



# The Targeting of Aid Workers in Nigeria

## Objectives, Messages and Causes

September 2020



Data Insight is a platform for data and information collection and analysis to understand data trends in a scientific and innovative way, using big data analysis tools and artificial intelligence technologies that aim at:

- Concluding trends and predicting their growth in the near future.
- Outlining final results models.
- Presenting data in a visual and simplified way.
- Supporting strategic and executive decision making.



An independent institution specializing in information management and conducting studies and research related to the Syrian political and social affairs in particular and the Middle East region in general. We aim to build bridges with officials and decision makers in various state fields and developing sectors to help them make balanced decisions related to regional issues by providing them with accurate, detailed and professional data and reports.

# Index

Introduction.....	4
ISIS Targeting Aid Workers in Nigeria .....	5
Significance of Place and Time. ....	7
Proclaimed Reasons.....	8
Insights and Analysis.....	9
Recommendations.....	10
Conclusion.....	11
Accessories.....	12

## Introduction

Armed groups around the world, irrespective of their different ideologies, use kidnapping and kidnapping for ransom as a method to achieve one of the following goals :

**First:** to obtain funding in the form of the ransom money paid in exchange for the release of the kidnapped hostages.

**Second:** to secure non-financial gains such prisoners swap, using kidnappings to put pressure on governments involved in military acts by taking their citizens as hostages, or to withdraw from alliances in exchange for the release of hostages.

**Third:** to control foreign organizations to force them to implement certain agendas requested by the kidnappers, or with the aim of preventing their arrival to region as a means to stop any foreign infiltrations and ensure full control over the local population.

**Fourth:** to access to the media attention and highlight specific issues.

ISIS's aims from kidnapping aid workers centrize around obtaining fund for its operations or as a form of propaganda for the organization. ISIS includes this goal in its propaganda to prove it is consistent in its principles to fight "the West and infidel states and their client regimes." The organization relies on this propaganda to recruit new member and spread terror among the ranks of other organizations operating in locations close to its operation, thereby prompting them to negotiate with ISIS and agree to support the organization in some form.

ISIS also approaches kidnapping as a symbolic and media victory against the parties that fight it, uses it to achieve prisoner exchange for ISIS detainees or to fulfill other objectives such as imposing a ceasefire or stopping a military campaign against the areas under its control.

ISIS's approach to kidnapping has made it an influential actor in conflict areas as it imposes itself as an authority that must be dealt with to ensure that humanitarian relief aid reaches affected and vulnerable populations.

Under these circumstances, ISIS and other jihadist groups dictate certain conditions to the organizations including: removing slogans from the aid; preventing organizations from reaching the required locations; requiring organizations to deliver aid to the extremist parties themselves so they distribute it according to their calculations, among other demands.

Organizations' compliance with these demands is an indicator the Jihadist groups have successfully rendered their organizations as effective actors, outside of the state, whose areas can only be accessed by dealing with them.

## ISIS Targeting Aid Workers in Nigeria

At the end of 2015, Boko Haram pledged allegiance to ISIS, but the dispute that arose between Abu Bakr Shikawa and Abu Musab al-Barnawi prompted ISIS's general leadership to appoint Abu Musab al-Barnawi as the Emir and leader of the organization's branch in West Africa in July 2016.

Al-Barnawi's<sup>1</sup> message was very brief: the organization will target workers in European aid and charitable organizations, because they "seek to evangelize Nigerian society, exploit those who have been displaced by the war, provide them with food and shelter, and then convert their children."

Several operations and incidents were carried out subsequently which resulted in the kidnapping and execution of many aid workers, for example:

On March 01, 2018, a large ISIS force stormed the Rann camp, which is overseen by international relief organizations, and entered tents inhabited by aid workers and shot them.

The force killed two people from the International Organization for Migration, who were sent to work as camp managers, a doctor who works as a consultant for UNICEF, and kidnapped: Hawa Layman, a midwife working with the International Committee of the Red Cross, Sephora Khorsa, a nurse who works with the International Committee of the Red Cross, and Alice Loksha, a nurse who works with UNICEF.

Following their kidnapping, ISIS demanded 1 million USD be paid as

ransom for each of them.

However, Nigeria and the organizations that the kidnapped women work with refused to make the payment. ISIS forces executed Layman and Khorsa even though they were Muslim based on their work with infidel organizations. Alice remained hostage and it was later announced that she has become the property of ISIS, a slave, and her fate along with that of several other women who are held as slaves remains unknown.



A vehicle used by UN staff destroyed when militants attacked a humanitarian hub in Ngala in northeast Nigeria's Borno state on January 20, 2020

<sup>1</sup> In a conversation with him in Al-Anba magazine (No.41), dated August 02, 2016

On July 18, 2019, ISIS attacked a vehicle carrying Action Against Hunger aid workers near Medjuri, the capital of Borno state, killing the driver and kidnapping the six persons who were in the vehicle.

