Troubled waters: a snapshot of security challenges in the Mediterranean region

*James Black, Alexandra Hall,
Giacomo Persi Paoli, Rich Warnes*

Mediterranean
Foresight Forum

New challenges are reshaping the international order, requiring government leaders to consider new strategies and tools that integrate diplomatic, economic and military instruments of power. Nowhere is this more evident than around the Mediterranean Sea, which has progressively returned as a region of global strategic interest where political tensions, armed conflict, economic and social instability and transnational criminal networks demand solutions that cross traditional institutional boundaries of domestic and international policymaking.

The geo-political situation on the southern coast of the Mediterranean has radically changed and new challenges have emerged for the European Union, United States, and beyond. Long-lasting issues such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or the tensions between Turkey and Greece, continue to be present, but new destabilising factors have emerged in the region following the Arab Spring of 2011.

The US, EU and NATO continue to maintain a significant military presence in and around the Mediterranean, but military capabilities must be nested within a whole-of-government, international approach. The challenges in this region demand unprecedented levels of civil-military and intergovernmental cooperation.

In this context, RAND established the *Mediterranean Foresight Forum* (MFF) in 2015 to support the development of comprehensive, integrated civil-military responses to complex regional challenges through an innovative combination of research, scenario-based sensitivity analysis and strategic-level exercises.

This publication is part of a series of four RAND Perspectives (PE) each focusing on different challenges in the Mediterranean region. This PE focuses on Defence and Security. Other PE focus on Foreign Policy and Diplomacy, Criminal Activities and Cross-cutting issues.

Key findings and observations

- Many of the defence and security challenges that exist in the region are multi-faceted, long-standing and ingrained. It is not clear that actors possess the individual or collective will and economic resources needed to support a comprehensive approach to regional conflict.
- Given finite political and economic capital, the question arises whether the priority should be reinforcing relative success (e.g. Tunisia) or tackling the worst problems (e.g. Syria, Libya).

- The actions of external players in the countries of the Mediterranean region, particularly Russia and the US, represent a significant complicating and potentially escalatory factor.
- Destroying Islamic State in one country while others remain fragile and violent is likely to see the problem relocate, rather than disappear.

Introduction

This PE provides an insight into the defence and security dimension of recent developments in the Mediterranean. It is not an analytical report, but rather is intended as a primer, providing a snapshot of the current security picture in the region and some of the most prominent defence and security issues that exist there. As such, this perspective does not offer conclusions or recommendations regarding the challenges of this region or potential ways of addressing them. For a more fulsome view of the dynamics and challenges of the Mediterranean region, incorporating issues of foreign policy and diplomacy, criminality and trafficking, readers should also consult other RAND PE in the *Mediterranean Foresight Forum* series.

The Mediterranean region is marked by interaction between a range of competing political, economic and diplomatic interests, driven both by local and external actors (such as the US and Russia). Given this strategic significance and contestation, the Mediterranean and its surrounding littoral has historically been host to relatively high levels of military activity – ranging from investment in defence infrastructure and capacity-building initiatives through to open conflicts like the Lebanon war in 2006, the foreign intervention in Libya in 2011, or the ongoing Syrian civil war.

In this context, this PE examines recent trends in regional security across four principal topics:

- **Syrian civil war and its wider impact:** Examining both the internal dynamics of the ongoing Syrian conflict – its context, key actors and current status – as well as the wider implications for international actors' defence strategy.
- **Ongoing instability in Libya:** Analysing the threats to Libya's already fragile security and the potential ramifications for the Mediterranean region.
- **The regional threat of terrorist activity:** Mapping the main terrorist actors across the region, including their motives, ambitions and tactics, as well as the flow of foreign fighters from Europe and other countries outside the region.
- **Developments in regional defence capability:** Including trends in defence cooperation, arms transfers and the development of new strategic capabilities (e.g. missile defence) by regional militaries, as well as direct or indirect transfers of weaponry to non-state actor control.

In the last section, a series of observations are offered. These observations are not intended as conclusions or recommendations. Rather, they are high-level reflections, informed by the compilation of this snapshot and through the other activities of the *Mediterranean Foresight Forum*.

The Syrian civil war and its wider impact

Context and internal dynamics of conflict in Syria

The Mediterranean region is beset by both longstanding conflicts (e.g. tensions between Israel and its neighbours, or between Turkey,

The Mediterranean region is marked by interaction between a range of competing political, economic and diplomatic interests, driven both by local and external actors.

Since the onset of conflict in 2011, Syria has seen heavy fighting and widespread destruction, especially around key military facilities and major urban areas.

Cyprus and Greece) and the more recent after-effects of the Arab Spring (e.g. Libyan instability, or Egyptian suppression of the Muslim Brotherhood). Despite this troubled wider picture, perhaps the most significant strategic development of recent years has been the onset of civil war in the Syrian Arab Republic, following a violent crackdown on pro-democracy protests by President Bashar al-Assad in 2011. As outlined below, this ongoing conflict is not only of great consequence to Syria and the Syrian people, who have seen hundreds of thousands killed and millions displaced. The war also poses wider challenges for defence and security actors in the Mediterranean region, helping fuel the rise of armed non-state groups such as Islamic State; drive the recruitment of 'foreign fighters' and terrorists across the Middle East and Europe; and create the potential for escalation or unintended consequences arising from the involvement of Russia, NATO and other militaries in Syria's violence.

Key actors, forces and territorial control

Since the onset of conflict in 2011, Syria has seen heavy fighting and widespread destruction, especially around key military facilities and major urban areas (e.g. Damascus, Aleppo, Homs). The result has been a loss of government control over large swathes of territory, especially in the east, north and south of the country, with the regime, Hezbollah and other pro-Assad militia maintaining a powerbase close to Mediterranean coastal areas (see Figure 1). In addition to fighting between pro- and anti-government forces, there has also been open conflict between different opposition groups, especially the more moderate Free Syrian Army and Islamist factions such as Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) or Islamic State (IS). The latter group has been especially successfully in establishing control over large portions of the eastern territories of Syria (as well as northern Iraq), focused around its stronghold in Raqqa.

Although publicly available information on the precise disposition of forces (e.g. number of fighters, arms, etc.) is limited, key actors include (Friedland, 2016):

- **Pro-government Syrian forces:** Syrian Armed Forces (220–280,000); pro-Assad militia, including the so-called National Defence Forces (100,000) and Ba'ath Brigades (10,000).
- **Foreign support for Assad:** Hezbollah, primarily on Lebanese border (20–30,000); Iranian special forces and paramilitaries, including the Al-Quds Force (15,000) and Basij Militia (unknown).
- **Opposition forces:** Free Syrian Army and related groups (total forces unknown, though the UK has previously suggested an estimate of 70,000 'moderate' fighters).
- **Islamist factions:** Islamic State, also known as Daesh (estimated at 15–20,000); Jabhat al-Nusra (15–20,000); Islamic Front (40–70,000) and others.
- **Independent groups:** Kurdish Popular Protection Units, the YPG (40–50,000), and other allied militias primarily focused on defending minority groups (e.g. Christian Syriac Military Council).

Figure 1. Overview of Territorial Control in Syrian Conflict

SOURCE: IHS Conflict Monitor, BBC News, 5 Sept 2016.

An overview of the zones of territorial control for the major groups is provided in Figure 1.

Impact of the war within Syria

Estimates of the human and economic cost of the ongoing conflict vary, reflecting the difficulty of obtaining reliable data from the conflict zone as well as the fast pace with which events on the ground unfold. In August 2015, the United Nations (UN) estimated that 250,000 people had died since the onset of the war, with the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights suggesting that this included 115,000 civilians, of which 12,517 were children (United Nations Security Council, 2015). Estimates also range as high as 470,000 according to a 2016 report by the Syrian Center for Policy Research – almost double the figures provided by the UN before it stopped counting due to lack of confidence in the data (Barnard, 2016). This violence has also resulted in massive internal displacement of 7.6 million civilians, as well as the flight of over 4 million

refugees to Arab countries, Turkey and Europe. In addition, the ongoing conflict is estimated to cost up to 42 per cent of Syrian GDP (Anderson, 2015), with the World Bank suggesting that the war has also cost the wider Levant area – Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt – approximately $35 billion in lost output, measured at 2007 prices (Ianchovichina, 2014). A report issued by the United Nations in March 2015 suggests the total economic loss since 2011 has been $202 billion (BBC News, 2016a). In addition, the commencement of US-led airstrikes in September 2014 has also impacted defence spending around the world, with the first year of US military operations reported to have cost $3.2 billion (Martinez, 2015).

Alongside the growing death toll, a particular concern to the wider international community has been the escalation of violence towards mass bombing of civilian areas (e.g. use of improvised 'barrel bombs') (Al Jazeera, 2015a) and battlefield deployment of weapons of mass destruction. This includes repeated allegations of use of chemical weapons by both government and anti-Assad forces. In September 2013, United Nations inspectors confirmed the use of sarin – a deadly nerve agent useful for its relatively quick dissipation times – in a rocket attack on opposition-controlled suburbs around Damascus on 21 August 2013 (Sellström et al., 2013). Though the exact death toll is unclear, estimates suggest approximately 1,400 were killed in the attack (Warrick, 2013).

In the wake of this incident, French, British and US policymakers debated military intervention to prevent further chemical attacks and respond to a breach of a 'red line' previously set out by the Obama administration. However, following a Russian diplomatic initiative, the Syrian government accepted a deal to hand over its 1,300-tonne stockpile of chemical weapons (and precursor agents) and join the Chemical Weapons Convention. An international mission to secure, transport and destroy the Syrian chemical arsenal was launched by the United Nations Security Council and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. This involved transportation of the chemical agents from Latakia, Syria to Gioia Tauro, Italy – escorted by Norwegian and Danish frigates and marines – before destruction at sea on the specialist US vessel *MV Cape Ray* using US Army equipment. Precursor agents, effluent and other materials were also shipped for safe disposal at facilities in Europe and the US (Jeavans, 2014). However, there have been numerous accounts of possible chemical weapons use in more recent years, suggesting that limited numbers of chemical weapons continue to circulate in Syria's shifting battlefield.

Regional and international implications of the Syrian war

Western proposals to intervene directly against the Assad regime have yet to lead to direct military action, outside of unintended incidents such as the accidental killing of 62 Syrian troops by US,

Alongside the growing death toll, a particular concern to the wider international community has been the escalation of violence towards mass bombing of civilian areas and battlefield deployment of weapons of mass destruction.

Australian, British and Danish aircraft in September 2016 (BBC News, 2016b). Instead, the dramatic rise of Islamic State and its seizure of large swathes of Syria and northern Iraq have precipitated a major air campaign against the group, with a coalition of international forces beginning operations in September 2014. Forces active in Syria include:

- **Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve:** A US-led coalition including Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Jordan, Morocco, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, UK and the Gulf States, with non-military support from other European and international partners. An overview of US-led airstrikes is provided in Figure 2 A failed coup attempt in Turkey in July 2016 saw the Turkish government suspend US operations out of the vital Incirlik Air Base, though Turkey has since redoubled its own independent efforts against Islamic State with the deployment of ground forces across the Syrian border to destroy targets around Jarablus.

- **Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism:** A recently formed counterterrorist alliance of 34 Muslim countries announced in December 2015, with a joint command centre in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (Taylor, 2015).

The dramatic rise of Islamic State and its seizure of large swathes of Syria and northern Iraq have precipitated a major air campaign against the group, with a coalition of international forces beginning operations in September 2014.

