
CALIPHATE SOLDIERS AND LONE ACTORS: WHAT TO MAKE OF IS CLAIMS FOR ATTACKS IN THE WEST 2016-2018

Other

May 2016, IS began implementing a strategy aimed at inciting lone actor attacks in Western countries, under the supervision of its “external security” body. This report examines changes in the ways in which IS has claimed credit for violent incidents in Western countries under this strategy in an effort to shed light on the links between the external operations and the main leadership of the organisation. IS’s claiming behaviour for attacks in the West fluctuated between leaving the initiative to perpetrators and trying to centralise the communication flow. The organisation, however, has experienced increasing difficulties in ascertaining information received from external sources, ultimately leading to the flawed claim for the Las Vegas shooting on 1 October 2017. Since then, communication between IS’s central media outlets and external sources seems to have largely broken down. At present, the hierarchical external operations structures of IS seem to have been replaced by individuals that communicate and, possibly, cooperate based on their common experience and acquaintance. The threat they pose will depend on their personal influence on others and their motivation rather than their position in the IS hierarchy.

The paper is available also at [ICCT website](#) 

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