There were two drivers, an employee working for Action Against Hunger and three Nigerian Ministry of Health employees, who were Nigerian citizens. They were taken to an unknown location where ISIS executed one of the Action Against Hunger employees on September 24, 2019.<sup>2</sup>

It is believed that the aid organization refused to meet ISIS's ransom demands. ISIS announced that four of the aid workers were executed on December 14, 2019 while the last remaining employee's fate is still unknown.<sup>3</sup>

On June 29, 2020, ISIS released a video showing four aid workers and a private security worker.

Three hostages stated their names in the video and said that they work for various humanitarian organizations, such as Action Against Hunger, the International Rescue Committee, and Reach while the latter was working in the government emergency management agency. On July 23, 2020, ISIS broadcasted a video showing these volunteers and the security worker being shot.

A statement explaining the reasons for their execution followed, stating that they were killed for their work with "missionary and intelligence organizations and cooperating with the apostate Nigerian government".



The United Nations demands the release of 3 aid workers kidnapped by Boko Haram  
Image source: Google

1 F24 news, "Group affiliated to the Islamic State execute Relief Worker held hostage," available via this link: <https://bit.ly/31ucg2l>

2 F24 News, "Armed group announce the killing of 4 hostages in Nigeria", available via this link: <https://bit.ly/3b0bXA3>

## Significance of Place and Time

On July 23, 2020, ISIS carried out the execution after the donors refused to pay a ransom of 500,000 USD for each hostage, according to some reports, or release ISIS members detained in Nigerian prisons.

The negative response prompted ISIS to execute the hostages.

The execution came a week after attacks in northeastern Nigeria, southern and western Chad against the coalition between the two countries escalated in the face of their joining forces against ISIS.

ISIS carried out the execution in the Monguno region near the town of Malem Ftouri in the northeast of Borno state.

The organization controls this region extending all the way to the eastern border with Lake Chad, an area with difficult terrain as it is formed of swamps and isolated islands and densely wooded nature. The area remains an ISIS stronghold despite the continuous campaigns against the organizations for months.

The organization's choice of when to carry out the execution indicates it aimed to increase the popular and international anger against the governments of Chad and Nigeria, which have accomplished nothing tangible in their efforts to confront ISIS expansion in northern Nigeria and southern Chad. The move aims to hold them responsible for the execution of the international organization volunteers, they are believed to be

local volunteers.

It is possible that there will be an increase in the attacks against these actors in the coming period.

The executions were also carried out during the height of the military operations against ISIS, whereby the executions were caused by governments' military campaigns as well as their failure to negotiate with ISIS.



Al-Qaeda members began to infiltrate the northwestern part of Nigeria.  
Image source: Akewusolaf

## Proclaimed Reasons

The organization indicated in both issues 244 and 247 of al-Anba newspaper the overall reasons that prompted it to carry out the execution operation, namely:

