

Jihadist Snapshot: Daesh & AQ Trends

MONTHLY ANALYSIS #05

During June, Moonshot collected and analyzed over **600 posts** across pro-Daesh and pro-al-Qaeda (AQ) channels on encrypted platforms and identified their relevance to geographic regions. Posts classified as regional were focused on events taking place in specific countries/regions. Posts identified as non-regional were not linked to a physical event or were primarily significant to each group's global narratives.

This infographic illustrates the discourses identified, providing a summary of the primary topics and an analysis of the narratives disseminated by the two groups and their supporters.

Key findings

- Daesh's activities in Africa dominated discussions by the group and its supporters in June, with posts related to the group's operations in Africa representing two of the three most discussed narratives.
- Both AQ and Daesh shared a high volume of posts relating to Asia. The majority of posts were connected to offensive remarks made about Prophet Muhammad by members of India's BJP ruling party and Daesh's 18 June attack on a Sikh temple in Kabul, which was framed as an act to avenge the offensive remarks.
- Pro-AQ channels also heavily discussed interjihadist rivalry between the group and HTS, as well as provided commentary on infighting between Salafist and rebel groups in Syria's Idlib province.



Daesh

The three main narratives discussed across pro-Daesh channels were:

Daesh attacks in Afghanistan (13%)



Islamic State West Africa Province's (ISWAP) "A Book that Guides and a Sword that Brings Victory" video (11%)



Daesh attacks in Mozambique (9%)

