Annex of Statistical Information

Country Reports on Terrorism 2020

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DSG Science in the Service of People

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Methodology

About the 2020 Annex of Statistical Information

Title 22, Section 2656f, of the United States Code, requires the U.S. Department of State to present in its annual report on terrorism "to the extent practicable, complete statistical information on the number of individuals, including United States citizens and dual nationals, killed, wounded, or kidnapped by each terrorist group during the preceding calendar year."

Title 22 of the U.S. Code defines terrorism as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents." From 2004 to 2011, the data for the Annex of Statistical Information were collected by the National Counterterrorism Center, part of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, through the Worldwide Incidents Tracking System.

In June 2012 the Department of State contracted with the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) to collect an Annex of Statistical Information dataset and provide a report to supplement the Department of State's annual Country Reports on Terrorism. Using its Global Terrorism Database, START produced the Annex from 2012 through 2017.

GTTAC DATA ELEMENTS

- The number of incidents
- Casualties including fatalities, wounded, and hostages
- Geolocation (country and state/province) of the incident
- The perpetrator responsible for the incident
- The tactics (e.g., assassination, suicide, armed assault, bombing/explosion, hijacking)
- Intended and actual victim type (e.g., business, government, police, military)

In August 2018 the Department of State awarded the Annex of Statistical Information contract to Development Services Group, Inc. (DSG), an international research firm with headquarters in Bethesda, Maryland. DSG and its subcontractor, the Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center operated by the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University (GMU), are responsible for data collection and analysis, creation of a global database of terrorist incidents, the production of the Annex, and the editing of the Country Reports on Terrorism.

Defining Terrorism

For this Annex, an incident is deemed a terrorist act if it conforms with Title 22, Section 2656f, of the U.S. Code. It is therefore defined as a violent act carried out by nonstate actors that meets the following inclusion criteria:

1. The violent act aims to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal.

2. The violent act includes evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to an audience (or audiences) larger than the immediate victims.
3. The violent act occurred outside the precepts of international humanitarian law as far as it targeted non-combatants.

The Global Terrorism Trends and Analysis Center (GTTAC) includes only those incidents for which all three criteria were met. In some cases, where terrorists initiate an action that targets military forces rather than non-combatants, this would be considered an incident. An example would be an improvised explosive device (IED) attack on a military patrol. A coordinated counterterrorism operation in which the military initiates the attack would not be considered an incident. Additionally, all identified terrorist incidents must be reported by at least one independent and reliable source. For example, GTTAC does not use any reports from terrorist media sources, and it excludes any incidents for which there was considerable uncertainty or conflicting reporting.

About GTTAC

DSG created the GTTAC database that the Annex uses to summarize global terrorism incidents. GTTAC accesses comprehensive, open-source, multimedia data aggregators to identify reports of potential terrorist incidents. Data acquisition begins with using open-source technology tools developed in Python atop a Linux platform for text analysis, predictive modeling, and feature extraction. GTTAC applies ontologies for terrorist incidents, perpetrators, tactics for attack, weapon use, and the targeting of victims and facilities. Once the automated processes have established a body of data for human review and validation, the database of global terrorism incidents aggregates information based on regional and other geographic locales.

Limitations

A rigorous approach using open-source material has its challenges; not all media outlets have the same reporting standards. There are increasing issues with disinformation and misinformation finding their way into open-source media through news outlets, or outlets repurposing older content with modified and unconfirmed details. The sophistication of these outlets can be quite advanced, and techniques for propagating their messages are constantly evolving and adapting. These sources often thrive in information-poor regions, making the confirmation of incidents increasingly difficult. In addition to the biases that some outlets may have in reporting certain conflicts, there are localized media blackouts that will hinder anyone using open-source material from those areas. The COVID-19 pandemic seriously disrupted 2020 in many ways, and while it is too early to understand the full impact on terrorism and reporting, many media outlets have limited the mobility of their journalists at a time when terrorism incidents are on the rise. We strive to ensure that the data collection process is not biased by unreliable media coverage, especially in conflict zones. Quantifying harm to victims or identifying the perpetrator of terrorist incidents is challenging when open-source information (particularly about people killed or wounded) is imprecise.

