<sup>28</sup>

**The Syrian intelligence apparatus** is another example of a mosaic *Mukhabarat* whose reorganisation is unlikely. A regime keystone (which guarantees them a high degree of impunity in return for their loyalty), it is composed of approximately fifteen services<sup>29</sup> that compete in order to prevent one of them from exerting too much influence within the system. The role of the heads of each service is considerable, as is the authority they have over their "fiefdoms within the Syrian state".<sup>30</sup> Even if the structure of the services does not link them all directly to the head of state in theory, practice shows that they have more or less direct links with Assad. Inter-service cooperation is not optimal and the insufficient pooling of their resources and means accentuates their pre-existing shortcomings (few technological resources, large HUMINT network).<sup>31</sup> The available information does not allow to determine precisely to what extent the rise of ISIS could lead to changes in the organisation, missions, priorities and resource allocations of Syrian services. However, interviews suggest that the group is unlikely to bring about any significant reorganisation. Indeed, a merger of services would unbalance the prerogatives that have been assigned to them over the years. Moreover, we will see that ISIS justifies operations that serve the interests of Damascus, Russia and Iran - further curtailing potential reformist ambitions.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Chenève G. (2017) p.27

<sup>29</sup> Berthelot, P. & Valter, S. (2017); Rathmell, A. (1996).

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Stéphane Valter on 23 April 2021

<sup>31</sup> Berthelot, P. & Valter, S. (2017).

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Stéphane Valter on 23 April 2021 ; Interview with Nicolas Hénin on 26 March 2021



**The Egyptian intelligence apparatus** is, as in Syria, an emblematic example of *mukhabarat* whose structure only saw changes after the revolutions of 2011. It was set up in the 1910s to fight against nationalist and Islamist militants<sup>33</sup> and continues to serve as the ultimate shield of the regime. It consists of three services with a large budget and impunity due to the lack of judicial oversight<sup>34</sup>: the General Intelligence, responsible for national security intelligence and active in counter-terrorism; Military Intelligence; and the General Directorate for State Security, which was dissolved and replaced by the State Security Services following "cosmetic changes"<sup>35</sup> resulting from the 2011 revolution. Although ISIS is present in Egypt and conducts attacks there, this research seems to point to another type of major threat: the regime's inability to cope with economic constraints, demographic and environmental pressures, and numerous social demands.<sup>36</sup> As with these threats, and although strengthened after Sissi's takeover,<sup>37</sup> Egypt's counterterrorism efforts must move from tactical security responses to strategic ones if they aim to be effective.

The **Jordanian intelligence services** have not faced any internal reorganisation either, notably because of their previous experience of the terrorist wave of the 2000s linked to al-Qaeda, a period in which the services became famous for their infiltration capabilities. However, there is a strategic rapprochement with the Sunni tribes in Iraq and Syria to weaken ISIS, in a logic of protection through a "cushion policy".<sup>38</sup> Similarly, **Lebanon** has not seen a reorganisation of its services, distributed according to a historical confessional logic: counter-terrorist efforts are accommodated to the situation. However, we note that counter-terrorism and intelligence have become priorities since the end of the Syrian occupation for the various services, whether those of the Army, the Internal Security Forces or the General Directorate of General Security.<sup>39</sup> After a counter-terrorist and counter-insurgency experiment in 2007 in a Palestinian camp against *Fatah el Islam*<sup>40</sup>, many jihadist cells' dismantling have taken place, mostly led by the Army. From a tactical point of view, the presence of a common enemy has always brought Hezbollah and the state services closer together: after Israel in 2006, ISIS is thus the new common target, explaining a certain rise in collaboration between the Shiite armed group and the Lebanese state institutions.<sup>41</sup>

**Iran** is somewhat of an exception in the region (alongside Tunisia and its democratic opening), demonstrating a rising commitment commensurate with the threat it perceives on its borders. The country has been targeted for decades by terrorist groups. This has allowed Iran to set up a sophisticated counter-terrorist apparatus and mechanisms.<sup>42</sup> In particular, Tehran has four key organisations: the Ministry of Intelligence and Security,<sup>43</sup> the *Artesh*, the police force and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (*Pasdaran*), in addition to the Supreme

---

<sup>33</sup> Sirrs, O. L. (2010).

<sup>34</sup> Note that the Egyptian services have tourism and aviation infrastructures and have entrepreneurial prerogatives. in Berthelot, P. & Valter, S. (2017). p. 48-53.

<sup>35</sup> Berthelot, P. & Valter, S. (2017).

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Stéphane Valter on 23 April 2021

<sup>37</sup> Middle East Institute. (2015).

<sup>38</sup> el-Adhamat (2019)

<sup>39</sup> Nerguizian, A. (2015)

<sup>40</sup> Marteu E. (2016.)

<sup>41</sup> Alami, M. (2014)

<sup>42</sup> Tabatabai, A.M. (2018)

<sup>43</sup> The latter replaced the Intelligence and National Security Organisation (formerly SAVAK) after the Revolution.

National Security Council at the head of the system's coordinating bureaucracy. However, it does not reduce inter-agency competition dynamics. According to the Iranian law, the Ministry is responsible for gathering intelligence and conducting surveillance at home and abroad. However, its domestic activities have priority, and its missions outside the national territory have been gradually handed over to the *Pasdaran*, its competitor in the fight against terrorism.<sup>44</sup> Because of the diversity of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' operations, its counter-terrorism efforts are divided into several branches, including the *Quds*<sup>45</sup> Force and the intelligence units. The former has become known for its involvement in the fight against ISIS on the ground, but it is the intelligence missions of the latter that fuel the *Pasdaran* competition with the Ministry. To this competitive duo working to 'preserve the Iranian clerical regime'<sup>46</sup> is added the army, the *Artesh*, whose operations often overlap with those of the *Pasdaran*, although the two also work closely together in the field of counter-terrorism. The *Artesh* has its own military intelligence capability (J2 unit), but it depends on the support and resources of the Revolutionary Guard to be operational. *Artesh*'s role in counter-terrorism became more visible when the regime strengthened its efforts against ISIS, as the army was deployed to Syria to fight the group alongside the *Pasdaran*. Defensive methods are mainly carried out by the Ministry's network of informants (in the summer of 2016, the Ministry claimed to have arrested 1,500 individuals who joined the group)<sup>47</sup>; the *Pasdaran* and *Artesh*. However, these defensive skills already existed before the advent of ISIS and it is impossible to determine the impact of the group on the evolution of their resources and activities. In terms of offensive actions, Iran's involvement has gradually increased in Iraq and Syria. While the Iranian presence in Syria and Iraq was initially denied by the authorities,<sup>48</sup> Iran changed its approach from mid-June 2014, publicly assuming a commitment beyond its borders by sending the *Artesh* and the *Quds* Force: direct military assistance, logistical advice, sending security advisers, sharing intelligence and tactical involvement.<sup>49</sup> Its objectives are clear: to combat the terrorist group militarily by reducing the direct involvement of its forces on the ground to a minimum, to dissuade ISIS from engaging in attacks on Iranian soil and to prevent the domino effect that would affect the stability of the regime.<sup>50</sup> The Iranian commitment is also reflected in its control over the "axis of resistance" (Iraq, Syria and Hezbollah), i.e. one of the main ground forces directly fighting jihadist groups in Iraq and Syria. Here too, despite a recent increase in efforts, Tehran was already engaged in unilateral or multilateral offensives against threats abroad.<sup>51</sup>

As far as **Turkey** is concerned, the MIT has been active in the fight against Islamic state jihadists in Iraq and Syria. President Erdogan prepared a restructuration of the Turkish

---

<sup>44</sup> Wege, C.A. (2019).