- **Russian Federation and 4+1 Coalition:** Intelligence-sharing cooperation between four governments (Russia, Syria, Iran and Iraq) and Hezbollah as part of joint efforts to combat ISIS (Al Jazeera, 2015b). While Iran and Hezbollah have been deploying Special Forces, paramilitaries and other units in support of Assad, the Russian military has moved fighter aircraft, sophisticated air defence systems, helicopters and ground forces to Syria to secure its bases at Latakia and Tartus. Since September 2015, Russia has conducted airstrikes against ISIS and other rebel groups opposed to the Syrian government. In March 2016, Russian President Putin announced a surprise 'withdrawal' of Russian forces from Syria, having successfully helped pro-Assad forces to strengthen their position on the ground ahead of a UN-backed truce (Al Jazeera, 2016). In reality, however, the drawdown has only been partial; though some combat aircraft did return to Russia, the Russian military continues to conduct operations in support of the Syrian government, bolstered by the arrival of new attack helicopters and ongoing expansion of Russia's bases in the country (Marcus, 2016).

In September 2016, the United States and Russia announced a deal aimed at achieving a cease-fire in the Syrian civil war, with a view to focusing international military efforts on the battle against Islamic State and other terror organisations. This accord followed ten months of failed diplomatic attempts to halt the fighting and move towards a political settlement to Syria's five-year old conflict. As part of the deal, the US and Russia pledged to establish a Joint Implementation Centre to share targeting data and begin coordinated bombing of militants from Nusra Front and Islamic

Figure 2. US-led coalition airstrikes against Islamic State

Coalition strikes

■ Iraq **9,508**　■ Syria **4,908**
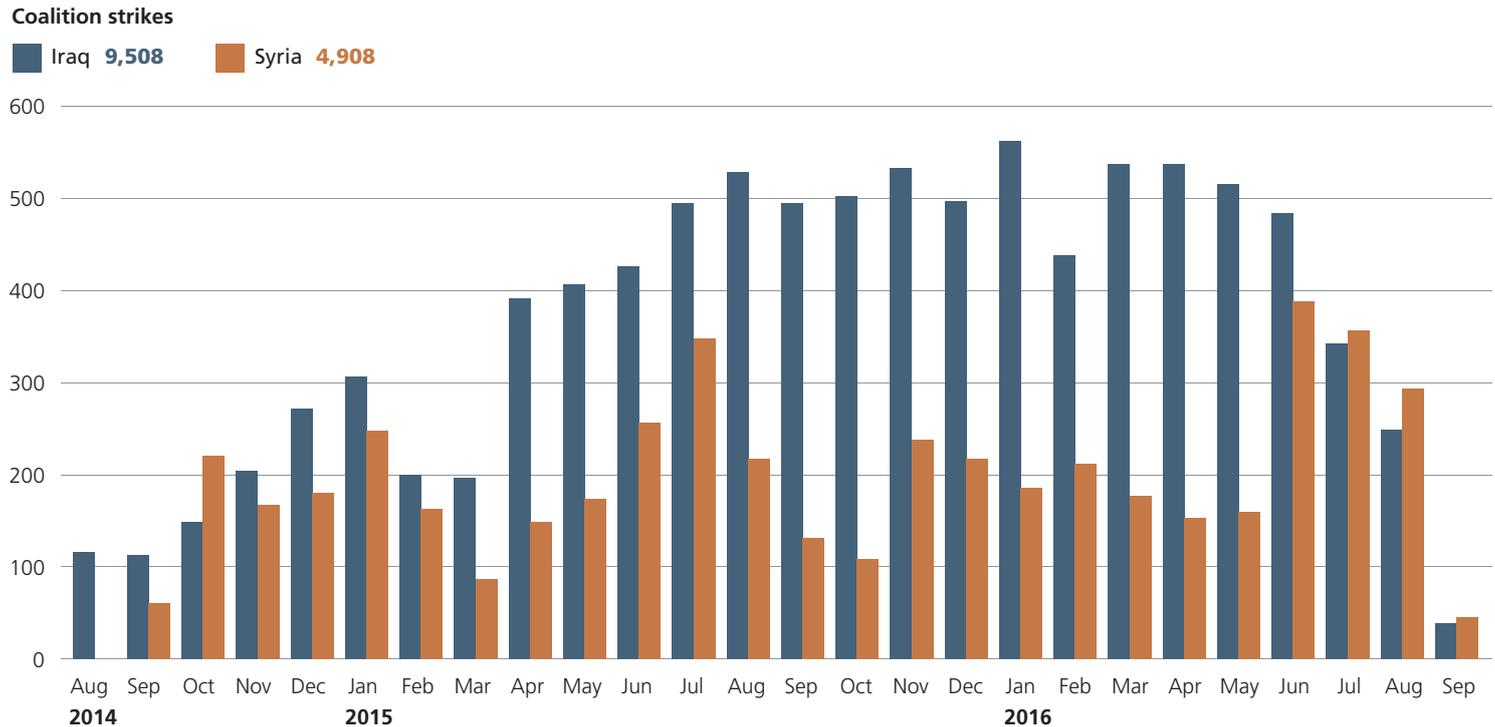
SOURCE: US Central Command via BBC News (2016). Note: figures are up to 6 September 2016.

State, who fall outside of the ceasefire agreement (DeYoung, 2016). However, just a week after being struck, this agreement was thrown into jeopardy with the US-led bombing of Syrian army positions in the east of Syria (Borger, 2016). Russia and the US have since been unable to agree terms to restore the truce. Within days of the ceasefire collapsing, the Syrian government had embarked on a new offensive in the northern city of Aleppo (Borger and Sha-heen, 2016). At the time of writing, it was reported that incendiary weapons and bunker-busting bombs were being used by the Syrian regime against residential areas (BBC News, 2016c). Some 275,000 people are thought to be trapped in the city and while humanitarian corridors have purportedly been opened up, these are understood to have been blocked by rebels. While Russia has claimed that Syria is trying to expel terrorists while harming as few civilians as possible, Syria has been widely condemned for its actions, with Britain, France and the US accusing Russia of complicity in the

Assad regime's 'war crimes' in the United Nations Security Council (McKirdy et al., 2016).

This internationalisation of the Syrian conflict has ramifications not only for the outcome of the civil war itself, but also for the related humanitarian and refugee crisis, the radicalisation of 'foreign fighters', and the proliferation of arms (see below). It also brings profound implications for the wider geopolitics and strategic balance of the Mediterranean region. Key issues with a potential for further escalation include:

- **Potential standoff, miscalculation or clash between Russia and NATO:** A major concern for defence planners on all sides has been the commencement of parallel US-led and Russian aerial campaigns over Syria, which poses the risk of an unintended confrontation due to miscommunication, mistrust or other error. With the Turkish downing of a Russian Su-24 fighter in late 2015 – an incident that prompted a sharp deterioration of relations between Moscow and Istanbul – international forces have undertaken a number of initiatives to promote trust-building and information exchange. Tensions have, however, been raised again recently amid allegations that Russia was responsible for the bombing of a UN aid convoy (Borger and Ackerman, 2016) and with the US-led bombing of Syrian army positions in September 2016 (Millward, 2016).

- **Proxy war between regional actors (e.g. Saudi vs. Iran):** As well as escalating tensions between Russia and the West, the complex religious and ethnic divisions of the Syrian civil war also have ramifications for relations between Sunni, Shia and other Muslim denominations, as well as the wider regional power struggle between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

- **Exacerbation of tensions between Turkey and the Kurds:** While Kurdish Peshmerga units have proven one of the most effective local forces fighting IS, and have received significant international military aid, relations between Turkey and Kurdish organisations have deteriorated significantly. Despite a peace deal signed in 2013, in the past year Turkish forces have launched military strikes against Kurdish positions in Syria and Iraq, prompting concerns over wider escalation (Associated Press, 2015).

- **Anti-access, area denial (A2AD) in Eastern Mediterranean:** As outlined below, a number of regional actors are already developing sophisticated capabilities (e.g. minelaying, submarines, long-range anti-air and anti-ship missiles) which may enable them to deny or limit access to airspace and sea-lanes in the Eastern Mediterranean, or else threaten forward bases such as the UK presence on Cyprus at RAF Akrotiri. The escalation of Russia's involvement in Syria, however, and deployment of the powerful S-400 missile defence system to Latakia threatens a 500,000 km² area of airspace, covering Cyprus, Lebanon and large areas of Israel and Turkey (Marcus, 2015). Collapse of the Syrian regime could lead to further proliferation of anti-ship, anti-air and chemical weapons in the country, with MAN-PADS a particular concern.

Ongoing instability in Libya

Alongside the larger conflict in Syria, Libya has also continued to experience profound instability since the onset of civil war in 2011, which resulted in NATO military intervention and the collapse of Muammar Gaddafi's 40-year rule (NATO, 2015a). Despite

In December 2015, Libya's two main factions agreed to a United Nations-backed deal to form a unity government with a view to ending the conflict.

the fall of Gaddafi's regime and conclusion of NATO's Operation Unified Protector, Libya has been unable to achieve political consensus around a new government, as well as the disarmament of the approximately 1,700 armed groups thought to have emerged since the conflict began. The collapse of Gaddafi's rule in 2011 did not prevent ongoing civil conflict, with rival parliaments and other government institutions established in subsequent years – dividing Libyan territory east-west between Libya Dawn forces loyal to the General National Congress in Tripoli and the internationally recognised House of Representatives in Tobruk. In addition, urban and coastal areas have been contested by a range of significant armed groups while Tuareg and Tobou militia have assumed control of desert regions bordering Algeria, Niger and Chad (see Figure 3).

In December 2015, Libya's two main factions agreed to a United Nations-backed deal to form a unity government with a view to ending the conflict. Rival administrations in Tripoli and Tobruk have both been reluctant to acknowledge its authority, though the new Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj finally relocated to Tripoli in March 2016, where he operates from a secure military headquarters. The long-term prospects for implementation of this new political settlement remain uncertain, however, with a number of parties to the agreement reporting strong concerns that the
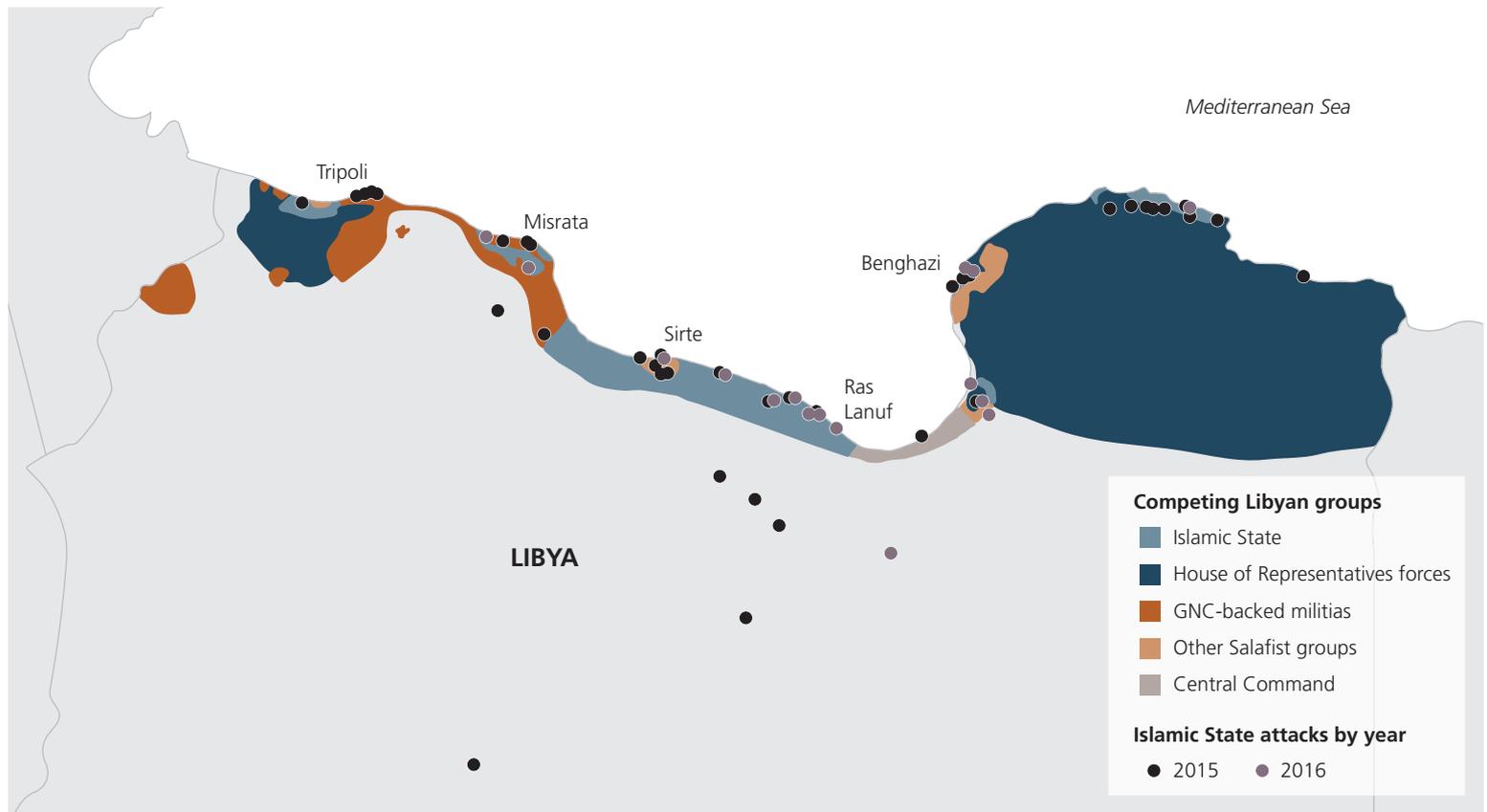
deal had been forced on Libya by external powers (Kingsley, 2015). Particularly uncertain is whether the lead signatories possess the political capital, organisational discipline and military strength needed to enforce the disarmament of Libya's numerous militia and those factions within the new government's own ranks who may be opposed to the deal.