This report mitigates these challenges by employing a well-trained, multilingual, and multicultural team of subject-matter experts, technologists, and researchers to continually monitor and enhance

the methodology and thereby maintain a comprehensive, accurate, and systematic data collection process in more than 90 languages.

We have made use of technological advancements in data collection that employed different processes for identifying, coding, and counting terrorism incidents.

GTTAC has also created a Global Terrorism Experts Group, an international advisory board that reviews content and ensures objectivity by capturing local context and nuance.

As part of our effort to maintain data integrity, we have created the following scale (Table M.1) to ensure consistency in the recording of fatalities:

Table M.1. Quantifying Imprecise Amounts

When Media Articulate	GTTAC Records
A couple	2
A number of, a few, several, or some	3
Many	5
Tens	11
A dozen	12
More than a dozen, dozens	13

It is GTTAC's understanding that, before 2018, data on fatalities and wounded were omitted when open-source reports did not cite specific numbers; fatalities described in terms such as "a few," "huge losses," or "scores" were classified as "missing data" and were not counted. Because of this methodological difference, GTTAC's numbers may be higher than those reported in previous data.

For 2020, we have introduced improvements to several typologies to enhance the clarity of the incidents included in this report. These improvements include

A. Dashboards for significant and emerging perpetrators.
B. Global characteristics of incidents.
C. More information on racially and ethnically motivated violent extremism.

These changes simply provide more information about each incident and do not affect data integrity. We also are tracking 465 known perpetrators of global terrorism, and we collect up to 126 different attributes for each incident. Unfortunately, it is not possible to share them all in a written report. This report conducts comparisons and looks at trends with data from 2018, 2019, and 2020 that were processed under the same conditions and for which direct comparisons are appropriate.

Trend Analysis and Presentation

Each year the Annex reports on the top 10 perpetrators of terrorist activity and fatalities as well as the top 10 countries with the most terrorist incidents and fatalities. For each year, we recalculate the reporting year's top 10 perpetrators and countries and look back at the trends of what has changed in these categories.

When reporting on perpetrators and countries that show large increases in activity or fatalities, we delve into a second-level geographic location, victims, facilities, and weapon types to examine these increases in greater depth. We present these data in Perpetrator and Country dashboards. We have added a new section this year, called the Global Characteristics of Incidents, which delves deeper into the various attributes of incidents and their impact.

Disclaimers

Nothing in this report should be construed as a determination that individuals associated with incidents are guilty of terrorism or any other criminal offense.

The data on terrorist incidents collected and stored in GTTAC are not static. Rather, the database is dynamic and will evolve as new incidents are identified and as further details about existing incidents become available. For this reason, the data provided in this report may not exactly match data provided in subsequent or previous reports.