<sup>45</sup> IRG Task Force on Offshore Operations.

<sup>46</sup> Defense Intelligence Agency. (2019).

<sup>47</sup> Tabatabai, A.M. (2018).

<sup>48</sup> President Rohani has stated that 'Iran has never sent forces to Iraq and it is highly unlikely that this will ever happen' in Esfandiary, D. & Tabatabai, A. (2015).

<sup>49</sup> Tabatabai, A.M. (2018).

<sup>50</sup> It should be noted that Iran has an interest in preserving the territorial integrity of both Syria and Iraq. On the one hand, Syria is a gateway to the West, reinforcing the Iranian regime's ambitions for regional expansion of its influence, in addition to allowing the delivery of missiles and access to the Atlantic (in United Press International. (2011). On the other hand, from Tehran's point of view, the partition of Iraq into three states would cause it to lose the support of a neighbouring state with a Shiite majority (the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest Shiite population in the world), thus weakening its zone of influence while threatening regional stability. Moreover, due to the geographical proximity of the two states (they share 910 km. of borders), crises in Iraq can directly impact Iran's internal stability. Finally, economic ties are particularly important in the context of international sanctions against Iran (in Esfandiary, D. & Tabatabai, A. (2015).; Denécé, E. (2015).; Tabatabai, A.M. (2018).

<sup>51</sup> Hashem, A. (2016).

intelligence community not to fight more effectively against ISIS and its threats but rather to reduce the prerogatives of the MIT by dividing the service and thus strengthen its influence and centralise power in his person.<sup>52</sup> The fight against ISIS did not have much influence in the aborted restructuration of the MIT, composed as follows: a Security Intelligence Directorate, mainly responsible for counter-terrorism inside and outside the country; the Foreign Intelligence Directorate, renamed Strategic Intelligence. It oversees the production of strategic analyses of interest to the government; the Directorate of Technical and Electronic Intelligence; the Directorate of Electromagnetic Intelligence; Directorate of Counterintelligence which, in addition to its counter-intelligence mission, is responsible for regulating relations between the MIT, the various ministries and the armies; the Directorate of External Operations which is particularly responsible for conducting all interventions on the Syrian and Iraqi fronts.

**Algeria** and its intelligence services have a long experience of counter-terrorism, notably in the face of the GIA and then Al-Qaeda: according to estimates, the black decade saw the death of 200,000 people due to terrorism. Although a June 2011 decree transferred all counter-terrorism forces from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Defence, the recent reorganisations of the services have nothing to do with the evolution of the terrorist threat posed by ISIS, but can be explained by internal power struggles between different camps.<sup>53</sup> The rise of the threat in the east and south has, however, led to a certain questioning of the traditional doctrine of non-intervention outside the Algerian borders.<sup>54</sup> The context of the Libyan and Malian crises has made border security a major concern for the Algerian authorities. However, the strategy of securing the border strip remains limited by internal power struggles and a reluctance to modify the strategic doctrines inherited from the FLN.<sup>55</sup> **Libya** also rapidly faced politicisation and capture of the security and intelligence services, which led to their self-destruction and the emergence of armed non-state groups.

Two Maghreb countries have witnessed the reorganisation of their services in order to better respond to the ISIS threat, but with different logics. In 2015, **Morocco** chose to establish a Central Bureau of Judicial Investigation as the lead agency for counter-terrorism. This new service works closely and effectively with others, notably the Directorate General of National Territorial Surveillance. In parallel, the counter-terrorism law was amended in the same year to add the criminalisation of joining a terrorist organisation and an extension of the period of detention without charge. This reorganisation seems to be bearing fruit, as many cells have been dismantled and a significant number of individuals tried. In the same year, in **Tunisia**, the Parliament voted the "anti-terrorist and anti-money laundering law" putting for the first time anti-terrorist intelligence at the heart of the security system. This law, which aimed to build an intelligence system based on both the Army and Internal Security, created the Defence Intelligence Agency and clearly defined the missions and capabilities of the service. Indeed, following the Jasmine Revolution, the Tunisian security system had become inadequate and unable to deal with jihadist terrorism. Following the disappearance of the Directorate of State Security, knowledge about Tunisian radical groups was largely lost by the services. In addition, the broad amnesty law prepared in a hurry, led to violent Islamists being released from prison. The system put in place in 2015, strongly inspired by the Western (and in particular French) model, does not function optimally because of the absence of a real doctrine and the internal

---

<sup>52</sup> Batigne L., Levallois A. (2017), p.21.

<sup>53</sup> Abi M. (2020)

<sup>54</sup> Ammour L. (2019)

<sup>55</sup> Benantar A. (2016)

political struggles that paralyse this country in democratic transition.<sup>56</sup> The body that has been most successful in counter-terrorism operations is the National Guard, which is more independent and better trained than the others, which explains its rise in power since 2011.<sup>57</sup>

## B - An increased budget and more resources?

As for the internal restructuring of the services, and for those states whose financial resources are known (such as Jordan or **Algeria**), there have been no major budgetary increases to support the fight against ISIS. It should be noted, however, that many countries have a substantial military budget (9% of GDP for **Jordan**, for example), and that it is difficult to know in detail the evolution of the distribution of the military budget.

Since 2016, **Algeria** has put in place a costly electronic surveillance system in the Sahara to better control its southern and eastern borders.<sup>58</sup> **Morocco** has also strengthened its technical means of surveillance in recent years, with the declared aim to fight against ISIS.

**Lebanon**, the most indebted country in the world, has depended heavily on foreign aid for its military equipment for years, as shown by the high level of American aid<sup>59</sup>: for example, **Saudi Arabia** had announced three billion dollars in aid for the purchase of military, counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism equipment from France (this aid was finally withdrawn under the pretext of Hezbollah's actions, and the equipment purchased by Saudi Arabia was used in its war against Yemen). **Tunisia**, another state with few resources, faces another problem: that of rebuilding the intelligence community. Although counter-terrorism is a national priority, the budget is hardly adequate. This problem of means is also found at the level of justice : no trial for terrorism has, to date, been successful in Tunisia, because of the lack of means in the courts, the high number of prosecution required and the instable internal situation.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, **Egypt** has significant financial shortcomings: its counter-terrorism efforts would require real counter-insurgency resources<sup>61</sup> capable of dealing with the *wilaya* in the Sinai, which has significant military and financial resources.<sup>62</sup> However, Sirrs points out that Egyptian SIGINT assets are among the best in the region and that they have extensive networks of informants. The latter two are used in the fight against ISIS, although we could not determine in which ways they had been resourced.<sup>63</sup>

Some argue that "only **Iran** seems committed to fighting ISIS effectively"<sup>64</sup> and that it "now sees itself as leading the fight against jihadist extremism in the region".<sup>65</sup> To this end, the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Iran's legislative branch) recently increased the budget for

---

<sup>56</sup> Interview with T. Bourgou. (2021)

<sup>57</sup> France 24. (2016)

<sup>58</sup> Ammour L. (2019)

<sup>59</sup> Nerguizian, A. (2015)

<sup>60</sup> Interview with T. Bourgou. (2021)

<sup>61</sup> Middle East Institute. (2015); International Crisis Group. (2018).

