
UN REPORT SAYS DAESH EVOLVING INTO COVERT NETWORK

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Daesh continues to be a threat to the international community even as it transforms its operations following military defeats in Iraq and Syria, according to an advance copy of a UN report obtained by Anadolu Agency.

"ISIL has substantially evolved into a covert network in Iraq, where it prioritizes local operations. It is in a phase of transition, adaptation and consolidation. It is organizing cells at the provincial level, replicating the key leadership functions," Secretary General Antonio Guterres' report said, using another name for Daesh.

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi remains in control of the terror group, the report said, despite multiple reports of his death.

Some of Daesh's fighters are leaving Syria for Iraq, but the report said some countries expect its Syrian branch to morph into a covert network, reflecting the one operating in Iraq.

"One document obtained by a Member State describes ISILs objectives for the post-caliphate period: to undermine stabilization and reconstruction activities, target infrastructure rebuilding efforts and in general thwart economic progress," it said. "Its center of gravity is expected to remain in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic."

The report estimates that the Daesh terror group continues to control between 14,000 to 18,000 militants in Iraq and Syria. In Iraq alone, it said there are 3,000 active Daesh fighters, and the terror group is estimated to still have control of between \$50 million and \$300 million.

It also warned that women who have been radicalized as well as "traumatized minors" who lived under Daesh's rule "pose a serious threat".

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