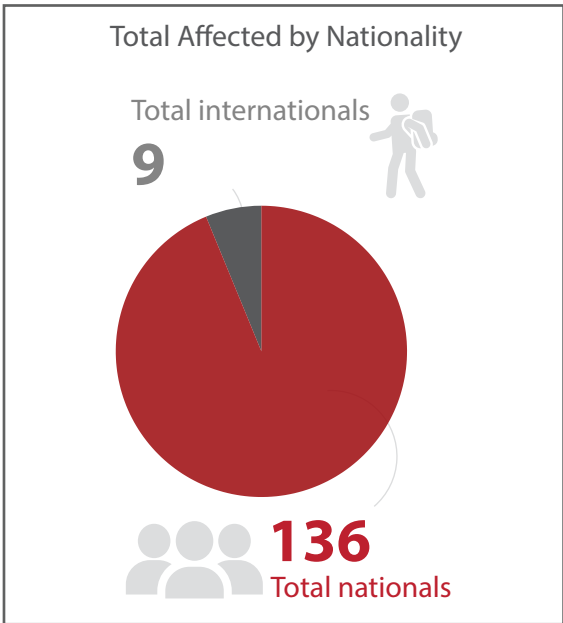
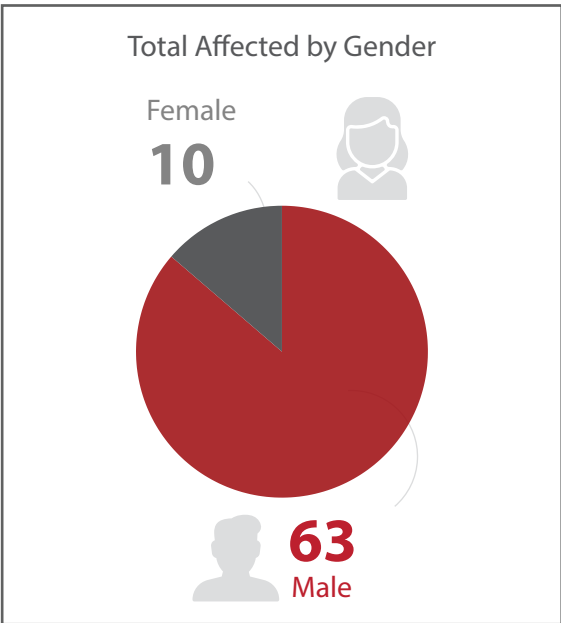
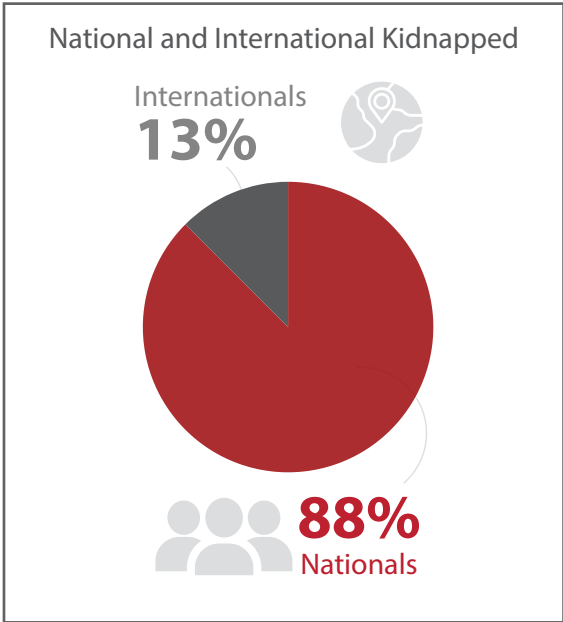
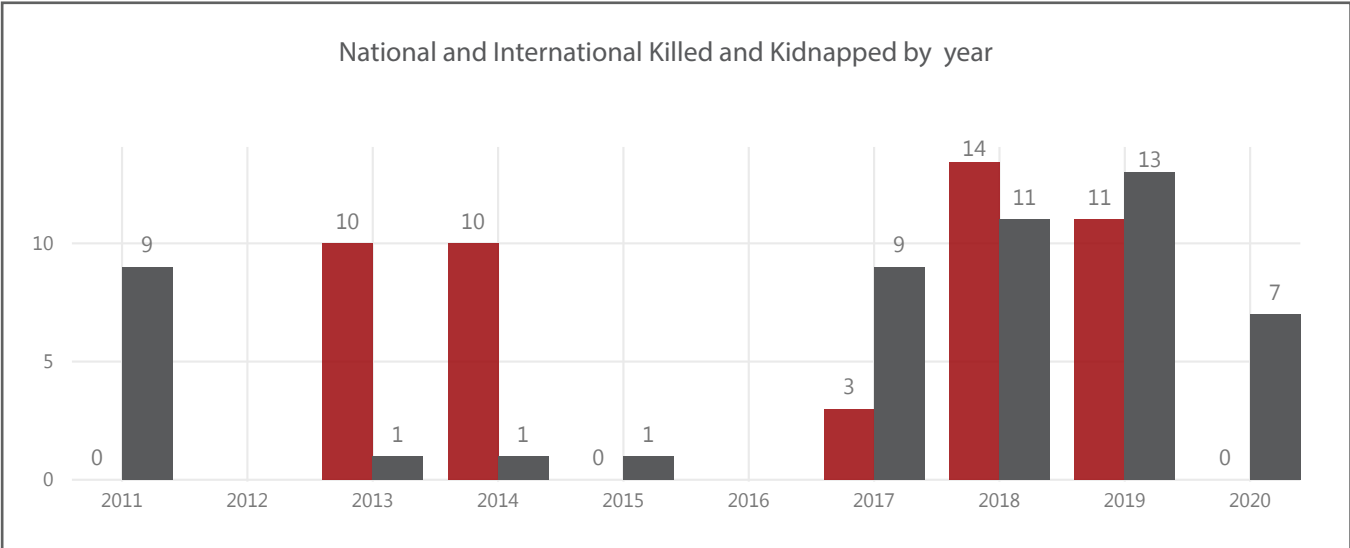
- The volunteers in the international organizations working to spread Christianity among the displaced Muslim population.
- These organizations support the Nigerian government in brainwashing the displaced through anti-extremism programs and call on people to support the government against the jihadists.
- Fulfilling the promise made by ISIS to protect Muslims' beliefs and homes against "the Crusaders" and "tyrannical" rulers.

