
THE HISTORY AND INFLUENCE OF THE BELGIAN ISIS CONTINGENT

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This paper provides an insight into how the Belgian Jihadi scene and recruitment evolved since the outbreak of the Syrian war in 2011. We will look into the recruitment hubs and provide a brief demographical background of recruits. After an introduction to the various networks in Belgium that led to the biggest Western European per-capita foreign fighter contingent, we will zoom in on the various groups in which the Belgian foreign fighters were involved and how these groups eventually were responsible for organising the biggest terrorist attacks in North-Western Europe since World War II: the attacks in Paris in November 2015 and the March 2016 Brussels attacks. Subsequently, we will look into the evolution of the so-called Islamic State (ISIS) as an internationally focused terrorist organisation and how Western European foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) played a highly important role in the internationalisation of ISIS terror.

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