In addition, the country remains beset by a number of Islamist terror groups, split in their affiliations between al-Qaeda and Islamic State. The latter received particular international attention in the summer of 2016, when military units aligned with Libya's UN-backed government clashed with Islamic State forces for control of the central coastal city of Sirte (Lewis, 2016).

Regional and international implications of Libyan instability

This ongoing conflict has become a subject of growing international concern, especially in relation to Libya's wider impact on regional security as a source of looted and illegal arms, a launching point for illegal migration and a safe haven for terrorist groups such as ISIS. The rise of Islamist groups in the country has directly threatened foreign government officials, workers and tourists in the country, with the most high-profile attack resulting in the death of Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens in an assault on the US diplomatic compound in Benghazi in 2012 (Kaphle, 2014). Furthermore, Islamists and other militia groups have seized or destroyed a number of major oil terminals, resulting in a significant fall in production and trade, as well as capturing significant areas of coastal territory that foreign governments fear could become ISIS's new heartland as it endures setbacks in Iraq and Syria. As well as providing a new base from which to conduct information operations and prepare terrorist strikes against Europe or the US, there

Figure 3. Overview of Islamic State attacks in Libya, 2015–2016

Competing Libyan groups
- Islamic State
- House of Representatives forces
- GNC-backed militias
- Other Salafist groups
- Central Command

Islamic State attacks by year
- 2015
- 2016

SOURCE: BBC News (2016d).

is concern that Islamist groups operating in Libya could similarly destabilise neighbouring states such as Tunisia or Egypt – already weakened after the Arab Spring – or else link up with terrorist organisations currently troubling French counter-terrorist operations in the Sahel (BBC News, 2016e).

These multiple threats to Libya's fragile security could also conceivably lead to the disintegration of the Libyan state – either driven from within by insurgency and ongoing disagreements over the legitimacy of the unity government, or else externally imposed by Western and regional powers frustrated at the intractability of Libyan divisions. As with the recent division of Sudan, such a sce-

nario could provoke new tensions, as much as resolve existing ones, and might also require international peacekeepers to maintain a buffer zone between the various successor states or to create safe havens for displaced peoples.

The growing instability has therefore prompted the Libyan government to request EU assistance in the areas of security sector reform, migration, border management and police capacity-building, with plans reported to involve €100 million of EU funding (Wintour, 2016). Meanwhile, the British, French, Italian and US governments are also reported to be considering military intervention options, including a potential deployment of up to 6,000 troops to reinforce and train anti-Islamist forces, on top of those Special Forces already thought to be operating in the country (BBC News, 2016f). Alongside the terrorist threat, the challenge posed by Libyan people smugglers has also provoked the deployment of a 150-strong Royal Marine Special Purpose Task Group from the UK to the Mediterranean – with the hope that Libya's new government will grant permission for EU counter-smuggling operations to work closer to the Libyan coast (Farmer, 2016).

4. Regional threat of terrorist activity

Mapping key terrorist actors across the region
ISIL (Daesh)

It can be argued that the most significant terrorist threat in the wider Mediterranean region emanates from the Islamic State in the Levant (ISIL). The group is also known as the Islamic State (IS), Islamic State of Iraq and al Sham (ISIS – al Sham referring to 'Greater Syria'), or Daesh, a colloquial term used by its regional opponents (Cockburn, 2015).

It can be argued that the most significant terrorist threat in the wider Mediterranean region emanates from the Islamic State in the Levant (ISIL).

The group's origins lie in the al-Qaeda affiliate group, Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), which from April 2010 was led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Around August 2011, following the 'Arab Spring' and the outbreak of conflict in Syria, Baghdadi sent ISI activists under a Syrian deputy, Abu Mohammad al-Julani (or al-Golani), to operate across the border into Syria. Many of those involved were of Syrian origin and as this Syrian based offshoot attracted more local recruits and support, it became established in early 2012 as Jabhat al-Nusra (JN). Still affiliated to the wider al-Qaeda network, it soon gained a reputation as one of the more extreme, active and effective of the Syrian groups opposed to the Assad regime.

In April 2013, Baghdadi attempted to reassert his authority, stating that ISI had been instrumental in establishing JN and that the two would merge to form ISIL. This was rejected by al-Julani and the predominantly Syrian JN, despite intercession by Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of al-Qaeda since the death of Osama bin Laden. Consequently the two groups split, with JN remaining a loyal affiliate to al-Qaeda and Baghdadi breaking from al-Qaeda to form ISIL. Originally Baghdadi travelled to Aleppo, where many non-Syrian 'Foreign Fighters' joined the group. The main base of ISIL is now the Syrian city of Ar-Raqqah.

ISIL came to world attention in June 2014 when the group captured the major city of Mosul in Northern Iraq, renaming itself

Islamic State (IS) to suggest its formation of a cross-border 'Caliphate'. While the actual size of the territory that ISIL holds regularly fluctuates, ISIL still currently occupies and administers significant territory on both sides of the Iraq-Syria border, including major cities and oilfields.

In the immediate Eastern Mediterranean region, the longer-term aim of ISIL is to expand the territory it holds, extending its so-called 'Caliphate' further into Syrian and Iraqi territory. However, it has also received support from terrorist groups further afield, many of which were previously affiliated with al-Qaeda, but have now sworn allegiance to ISIL. These include the predominantly Nigerian based group Boko Haram and the Indonesian Jemaah Islamiya. Consequently, ISIL poses a threat in several major ways to the Mediterranean region. First, ISIL's expansion of territory and control in the region is a threat, particularly should it succeed in expanding into the littoral Syrian province of Latakia and the eastern Mediterranean coastline.

Second, ISIL poses a direct threat to those countries immediately adjacent to or near Syria and Iraq, such as Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Libya and Egyptian Sinai. For instance:

- It has launched attacks in Beirut (in November 2015, 41 were killed in an attack targeting the Shi'ite Muslim community, purportedly because of their support for Hezbollah, which has supported the Assad Regime against ISIL and other opposition groups) (Loveluck, 2015).
- There are concerns that groups supporting ISIL have already been established in the underdeveloped Sunni tribal areas in south and east of Jordan (Middle East Briefing, 2016).
- To the north, Turkey has also suffered from several recent suicide attacks claimed by ISIL. In July 2015, for instance, 33 student activists were killed, while in October over 100 died as a result of a double suicide attack on a peace rally in Ankara (Weise, 2015). In January 2016 a further suicide attack in Istanbul killed ten German nationals (Watts, 2016).
- The bombing of Metrojet Flight 9268 in October 2015 over Egypt killed all 224 predominantly Russian passengers and crew, and was claimed by the ISIL affiliate 'Sinai Province' – previously known as Ansar Bait al-Maqdis.
- In Libya, the overthrow of the Gaddafi regime and the ongoing civil war has spawned a number of Islamist groups and militias including Ansar al-Sharia (widely implicated in the attack on the US Diplomatic Mission in Benghazi in September 2012, which led to the death of Ambassador Stevens and three others (Kirkpatrick et al., 2012).) In late 2014 after the death of the group's leader many of its activists transferred their allegiance to the 'Libya Province' of ISIL, which allegedly has bases in the east, south and around the capital (Schmitt and Kirkpatrick, 2015).

The third way that ISIL poses a threat is through the ideological motivation and/or recruitment of individuals inspired and radicalised by its narratives and propaganda, often via the Internet. This has resulted in numerous attacks by individual 'lone actors' or small self-contained cells in various European, North African, North American and other countries. These tend to conform to their Inghimasi concept of attacks – 'Immersing oneself deep into enemy lines to inflict damage or attain Shahada – martyrdom'. Such 'marauding' attacks include March 2015 attacks in Tunis and the June 2015 attack in Sousse, Tunisia. Most of those involved in the Paris attacks in November 2015 and the Brussels attacks

in March 2016 were of Algerian or Moroccan origin. Some had travelled to Syria and trained and/or fought with ISIL. Islamic State is also thought to have inspired the truck attack that killed 84 people in Nice in July 2016, as well as smaller attacks in Würzburg, Ansbach and Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray.

Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (or Jabhat al-Nusra)

Another important group operating in Syria's civil war is Jabhat Fateh al-Sham – formerly known as Jabhat al-Nusra (JN or 'Victory Front') until July 2016. From February 2014 JN joined other rebel groups in fighting ISIL, in part due to ISIL's brutal treatment of local Syrian civilians and communities. Headquartered in Deir ez-Zor, Syria, JN has historically represented al-Qaeda in Syria, though with its recent rebranding it has sought to distance itself from that organisation – thought to be less an ideological split than an attempt to remove the excuse used by the US-led coalition or Russia to justify strikes against JN forces (Sanchez and Cruickshank, 2016). Since turning against ISIL, JN has become one of the most effective groups fighting the regime of President Assad. It is estimated to number between 10,000 and 12,000, with members dispersed across the country. Around a quarter are believed to be 'foreign fighters', prompting fears that some will return to their countries of origin, posing a significant security threat (Daragahi, 2014).

Jabhat al-Nusra has become one of the most effective groups fighting the regime of President Assad.

Previously linked to JN and believed to be operating in Syria near Aleppo, is a group of veteran international al-Qaeda fighters and bomb makers, which American intelligence agencies call 'The Khorasan Group'. Unlike JN and other groups fighting the Syrian Assad regime, their focus appears to be on targeting Western nations. Given the level of threat it was believed to pose, the group and its bases have been targeted by US air and missile attacks (Philp and Spence, 2014).