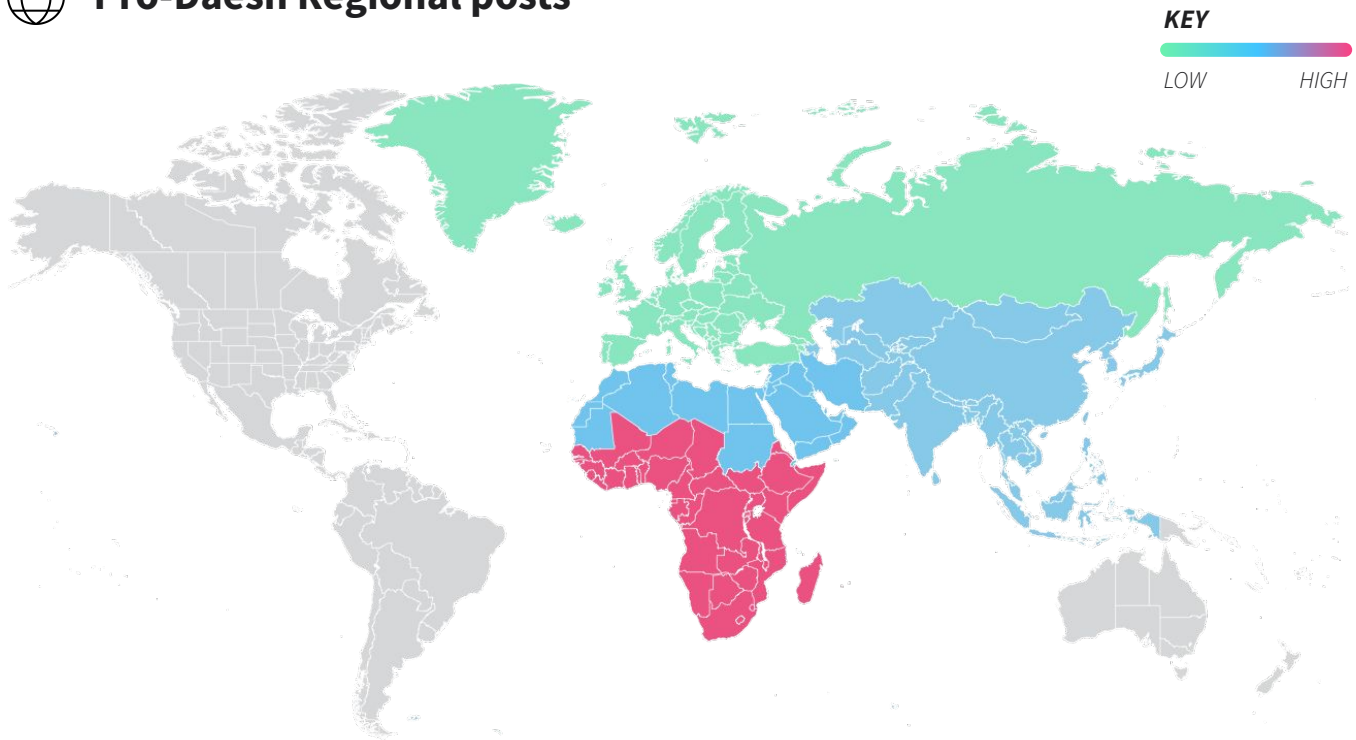


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Pro-Daesh Regional posts



Africa	45%
MENA	19%
Asia	17%
Non-regional	15%
Europe	4%

Analysis of regional and non-regional posts

In June 2022, **45%** of regional posts identified within pro-Daesh channels were related to **Africa** (excluding North Africa). **24%** of these posts discussed Islamic State West Africa Province's (ISWAP) 14 June release of its "A Book that Guides and a Sword that Brings Victory" video, while **20%** of posts discussed Daesh's attacks in Mozambique. These two topics were also the second and third most discussed pro-Daesh posts overall.

Posts identified relating to the **Middle East and North Africa (MENA)** were largely linked to Daesh's attacks in Egypt's Sinai peninsula, representing **34%** of MENA-related posts. **17%** of all posts concerned Asia, with Daesh's attacks in Afghanistan dominating discussion (**75%** of posts).

Two thirds of posts identified (**68%**) relating to **Afghanistan** discussed Daesh's 18 June terror attack targeting a Sikh temple in Kabul, allegedly in response to insulting remarks made by members of India's ruling BJP party regarding Prophet Muhammad.

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Posts identified regarding **Europe** discussed the 25 June Oslo shooting, the ongoing war in Ukraine, the French sentencing of 2015 Bataclan attacker Salah Abdeslam, Finland and Sweden's bid to join NATO and the 8 June Berlin car attack.

Posts not linked to a specific region (**16%**) primarily comprised guidance shared among Daesh supporters, including cyber-security "tips" and bomb-making recipes.



Al-Qaeda

The three main narratives discussed across pro-AQ channels were:

Insulting remarks made by members of India's ruling BJP party regarding the Prophet Muhammad (19%)



Infighting in Idlib, North Syria (14%)



Interjihadist rivalry (6%)