## Insights and Analysis

*According to the Aid Worker Security Database, ISIS and its affiliated groups conducted 29 incidents since 2000, as a result 145 aid workers (national and international) were affected by these attacks, and 48 of them were kidnapped while 52 of them lost their lives. And although countries like Afghanistan and South Sudan came first with number of incidents against aid workers, but ISIS is more active in Nigeria and Syria with 12 and 10 incidents respectively.*

*it is noteworthy, that ISIS came third in number of attacks against aid workers (after Al Qaeda and Russian\Syrian Military Coalition), moreover, ISIS tends more to attack the national aid workers as they are consider as soft targets, where the percentage between national and international staff for ISIS attacks is 15.1% while this percentage increase into 37.6% for Al Qaeda attacks*





## Recommendations

Although it may not be the first ISIS's threat against humanitarian organizations, however, it is advised to consider this threat seriously, since the lack or the absence of a centralized administration or chain of command of ISIS may give ISIS members and cells a flexible margin to conduct attacks and operations in line with the last announcement. As such, the following mitigations and measures are recommended to be considered:

- 1 Conduct a comprehensive security assessment of the areas to detriment and categorize; level of risk, the required protection and deterrence measures, as well as the emergency response.
- 2 Update the security plans on the geographic level considering the latest threat as a potential risk factor.
- 3 Revise the plans and policies regarding the movement and transportation of staff, national and international.
- 4 Revise the relevant policies and plans that include sending international staff to the field at the levels of countries, governorates (provincials) and districts.
- 5 Revise the social media and sensitive information policies to ensure that confidentiality of the staff movements and locations.
- 6 Revise the branding policy of the organization including the logos of the organizations and the donors, either on the vehicles, facilities or employees' attire especially in the high risk areas.
- 7 Update the Duty of Care policy for employees in the high risk areas

## Conclusion

The jihadist organizations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Algeria leading up to ISIS in its various regions, have relied on the kidnapping of journalists, aid workers and other figures for multiple purposes, most notably obtaining ransom money to finance their organizations, or to achieve other political and moral goals, such as the release of detainees.

ISIS, and other jihadist organizations, focus on targeting international organizations that have complex connections with governments and international organizations for several reasons, the most important is these groups' imposing themselves as key actors in conflict zones. Kidnapping is a means to achieve certain material, political or moral goals, such as gaining the release of detainees, obtaining some relief and logistical materials to support its activities or gaining some money in exchange for the continued operation of the relief organizations.

In addition, the organization relied on using its relationships with the relief organizations to put pressure to stop or impose a truce during the military campaigns waged against it.

Nevertheless the mentioned event occurred in Nigeria, but the declaration concerning the legitimacy of targeting aid workers in international organizations and United Nations may encourage ISIS members and cells in various regions to carry out attacks against those workers.

On the other hand, this announcement may be considered as a justification for any party or person to carry out hostile actions against aid workers in the areas of ISIS's operations and presence then claim the responsibility to ISIS, thereby, making use of this declaration.

It is the duty of donors and international and local organizations to make greater effort and increase the funding available to ensure the safety and security of aid workers in the affected areas.

# APPENDICES

**I** **Analysis of ISIS Attacks against  
Aid Workers since 2000**

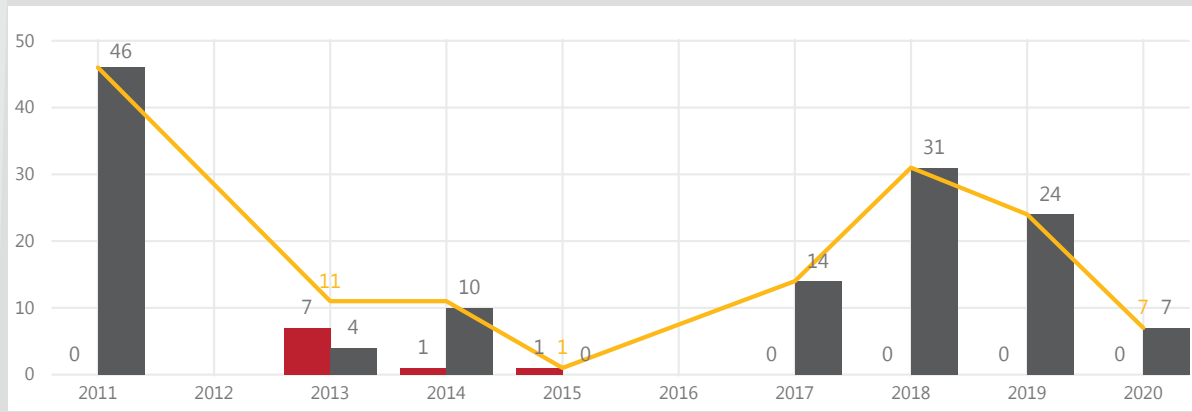
**II** **Aid Workers Incidents  
Analysis since 2000**