Other Syrian Groups

However, while most Western focus has been on threats posed by ISIL and Jabhat al-Nusra, there are many other groups based in Syria that share a similar Jihadi-Salafist ideology and ideological hatred of Western democracies and their allies in the region. These include Jaish al-Islam with approximately 17,000 members, Ahrar al-Sham with around 15,000 and Liwa al-Umma with around 6,000 activists. A recent report has highlighted the concern that if the Western military and political focus is centred specifically on the threat posed by ISIS, these other similarly motivated groups are likely to fill any power vacuum created by its defeat, maintaining a similar level of threat (Centre on Religion and Geopolitics, 2015).

al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

As well as the terrorist threat in the Eastern Mediterranean area, focused mainly on Syria, a further area of concern within the wider region is North Africa. Traditionally, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has operated in Algeria, Morocco and the Sahel area, where along with various offshoots it continues to pose a security threat (Larémont, 2011).

AQIM grew out of the Groupe Islamic Armée (GIA), which emerged during the Algerian Civil War of the early 1990s. During this brutal conflict, the GIA targeted Algerian police and security forces, foreign nationals and civilians loyal to the government. It was this deliberate Takfiri policy of brutality towards local civilians that led Hassan Hattab to splinter from the GIA and form the 'Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat' (GSPC) in 1998 (Rabasa et al., 2006). Later leaders of the GSPC allied with al-Qaeda, changing its name to AQIM and becoming an affiliate in January 2007.

The group has since been involved in kidnappings and attacks on Western tourists and interests in Algeria and wider North Africa. AQIM is estimated to have received between $5 and $10 million for the release of 32 European tourists travelling in the Sahara during 2003. In April 2007, a car bombing in Algiers killed 30. In December of the same year two further car bombs killed 41, including 17 UN employees (Chalk, 2012).

A harsh but effective Algerian counter-terrorist campaign forced AQIM to diversify its base of operations from Algeria into the Sahel desert region, including Niger, Mauritania and Mali. Consequently, the group has active members in all these areas and is also believed to have cells in Libya, Nigeria and Tunisia, where it has been linked to attacks. It has also co-operated with other al-Qaeda linked groups in the wider Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and African regions, including Boko Haram in Nigeria, al-Shabab in Somalia and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), sharing weaponry and funding (Laub and Masters, 2015). As well as raising these funds through kidnapping Western tourists, AQIM is also actively involved in trafficking humans, weaponry, drugs and goods, such as cigarettes.

With its aim of removing Western influence in North Africa and overthrowing regimes in the Mediterranean region deemed to be linked to the West, including Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, AQIM is seen as the primary terrorist threat in North Africa. This was reinforced by its alleged involvement in the attacks on the Radisson Blu hotel, Bamako, Mali in November 2015 and on the Splendid Hotel in Ouagadougou on 15 January 2016. Both are known to be frequented by foreign tourists and officials, many of whom were among the casualties.

Ansar Dine, MUJAO and al–Murabitoun

In addition to AQIM, there are several splinter/affiliate groups that have emerged in the North African area. Linked to AQIM, and active in Northern Mali, is Ansar Dine, which in early 2012, along with AQIM and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) supported the Tuareg tribal rebellion in Mali. By March 2012, Ansar Dine had captured many of the cities in Northern Mali and began implementing strict Sharia law in the areas it had captured. In January 2013, a further rebel advance southwards led the Malian government in Bamako to call for military assistance from France. France responded by deploying forces, which retook the cities and forced AQIM, Ansar Dine and other insurgents north into the more remote mountainous regions. Although these groups no longer pose the same level of threat, they have continued to launch intermittent attacks against UN peacekeeping troops from MINUSMA operating in the region (Laub and Masters, 2015).

A further splinter group from AQIM is al-Murabitoun, established by Mokhtar Belmokhtar, a former commander in AQIM, known as 'Mr Marlboro' because of his fundraising through ciga-

rette smuggling. In December 2012 he left AQIM to form his own organisation, known as al-Mulathameen Brigade and one month later, at the start of 2013 his group launched a major attack and hostage taking at the In Amenas oil facility, Algeria. Though the facility was eventually recaptured by Algerian police and security forces, this was not before the group had killed 39 hostages, including 7 British nationals (Leppard et al., 2013). Four months later, in May 2013, Belmokhtar's group claimed responsibility for two suicide truck bombings against a French owned uranium mine in Arlit and a military base in Agadez, Niger, killing around 30 (Nossiter, 2013). That same month, MUJAO merged with his al-Mulathameen Brigade and the new organisation was named al-Murabitoun. Despite French and UN military operations in the area, the continuing threat was highlighted on 20 November 2015. In an alleged joint attack demonstrating their level of cooperation, al-Murabitoun and an AQIM element took 170 tourists and staff hostage at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Bamako, killing 20 before the building was recaptured (Callimachi and Bulos, 2015).

Radicalisation and the foreign fighters phenomenon

A further major security concern interlinked with terrorism, which extends beyond the Mediterranean region, is the phenomenon of 'foreign fighters'. A significant number of European, North American and other nationals have travelled to take part in the conflicts in Syria and Iraq. While a small number of individuals have joined Kurdish YPG 'People's Protection Units' in the fight against ISIL, the vast majority, inspired and radicalised by Islamist rhetoric, have joined ISIL, Jabhat al-Nusra and similar Jihadi-Salafist groups actively fighting the Assad regime or Iraqi authorities.

Figure 4. Number of foreign fighters in Syria by country
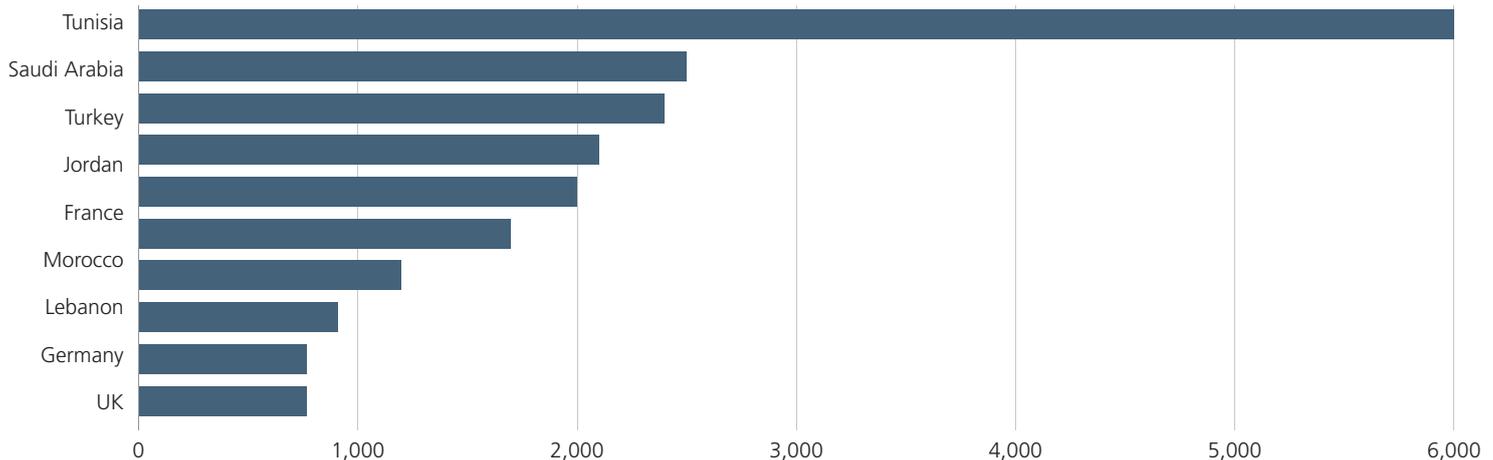
SOURCE: The Soufan Group, BBC News (2016g).

Figure 4 shows that the largest number of nationals of any EU country travelling to fight in Syria emanate from France. However, in proportion to the size of its population, France's smaller neighbour Belgium has the largest percentage of foreign fighters. Outside of Europe, major countries of origin include Tunisia, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. In the case of the United Kingdom, currently the figure is estimated at around 700–800 British nationals and growing. Clearly, due to the covert nature of the phenomenon, it can prove extremely difficult to obtain accurate figures.

Growing pressure from coalition operations against groups such as ISIS are thought to have taken their toll on the flow of foreign fighters in recent months. In April 2016, the US Department of Defense released figures suggesting a 90 per cent decline in the numbers of foreign fighters arriving in Syria and Iraq, down from around 2,000 to only 200 per month (Gibbons-Neff, 2016). The Combating Terrorism Center at West Point has highlighted the growing difficulty of ISIS in compensating its fighters, with recent defectors suggesting many are now on half pay or else have not received salaries in months (Warrick, 2016). Other commentators have suggested that ongoing territorial losses and military setbacks may further undermine ISIS's propaganda narrative and with it the group's ability to attract new recruits (Tierney, 2016).

Growing pressure from coalition operations against groups such as ISIS are thought to have taken their toll on the flow of foreign fighters in recent months

Potential threat

In their detailed overview of foreign fighters, Byman and Shapiro (2014) point out that many do not return to their countries of origin:

- Many die, either in suicide attacks or in combat with Syrian regime forces.
- Many will not return home, but will continue fighting, travelling to the next *Jihad* location.
- Many who travel out become disillusioned and many of those who come back are not violent.
- Others are detected and are arrested or disrupted by police or intelligence services.

However, concerns have been raised at the potential threat posed by returning foreign fighters coming home from Syria or Iraq. Clearly, when/if these individuals return to the communities they previously left behind, they may act as a focus for other likeminded and radicalised individuals. They are also likely to have established contacts and networks with fellow fighters. In addition, foreign fighters may have both 'intent' to commit acts of terrorism, and enhanced capability, drawing on their training and combat experience. Given the 'Darwinian' nature of the conflict in Syria and Iraq, there is also likely to be an element of 'survival of the fittest', with the most capable and skilled individuals being more likely to survive than many impressionable individuals who have already travelled into these conflict areas. Consequently, in the case of returning foreign fighters, given the radicalising effect of being involved in such brutal conflict and their development of the combat skills discussed, they are likely to pose a significant longer-term threat.

Developments in regional defence capability

This section builds on the discussion of terrorist and other security threats (e.g. Syria) outlined above by providing an overview of regional investment in defence capabilities. However, developing military forces can create new challenges of its own, even as it seeks to solve others, with the build-up of new capabilities potentially destabilising the regional security balance, or else provoking a local 'arms race'.

Ongoing operations and capacity-building initiatives

In addition to ongoing military action in Syria, international defence organisations are currently conducting a number of other joint operations to boost security in the Mediterranean region:

- **NATO – Operation Sea Guardian:** At the Warsaw Summit in July 2016, NATO announced a new mission to provide situational awareness, counter trafficking and terrorism, uphold freedom of navigation, and contribute to regional capacity-building in the Mediterranean (NATO, 2016). This follows on from Active Endeavour, a long-running NATO counter-terrorism operation initiated under Article 5 following the 9/11 attacks on the United States. NATO forces track, control and

At the Warsaw Summit in July 2016, NATO announced a new mission to provide situational awareness, counter trafficking and terrorism, uphold freedom of navigation, and contribute to regional capacity-building in the Mediterranean.

protect maritime shipping in the Mediterranean Sea, boarding suspicious vessels and acting to ensure the security of trade. Since 2004, the Operation has also had non-NATO involvement, with support from Mediterranean Dialogue members (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) as well as the wider international community (including Russia in 2006–2007).

- **EUNAVFOR Med – Operation Sophia:** An EU naval mission to neutralise people smuggling routes in the Mediterranean, with assets including the Italian aircraft carrier *ITS Cavour* and eight other European frigates, patrol and support vessels.
- **Frontex – Operation Triton:** Following the conclusion of Italy's Operation Mare Nostrum in 2014, Frontex has been conducting a more limited operation to gather border security intelligence and screen migrants rescued at sea. This has support from 16 European states under Italian leadership, drawing on 2 surveillance aircraft, several warships and a British helicopter carrier (European Commission, 2014).