1. Significant Trends

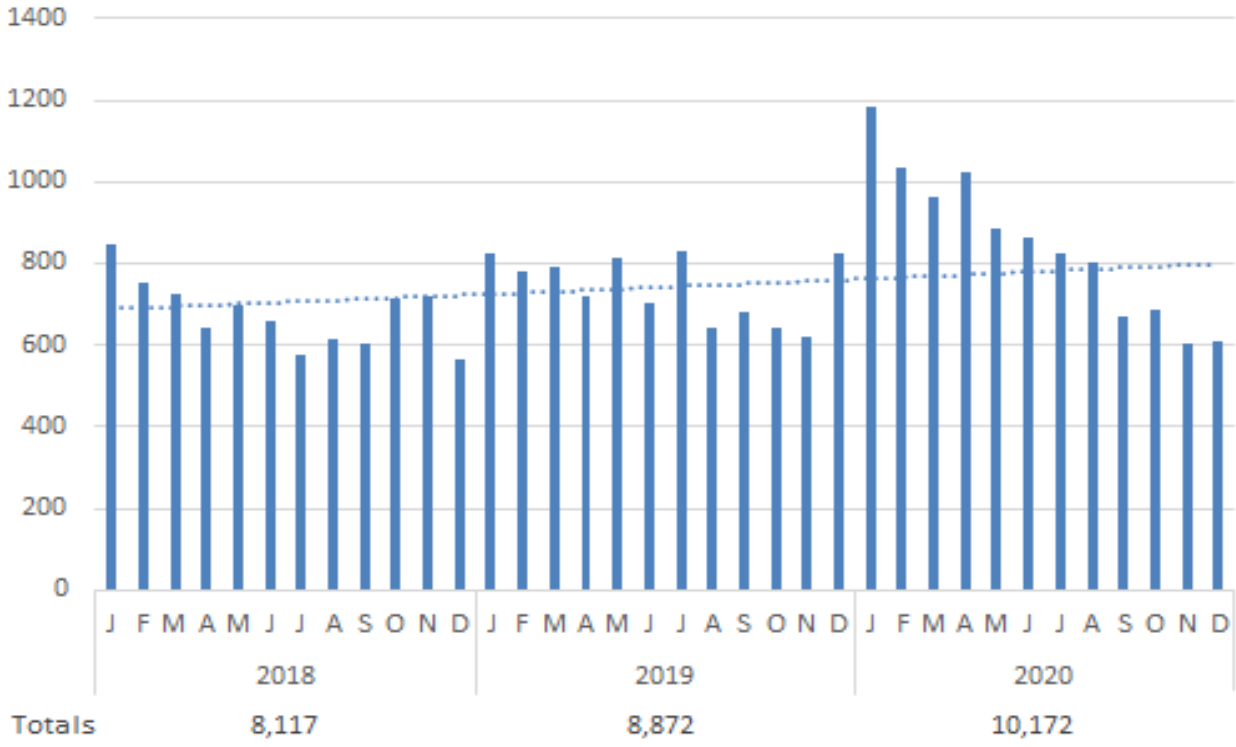
In 2020 there were 10,172 terrorist incidents, resulting in 29,389 fatalities (detailed in Table 1.1), 19,413 wounded, and 4,471 kidnappings. 2020 had 1,300 more terrorism incidents, 3,116 more fatalities, 1,189 fewer wounded, and 1,262 more kidnappings than in 2019. The number of incidents in 2020 represents a 15 percent increase over 2019. A large part of this can be explained by a 111 percent increase in incidents in Yemen and neighboring Saudi Arabia coupled with a continuing rise throughout Africa, particularly in the Sahel, Mozambique, and the Democratic Republic of Congo — the last of these had a 160 percent increase in incidents. In 2020, terrorist incidents occurred in 98 countries and territories. Of these, 87 percent were concentrated in three geographic regions: Western Asia, Southern Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa. As Table 3.1 shows, in order, Afghanistan, Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen, India, Iraq, Somalia, Nigeria, the Philippines, and Mali experienced the greatest number of terrorist incidents in 2020. Incidents in these 10 countries accounted for 75 percent of all global terrorist incidents and 90 percent of all fatalities attributable to terrorism in 2020.

Table 1.1. Global Terrorist Incidents, 2020

	Incidents			*2019-20*		Fatalities			*2019-20*	
	2018	2019	2020	*change*		2018	2019	2020	*change*	
January	847	827	1,185	43%	▲	2,677	2,478	2,963	20%	▲
February	753	778	1,032	33%	▲	1,720	2,215	2,743	24%	▲
March	723	791	964	22%	▲	2,711	2,557	3,057	20%	▲
April	641	719	1,026	43%	▲	2,473	2,457	2,585	5%	▲
May	699	814	888	9%	▲	3,547	2,342	2,531	8%	▲
June	658	703	866	23%	▲	3,123	2,387	2,560	7%	▲
July	576	831	824	-1%	▼	2,640	2,590	2,567	-1%	▼
August	614	643	802	25%	▲	2,654	1,835	2,139	17%	▲
September	606	680	682	0%	▲	2,616	1,893	2,192	16%	▲
October	715	642	690	7%	▲	2,668	1,702	2,356	38%	▲
November	719	620	604	-3%	▼	3,981	1,691	1,874	11%	▲
December	566	824	609	-26%	▼	2,142	2,126	1,822	-14%	▼
TOTAL	**8,117**	**8,872**	**10,172**	**15%**	▲	**32,952**	**26,273**	**29,389**	**12%**	▲

Figure 1.1 shows the trend line of incidents on a month-to-month basis over the previous three-year period.