Appendix I

# Analysis of ISIS Attacks against Aid Workers since 2000

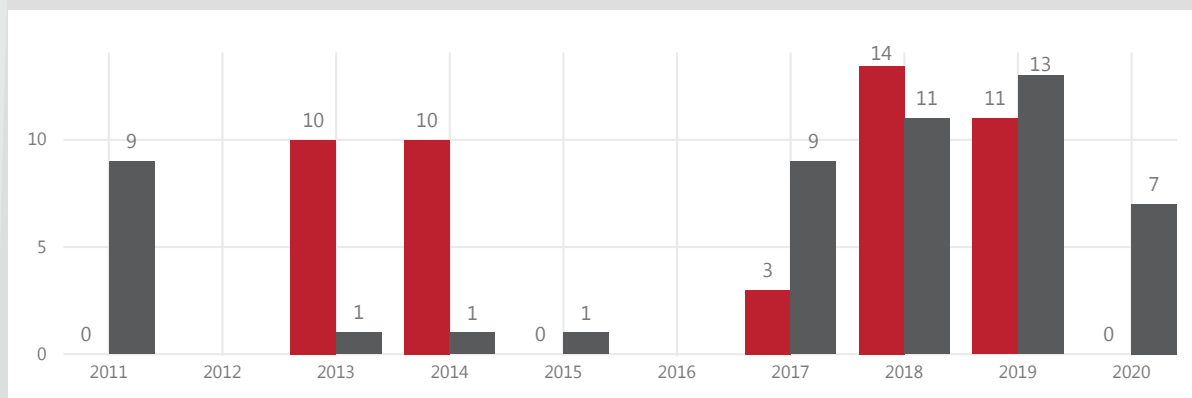
National and International Affected by Year

Total internationals Total nationlas Total affected

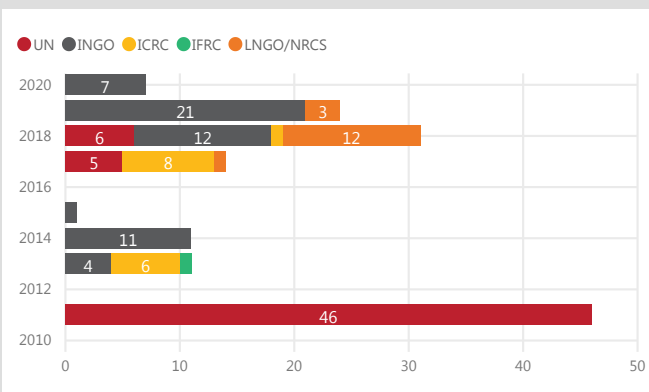


National and International Killed and Kidnapped by year

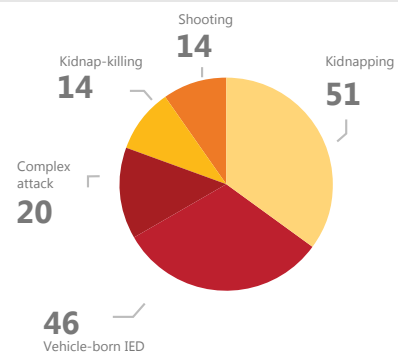
National kidnapped National killed



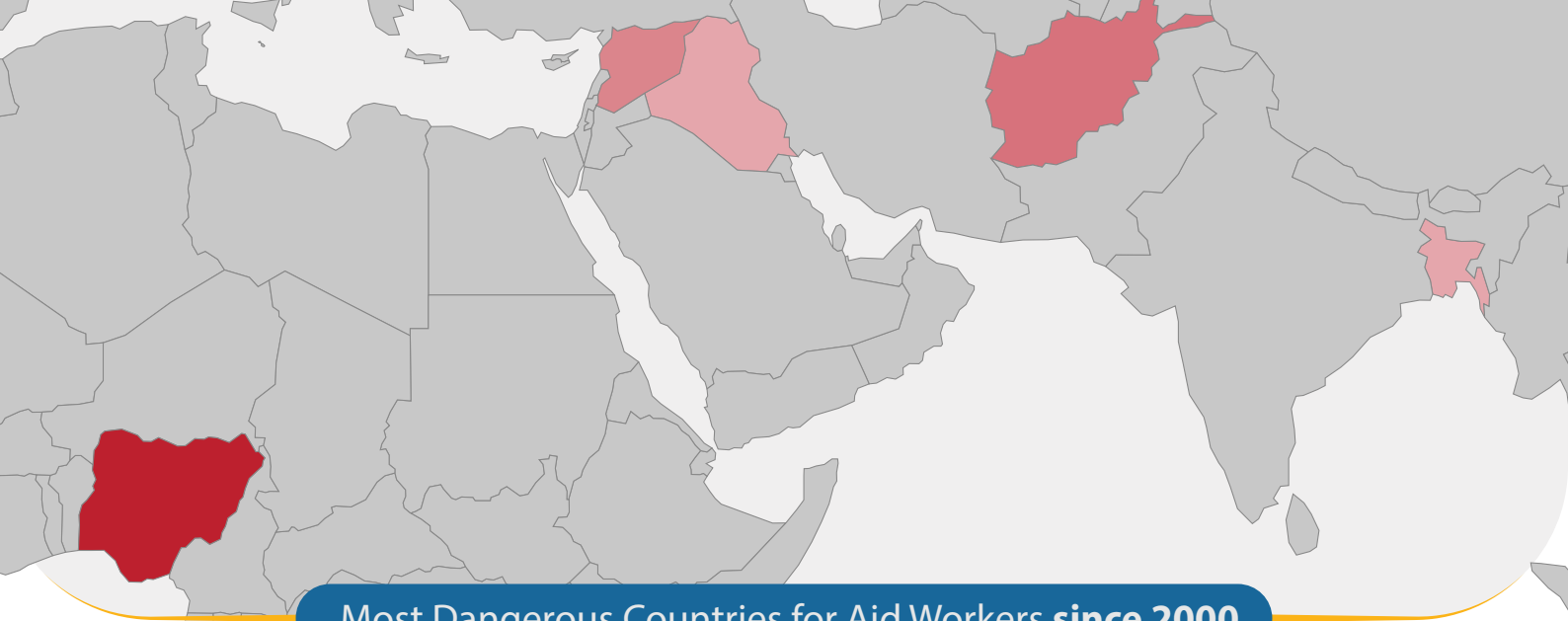
National and International Affected by Organization