<sup>62</sup> Hecker, M. & Tenenbaum, E. (2019), Interview with Stéphane Valter on 23 April 2021

<sup>63</sup> Written exchanges with Owen L. Sirrs, April 2021.

<sup>64</sup> Denécé, E. (2015).

<sup>65</sup> Mauriello, R. (2015).

counter-terrorism.<sup>66</sup> Although it is not known how much is allocated to counter-terrorism, political figures (for instance former parliamentary speaker Ali Larijani) have suggested that it is sufficient to protect Iran.<sup>67</sup> For example, the *pasdaran* has more resources (especially financial<sup>68</sup> and technical) than the other four bodies of the security system: it is the key institution in counter-terrorism.<sup>69</sup> Finally, the regime has tried (with little success) to counter the rhetoric of ISIS<sup>70</sup> by strengthening the fight against radicalisation since the rise of the proto-caliphate.

Furthermore, the fight against terrorist financing has proven to be of limited effectiveness for those states in the region that are committed to it. For example, Tehran has attempted to improve its engagement in the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing, but the Iranian apparatus remains weak in this regard.<sup>71</sup> Historically, Lebanon was used more as a financial and logistical hub than as a staging ground for jihadist groups, and despite some successful operations by the army following the money trail, the highly corrupted country does not stand out in terms of countering terrorist financing.<sup>72</sup>

## C - International cooperation

As we will see in detail in Part III, the fight against terrorism is subject to numerous political and diplomatic instrumentalities. In the image of Obama's speeches (after 2011) emphasising the central role of the countries of the region in the fight against terrorism, many partnerships are active. The sharing of information takes place on a bilateral, regional and even international scale (Europe, United States). In addition, several Arab states benefit from "practical" support (training and transmission of know-how).

First, the states in the area exchange intelligence and cooperate with their regional neighbours or Western states. In the Maghreb, cooperation is only bilateral due to the tensions between **Algeria** and **Morocco** over the Western Sahara. In 2013, as part of their joint counter-terrorism strategy, Algiers and Tunis signed an unprecedented security agreement authorising Algerian forces to enter the territory of its neighbour if necessary and accompanied by the establishment of border military facilities, the provision of heavy weaponry and the exchange of intelligence. A similar but less intense cooperation is found between Morocco and **Tunisia**.<sup>73</sup> Although it is not public, limited cooperation between Morocco and Algeria on the common interests of violent groups on their common border cannot be excluded. For the Maghreb countries, cooperation also exists with their southern neighbours. In 2010, for example, a

---

<sup>66</sup> Tabatabai, A.M. (2018).

<sup>67</sup> Tasnim News Agency. (2016).

<sup>68</sup> The *pasdaran* are heavily involved in the black economy and the black market, which complements the already large budget given to them by the regime.

<sup>69</sup> Defense Intelligence Agency. (2019); Tabatabai, A.M. (2018).

<sup>70</sup> Tabatabai, A.M. (2018).

<sup>71</sup> It should be noted that Iran finances some groups, fights others and that inter-agency competition makes the fight against terrorist financing even more complex.

<sup>72</sup> Marteu E. (2016.)

<sup>73</sup> France 24 (2016)

fusion unit bringing together Algeria, Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso, Libya, Mali, Chad and Nigeria was set up in Algiers, in order to share intelligence and coordinate the fight against terrorism, with a particular focus on financing. Algeria is also a member of the Committee of African Security and Intelligence Services (CISSA), the largest African organisation of security and intelligence services, created on 26 August 2004 in Abuja (Nigeria). Finally, the headquarters of AFRIPOL is in Algiers. Similarly, Tunisia exchanges a lot with Mali, Côte d'Ivoire and CAR. All these institutions and exchanges were created before the rise of ISIS, but this new threat has contributed to the maintenance and functioning of these institutions on an African scale. Algeria is a special case, given its experience as mentioned above: it trains other countries in counter-terrorism techniques, such as Mali. <sup>74</sup>

The services we are studying also exchange information with the West: there is an official FBI office in Algiers and frequent mutual information missions between the US and Algeria. Morocco participates in multinational operations via Interpol<sup>75</sup>, and passes on valuable intelligence, notably to France, Spain, and the United States. **Lebanon** does the same publicly. It should be noted that despite tensions with Israel, **Jordan** also shares intelligence with it. Partnerships with Asian countries, such as Indonesia, also exist. <sup>76</sup>

Regional states are also involved in technology transfers (SIGINT). Algeria, as well as Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania, Mali and Chad, have been receiving US technical assistance for almost 20 years. This assistance has been revived by the risk posed by ISIS. Tunisia in particular has received US equipment for hybrid and terrorist threats and has had access to second-hand equipment from Italy and Portugal. Similarly, Lebanon has been receiving equipment since the 2000s to fight terrorism: the US provided 959 million dollars between 2007 and 2014 <sup>77</sup>and the EU 85 million euros between 2006 and 2018. <sup>78</sup>

Cooperation is not limited to information sharing and technology transfer but is reinforced by training. For example, Jordan has benefited from US funding of counter-terrorism exercises for the past 30 years, thanks to the US State Department's Counter-Terrorism Assistance (CTA) programme, which established a Jordanian Gendarmerie Training Centre, where nearly 7,200 Jordanian officers and almost 2,000 officers from other countries have been trained. This programme has provided Jordan with weapons, vehicles, dogs and counter-terrorism equipment worth over \$40 million. As a result, Jordan is now a regional training centre where the US trains police from 22 different states to detect, deter and disrupt terrorist activities<sup>79</sup>. This support reinforces Jordan's role as a US bridgehead and regional leader in the Global Coalition to defeat ISIS. The Tunisian Special Forces, for their part, benefit from training by France.

In **Iraq**, the services were able to benefit from Western assistance particularly after the 2003 war, when the CIA took on the task of restructuring the Iraqi intelligence and security system after the fall of Saddam Hussein. The West thus focused Iraqi intelligence services on counter-terrorism, giving them expertise and know-how in this task. It was at this time that the services underwent the most significant changes because of international cooperation.

---

<sup>74</sup> Ammour, L. (2019)

<sup>75</sup> APANews (2019)

<sup>76</sup> Asia News Monitor. (2017).

<sup>77</sup> Nerguizian, A. (2014)

<sup>78</sup> Shah H, Dalton M, (2020)

<sup>79</sup> Maxwell M-J. (2018).