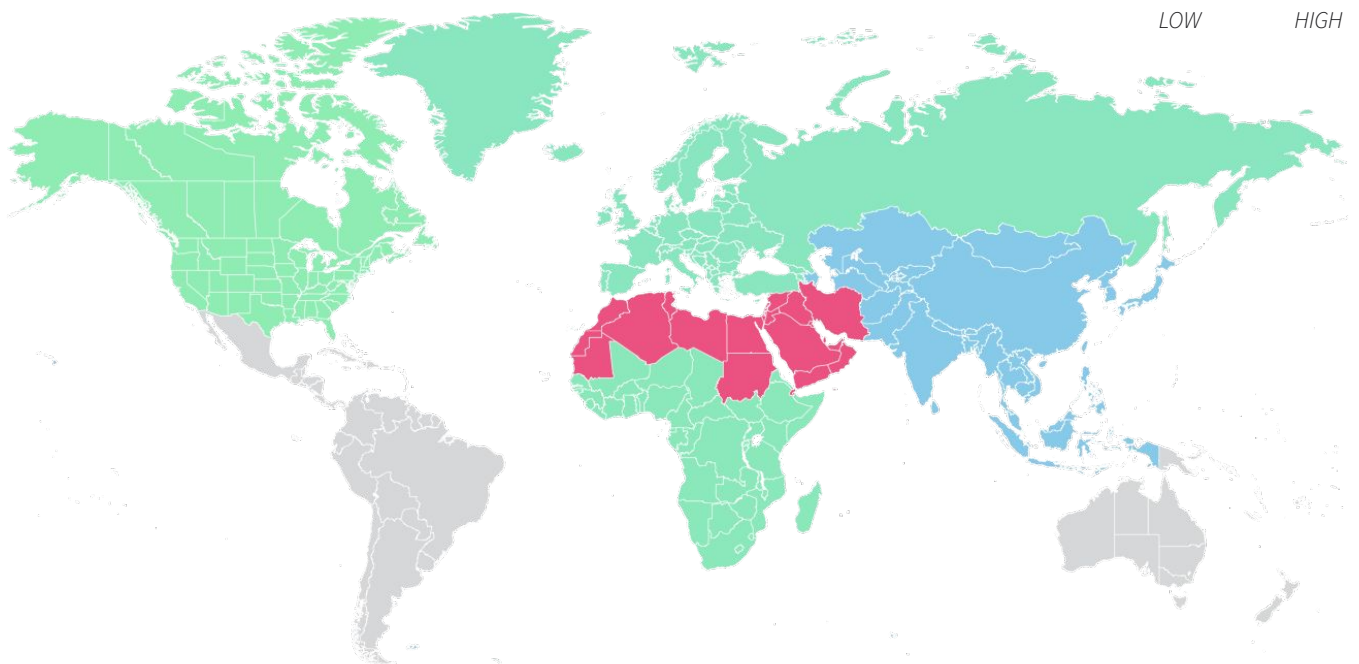


Pro-AQ Regional posts

KEY

LOW

HIGH



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MENA	54%
Asia	23%
Non-regional	16%
Africa	3%
Europe	3%
North America	1%

Analysis of regional and non-regional posts

In June 2022, the largest volume (**54%**) of regional posts from pro-AQ channels were linked to the **MENA** region, with **25%** of posts linked to infighting between Ahrar al-Sham (a Salafist militant group) and Jabhat Shamiya (a group within the Syrian National Army's Third Legion) in northwestern Syria.

All posts related to Africa (**3%**) were connected to attacks or video releases by AQ's East Africa affiliate, al-Shabaab.

Asia-related posts constituted **23%** of AQ's total discussion this month, with **81%** of posts connected to insulting statements made by members of India's ruling party, the BJP, regarding the Prophet Muhammad controversy, and subsequent protests.

Posts related to **Europe** (**3%**) were linked to the Russia-Ukraine war as well as the 25 June mass shooting in Oslo targeting an LGBTQ+ bar during the city's Pride celebration.

1% of posts related to **North America** and mainly focused on the US Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade and the constitutional right to an abortion.

54% of posts not linked to a specific region (**16%** of total posts) discussed interjihadist rivalry against Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, Daesh and other Salafist-Jihadist groups.

Trend of note - Daesh calls for hijrah to Africa

Moonshot observed a spike in the volume of posts relating to Africa, increasing from **16%** of all posts in May 2022 to **45%** in June 2022. This is largely related to ISWAP's 14 June video release. In "A Book that Guides and a Sword that Brings Victory", Daesh's West African affiliate attempted to depict its capacity for alleged Islamic governance in areas where it claims to maintain some form of control, likely in northeastern Nigeria. The video also included a call for Daesh supporters to make hijrah (emigration) to these areas, followed by a second official call for hijrah to Africa specifically in the editorial of Daesh's 16 June al-Naba magazine. The group's supporters also began an online campaign to encourage this migration, under the hashtag "إفريقية_هجرة_وجهاد#" [Africa_hijrah_and_jihad]. These calls came amid the promotion of Daesh's alleged expansion in Africa, most notably in Nigeria, which has been ongoing since April 2022. These calls for hijrah echo Daesh's previous encouragement of supporters to migrate to its former strongholds in Iraq and Syria, prior to its loss of territorial control in March 2019. The impact of Daesh's renewed call for hijrah to new territories remains to be seen and Moonshot will continue to closely monitor this narrative in coming months.