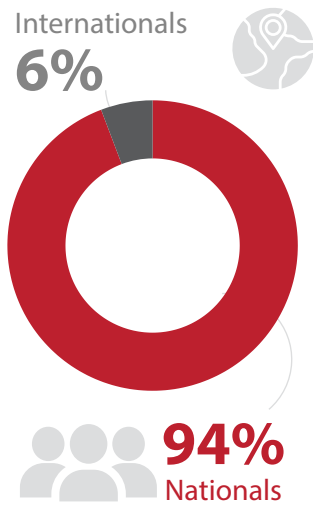
Top 5 Means of Attack



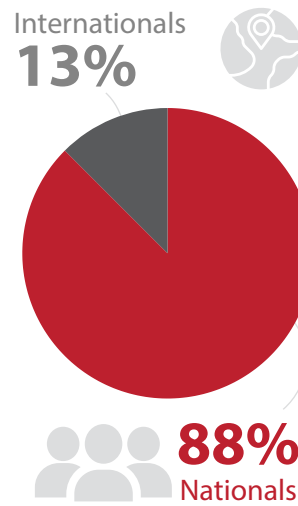
Source: <https://aidworkersecurity.org>



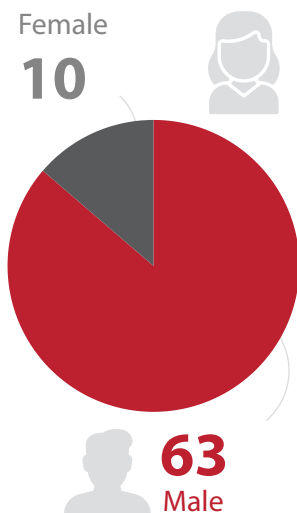
**National and International Killed**



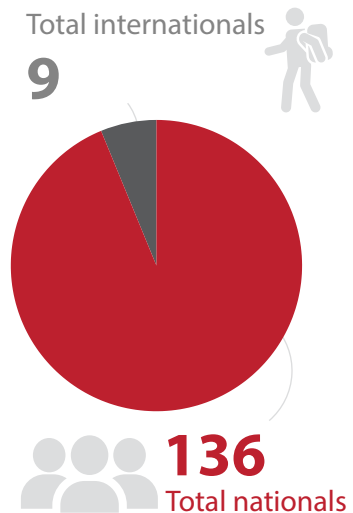
**National and International Kidnapped**