However, this restructuring has shown its limits, particularly in terms of its suitability for local realities. In its war against ISIS, Western aid and international cooperation have also been "catalyst[s] for progress" for Iraqi military intelligence. According to Gilles Chenève, "the operational engagement alongside the West has allowed Iraqi military intelligence to refine its knowledge of ISIS' capabilities and modes of action, and thus to spare human lives. »<sup>80</sup> Means such as the use of GPS coordinates for location, the use of tablets to digitise exchanges, and closer coordination with the components in charge such as helicopters, planes, engineers but also the officers in charge of conducting operations are practices that result from this cooperation and have made it possible to improve the service's action against ISIS, while reinforcing its legitimacy.

Within Iraq, there is also the autonomous region of **Kurdistan**. Although not part of the Iraqi regime itself, it is relevant to mention it in this section. Indeed, Western partners have helped develop the Kurdish intelligence service: *the asayesh*. Created in the 1960s and institutionalised in 2004, "it was set up and strengthened thanks to the support of partner services: the Americans, but also the Israelis and the French [...], it is well organised and has a large budget."<sup>81</sup> There were previously two different services, but they merged during the operations against ISIS. *The asayesh* is thus effective against the terrorist group, inside and outside the region.

It should also be noted that many intelligence officials and members of the region's intelligence services have been trained in the West, such as Antoine Suleiman Manssour, the Lebanese Army's Director of Intelligence in 2017, who was trained in counter-terrorism in France and the United States. At the same time as establishing cooperation with regional and Western services, the services has been able to take advantage of counter-terrorism efforts.

### III - The political use of the threat

The threat posed by ISIS to the intelligence services must be qualified. Indeed, their main missions are those of guaranteeing the regime's durability in the face of internal danger and of promoting regional ambitions. These missions are often carried out through support for 'just causes', such as counter-terrorism and more particularly the fight against ISIS. This fight is thus a mode of action for the services. Thus, the intelligence services of the Arab world are led to use, instrumentalise and manipulate this threat on their national soil but also on the international scene, with the aim of achieving their own objectives and defending their own interests.

#### A - Within states: instrumentalizing and dividing to better rule?

The intelligence services have recourse to very specific operating methods and tools that the terrorist threat, particularly from ISIS, has sometimes served to justify and legitimise. This threat can both legitimise practices and the entire system in place. Thus, the use of violence by the services sometimes plays a role in the conception of the effectiveness of their

---

<sup>80</sup> Chenèves G. (2017), p.29.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* p.27.

power. Indeed, the use of violence is often seen as a guarantee of effectiveness in fighting and eradicating the threat of the ISIS. For some regimes, the threat posed by ISIS is a real boon in order to justify the use of violence and repress a more revolutionary and protesting population, particularly after the Arab Spring.

In **Iraq**, the services priority is placed on the fight against ISIS: this is explained by the deep internal division, notably between Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds. By focusing on the fight against ISIS, this can bring these different components of Iraqi society together in the face of a common enemy. The Iraqi military intelligence service's fight against ISIS would also have allowed it to be better perceived by the local populations, who are more willing to offer their support and cooperation. This fight against ISIS has thus strengthened its legitimacy among the Iraqi population, which had previously feared this service.<sup>82</sup> However, this affirmation must be nuanced: indeed, a part of the population also joined ISIS. Thus, the Iraqi government remains reluctant to arm the Sunnis against it, for fear that they will change sides. Moreover, Alain Rodier underlines that "despite the dismissal of Al-Maliki, the Baghdad authorities still remain in a logic of revenge towards them, following the exactions committed in recent years against the Shiites, which hardly allows the anti-ISIS Sunnis to adhere to its policy. Generally poorly armed, those of them who have joined the fight against the organisation are in turn targeted and decimated by it, or end up joining it, forced and coerced. As for **Syria**<sup>83</sup>, the Syrian regime has long waged a counter-productive anti-terrorist struggle, its main interest being to reduce the moderate political opposition in order to face only the assumed Salafist/jihadist opposition. By doing so, it could obtain a green light from the international community to crush this opposition, which is overwhelmingly considered an enemy on an international scale. The security operations, arrests, torture, etc., during and after the revolution attest this fight against political opponents, not only jihadists.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, the presence of ISIS in Syria (as long as it is reasonably contained), serves the interests of various actors: Assad's regime, Russia and Iran in particular. The repression of the group is "a godsend chance for the regime"<sup>85</sup> by allowing it to avoid too many reforms. Moreover, the regime instrumentalize the fight against ISIS of the Kurdish militias to concentrate their efforts to the detriment of their political demands. The Syrian regime has thus subcontracted the war against ISIS to the Kurds in their area (as well as to Hezbollah in the west).

In **Egypt**, the instrumentalization of terrorism by the regime to fight its political opponents is not new, but perhaps less pressing than in Syria: the General Intelligence have a long experience of fighting against those called "jihadists" (a term used easily by Cairo). ISIS is no exception to the rule and Sissi's regime insists that the group is in fact an outgrowth of the Muslim Brotherhood<sup>86</sup>. This amalgam between political opposition and jihadism justifies arrests, trials and other arbitrary acts which in turn feed the attraction for violence.<sup>87</sup> The regime

---

<sup>82</sup> Chenèves G. (2017), p.29.

<sup>83</sup> Batigne L., Levallois A. (2017), p.22.

<sup>84</sup> Interview with Stéphane Valter on 23 April 2021

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Nicolas Hénin on 26 March 2021

<sup>86</sup> Written exchanges with Owen L. Sirrs, April 2021. Note that the late 1990s and early 2000s saw this same strategy of amalgamation: many statements that the Muslim Brotherhood was intimately linked to Islamic Jihad and the Islamic Group justified the regime's violent activities.

<sup>87</sup> Hecker, M. & Tenenbaum, E. (2019).



therefore tries to sow confusion - at least rhetorically - between the Muslim Brotherhood and ISIS.<sup>88</sup>

**Morocco**, due to the strong legitimacy of the monarchy, does not see the action of its services questioned. The government does not hesitate to communicate a lot about the counter-terrorist actions carried out, thus highlighting the effectiveness of the services. For example, when the Moroccan services provided information about an American soldier radicalised by ISIS to the FBI, or when Morocco helped France to locate one of the Bataclan terrorists, the Moroccan government made a show of it to its population.<sup>89</sup> In 2016, the head of the Directorate of Territorial Surveillance and National Police was even named "man of the year".<sup>90</sup> However, one must be careful: official press releases often speak of "terrorists" without always specifying their allegiance.

The Algerian government also uses its counter-terrorism successes, notably through the warming of diplomatic ties, as a source of domestic legitimacy, while the war on terror has a social and political impact.<sup>91</sup> **Algeria** also maintains the fear of Libyan chaos and communicates on the fight against terrorism to legitimise itself directly in the eyes of its population, so that the repressive regime is first perceived as reassuring. Similarly in **Lebanon**, each successful counter-terrorist operation increases the credibility of the armed forces.<sup>92</sup> It should be noted, however, that the collusion of the services with Hezbollah (as in 2017 against *Jabhat al Nosra*) is badly perceived by a part of the Lebanese population, especially Sunni.<sup>93</sup> As for **Tunisia**, the only democratic state in the region, it faces a troubled geopolitical and internal context : thus, the actions of the intelligence services are complicated by the context of political deadlock, but the services and especially the army remain well regarded by the population.