Figure 1.1. Three-Year Incident Trend Line



Trends Summary

Among other global perpetrators, the Taliban (includes the Haqqani Network) was responsible for the most incidents and fatalities, followed by ISIS-Core (which comprises the ISIS elements in Iraq and Syria, including connections into the surrounding countries operating in support of those elements), al-Shabaab, CPI-Maoists, and ISIS-DRC — to round out the top five. In 2020 the Taliban was responsible for 1,325 incidents and 7,417 fatalities — a decrease of 10 percent in the number of incidents and 6 percent in the number of fatalities from 2019, yet still 25 percent of the total fatalities attributed to terrorism globally. (In 2019 the Taliban was responsible for 7,918 fatalities, about 30 percent of the global total.) With 507 terrorist incidents, ISIS-Core was the next-most-active terrorist organization, which was responsible for 1,434 fatalities; followed by al-Shabaab, responsible for 477 incidents and 1,393 fatalities (compared with 484 attacks and 1,409 fatalities in 2019). CPI-Maoists in India were the fourth-most destructive group this year, with 298 incidents and 202 fatalities. ISIS-DRC was the fifth-most active perpetrator group, responsible for 276 incidents and 1,435 fatalities. We have added a perpetrator dashboard in section 2.3 for a more-thorough review of some of the top groups.

As reported in previous years, ISIS-Core lost most of the remaining territory of its so-called caliphate in Iraq, and in 2019 lost the remainder of its territory in Syria; the group and its affiliates, however, remained active in 26 countries, including Iraq and Syria.

ISIS-Core and the most active ISIS affiliates of 2020 claimed responsibility for the following attacks:

- ISIS-Core (507 incidents, 1,434 fatalities) in Algeria, Indonesia, Iraq, Russia, Syria, Yemen, and Lebanon.
- ISIS-Democratic Republic of the Congo (ISIS-DRC) often reported as the Allied Democratic Forces (275 incidents, 1,435 fatalities) in Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- ISIS-West Africa (98 incidents, 982 fatalities) in Chad, Cameroon, Niger, and Nigeria.
- ISIS-Mozambique (87 incidents, 457 fatalities) in Mozambique and Tanzania.
- ISIS-Greater Sahara (27 incidents, 221 fatalities) in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger.
- ISIS-Khorasan (22 incidents, 219 fatalities) in Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan.
- ISIS-Philippines (60 incidents, 153 fatalities) in the Philippines and Malaysia.
- ISIS-Central Africa Province (14 incidents, 113 fatalities) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- ISIS-Sinai Province (31 incidents, 84 fatalities) in Egypt.
- ISIS-Yemen (5 incidents, 78 fatalities) in Yemen.
- Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (33 incidents, 63 fatalities) in the Philippines.
- ISIS-Jammu Kashmir (6 incidents, 14 fatalities) in India.
- Maute Group (9 incidents, 13 fatalities) in the Philippines.
- ISIS-Libya (6 incidents, 6 fatalities) in Libya, Syria, and Tunisia.
- ISIS-Somalia (5 incidents, 6 fatalities) in Somalia.
- Caucasus Province of the Islamic State (2 incidents, 5 fatalities) in Russia.
- Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (2 incidents, 3 fatalities) in Indonesia.

AFFILIATES

GTTAC defines an "affiliated group" as pledging allegiance, declaring loyalty, breaking away from the group but still linked, by finance, communications, technical, HR, or being a splinter/ offshoot organization."

Al-Qa'ida networks continue to operate primarily in the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa. Some of the major al-Qa'ida affiliate groups in 2020 were

- Al-Shabaab (477 incidents, 1,393 fatalities) in Somalia and Kenya.
- Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (139 incidents, 433 fatalities) in Syria.
- Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam Wal-Muslimin (44 incidents, 335 fatalities) in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso.
- Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (45 incidents, 112 fatalities) in India and Afghanistan.
- Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (30 incidents, 38 fatalities) in Yemen.
- Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind (3 incidents, 11 fatalities) in India.
- Rouse the Believers Operations Room-Syria (10 incidents, 52 fatalities) in Syria.
- Ansar al-Tawhid (9 incidents, no fatalities) in Syria.