**Total Affected by Gender**



**Total Affected by Nationality**



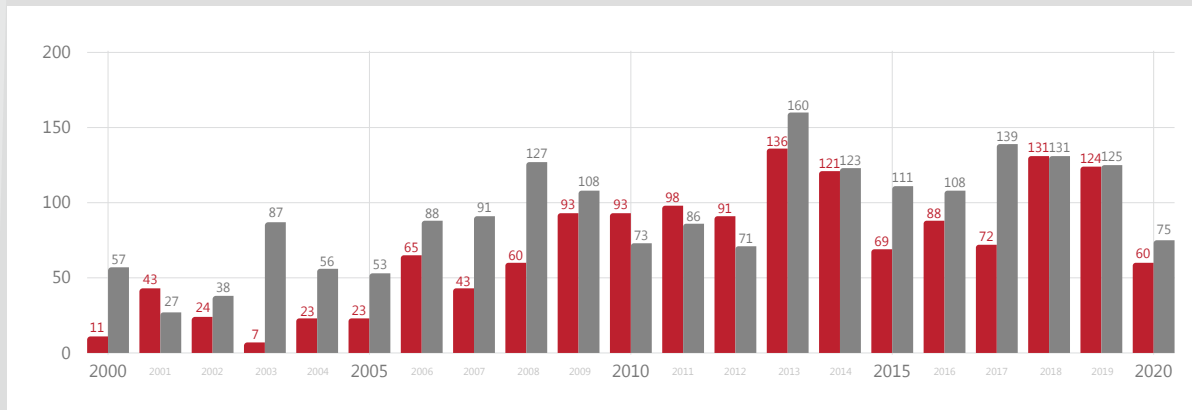
Source: <https://aidworkersecurity.org>

Appendix II

# Aid Workers Incidents Analysis since 2000

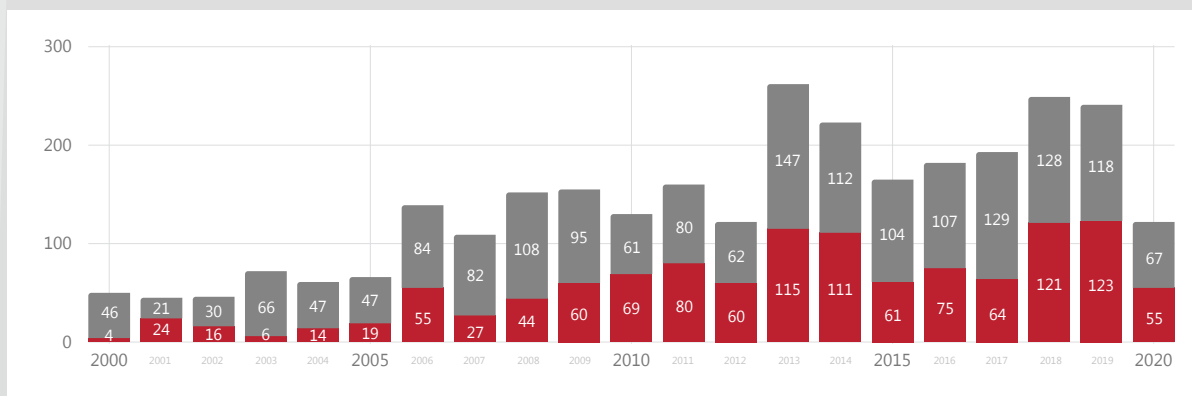
National and International Killed and Kidnapped by Year