## B - The war on terror: a diplomatic resource

When discussing counter-terrorism, reference is sometimes made to the West's manipulability of the Arab world's intelligence services. Seen as indispensable to the effective fight against ISIS, the region's intelligence services tend to make the war on terror a façade priority in order to benefit from cooperation with the West in particular, and to use their counter-terrorism knowledge and expertise as a diplomatic resource.

To begin the tour of the services that have distinguished themselves in the use of terrorism as a diplomatic resource, **Morocco** is interesting. Its successes in terms of international cooperation are numerous, but above all they are highly publicised: a radicalised American soldier reported to the FBI, information on Abaaoud, collaboration with Spain during the attacks in Barcelona and Cambrils...<sup>94</sup> A roadmap for defence cooperation was signed in 2020 with the United States, at the same time as the recognition of Western Sahara as part of Moroccan territory by the Trump administration, suggesting that in addition to the recognition of Israel by the Cherifian kingdom, the profile of "good student of counter-terrorism", based on three pillars (counter-discourse, development and counter-terrorism) may have played a role.<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> International Crisis Group. (2018).

<sup>89</sup> APANews (2021)

<sup>90</sup> Fokina, A. (2019)

<sup>91</sup> Merkouk M. (2009)

<sup>92</sup> Nerguizian A., (2015)

<sup>93</sup> Interview with Tannous Mouawwad

<sup>94</sup> APANews (2017)

<sup>95</sup> APANews (2020)

Indeed, Morocco hosts the headquarters of the UNOCT Office of the Programme for Counter-Terrorism and Training in Africa and in 2017, the country co-chaired the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, during which international texts such as the "Rabat-Washington best practices" on counter-terrorism were produced. Finally, the problem of the Polisario Front can be addressed by Morocco thanks to this counter-terrorist prestige, by linking the Saharawi armed group to ISIS in a bid to discredit them on the international scene as terrorists. Finally, it should be noted that the Moroccan services know how to use their counter-terrorist capabilities to influence their opponents: collaboration in terms of intelligence was suspended in 2014 following an investigation by the French police which implicated Moroccan intelligence in a case of torture. This cooperation was revived after Charlie Hebdo, notably by the invitation of Mohammed VI to the Elysée, when the investigation was abandoned. We can see that the ISIS has therefore re-launched Franco-Moroccan cooperation.<sup>96</sup>

As for its neighbour **Algeria**, it also considers its counter-terrorism policy as one of the central elements of its diplomatic strategy, both on a regional and global scale: after 2001, the country joined many international bodies and programmes, such as NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue, or the Trans-Saharan Counter-Terrorism Initiative. It is also a founding member of the Global CT Forum in New York in 2011.<sup>97</sup> At the regional level, Algeria has been a leader in the face of the terrorist threat for more than 20 years, since the signing in 1999 in Algiers of the African Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. The country is thus considered as a privileged interlocutor because of its experience, for its neighbours as well as for Western powers such as the United States. The rise in power of ISIS and its wilyat around Algeria has only reinforced this strategy of influence.<sup>98</sup> For **Egypt**, its ambitions of regional influence are also translated via the fight against ISIS. In February 2020, the country hosted the first meeting of the heads of Arab intelligence agencies during the Arab Intelligence Forum (chaired by the head of the General Intelligence, Abbas Kamel). While the meeting served as a reminder of the importance of cooperation in the field of counterterrorism, it was also an opportunity for Sissi's regime to pose as a key player in this fight and to accuse "other states and governments [that support ISIS]", which are imagined to be Egypt's enemies.<sup>99</sup>

In the face of the territorialisation of ISIS, the case of **Jordan** is relevant. The country served as a military base for the international coalition and provided facilities and logistics. The country included French airbases, from which aircraft took off to obtain magnetic intelligence. This Franco-Jordanian collaboration has thus contributed to making Jordan a privileged partner of the West, first and foremost France.<sup>100</sup> Western aid sometimes comes in moments of crisis, as during the operation against *Jabhat al Nosra*, which led the United Kingdom to announce greater aid to **Lebanon** for the protection of its borders.<sup>101</sup> But the **Libyan** example is surely the most eloquent from this point of view: Marshal Haftar, after living for 20 years near Langley, obtained Russian, Saudi, Emirati and even French support in his fight against terrorist groups.<sup>102</sup> More recently, Syrian intelligence, notably through the key figure of Ali Mamlouk, head of the Presidential Security Council, has been trading intelligence with Western services

---

<sup>96</sup> Morocco World News (2017).

<sup>97</sup> Ammour, L. (2019)

<sup>98</sup> Merkouk, M. (2009)

<sup>99</sup> Asharq Al-Awsat. (2021).

<sup>100</sup> Cigolotti O., Roger G., Raimond-Pavero I., Vial J-P. (2019).

<sup>101</sup> Dettmer, J. (2017)

<sup>102</sup> Moghaddam F. (2019)

for diplomatic normalisation or rehabilitation of the regime.<sup>103</sup> Some argue that the services do not themselves control all the movements over which they claim to have authority.<sup>104</sup>

In **Saudi Arabia**, the General Intelligence Presidency has been able to make a place for itself in the fight against terrorism and to make itself "indispensable", and to carry weight in the eyes of Western services. The seizure of the Great Mosque in Mecca in 1979 is considered today as a turning point for Saudi counter-terrorism programmes. Over a period of some thirty years, they have become more sophisticated, "the kingdom has developed new methods for infiltrating extremist groups, which has given rise to an intelligence network serving both the kingdom and its allies"<sup>105</sup>. Thus, to fight against ISIS, the Saudi intelligence services have imposed themselves on their regional counterparts. They have positioned themselves as an asset for the West in the region and have used this position. So much so that even its regional rival has to call on it. Iran could not achieve its objectives without cooperating with other states (regional or international, notably the United States and Saudi Arabia - thus putting aside political differences).<sup>106</sup> The announcement of cooperation (intelligence sharing) with Canberra illustrates this collaborative dynamic in the fight against ISIS.<sup>107</sup>

Internationally, the fight against terrorism is used as a diplomatic resource rather than as a laudable cause and a real struggle. This is particularly reflected in the ambivalence and double standards of certain intelligence services regarding ISIS and its actions, which can, beyond an internal and external instrumentalization, be used indirectly and even sometimes manipulated in order to achieve objectives specific to the Arab regimes.

## C - Ambivalences: the usefulness of the Islamic State

For some regimes as well as some intelligence services in the Arab world, ISIS can sometimes be seen as a 'useful' and 'usable' group, which can also be taken advantage of by using its action, its claims, or simply its image. Some services therefore allow, instrumentalise or even manipulate ISIS to act in their own interests. All the intelligence services and regimes in the Arab world do not necessarily view the terrorist *modus operandi* in a negative light, as they themselves may have resorted to it through direct action: however, subcontracting seems riskier. They may then try to take advantage of ISIS.

