

## The Emergence and Growth of ISIS in Bangladesh

### Executive Summary

Bangladesh has seen a steady increase in attacks linked to radical Islamic terrorism over the past few years. While the government is technically correct to label the attacks as home-grown rather than transnational in nature, such a conclusion ignores the relationships local terrorist organizations maintain with transnational jihadist networks, particularly Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh's (JMB) identity as a local affiliate of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

This report examines the growth, activities, organizational structure, and threat trajectory of terrorist groups in Bangladesh, focusing on ISIS and JMB.

#### Key findings include:

- **The terrorist threat in Bangladesh is greater than generally acknowledged.** The government has neutralized many of the highly-connected terrorists, but the large number of known terrorists missing or absconding indicates a serious intelligence gap in terms of the strength and spread of these networks. Experience in other regions shows that the known terrorists are only the tip of the iceberg, with the majority of jihadists still running free.
- Tamim Ahmed Chowdhury (Mr. TAC), the now-deceased emir of ISIS in Bangladesh, was directly involved in the group's operational planning in Bangladesh. As formally-appointed emir, he likely received instructions from the ISIS external operations department in Raqqa, Syria, indicating that **the activities carried out in Bangladesh had direct approval from ISIS headquarters.**
- ISIS activity in Bangladesh is centered in Dhaka and interspersed across the northwestern and western parts of the country.
- The command structure of ISIS in Bangladesh follows a "pool matrix system," with sleeper pools operating independently from their parent organizations. Several localized pools of 20-30 personnel each fall under the leadership of regional pools, which in turn serve as units of larger combined regional pools and combined inter-regional pools. **This structure facilitates logistics, minimizes the need for detectable communications, reduces the possibility of infiltration, and enables smooth leadership transition.**
- The intelligence structure of jihadists in Bangladesh follows the pool matrix command structure. Specific tasks are assigned to specific support personnel, ensuring that **everyone involved in intelligence gathering has just one piece of the jigsaw puzzle, with only the commander having access to the complete picture.**

*To access the full report click here: <http://bit.ly/ISSRiskBangladesh>*