Total kidnapped Total killed



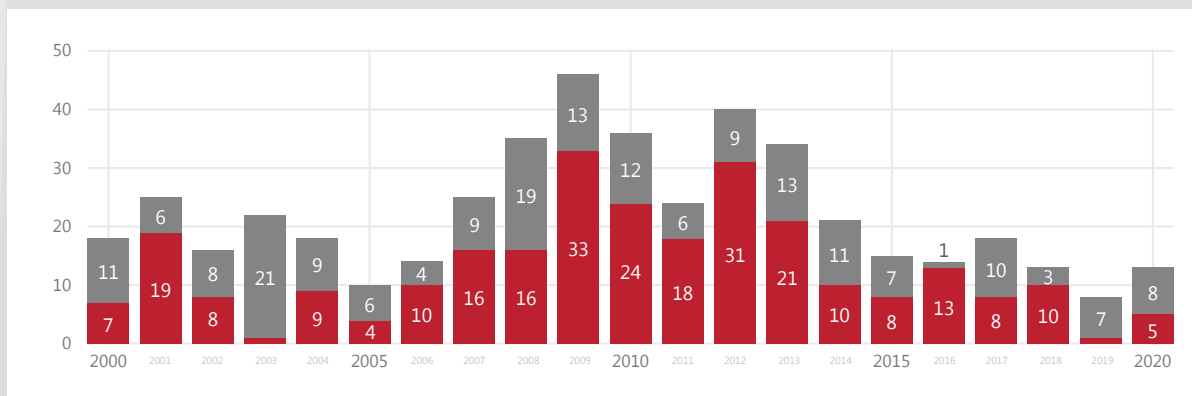
National killed and kidnapped by year

National kidnapped National killed

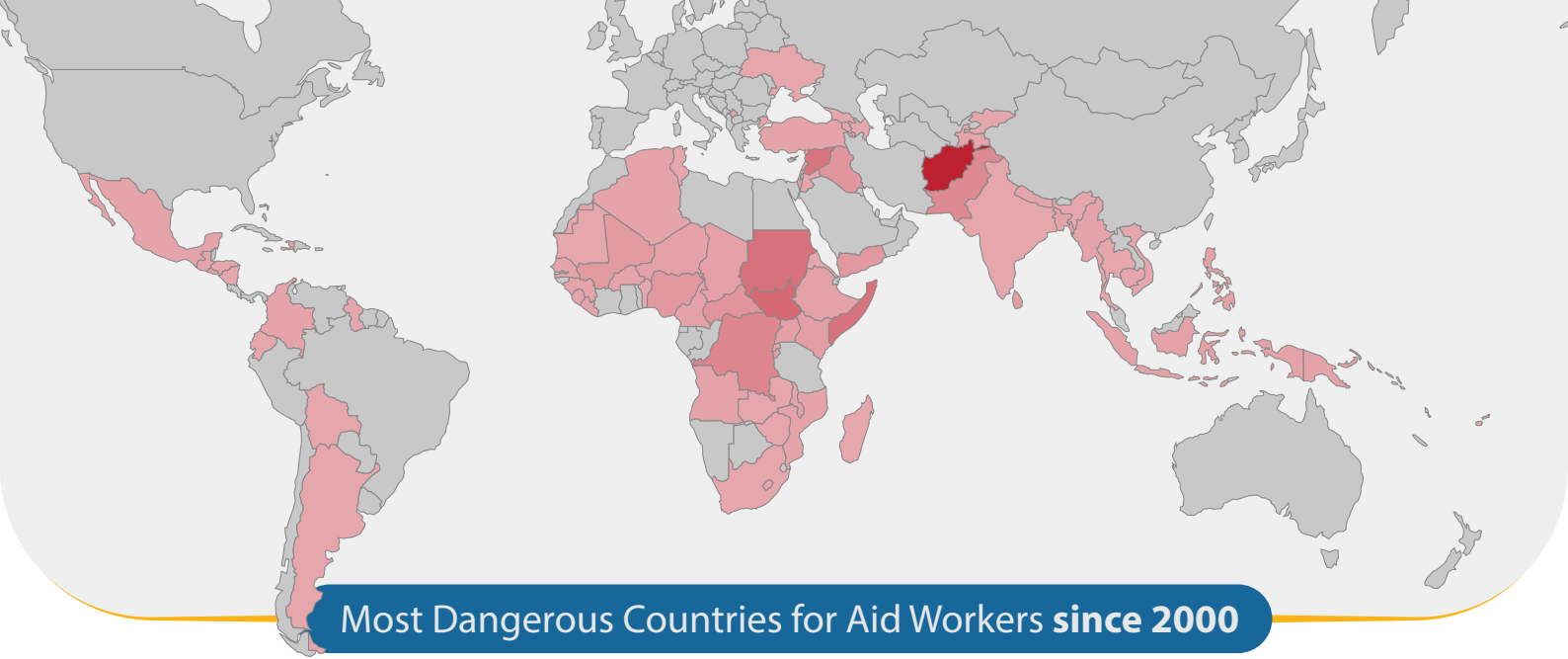


International killed and kidnapped by year

International kidnapped International killed



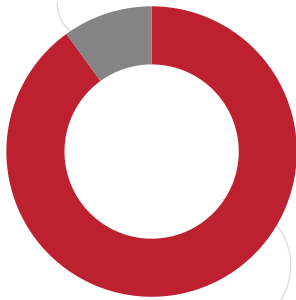
Source: <https://aidworkersecurity.org>



**National and International Killed**



Internationals  
**10%**

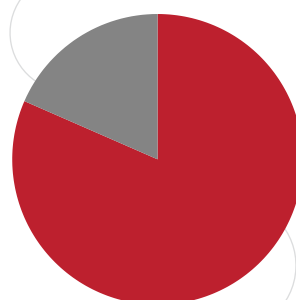


**90%**  
Nationals

**National and International Kidnapped**

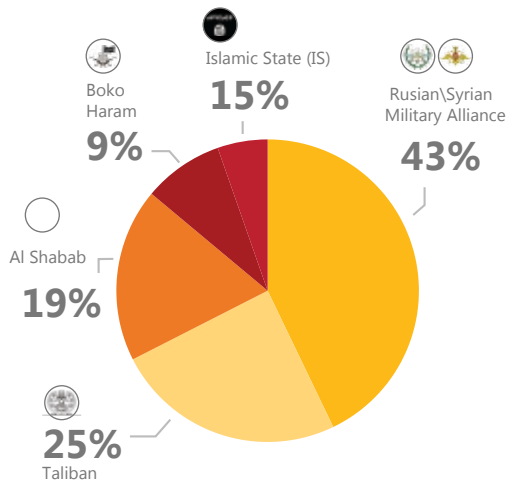


Internationals  
**18%**

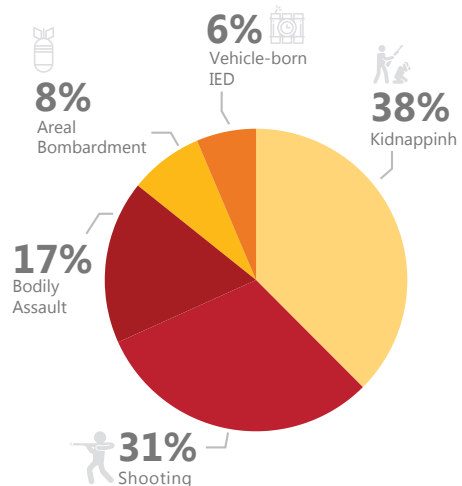


**82%**  
Nationals

**Top 5 Known Aggressor Groups**



**Top 5 Means of Attack**



Source: <https://aidworkersecurity.org>





## JUSOOR for STUDIES

 Mall of Istanbul-offices Block  
Başakşehir/ **İSTANBUL** Head Office

 /jusoorstudies

 /jusoorstudies

 /jusoorstudies

 info@jusoor.co

[www.jusoor.co](http://www.jusoor.co)