If for **Iraq**, the threat posed by ISIS is real and very concrete, some observers of the region judge the role of its army harshly and sceptically. Indeed, there is a risk of ambivalence that can be explained by the nature and origin of the main cadres of the *Amniyat* of ISIS, who are for the most part from the intelligence and security services of Iraq under Saddam Hussein and his Baath Party. Hence this fear about the links between the old and the new regime, even more so when the combativeness of the Iraqi army is questioned by some analysts of the area such as Eric Denécé who judged the Iraqi generals in 2015 as technically and tactically outdated by the officers of ISIS whom he describes as "seasoned, innovative and motivated". He was particularly critical of the Iraqi security forces and army which "abandoned more than 2,300 Humvees to Islamic State fighters. They also lost more than 40 M1A1 tanks and more than 50 M198 artillery pieces, not to mention more than 75,000 machine guns and many more

---

<sup>103</sup> Batigne, L. & Levallois, A. Courses at Sciences Po Paris ; Interview with Nicolas Hénin on 26 March 2021

<sup>104</sup> Interview with Nicolas Hénin on 26 March 2021

<sup>105</sup> Kéchichian J.A (2017), p.45

<sup>106</sup> Esfandiary, D. & Tabatabai, A. (2015).

<sup>107</sup> Gady, F-S. (2015).

individual weapons with their ammunition. »<sup>108</sup> However, if the non-combativeness of the Iraqi forces allowed ISIS to supply itself with weapons and to advance territorially in Iraq until the intervention of the coalition, it cannot be considered that the Iraqi services really let it happen and directly and voluntarily supplied weapons to the group with the aim of using it.

This is not necessarily the case with **Turkey**, which is probably the most ambivalent country towards ISIS. In its fight against it, Turkey has on several occasions officially or unofficially supported ISIS, particularly against Damascus. There is a collusion between ISIS and Turkey in its involvement in Syria. For example, the Turkish army came to the aid of the terrorist group in 2020 during the Syrian army's offensive in the Idlib region by providing them with fire support and heavy weapons<sup>109</sup>, before also getting involved in the fight in Idlib. In 2014, MIT was already at the centre of a scandal revealing its role in supplying arms to Islamist rebels in Syria, including ISIS. Furthermore, according to documents revealed in 2019, MIT secretly transported ammunition and fighters to Syria with buses in 2015. Turkey has thus used ISIS, its groups and fighters on several occasions to defend its own interests. Indeed, it is far from being the main threat of the regime, which focuses more on its political opponents and the Kurds, whom it considers as terrorists. Moreover, it also tended to subcontract Turkmen fighters from ISIS operating in Syria and send them to the Libyan front. The **Libyan** case, which we have mentioned several times, is also complex, as it is entangled in a dramatic security situation and subject to all regional influences. The fight against ISIS would have benefited for a time also Marshal Haftar, against whom the Turkish "proxies" were fighting.

As for **Syria**, while the Assad regime publicly claims to fight against ISIS, it has also been suspected of releasing radicals from its prisons in order to "Islamise", divide and discredit the 2011 revolution.<sup>110</sup> However, it should be noted that not all of these prisoners joined ISIS, some having preferred other radical but non-jihadist groups (i.e. *Jaysh-Al Islam*).<sup>111</sup> Similarly, **Saudi Arabia's** ambivalence also lies in its link with certain extremist and Salafist groups. At the advent of ISIS, the kingdom played a double game towards this organisation by letting its rich nationals support it. On the other hand, although Saudi Arabia leads a coalition of armed countries against it, in reality the fight is limited if we compare it to its commitment in Yemen against the Houthis.<sup>112</sup> Indeed, they do not represent a threat to the whole region, unlike ISIS. On the other hand, they are supported by **Iran**, the kingdom's main rival in the region. Saudi Arabia is also using its fight against the Islamic State and this coalition to counter Iranian influence in the region around a common axis that is the fight against ISIS. The group itself is not the enemy targeted by this fight, but rather Iran. Finally, in **Tunisia**, *Ennahda*, the Islamist party in power after the Jasmine Revolution, has often been accused of not being intransigent enough with Islamist groups that were at risk of turning violent.<sup>113</sup> **Jordan**, for its part, is still seeking a balance between total repression and controlled expression of the *salafiyya* : the example of Al-Maqdisi, a former member of Al-Qaeda in Iraq and mentor of Al-Zarqawi, was thus released in 2015 by the Jordanian authorities to publicly condemn ISIS. The internal contradictions in the Hashemite Kingdom are thus worrying.<sup>114</sup>

---

<sup>108</sup> Denécé E. (2015)

<sup>109</sup> Denécé E. (2020)

<sup>110</sup> Batigne, L. & Levallois, A.; Interview with Nicolas Hénin on 26 March 2021; Berthelot, P. & Valter, S. (2017).

<sup>111</sup> Interview with Nicolas Hénin on 26 March 2021

<sup>112</sup> Denécé E. (2015)

<sup>113</sup> Interview with T. Bourgou. (2021)

<sup>114</sup> Marteu E (2016.)

Faced with this demonstration, it is clear that the Eastern vision of ISIS is far from corresponding to the Western one. Indeed, although this organisation represents a threat, on the ground it has also been necessary to approach it as an opportunity. This attitude has been adopted by certain intelligence and security services in the Arab world, which are led to use the threat and the fight against ISIS, both within their own territory and on the international scene, as a diplomatic weapon, when others do not go so far as to use the action of this organisation directly in order to defend their interests and achieve their objectives.

## Conclusion

The research conducted for this report, although faced with insufficient access to reliable sources, highlights the diversity of perceptions of the threat posed by ISIS in the states studied. Sometimes it is an internal threat, sometimes it is from *wilayats* or individuals joining or returning from its ranks. Even when the threat is publicly acknowledged by the regime, our research indicates that it has not led to major internal restructuring of the intelligence services. Only Iran and Morocco seem to have given their services the means to achieve their ambitions - albeit with flaws. The organisational upheavals seem to have been brought about mainly in the wake of the 11 September 2001 attacks and the major absence of effects of the rise of ISIS run counter to our initial hypothesis. Finally, cooperation between states in the field of intelligence is regular, both at the regional and international levels. It is often characterised by the instrumentalization of the fight against terrorism for political or diplomatic purposes.