Racially or Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremism

In the methodology section of this report, we define terrorism as the deliberate use or threat of violence by nonstate actors to achieve political goals, making a broader impact beyond the actual victims or event. In the case of racially and ethnically motivated violent extremism (REMVE) analyzing our data from 2018 through 2020, the common denominator of the perpetrators is driven by race or ethnicity. Tightly defining terrorist ideologies can be a challenge even when groups or individuals proclaim to adhere to an ISIS ideology, for example. In the case of REMVE the landscape is dynamic, involving actors that are neither homogeneous nor geocentric. In 2020, we have noted a growing number of incidents of REMVE attacks, predominantly in North America and Europe. Many of these incidents are perpetrated by self-radicalized individuals with various ideologies reflecting white-identity, anti-government, anti-immigrant, anti-abortion, Incel, or neo-Nazi views. Among the victims were law enforcement officials and individuals identified by gender, religion, race, or ethnicity. In the case of the Christchurch mosque attacks of 2019, for example, the perpetrator was encouraged by others but acted alone. Lone-actor incidents like this one are hard for authorities prevent. They are also difficult for GTTAC to record and code.

Some 2020 examples of REMVE incidents:

Canada

On February 24 a Toronto, Ontario, teenager became the first Canadian ever charged with carrying out an "Incel"-inspired terror attack. The 17-year-old boy is accused of fatally stabbing a woman in February. Incel, short for "involuntarily celibate," is an online subculture focused on members' perceived inability to find romantic or sexual partners.

On July 2, 2020, in Ottawa, Ontario, an individual assailant rammed his vehicle through the gates of Rideau Hall, the residence of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. He came to the residence with multiple loaded guns and threatened to kill Trudeau. The assailant allegedly was inspired by QAnon far-right ideology.

On September 12 a man was charged with the killing of a Muslim man in Toronto. The accused appears to have ties to a neo-Nazi occult group called the Order of Nine Angels.

Federal Republic of Germany

On February 19, in Hanau — in Hesse, Germany — Tobias Rathjen, motivated by xenophobic views, opened fire inside and outside two hookah bars, killing nine people, all of whom were of foreign descent. Rathjen was found dead in his home along with his mother after the shooting spree. While the Hanau killer publicized his belief in conspiracy theories, according to authorities, he stated that a racist worldview motivated him. The act has once again shined the spotlight on right-wing terror in a country still struggling to come to terms with its Nazi past.

On June 10, in Göttingen, Germany, police reported that they tracked down a suspect in an explosive attack on an antifascist activist after following a trail of blood that led to the perpetrator's apartment. The 41-year-old woman who was targeted had been active in so-called Antifa campaigns against neo-Nazis.

France

On October 18, 2020, in Paris, France, an individual assailant repeatedly stabbed and wounded two Muslim women. She allegedly shouted, "Dirty Arab," and "This is not your home" during the attack.

Russian Federation

On April 6, 2020, in Moscow, Russia, members of the Other Russia of E.V. Limonov hurled a smoke grenade at the Embassy of the Czech Republic in the Russian Federation in retaliation for the dismantling of a Soviet-era monument in Prague. The group claimed responsibility for the incident on its website.

2. Perpetrators and Fatalities

2.1. Perpetrator Activity

As in previous years, a significant percentage of terrorism incidents were either not claimed or not credibly attributable to one perpetrator or another. Following our methodology, if the perpetrator is not named or identified by a credible source, we will simply record it as unknown. In 2020, for 3,786 incidents (37 percent of the total number of incidents), the perpetrators were either not identified or unknown. This is a 28 percent increase over 2019. We suspect that some of this is due to the impact of COVID-19, when there were fewer reporters in the field to validate claims of responsibility. Some groups, such as al-Shabaab, have a stated policy of not claiming responsibility for incidents outside a single country — even though the groups may be active in neighboring countries.

The geographic clustering of terrorism hotspots (see Figure 3.1) shows that terror groups, including ISIS-Core, al-Qa'ida, and their affiliates, continued to expand across Africa. ISIS-DRC and ISIS-Mozambique accounted for some of the sharpest increases in incidents in 2020. ISIS-DRC alone had a 184 percent increase. Terrorist events in the tri-border area of the Sahel increased by 63 percent from 2018 to 2020. See the Sahel dashboard in section 3.

