

ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K)



OVERVIEW

AS OF JUNE 2026

One of ISIS's most lethal branches, ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K) has killed or injured hundreds of people in mass-casualty attacks in Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, and Russia. In 2024 and 2025, the branch plotted attacks against targets in Europe that were later disrupted, and in 2025, ISIS-K leaders voiced support for attacks in the United States. The branch also attacked US military personnel before US forces withdrew from Afghanistan.

ISIS-K was formed in 2015 by members of other militant groups—including Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan—who pledged allegiance to ISIS. The branch aspires to establish a province in ISIS's self-proclaimed caliphate by controlling territory in “the Khorasan,” referring to Afghanistan and parts of Pakistan, Central Asia, and Iran. ISIS-K uses its media to call for attacks, solicit donations, and recruit new members. The branch obtains funding from donations and criminal activity.

Operating Areas

Afghanistan and Pakistan

Tactics And Targets

ISIS-K conducts ambushes, military-style assaults, targeted killings, and bombings primarily using small arms, light and heavy machineguns, rockets, improvised explosive devices, and suicide bombers. ISIS-K primarily targets the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Pakistani Government, and religious and ethnic minorities. The branch has also pursued external operations through lone-actor or coordinated attacks. ISIS-K seeks to promote sectarian violence and local instability, and the branch exploits poor economic conditions and social divisions to attract members.

Terrorist Group Designation

The US State Department designated ISIS-K as a foreign terrorist organization in January 2016. Sanaullah Ghafari, who has been the branch's amir since June 2020, was named a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in November 2021.

KEY LEADERS



Sanaullah Ghafari

a.k.a. Shahab al-Muhajir

Amir



ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K) *(continued)*

NOTABLE ATTACKS

19 January 2026

Kabul, Afghanistan

ISIS-K conducts a suicide bombing against a Chinese restaurant, killing seven people and wounding 13.

11 December 2024

Kabul, Afghanistan

ISIS-K conducts a suicide bombing in Kabul, killing Khalil Haqqanni, the Minister for Refugees of Afghanistan, and six others.

22 March 2024

Moscow, Russia

Four ISIS-K members attack a concert hall in Moscow, killing at least 144 people and wounding more than 500.

3 January 2024

Kerman, Iran

ISIS-K conducts a bombing against a commemorative ceremony for deceased Iranian IRGC-QF leader Qassim Soleimani, killing more than 80 people.

29 July 2023

Khar, Pakistan

ISIS-K conducts a suicide bombing at a political rally, killing 63 people and wounding 123.

4 March 2022

Peshawar, Pakistan

ISIS-K conducts a suicide bombing at a Shia mosque, killing at least 56 civilians and wounding 194.

26 August 2021

Kabul, Afghanistan

ISIS-K kills 13 US servicemembers and more than 170 civilians in an attack outside the Kabul International Airport.

18 August 2019

Kabul, Afghanistan

ISIS-K attacks a wedding reception, killing more than 60 civilians and injuring more than 180.