# Bibliography

- Abi M. (2020). *Algérie : les services de renseignement sacrifiés sur l'autel de la politique*, Centre Français de recherche sur le renseignement, Available on : <https://cf2r.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/RR26-Renseignement-alg%C3%A9rien-1.pdf>
- AFP. (2020). « La Syrie plonge dans le noir après une « attaque terroriste » contre un gazoduc ». *Le Point*. Available on : [https://www.lepoint.fr/monde/la-syrie-plonge-dans-le-noir-apres-une-attaque-terroriste-contre-un-gazoduc-24-08-2020-2388755\\_24.php](https://www.lepoint.fr/monde/la-syrie-plonge-dans-le-noir-apres-une-attaque-terroriste-contre-un-gazoduc-24-08-2020-2388755_24.php)
- Agence Congolaise De Presse (2020), *Deux terroristes abattus dans le centre-ouest de la Tunisie*. SyndiGate Media Inc. Available on : <https://access-distant.sciencespo.fr/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/wire-feeds/deux-terroristes-abattus-dans-le-centre-ouest-de/docview/2386098143/se-2?accountid=13739>
- Alami, M. (2014). *The Lebanese Army and the Confessional Trap*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Available on : <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/56014>
- Ammour L. (2019). *La stratégie algérienne de lutte anti-terroriste : entre impératifs de sécurité intérieure et recherche de stabilité régionale*, Centre Français de recherche sur le renseignement, Available on : <https://cf2r.org/documentation/la-strategie-algerienne-de-lutte-anti-terroriste-entre-imperatifs-de-securite-interieure-et-recherche-de-stabilite-regionale/>
- Asharq Al-Awsat. (2021). "Egypt's Sisi Calls for Arab Intelligence Cooperation to Counter Terrorism" *Asharq Al-Awsat*. Available on : <https://english.aawsat.com/home/article/2779746/egypt%E2%80%99s-sisi-calls-arab-intelligence-cooperation-counter-terrorism>
- Asia News Monitor. (2017). *Indonesia: Indonesia, Jordan to intensify counterterrorism cooperation*. Available on : <https://search-proquest-com.access-distant.sciencespo.fr/docview/1947498389?accountid=13739&pq-origsite=primo>
- APANews (2017) *Le Maroc a contribué à l'enquête sur le double attentat à Barcelone et Cambrils (ministre espagnol)*, Agence De Presse Africaine, Available on : <https://access-distant.sciencespo.fr/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.access-distant.sciencespo.fr/wire-feeds/le-maroc-contribue-à-lenquête-sur-double-attentat/docview/1938959301/se-2?accountid=13739>
- APANews (2019). *Le Maroc participe à une opération antiterroriste d'Interpol aux frontières maritimes en Méditerranée*. Agence De Presse Africaine. Available on : <https://access-distant.sciencespo.fr/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.access-distant.sciencespo.fr/wire-feeds/le-maroc-participe-à-une-opération-antiterroriste/docview/2294067086/se-2?accountid=13739>
- APANews (2020). *Le Maroc et les Etats-Unis d'Amérique signent une feuille de route pour la coopération en matière de défense.*, Agence De Presse Africaine. Available on : <https://access-distant.sciencespo.fr/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.access-distant.sciencespo.fr/wire-feeds/le-maroc-et-les-etats-unis-d-amérique-signent-une/docview/2447972701/se-2?accountid=13739>
- APANews (2021). *Maroc : Collaboration entre la DGST et le FBI pour l'arrestation d'un soldat US impliqué dans la planification d'actes terroristes*. Agence de Presse Africaine. Available on : <https://access-distant.sciencespo.fr/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.access-distant.sciencespo.fr/wire-feeds/maroc-collaboration-entre-la-dgst-et-le-fbi-pour/docview/2480799489/se-2?accountid=13739>.

- Batigne, L. & Levallois, A. Cours à Sciences Po Paris. « Les services de renseignement du monde arabo-musulman ».
- Benantar A. (2016) .« Sécurité aux frontières : Portée et limites de la stratégie algérienne », *L'Année du Maghreb*, 14 | 2016, p 147-163. Available on : <https://journals.openedition.org/anneemaghreb/2712>
- Berkouk, M. (2009). *U.S.–Algerian Security Cooperation and the War on Terror*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Available on : <https://carnegieendowment.org/2009/06/17/u.s.-algerian-security-cooperation-and-war-on-terror-pub-23276>
- Berthelot, P. & Valter, S. (2017). “Les services secrets syriens et égyptiens : points communs et spécificités ». *Revue Moyen-Orient*. Numéro 36, Oct-déc 2017. P. 48-53.
- Bourgou, T. (2015). “Renseignement et terrorisme en phase de transition politique : le cas de la Tunisie.” *Sécurité et stratégie*, 3(3), 54-61. <https://doi.org/10.3917/sestr.020.0054>
- Cigolotti O., Roger G., Raimond-Pavero I., Vial J-P. (2019). *Rapport d'information n° 656 , La Jordanie, clé de voûte de la stabilité d'un Moyen-Orient en crise*. Commission des affaires étrangères, de la défense et des forces armées du Sénat. Available on : [https://www.senat.fr/rap/r18-656/r18-656\\_mono.html](https://www.senat.fr/rap/r18-656/r18-656_mono.html)
- Clapper, J. R. (2016). 'Statement for the Record – Worldwide Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community – Senate Armed Services Committee,' 25
- Corbeil A. (2014). *The Syrian Conflict and Sunni Radicalism in Lebanon*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Available on : <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/54132>
- Crisis24 (2021), *Jordanie Rapport National*. Available on : <https://crisis24.garda.com/fr/rapports-nationaux/jordanie>
- Daraj. (2021). « Enquête. Les dessous de la résurgence de Daech en Syrie. » *Courrier International*. Available on : <https://www.courrierinternational.com/article/enquete-les-dessous-de-la-resurgence-de-daech-en-syrie>
- Defense Intelligence Agency. (2019). “Iran Military Power. Ensuring Regime Survival and Securing Regional Dominance”. *Defense Intelligence Agency*. Available on : [https://www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military%20Power%20Publications/Iran\\_Military\\_Power\\_LR.pdf](https://www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military%20Power%20Publications/Iran_Military_Power_LR.pdf)
- Denécé, E. (2015). *Qui cherche vraiment à lutter contre Daesh ?*, Centre français de Recherche sur le Renseignement. Available on : <https://cf2r.org/editorial/qui-cherche-vraiment-a-lutter-contre-daesh-2/>
- Dettmer J. (2017), “Britain Announces More Support for Lebanese Army”, *VOAnews*. Available on : <https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/britain-announces-more-support-lebanese-army>
- D.F. (2021). « Le camp d'al-Hol en Syrie est hors de contrôle : "Daech est devenu maître des lieux". » *RTBF*. Available on : [https://www.rtbf.be/info/monde/detail\\_le-camp-d-al-hol-en-syrie-est-hors-de-controle-daech-est-devenu-maitre-des-lieux?id=10710568](https://www.rtbf.be/info/monde/detail_le-camp-d-al-hol-en-syrie-est-hors-de-controle-daech-est-devenu-maitre-des-lieux?id=10710568)
- El-Adhamat, M. (2019) *La Jordanie face au terrorisme - Approches militaires, d'autres douces*. Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition. Available on : <https://imctc.org/fr/eLibrary/Articles/Pages/Articles88122019.aspx>
- Esfandiary, D. & Tabatabai, A. (2015). “Iran’s ISIS Policy”. *International Affairs* 91. Available on: [https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/field/field\\_publication\\_docs/INTA91\\_1\\_01\\_Esfandiary\\_Tabatabai.pdf](https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/field/field_publication_docs/INTA91_1_01_Esfandiary_Tabatabai.pdf)