In addition, a wide variety of bilateral and multilateral initiatives are also underway to promote regional cooperation and develop the capacity of local actors in fragile or smaller states. These include:

- **NATO regional partners:** Through a variety of mechanisms (e.g. political and technical delegations, funding, training, information exchange), NATO cooperates with non-NATO members of the Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (NATO, 2012). In December 2015, NATO also ratified the accession of Montenegro to the Alliance in the first expansion since 2009.

- **European Union missions:** The EU has engaged in a range of missions to support security in the region, including the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) to boost border security in Libya; support to policing and the rule of law in the Palestinian territories (EUPOL COPPS); or the contribution of €75 million to a European Fund for Malta's internal security to provide the small island nation with a naval patrol boat, helicopter and improved border security capability (*Times of Malta*, 2015).
- **5+5 Dialogue in the Western Mediterranean:** Five European (France, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain) and five North African (Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Tunisia) partners are involved in this Mediterranean dialogue, holding regular high-level meetings between defence ministers, coordinating on naval and maritime matters, and cooperating on the 5+5 Defence College (*Times of Malta*, 2015).
- **Bilateral capacity-building:** In addition, a number of countries collaborate on a bilateral basis, through training and military exchange programmes, or extensive US military aid to the region.

The Mediterranean has also recently been host to a number of major joint military exercises, both in an attempt to promote interoperability between allied forces, and to act as a show of force to deter potential aggressors. In November 2015, for instance, more than 30 NATO and allied countries carried out Trident Juncture, NATO's largest military exercise in a decade. This brought together 36,000 personnel, 140 aircraft and 60 ships in a range of exercises

Figure 5. Defence spending in Mediterranean region, 2012–2019 (FY15 prices)
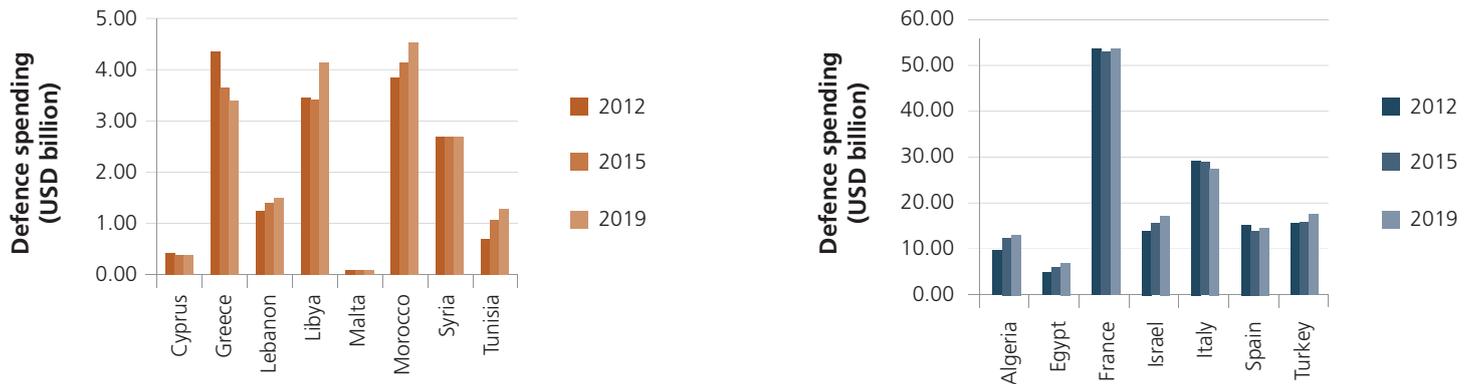
SOURCE: IHS Jane's, RAND analysis (2015). Note the differing scales used on the y-axis.

Figure 6. Past and projected trends in regional defence spending, 2013–2019

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
EU / NATO	0.7%	-1.9%	-1.4%	-1.0%	0.4%	0.9%	0.6%
Other	6.4%	3.6%	4.2%	2.6%	2.3%	2.5%	2.6%
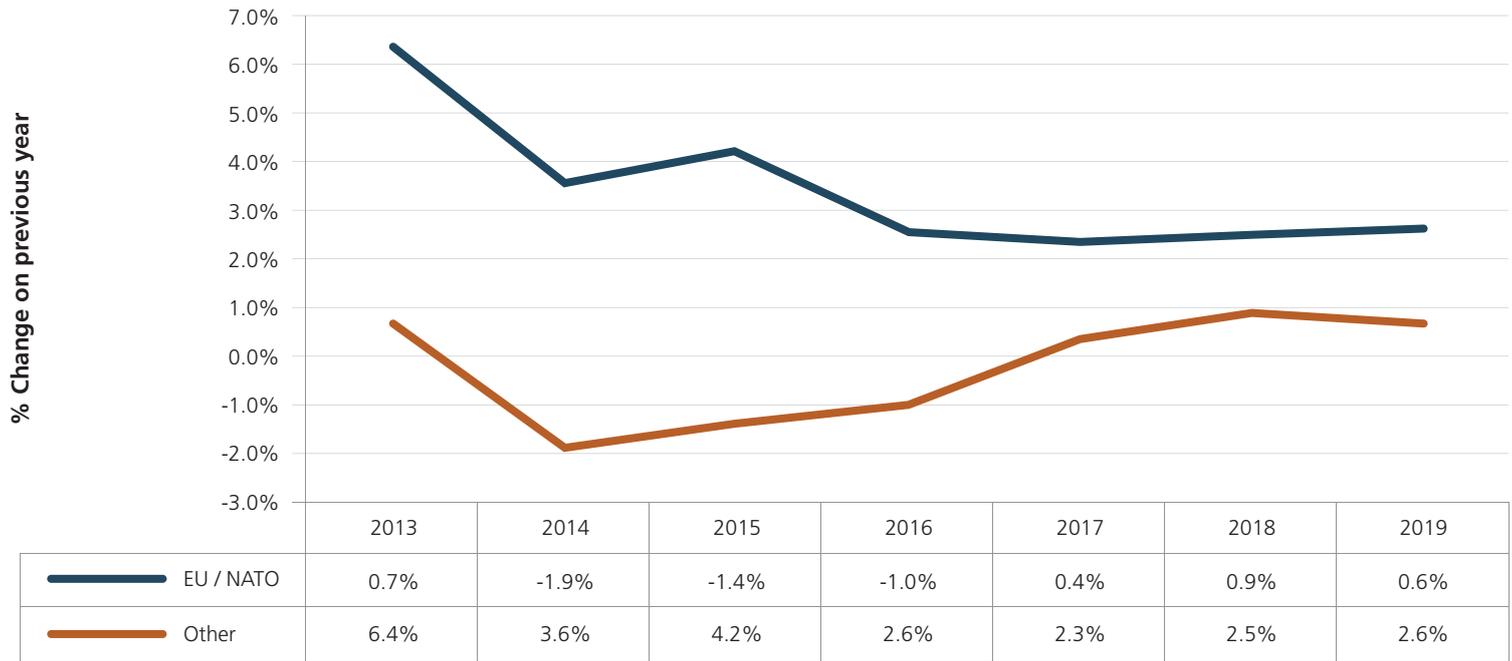
Source: IHS Jane's (2015).

across Italy, Portugal, Spain and the Mediterranean, including amphibious landings and airborne assaults (NATO, 2015b).

Regional defence expenditure and arms transfers

In light of the security concerns outlined above and elsewhere in this report, the nations around the Mediterranean littoral have historically invested significant resources into their military capabilities. While spending is dominated by France (32 per cent) and Italy (18 per cent), who collectively make up just over half of total regional expenditure, the Mediterranean is also home to other significant middle powers such as Israel, Spain and Turkey. Furthermore, Algeria represents Africa's top defence spender, with Egypt also growing its investment out to 2019 (see left-hand chart in Figure 5). By contrast, smaller Mediterranean nations, predominantly those in the Middle East and North Africa, are limited in their financial resources, especially that portion of their budgets available for procuring new capabilities (see right-hand chart in Figure 5).

However, while spending in major European powers continues to outstrip other regional defence budgets by an order of magnitude, defence spending to the north of the Mediterranean has been stagnant in recent years – falling each year 2014–2016 and predicted to grow by less than 1 per cent per annum through to the end of the decade (see Figure 6). By contrast, non-EU and non-NATO countries have been expanding their investments. Tunisia (82 per cent), Egypt (43 per cent) and Algeria (35 per cent) are all predicted to increase their defence spending by a large proportion between 2012 and 2019, while the largest non-NATO spender, Israel is projected to see a budget increase of 23 per cent to over $17 billion. This disparity reflects Middle Eastern and North African states' ongoing concerns over internal and regional insecurity, as well as the need to replace or update ageing equipment, in contrast to fiscal restraint in much of Europe. Whether this will change with the European Union's growing focus on enhancing collective European defence as a response to Britain's vote to leave the EU is as yet uncertain.

While these high-level budget trends may have a long-term impact on the balance of military power in the Mediterranean, more pressing for strategic planners are the potential challenges posed by the acquisition of new, high-end capabilities. Though this report does not seek to outline the full procurement plans of all Mediterranean states, it is important to highlight a number of recent and upcoming programmes that may provoke significant shifts in the military balance of the region:

- **Naval:**
  - Egypt is acquiring helicopter carriers and naval attack helicopters, providing it with a limited expeditionary capability for the first time, as well as mobile sea-bases

While these high-level budget trends may have a long-term impact on the balance of military power in the Mediterranean, more pressing for strategic planners are the potential challenges posed by the acquisition of new, high-end capabilities.

from which to strike internal threats (*Defense Industry Daily*, 2016). In 2015, Egypt also took receipt of an advanced FREMM frigate originally intended for the French Navy. Egypt is also acquiring submarine capability from Germany (*Middle East Eye*, 2015).
- Algeria last year took possession of a new landing platform dock and undertook a modernisation programme for its other such ships. Algeria has also signed a contract for two frigates from Germany with delivery expected in 2016–2018. The deal also involves development of an Algerian shipyard to build two of the vessels. Algeria is expected to receive two submarines from Russia in 2017–2018 that will also possess a mine-laying capability for anti-access missions (IHS Jane's, 2016a).
- Israel is procuring advanced Type 209 submarine capability from Germany (*Middle East Eye*, 2015).
- Italy embarked on a programme to review its naval fleet, including investment in one landing helicopter dock, two special forces support vessels and logistic support (IHS Jane's, 2016c).

- France is proceeding with its Barracuda nuclear attack sub programme (IHS Jane's, 2016b).
- Greece has announced its intention to complete its long-delayed procurement of four Type 214 submarines (IHS Jane's, 2015b).

- **Air:**
    - In July 2015, the Egyptian military took receipt of the first of 24 advanced Rafale fighter aircraft from France. Egypt is also thought to be considering the Russian MiG-35 as a means of diversifying its fleet (IHS Jane's, 2015a).
    - To increase its combat air capability, Algeria recently ordered 12 Su-34 aircraft produced in Russia (Nkala, 2016).
    - Israel (19-75 aircraft) and Italy (90) are both acquiring the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, which offers advanced surveillance, targeting and stealth capabilities, opening the possibility of operating in highly contested or denied airspace (Reuters, 2014).
    - In addition, four Mediterranean states (France, Greece, Italy and Spain, along with Sweden and Switzerland) are involved in the early development of the stealthy NEURON unmanned combat air vehicle (UCAV), with France also running a parallel bilateral programme with the UK (*Defense Industry Daily*, 2015).
    - A number of Mediterranean states are also investing in medium altitude long endurance (MALE) unmanned air vehicles (UAVs), with France, Italy and Spain all soon to operate the MQ-9 Reaper. Additionally, Israel has a long record of indigenous drone development (Stevenson, 2015).

