



AQIS AND ISIS: EXPANDING IN BANGLADESH



Al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) are growing capabilities in Bangladesh by leveraging local terrorist groups. While AQIS seeks to protect Muslims from perceived injustices, ISIS views Bangladesh as a staging area for operations in the region and beyond. As the Bangladeshi Government continues to deny the existence of terrorist organizations within its borders, both groups remain steadfast in their recruitment, operations, and propaganda efforts.

	Recruitment	Operations	Propaganda
AQIS is...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligning with Ansar al-Islam, or the Ansarullah Bangla Team, and other established terrorist allies in Bangladesh expressing an interest in joining AQIS and transforming Bangladesh into a <i>Sharia</i>, or Islamic, state. Recruiting in Bengali, the official language of Bangladesh, with videos encouraging Bangladeshi Muslims to join its ranks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Claiming responsibility for eight small-scale, unsophisticated attacks in Bangladesh since November 2014, which used machetes and meat cleavers. Stressing Muslims have a duty to kill anyone opposed to Islam and targeting secular activists, bloggers, and writers in Bangladesh. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distributing al-Qa'ida's <i>Inspire</i> magazine in Bengali, as well as videos with bomb-making instructions and explicit references to potential targets, including Bangladesh's parliament building. Publicly responding to the Bangladeshi Government's ban of AQIS by delivering letters with death threats to public officials.
ISIS is...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligning with Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), estimated to have at least 10,000 members who are partnering with established terrorist networks and operatives. Posting material to its recently launched Bengali website, with eligibility requirements for potential recruits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Claiming responsibility for at least 17 small-scale attacks in Bangladesh since the beginning of 2015 targeting foreigners, professors, and religious minorities with blades, small arms, and basic explosives. Demonstrating its capability to conduct larger attacks. In July, ISIS conducted its first large-scale attack at a café in Dhaka, Bangladesh, killing 22 civilians. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aware of Bangladesh's strategic importance. In the April edition of its magazine, <i>Dabiq</i>, Sheikh Abu Ibrahim al-Hanif, head of ISIS operations in Bangladesh, stated, "It provides a location from which to expand future operations into eastern India and Myanmar."



Bangladesh is home to the fourth-largest Muslim population in the world.

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