- Fokina A. (2019), *La politique marocaine de lutte contre le terrorisme et ses angles morts*, OrientXXI. Available on : <https://orientxxi.info/magazine/la-politique-marocaine-de-lutte-contre-le-terrorisme-et-ses-angles-morts,3075>
- France 24 (2016) "TERRORISME - La Tunisie veut renforcer sa coopération antiterroriste avec l'Algérie et le Maroc.", *France 24*. Available on : <https://access-distant.sciencespo.fr/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.access-distant.sciencespo.fr/other-sources/terrisme-la-tunisie-veut-renforcer-sa/docview/1788124283/se-2?accountid=13739>.
- Gady, F-S. (2015). "Australia and Iran to cooperate in Fight Against ISIS." *The Diplomat*. Available on : <https://thediplomat.com/2015/04/australia-and-iran-to-cooperate-in-fight-against-isis/>
- Ghanem D. (2015). *Why Algeria Isn't Exporting Jihadists*. Malcolm H. Kerr, Carnegie Middle East Center. Available on : <https://carnegie-mec.org/2015/08/11/why-algeria-isn-t-exporting-jihadists-pub-60954>
- Hashem, A. (2016). "Iranian military official: We will "uproot" Jabhat al-Nusra," *Al-Monitor*. Available on : <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2016/08/iran-reaction-nusra-front-name-change-golani.html#ixzz4HiVW4o9I>
- Hecker, M. & Tenenbaum, E. (2019). " Quel avenir pour le djihadisme ? Al-Qaïda et Daech après le califat", *Focus stratégique*, n°87, Ifri.
- International Crisis Group. (2018). *Egypt's Expanding Jihadist Threat, 2018*. International Crisis Group. Available on : <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/egypt/egypts-expanding-jihadist-threat>
- International Crisis Group. (2021). *Crisis Watch Egypt*. International Crisis Group. Available on : <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/egypt>
- Interview with Nicolas Hénin, March 26, 2021
- Interview with Stéphane Valter du April 23, 2021
- Interview with Taoufik Bourgou du March 19, 2021
- Marteu E (2016.) "L'État islamique et la nébuleuse djihadiste au Liban et en Jordanie", *Politique étrangère* 2016/1, pages 107 à 122. Available on : <https://www-cairn-info.access-distant.sciencespo.fr/revue-politique-etrangere-2016-1-page-107.htm>
- Mauriello, R. (2015). "L'État islamique et la République islamique d'Iran, Jihadisme et jihad au Moyen-Orient". *Outre-Terre*, 3(3), 342-353. <https://doi-org.access-distant.sciencespo.fr/10.3917/oute1.044.0342>
- Maxwell M-J. (2018). *La Jordanie et les États-Unis, partenaires dans la lutte contre le terrorisme*, SHAREAMERICA. Available on : <https://share.america.gov/fr/la-jordanie-et-les-etats-unis-partenaires-dans-la-lutte-contre-le-terrorisme/>
- Middle East Institute. (2015). "Egypt's security challenge: ISIS, Sinai, and the Libyan Border". *MEI*. Available on : <https://www.mei.edu/publications/egypts-security-challenge-isis-sinai-and-libyan-border>
- Moghaddam F (2019), *Qui est le maréchal Haftar, chef de l'autoproclamée Armée nationale libyenne ?*, France Culture, Available on : <https://www.franceculture.fr/geopolitique/qui-est-le-marechal-haftar-chef-de-lautoproclamee-armee-nationale-libyenne>
- Morocco World News (2017), "100 Polisario Armed Members Joined ISIS: Abdelhak El Khiam", *Morocco World News*. Available on : <https://www.morocroworldnews.com/2017/04/214307/100-polisario-armed-members-joined-isis-abdelhak-el-khiam/>
- Murgue B. (2015), « Les enjeux stratégiques et sécuritaires au Liban : entre faiblesses institutionnelles, rivalités régionales et résilience nationale », *Sécurité et Stratégie*



2015/3, pages 63 à 69. Available on : <https://www-cairn-info.acces-distant.sciencespo.fr/revue-securite-et-strategie-2015-3-page-63.htm>

- Nerguizian A. (2009). *The Lebanese Armed Forces - Challenges and Opportunities in Post-Syria Lebanon*, Center for Strategic & International Studies. Available on : [https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy\\_files/files/media/csis/pubs/090210\\_lafsecurity.pdf](https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/media/csis/pubs/090210_lafsecurity.pdf)
- Nerguizian A. (2014). *Lebanon at the Crossroads*, Strategy Center for Strategic and International Studies. Available on : [https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy\\_files/files/publication/140225\\_Nerguizian\\_Lebanon\\_testimony.pdf](https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/publication/140225_Nerguizian_Lebanon_testimony.pdf)
- Nerguizian A. (2015). « Between sectarianism and military development : the paradox of the Lebanese Armed Forces », dans Salloukh, Bassel F., et al. *Politics of Sectarianism in Postwar Lebanon*, Pluto Press, 2015. Available on : <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/sciences-po/detail.action?docID=3440445..>
- Nerguizian A. (2017), *The Lebanese Armed Forces, Hezbollah, and Military Legitimacy*, Center for Strategic & International Studies, Available on : <https://www.csis.org/analysis/lebanese-armed-forces-hezbollah-and-military-legitimacy>
- Rathmell, A. (1996). "Syria's Intelligence Services: Origins and Development". *Journal of Conflict Studies*, 16(2). Retrieved from <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/JCS/article/view/11815>
- Rodier A. (2007). *Liban : le Fatah al-Islam s'oppose à l'armée libanaise*, Centre Français de Recherche sur le Renseignement. Available on : <https://cf2r.org/actualite/liban-le-fatah-al-islam-s-oppose-a-armee-libanaise/>
- Rodier A. (2019), *Daesh étend ses réseaux*, Centre Français de Recherche sur le Renseignement. Available on : <https://cf2r.org/actualite/8887-2/>
- Rowell, A. (2014). *Is Lebanon Winning Against Al-Qaeda?*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Available on : <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/55582>
- Shah, H, Dalton M. (2020). *Playing Politics: International Security Sector Assistance and the Lebanese Military's Changing Role* . Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Available on : <https://carnegie-mec.org/2020/09/07/playing-politics-international-security-sector-assistance-and-lebanese-military-s-changing-role-pub-82663>
- Sirrs, O. L. (2010) *A history of the Egyptian intelligence service: a history of the mukhabarat, 1910-2009*. Routledge.
- Tabatabai, A. M. (2018) *Other side of the Iranian coin: Iran's counterterrorism apparatus*, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 41:1-2, 181-207, DOI: 10.1080/01402390.2017.1283613
- Tasnim News Agency. (2016). "Iran's Parliament Boosts Armed Forces' Budget to Counter Terrorism: Speaker," *Tasnim News*, Available on : <https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2016/05/09/1070917/iran-s-parliament-boosts-armed-forces-budget-to-counter-terrorism-speaker>
- United Press International. (2011). "Evidence grows Iran aiding Syria's Assad". *UPI*. Available on: [https://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/Special/2011/06/02/Evidence-grows-Iran-aiding-Syrias-Assad/72061307024479/?ur3=1](https://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2011/06/02/Evidence-grows-Iran-aiding-Syrias-Assad/72061307024479/?ur3=1)
- Wege, C. A. (2019). « Iranian Counterintelligence ». *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, 32:2, 272-294, DOI: 10.1080/08850607.2019.1565274