- **Complex weapons:**
    - In July 2015, Spain confirmed receipt of Patriot SAM batteries from Germany (IHS Jane's, 2016d).
    - Algeria is looking to build on its stockpile of advanced S-300 systems with a new contract in November 2015 for the Russian Buk-M2 (IHS Jane's, 2016a).
    - Israel has continued to invest heavily in its Iron Dome and other missile defence systems, especially given the build-up of land attack rockets in Lebanon and Palestine.
    - Turkey has confirmed its intent to acquire an offensive missile capability as a counterbalance to ballistic missiles possessed by Iran, Syria and others (Bekdil, 2016).

The development of these military capabilities brings a number of strategic implications that may have an effect on wider regional security in the Mediterranean. As well as potentially prompting a regional 'arms race' or the deployment of increasingly sophisticated weapons systems that threaten international access to Mediterranean waters, defence procurement also has a strategic, geopolitical

In July 2015, the Egyptian military took receipt of the first of 24 advanced Rafale fighter aircraft from France. Egypt is also thought to be considering the Russian MiG-35 as a means of diversifying its fleet.

and diplomatic dimension. This is reflected in the bonds of interoperability and supply dependency that are created with countries producing critical equipment or materiel – with many Middle Eastern and North African states having traditionally been reliant on Russia to supply and upgrade Soviet-era kit.

In recent years, however, a number of Mediterranean countries have sought to diversify as a means of acquiring greater 'security of supply' and freedom of action. Algeria, for instance, is actively seeking to acquire systems from a variety of producers, while Egypt – traditionally close with both Russian industry and the US, which provides extensive military aid – began in 2015 to cement a new relationship with France, anchored around high-profile procurements of Rafale fighter aircraft, the *Mistral-class* amphibious assault carriers, missiles, Patroller UAVs and other equipment (IHS Jane's, 2015a). A number of Mediterranean nations are also working closely on cooperative development programmes (e.g. NEURON UCAV or European MALE project) or in-service support for common platforms (e.g. F-35 fighter, FREMM frigate), reinforcing political and military ties between these countries.

Access of non-state actors to arms in conflict zones and fragile states

An additional strategic dimension of arms transfers around the Mediterranean littoral is the potential for non-state actors and terrorist groups to acquire military equipment and capabilities. This is of particular concern in conflict zones (e.g. Syria, Libya) and fragile states (e.g. Tunisia, the Sinai), as well as in military institutions with high levels of corruption, limited administrative capacity to track weapons and weak controls on weapons stockpiles (Amnesty International, 2015a). Since 2011, a number of Mediterranean

In recent years a number of Mediterranean countries have sought to diversify as a means of acquiring greater 'security of supply' and freedom of action.

states have undergone regime change, rebellion or open civil war as part of the so-called Arab Spring, with the resultant insecurity weakening the safeguards preventing military-grade arsenals from falling into non-state control.

Libya

Prior to Gaddafi's fall in 2011, the Libyan regime signed extensive arms transfer agreements with European governments as part of a rapprochement with Western powers. This included deals worth $1 billion with European countries and $300 million with Russia in 2005–2008, as well as the signing of a $6.2 billion agreement with French President Nicholas Sarkozy for the planned (but subsequently aborted) sale of Rafale fighter jets, helicopters, ships, combat vehicles and artillery (Salama, 2011).

Following the onset of conflict in Libya in 2011, a panel of experts assembled by the UN Security Council reported that the 'capacity of Libya to physically prevent [illegal] transfers is almost non-existent', with most arms transferred to the country since the outbreak of civil war having ended up with armed non-state groups, either intentionally or through diversion. This includes materiel transferred as part of the European Union Border Assistance Mission (Dilloway et al., 2015). The UN Security Council panel also concluded that the Egyptian government has continued

to transfer heavy equipment such as Russian-made MiG-21 fighter aircraft and Mi-8 helicopters to Libya, while Qatar, Sudan, and the UAE are also under investigation for violating the arms embargo (Dilloway et al., 2015).

Of particular concern to international security actors has been the widespread looting of Libyan stockpiles of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS). In November 2011, a US State Department study suggested found that the Libyan government had acquired 17,546 MANPADS missiles since the 1970s as well as 760 missiles for the Strelets vehicle-mounted system (Small Arms Survey, 2015). Many of these weapons were used or destroyed in the Libyan conflict, or else formed part of the 5,000 secured by multinational weapons-collection teams in 2012. However, estimates for the number of MANPADS still not accounted for fall range from 3,000 to 12,000 (Small Arms Survey, 2015). In October 2013, for instance, Algerian troops discovered a cache on the Libyan border containing 100 anti-aircraft missiles, as well as hundreds of anti-helicopter rockets and rocket-propelled grenades (Chikhi et al., 2013). While almost 90 per cent of Libyan supplies are thought to have been older Russian SA-7b systems, designed only for short-range engagement of low-altitude targets, the proliferation of looted MANPADS still prompts concerns over their potential use against military or civilian aircraft in the Mediterranean region.

Syria

As in the case of Libya, weakened government authority, civil conflict and the supply of arms to local proxies by international actors all represent major concerns in Bashar al-Assad's Syria.

During the 2000s, Syrian defence procurement was hampered by the country's weak economic output and high levels of debt. Despite support from Russia and Iran, the limited availability of finance resulted in the cancellation of a number of planned acquisitions (e.g. a $2.5 billion deal for Su-27 fighters). As a result, the Syrian defence ministry reportedly focused its resources on a few priority areas (e.g. missiles, rockets, anti-tank, air defence) to compensate for shortages or obsolescence of other equipment (e.g. combat aircraft, armour (IHS Jane's, 2015c)). Further complicating matters, the Syrian government was subject to an EU arms embargo between May 2011 and May 2013, though this has since been restricted to only affect shipments of weapons for internal repression (SIPRI, 2011).

However, despite these procurement issues and the battlefield losses experienced since the onset of civil war, Syria remains home to significant amounts of military equipment and materiel – with the threat of non-state actors acquiring these stockpiles posing a wider strategic issue for the Mediterranean region. Of greatest potential concern are systems with a strategic, anti-access or area denial effect:

- **Chemical weapons:** Securing and destroying Syria's stockpile of weapons of mass destruction has been the focus of significant diplomatic and political efforts since more than 1,400 were killed in a chemical attack outside Damascus in 2013 (Warrick, 2013). Though the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) reported an international effort to remove and destroy Syria's entire arsenal in January 2016 (Berlinger, 2016), ISIS forces are thought to have used mustard gas in clashes with other armed groups north of Aleppo in August 2015 (Deutsche, 2015).

- **Ballistic missiles:** The Syrian Army is supported by three Missile Command brigades, with one possessing an estimated 120 SS-1 Scud-C missiles and 20 launchers thought to have been acquired from North Korea in the 1990s. With a 500 km range, these systems are capable of strikes against Turkey, Israel, Jordan and northern Iraq, as well as Cyprus and the UK's Sovereign Base Areas, including RAF Akrotiri. In addition, Syria has deployed unknown numbers of SS-21s, Iranian-produced Fateh-110s and the Chinese DF-15. However, reports suggest 90 per cent of this arsenal may have been expended in strikes on anti-Assad rebels since 2011 (Reuters, 2015b).
- **Anti-ship cruise missiles:** To compensate for the limited capabilities of its small naval force, Syria has acquired a range of shore-, ship- and air-based anti-ship cruise missiles, thought to include the P-800 Yakhont, Kh-13A and AS-17 Kypton from Russia, as well as the Iranian Noor, capable of targeting ships out to a 120 km range.
- **Long-range air defence:** Though the planned receipt of advanced S-300 air defence systems was cancelled in August 2014 following UN sanctions, the Assad government reportedly received subsequent assurances from Russia that this $1 billion sale would go ahead at a future time. Non-state actors have already been able to capture or acquire significant stocks of Syrian man-portable and short-range SAM systems.

In addition, Syria holds a wide array of other conventional weaponry (e.g. an estimated 4,600 main battle tanks, though many are obsolescent or in storage), small arms, explosives and munitions. While a large volume of Syrian arms have been overrun or illegally bought by Islamic State, significant caches have also been captured

Syria holds a wide array of other conventional weaponry (e.g. an estimated 4,600 main battle tanks, though many are obsolescent or in storage), small arms, explosives and munitions.

by other non-state actors, such as Jabhat al-Nusra or the Free Syrian Army. In addition, the US, European and regional powers continue to provide munitions, equipment or other support to anti-government forces – though evidence exists that shipments have also been diverted or intercepted by corrupt individuals or else captured on the battlefield by terror groups such as ISIS (Mazetti and Younes, 2016).

Iraq

Though Iraq does not form part of the Mediterranean littoral, the flow of arms to the country since 2003 has had profound strategic implications for the wider region, especially given the blurred distinctions between recent conflict with ISIS in northern Iraq and the civil war in neighbouring Syria.

While the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 led to the destruction and dismantling of the Ba'athist-era Iraqi armed forces, the country has since been the recipient of large-scale arms transfers from more than 30 countries in support of the rebuilding process and counter-insurgency operations – including supplies from the US, Russia, UK, France and China. In recent years, the recent emergence of ISIS and loss of government control over Iraq's northern provinces have provided additional impetus to defence imports.

Between 2011 and 2013, the US signed contracts for 140 M1A1 Abrams tanks, F-16 fighter aircraft, Hawk anti-aircraft batteries and over 680 Stinger MANPADS (Amnesty International, 2015b), Since coalition airstrikes began against ISIS targets in August 2014, the US government alone has approved more than $5.4 billion in arms transfers to Iraq, including heavy armour, Humvees, small arms, ammunition and logistics support, as well as over 43,000 M4 rifles (Agence France-Presse, 2015). At the same time, a number of Western actors (including Mediterranean powers, France and Italy) have sought to supply arms directly to Kurdish and other non-state forces, in addition to their wider training and technical support (Borger, 2015).

Tunisia

In the case of Tunisia, the collapse of Ben Ali's government led to a 'security vacuum' during which many military and police stockpiles fell into non-state actor control. In addition, ongoing domestic insecurity and political tensions have undermined attempts to stem cross-border flows of arms with Libya and Algeria, integrating Tunisia into a wider network of arms trafficking across the Middle East and North Africa. Since 2013, the Tunisian security forces have reported an increase in seizures of stolen military equipment, including small arms, explosives, large and small calibre ammunition, Tunisian army uniforms and even small numbers of surface-to-air missiles (International Crisis Group, 2013).

Wider region

Since 2014, other regional governments have received US approval for sales of Hellfire missiles (Egypt, Lebanon), anti-tank weapons (Morocco, Lebanon), air-to-air missiles (Turkey) and rockets (Jor-

dan), as well as ground attack aircraft (Lebanon) (Weisberger, 2015). The Israeli Defence Force has expressed particular concern about the large and varied stockpile of rockets and missiles held by Hezbollah, which ranges from unsophisticated, unguided Katyusha rockets through to small numbers of advanced Russian and Iranian anti-ship cruise missiles (Lappin, 2015). During the 2006 Lebanon War, the Israeli Navy corvette *INS Ahi-Hanit* was hit by one such missile – thought to be a Chinese-designed C-802 – resulting in four fatalities and significant damage to the hull and propulsion systems. The Israeli military has accused Iranian Revolutionary Guard advisors of taking part in this Hezbollah attack (Gardner, 2016).

Observations

This RAND Perspective is intended as a primer rather than an analytical report. As such, it does not offer conclusions or recommendations regarding the challenges of this region or potential ways of addressing them. However, from this snapshot and building on the other activities of the Mediterranean Foresight Forum, the RAND team drew a number of observations:

- Many of the defence and security challenges that exist in the region are multi-faceted, long-standing and ingrained. As such, these **challenges defy straightforward resolution**. Addressing the challenges of the region will require political and economic will, holistic thinking and coherent approaches. In respect of many of the region's specific issues, it remains to be seen who would or could take the lead at either a national or an institutional level, which framework would be most appropriate to legitimise any concerted international action and from where the requisite resources might be secured.

- It is apparent that there exist **tensions between short- and longer-term responses.** As has been observed elsewhere, to address the underlying causes of some of the problems in the Mediterranean region would be the work of many years. This would involve the concerted, targeted and evaluated application of substantial financial, political and human resources over time. In all likelihood, the impact of such efforts would not become apparent for decades. In other words, to solve the problems of today, we should either have started 15 years ago or must be prepared to wait 15 years for our initiatives to take full effect. Shorter-term, more readily applicable potential measures may be identified, but in some cases the effects of such short-term initiatives would most likely be confined to tackling the symptoms of problems rather than their underlying causes. Ideally, both short-term and long-term measures would be applied in tandem in order to generate both immediate and sustained effect. There is little evidence, however, that the will exists to undertake commitments on this scale nor, as discussed above, clarity on who would lead or contribute to such efforts.

- Since, as described above, both political will and economic resources are finite, the **question arises whether the priority should be on reinforcing success or tackling the worst of the problems.** For example, should efforts be directed at reinforcing the comparative stability of Tunisia, consolidating its progress towards transition and nurturing its fragile tradition in order to enhance its long-term stability and security as a symbol to the wider region; or should greater priority be given to the situation in Syria or Libya, both in the grip of political,

economic and humanitarian crisis with grave domestic and international implications?

- The actions of external players in the countries of the Mediterranean region, particularly **Russia and the US, represent a significant complicating factor.** As has been observed elsewhere, external actors' decisions and behaviours often reflect wider geopolitical realities, biases or tensions, with the danger being that the region of crisis – far from being the focus of constructive efforts – becomes a pawn in the struggle or the backdrop to a proxy war. In the specific case of the Mediterranean region, there appears to have been limited dialogue on how best the members of the international community, both individually and collectively (including organisations such as the African Union, Arab League and Gulf Cooperation Council), should work together to manage or mitigate the threats and challenges in the region to common gain.

- The gap in the defence capabilities of the countries to the north and south of the Mediterranean is narrowing. In the long term this may **limit freedom of action as historically less capable countries acquire more advanced capabilities.** The defence modernisation programmes of countries such as Egypt and Algeria could change the assumption set regarding operating with or within such countries as they become militarily more capable. This may present challenges and opportunities for interoperability but would also have potential ramifications were a dramatic deterioration in the security situations in such countries to precipitate or require international military engagement there.

- The security situation in the region is evolving rapidly. This is particularly apparent in the shifting sands of the terrorist actors

in the region whose identities, affiliations and allegiances, *modi operandi* and locations seem to mutate regularly. It seems likely that the trajectories of different terrorist groups will continue to be subject to near-continuous change. Given the turmoil that exists in multiple parts of the region, until there is an improvement in the security environment in the region as a whole, it is likely that terrorist entities will continue to enjoy considerable room for manoeuvre. This may be observed in the case of so-called Islamic State. Defeat in one geographic area is likely to represent a blow to the movement but not the end of the movement. Once **expelled from one area, so-called IS and other groups will likely probe for weaknesses else- where.** In some cases this will involve foreign fighters return- ing to their countries of origin. In others, so-called IS fighters will seek to establish a new stronghold elsewhere from which to prosecute and expand their operations.

References

Agence France-Presse. 2015. 'Isis captured 2,300 Humvee armoured vehicles from Iraqi forces in Mosul.' *The Guardian*, 31 May. As of 25 November 2016: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/ jun/01/isis-captured-2300-humvee-armoured-vehicles-from-iraqi-forces-in-mosul

———. 2015a. 'At UN panel, speakers call for end to Syria barrel bombs.' Al Jazeera, 28 September. As of 25 November 2016: http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/9/28/at-un-panel-speakers-call-for-end-to-syria-barrel-bombs.html

———. 2015b. 'Iraq liaises with Syria, Russia and Iran to bomb ISIL.' Al Jazeera, 14 October. As of 25 November 2016: http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/10/iraq-syria-russia-iran-isil-151014061134849.html

———. 2016. 'Russia begins withdrawal of forces from Syria'. Al Jazeera, 15 March 2016. As of 25 November 2016: http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/03/russia-begins-withdrawal-syria-160315071011068.html

Amnesty International. 2015a. 'Taking stock: The arming of the Islamic State.' As of 25 November 2016: https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde14/2812/2015/en/

———. 2015b. 'Islamic State' atrocities fuelled by decades of reckless arms trading.' As of 25 November 2016: https://www.amnesty.org/en/press-releases/2015/12/ islamic-state-atrocities-fuelled-by-decades-of-reckless-arms-trading/

Anderson, Mark. 2015. 'Global cost of conflict reaches $14.3tn, says report.' *The Guardian*, 17 June. As of 25 November 2016: https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/jun/16/ global-cost-conflict-reaches-14tn-says-report

Associated Press. 2015. 'Turkish jets strike Kurds in Iraq, complicating anti-ISIS fight.' *Associated Press*, 25 July. As of 25 November 2016: http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/ turkish-jets-strike-kurds-iraq-complicating-anti-isis-fight-n398276

Barnard, Anne. 2016. 'Death toll from war in Syria now 470,000, group finds.' *New York Times*, 11 February. As of 25 November 2016: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/12/world/middleeast/death-toll-from-war-in-syria-now-470000-group-finds.html?_r=1

BBC News. 2016a. 'Syria: The story of the conflict.' *BBC News*, 11 March. As of 25 November 2016: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26116868

———. 2016b. 'Syria conflict: UK took part in strike that killed government troops.' *BBC News*, 19 September. As of 25 November 2016: http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-37409236

———. 2016c. 'Syria conflict: US accuses Russia of "barbarism" in Aleppo.' *BBC News*, 25 September. As of 25 November 2016: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37468080

———. 2016d. 'Control and crucifixions: Life in Libya under IS.' *BBC News*, 3 February. As of 25 November 2016: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35325072

———. 2016e. 'Obama warns of IS focus on Libya after Iraq and Syria setbacks.' *BBC News*, 14April. As of 25 November 2016: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-36044439

———. 2016f. 'Why is Libya so lawless?' *BBC News*, 14 September. As of 25 November 2016: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-24472322

———. 2016g. 'Islamic State group: The full story.' *BBC News*, 9 March. As of 25 November 2016: http://soufangroup.com/ tsg-report-quoted-in-bbc-news-islamic-state-group-the-full-story/

Bekdil, Burak Ege. 2016. 'Turkey eyes offensive missiles to boost deterrence.' *DefenseNews*, 16 January. As of 25 November 2016: http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/land/weapons/2016/01/16/ turkey-eyes-offensive-missiles-boost-deterrence/78733576/

Berlinger, Joshua. 2016. 'Syria's chemical weapons destroyed, monitoring group says.' CNN, 5 January. As of 25 November 2016: http://www.cnn.com/2016/01/05/middleeast/syria-chemical-weapons/

Borger, Julian. 2015. 'France to send arms to besieged Yazidi community in Iraq.' *The Guardian*, 13 August. As of 27 September 2016: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/13/ france-arms-kurds-isis-iraq-military

———. 2016. 'Russia says ceasefire at risk after US bombing of Syrian troops.' *The Guardian*, 18 September. As of 27 September 2016: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/18/ us-accuses-russia-of-grandstanding-over-deadly-syria-air-strikes

Borger, Julian and Spencer Ackerman. 2016. 'Russian planes dropped bombs that destroyed UN aid convoy, US officials say.' *The Guardian*, 21 September. As of 25 November 2016:
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/20/
un-aid-convoy-attack-syria-us-russia

Borger, Julian & Kareem Shaheen. 2016. 'Aleppo enters second day of bombing in new Syrian army offensive.' *The Guardian*, 23 September. As of 25 November 2016:
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/22/
syria-army-new-aleppo-offensive-ceasefire

Byman, Daniel & Jeremy Shapiro. 2014. *Be afraid. Be a little afraid: The threat of terrorism from Western foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq*. Brookings. As of 25 November 2016:
https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Be-Afraid-web.pdf

Callimachi, Rukmini & Nabih Bulos. 2015. 'Mali hotel attackers are tied to an Algerian Qaeda leader.' *New York Times*, 21 Nov.

Centre on Religion and Geopolitics. 2015. *If the Castle Falls: Ideology and Objectives of the Syrian Rebellion*. London: Tony Blair Faith Foundation. As of 25 November 2016:
http://tonyblairfaithfoundation.org/sites/default/files/If%20the%20Castle%20
Falls.pdf

Chalk, Peter. 2012. *Encyclopedia of Terrorism*. Santa Barbara: ABC – CLIO.

Chikhi, Lamine. 2013. 'Algerian troops find huge arms cache on Libyan border.' Reuters, 24 October. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.reuters.com/article/us-algeria-security-idUSBRE99N0T620131024

Cockburn, Patrick. 2015. *The Rise of Islamic State: ISIS and the New Sunni Revolution*. London: Verso.

Daragahi, Borzou. 2014. 'Syria: A gathering force.' *Financial Times*, 12 February. As of 25 November2016:
https://www.ft.com/content/cae1bf48-9341-11e3-b07c-00144feab7de

Defense Industry Daily. 2015. 'nEUROn & Taranis: Euro FCAS Projects In Flight.' *Defense Industry Daily*, 15 September. As of 25 November 2016:
https://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/
neuron-ucav-project-rolling-down-the-runway-updated-01880/

———. 2016. 'Egypt Buys Mistrals; Kitting Out With KA-52 & KA-52K.' *Defense*

Industry Daily, 21 September. As of 25 November, 2016:
http://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/russia-to-order-french-mistral-lhds-05749/

Deutsche, Anthony, 2015. 'Exclusive: Chemical weapons used by fighters in Syria - sources.' *Reuters*, 6 November. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.reuters.com/article/
us-mideast-crisis-syria-chemicalweapons-idUSKCN0SU2PZ20151106

DeYoung, Karen. 2016. 'U.S., Russia reach deal on cease-fire in Syria.' *Washington Post*, 9 September: As of 25 November 2016:
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/russian-foreign-minister-lavrov-
says-he-was-thinking-of-calling-it-a-day-on-syria-talks-with-the-united-
states/2016/09/09/f37ca320-75ff-11e6-9781-49e591781754_story.html

Dilloway, Simon, Shamin Akhtar, Mohammed Cherkaoui, Khalil Msan, Steven Spittaels & Savannah de Tessières. 2015. 'Letter dated 23 February 2015 from the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1973 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council.' 23 Feb. 2015, p. 28.

European Commission. 2014. 'Frontex Joint Operation "Triton" – Concerted efforts to manage migration in the Central Mediterranean.' Europa.eu, 7 October 2014. As of 25 November 2016:
http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-566_en.htm

Farmer, Ben. 2016. 'Marines head to Med as Britain seeks to tackle Libya migrant smugglers.' *The Telegraph*, 17 April: As of 25 November 2015:
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/04/17/
marines-head-to-med-as-britain-seeks-to-tackle-libya-migrant-smu/

Friedland, Elliot. 2016. 'Who's who in the Syrian civil war.' Clarionproject.org, 2016. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.clarionproject.org/sites/default/files/Clarion%20Project%20
Syrian%20Civil%20War%20Factsheet.pdf

Gardner, Frank. 2006. 'Hezbollah missile threat assessed.' *BBC News*, 3 August. As of 25 November 2016: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5242566.stm

Gibbons-Neff, Thomas. 2016. 'Checkpoint Number of foreign fighters entering Iraq and Syria drops by 90 percent, Pentagon says.' Washington Post, 26 April. As of 25 November 2016:
https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2016/04/26/number-of-
foreign-fighters-entering-iraq-and-syria-drops-by-90-percent-pentagon-says/

Ianchovichina, Elena. 2014. 'The economic impact of the Syrian war and the spread of ISIS: Who loses & how much?' Worldbank.com, 18 December 2014. As of 25 November 2016:
http://blogs.worldbank.org/arabvoices/
economic-impact-syrian-war-and-spread-isis-who-loses-how-much

IHS Jane's. 2015a. 'Egypt: Procurement.' *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – North Africa.*

———. 2015b. 'Greece: Procurement.' *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – Eastern Mediterranean.*

———. 2015c. 'Syria: Procurement.' *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – Eastern Mediterranean.*

———. 2016a. 'Algeria: Procurement.' *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – North Africa.*

———. 2016b. 'France: Procurement.' *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – Western Europe.*

———. 2016c. 'Italy: Procurement.' *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – Western Europe.*

———. 2016d. 'Spain: Procurement.' *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – Western Europe.*

International Crisis Group. 2013. 'Tunisia's borders: Jihadism and Contraband.' *International Crisis Group.* As of 25 November 2016:
https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/tunisia/
tunisia-s-borders-jihadism-and-contraband

Jeavans, Christine. 2014. 'Destroying Syria's chemical weapons.' *BBC News*, 2 July. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-25810934

Kaphle, Anup. 2014. 'Timeline: How the Benghazi attacks played out.' *BBC News*, 28 June. As of 25 November 2016:
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/timeline-how-the-benghazi-attack-played-out/2014/06/17/a5c34e90-f62c-11e3-a3a5-42be35962a52_story.html

Kingsley, Patrick. 2015. 'Libyan politicians sign UN peace deal to unify rival governments.' *The Guardian*, 17 December. As of 25 November 2016:
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/17/
libyan-politicians-sign-un-peace-deal-unify-rival-governments

Kirkpatrick, David. D., Suliman Ali Zway & Kareem Fahim. 2012. 'Attack by fringe group highlights the problem of Libya's militias.' *New York Times*, 15 September. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/16/world/middleeast/attack-by-fringe-group-highlights-the-problem-of-libya-militias.html?_r=0

Kurz, Anat and Shlomo Brom. 2014. *The lessons of operation protective edge.* Ramat Aviv: Institute for National Security Studies.

Lappin, Yaakov. 2015. 'Israeli Navy "assumes" Hizbullah has Yakhont missiles.' IHS Jane's, 1 April. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.janes.com/article/50362/
israeli-navy-assumes-hizbullah-has-yakhont-missiles

Larémont, Ricardo René. 2011. 'Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in the Sahel.' African Security 4. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19392206.2011.628630?scroll=top&needAccess=true

Laub, Zachary & Jonathan Masters. 2015. 'Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).' Cfr.org, 27 March 2015. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.cfr.org/terrorist-organizations-and-networks/
al-qaeda-islamic-maghreb-aqim/p12717

Leppard, David, Makr Hookham & Richard Kerbaj. 2013. 'Five Britons feared dead in bloody desert showdown.' *The Sunday Times*, 20 January. As of 25 November 2016: http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/article1198219.ece

Lewis, Aidan. 2016. 'Libyan forces say Islamic State beaten back in Sirte.' *Reuters*, 30 August. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-idUSKCN114278

Loveluck, Louisa. 2015. 'ISIL claims responsibility in deadliest attack in Beirut since end of civil war kills dozens.' *The Telegraph*, 12 November. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/lebanon/11992262/Isil-suspected-in-deadliest-attack-in-Beirut-since-end-of-civil-war-kills-dozens.html

Marcus, Jonathan. 2015. 'Russia S-400 Syria missile deployment sends robust signal'. *BBC News*, 1 December. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34976537

———. 2016. 'Syria: Russia's continuing war'. *BBC News*, 27 April. As of 25 November 2016: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36138594

Martinez, Luis. 2015. '6,000 airstrikes in Iraq and Syria: A look at the numbers.' *ABC News*, 7 August. As of 25 November 2016:
http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/6000-airstrikes-iraq-syria-numbers/story?id=32956745

Mazetti, Mark & Ali Younes. 2016. 'C.I.A. Arms for Syrian Rebels Supplied Black Market, Officials Say.' *New York Times*, 26 June. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/27/world/middleeast/cia-arms-for-syrian-rebels-supplied-black-market-officials-say.html?_r=0

McKirdy, Euan, Tim Hume & James Masters. 2016. 'Monitoring group: At least 26 die in Aleppo strikes.' *CNN News*, 27 September. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.cnn.com/2016/09/26/middleeast/syria-aleppo-offensive/

Middle East Briefing. 2016. 'ISIL establishes a Base in South Jordan.' Mebriefing.com, 22 September 2016. As of 25 November 2016:
http://mebriefing.com/?p=1666

Middle East Eye. 2015. 'Germany delivers first of four attack submarines to Egypt.' *Middle East Eye*, 24 December. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/germany-delivers-first-four-million-dollar-attack-submarines-egypt-1822200022

Millward, David. 2016. 'UN Security Council meets after US-coalition air strike accidentally kills dozens of Syrian soldiers.' *Telegraph*, 17 September. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/09/17/dozens-of--soldiers-dead-in-accidental--us-led-coalition-strike/

NATO. 2012. 'NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue & Istanbul Cooperation Initiative.' Nato.int, 9 February 2012. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_59419.htm?

———. 2015a. 'NATO and Libya (Archived).' Nato.int, 9 November 2015. As of 25 November 2016: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_71652.htm

———. 2015b. 'Trident Juncture shows NATO capabilities "are real and ready."' Nato.int, 4 November2015. As of 25 November 2016:
http://nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_124265.htm%20

———. 2016. 'NATO steps up efforts to project stability and strengthen partners.' Nato.int, 14 July 2016. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_133804.htm

Nkala, Oskar. 2016. 'Algeria Orders 12 Su-34 "Fullback" Fighter-Bombers from Russia.' DefenseNews, 5 January 2016. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/2016/01/05/algeria-orders-12-su-34-fullback-fighter-bombers-russia/78319912/

Nossiter, Adam. 2013. 'Militant says he is behind attack in Niger.' New York Times, 24 May. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/25/world/africa/militant-says-he-is-behind-fatal-niger-attack.html

Philp, Catherine & Matt Spence. 2014. 'Bombmaker convert dies in American missile strike.' *Times*, 7 Nov. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/middleeast/article4259989.ece

Rabasa, Angel, Peter Chalk, Kim Cragin, Sara A. Daly, Heather S. Gregg, Theodore W. Karasik, Kevin A. O'Brien & William Rosenau. 2006. *Beyond al-Qaeda. Part 1: The Global Jihadist Movement*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG429.html

Reuters. 2014. 'The 11 countries expected to buy F-35 fighter jet.' *Reuters*, 6 June. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.reuters.com/article/us-lockheed-martin-canada-f35-orders-idUSKBN0EG2XD20140606

———. 2015b. 'Israel says 90 pct of Syria's ballistic missiles used up on rebels.' *Reuters*, 18 November. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.reuters.com/article/mideast-crisis-syria-missiles-idUSL8N13D4M220151118

Salama, Vivian. 2011. 'Qaddafi military spending below Sweden, leaves authority gap.' *Bloomberg*, 2 March. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2011-03-01/qaddafi-military-spending-below-sweden-s-leaves-authority-gap

Sanchez, Ray & Paul Cruickshank. 2016. 'Syria's al-Nusra rebrands and cuts ties with al Qaeda.' CNN News, 1 August. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.cnn.com/2016/07/28/middleeast/al-nusra-al-qaeda-split/

Schmitt, Eric & David D. Kirkpatrick. 2015. 'Islamic State sprouting limbs beyond its base.' *New York Times*, 14 February. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.nytims.com/2015/02/15/world/middleeast/islamic-state-sprouting-limbs-beyond-mideast.html?_r=0

Sellström, Åke, Scott Cairns & Maurizio Barbeschi. 2013. 'Report of the United Nations Mission to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic on the alleged use of chemical weapons in the Ghouta area of Damascus on 21 August 2013', United Nations, 18 Sep. 2013.

SIPRI. 2011. 'EU arms embargo on Syria.' As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.sipri.org/databases/embargoes/eu_arms_embargoes/syria_LAS/eu-embargo-on-Syria

Small Arms Survey. 2015. 'Missing missiles: The proliferation of man-portable air defence systems in North Africa.' Small Arms Survey. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/G-Issue-briefs/SAS-SANA-IB2-Missing-Missiles.pdf

Stevenson, Beth. 2015. 'Spain reveals plans for armed MQ-9.' *FlightGlobal*, 24 November. As of 25 November 2016:
https://www.flightglobal.com/news/articles/spain-reveals-plans-for-armed-mq-9-419317/

Taylor, Adam. 2015. 'Saudi Arabia's 'Islamic military alliance' against terrorism makes no sense.' *Washington Post*, 17 December. As of 25 November 2016:
https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/12/17/saudi-arabias-islamic-military-alliance-against-terrorism-makes-no-sense/

Tierney, Dominic. 2016. 'ISIS and the 'loser effect.''' *Atlantic*, 28 April. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/04/is-isis-losing/480336/

Times of Malta. 2015. '€100m fund to beef up Malta's security.' *Times of Malta*, 16 November.

United Nations Security Council. 2015. 'Alarmed by continuing Syria crisis, Security Council affirms its support for Special Envoy's approach in moving political solution forward'. Un.org, 17 August 2015. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12008.doc.htm

Warrick, Joby. 2013. 'More than 1,400 killed in Syrian chemical weapons attack, U.S. says.' *Washington Post*, 30 August. As of 25 November 2016:
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/nearly-1500-killed-in-syrian-chemical-weapons-attack-us-says/2013/08/30/b2864662-1196-11e3-85b6-d27422650fd5_story.html

———. 2016. 'Cash-strapped ISIS offers $50 a month to fighters — but more if they own sex slaves.' Washington Post, 22 April. As of 25 November 2016:
https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2016/04/22/cash-strapped-isis-offers-50-a-month-to-fighters-but-more-if-they-own-sex-slaves/

Watts, Joseph. 2016. 'Carnage as huge explosion tears through popular tourist district in Istanbul.' *Evening Standard*, 12 January.

Weise, Zia. 2015. 'We were singing, then the bombs hit.' *Sunday Times*, 11 October.

Weisgerber, Marcus. 2015. 'The ISIS fight is reshaping US arms exports to its partners.' *DefenseOne*, 3 December. As of 25 November 2016:
http://www.defenseone.com/business/2015/12/isis-fight-reshaping-us-arms-exports-its-partners/124161/

Wintour, Patrick. 2016. 'Libya offered security help by European Union.' *The Guardian*, 19 April. As of 25 November 2016:
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/19/libya-offered-security-help-by-european-union-fayez-seraj

Mediterranean Foresight Forum

Giacomo Persi Paoli (giacomo_persi_paoli@rand.org) is a research leader at RAND Europe and project lead for the Mediterranean Foresight Forum. A former Italian Navy warfare officer, his research spans a wide range of issues including counterterrorism, maritime security, border security, arms control and defence market analysis.

Rich Warnes (richard_warnes@rand.org) is an analyst at RAND Europe in the DSI research group. With prior experience in the Metropolitan Police and British Army, his research focuses on counterterrorism, insurgency, human factors, military strategy, policing, and international relief and human rights.

About the Mediterranean Foresight Forum

About the Authors

James Black (james_black@rand.org) is an analyst at RAND Europe in the Defence, Security and Infrastructure (DSI) research group. His work focuses primarily on UK and European defence strategy, futures studies, emerging security and technology trends, and acquisition and defence industrial base issues.

Alexandra Hall (alexandra_hall@rand.org) is a research leader at RAND Europe in the DSI research group, where her work spans a diverse range of defence and security subjects including strategic-level analysis of the contemporary and future operating environment, international relations, geopolitical risk, insurgency and counterterrorism.

RAND EUROPE

www.randeurope.org