Table 2.1. Top 10 Known Perpetrator Groups With the Most Incidents, 2020

Top Perpetrators	Incidents 2018	2019	2020	*2019-20 change*	
1 **Taliban**	1,083	1,466	1,325	-10%	▼
2 **ISIS-Core**	656	590	507	-14%	▼
3 **al-Shabaab**	537	484	477	-1%	▼
4 **CPI-Maoist**	178	292	298	2%	▲
5 **ISIS-DRC**	60	97	275	184%	▲
6 **Boko Haram**	220	294	249	-15%	▼
7 **CPP/NPA**	195	220	231	5%	▲
8 **Haftar Militia**	10	145	143	-1%	▼
9 **Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham**	126	140	139	-1%	▼
10 **CODECO**	-	7	121	1,629%	▲
Sub-total	**3,065**	**3,735**	**3,765**	**1%**	▲
Year-end Total	**8,117**	**8,872**	**10,172**	**14%**	▲
UNKNOWN	2,673	2,953	3,786	28%	▲

Table 2.1 shows the top 10 perpetrators in 2020 ranked by the number of incidents. These were the Taliban, ISIS-Core, al-Shabaab, the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-Maoist), ISIS of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (ISIS-DRC), Boko Haram, the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army (CPP/NPA), the Haftar Militia, Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, and the Cooperative for the Development of Congo (or CODECO). While these top 10 perpetrators account for 74 percent of global terrorism activity for 2020 (including Unknown), there was a 1 percent increase in terrorism incidents among 2020's top 10 perpetrators.

A more detailed review of perpetrators appears in section 2.3, Perpetrator Dashboards.

In 2019 the top 10 perpetrators ranked by the number of incidents were the Taliban, ISIS-Core, al-Shabaab, the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-Maoist), Boko Haram, the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army (CPP/NPA), the National Liberation Army (ELN), Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK, aka Kongra-Gel), and ISIS-West Africa.

2.2. Perpetrators and Fatalities

Table 2.2. Top 10 Known Perpetrators With the Most Fatalities, 2020

Top Perpetrators	Fatalities 2018	Fatalities 2019	Fatalities 2020	*2019-20 change*	
1 Taliban	8,554	7,918	7,417	-6%	▼
2 ISIS-DRC	298	341	1,435	321%	▲
3 ISIS-Core	3,654	1,487	1,434	-4%	▼
4 al-Shabaab	2,090	1,409	1,393	-1%	▼
5 Boko Haram	1,311	1,379	1,286	-7%	▼
6 ISIS-West Africa	114	929	982	6%	▲
7 CODECO	-	23	658	2761%	▲
8 Fulani Militants	1,924	430	487	13%	▲
9 ISIS-Mozambique	-	69	457	562%	▲
10 Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham	304	930	433	-53%	▼
Subtotal	17,945	13,985	15,549	11%	▲
Year-End Total	32,952	26,273	29,389	12%	▲
UNKNOWN	7,464	5,817	7,697	32%	▲

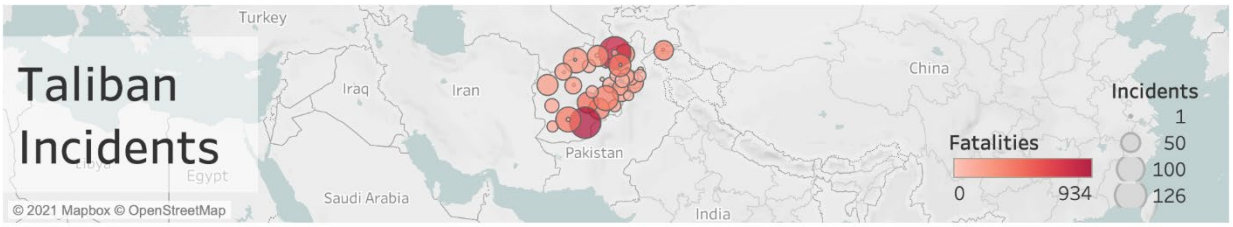
Table 2.2 shows the top 10 perpetrators in 2020 ranked in the order of fatalities. These were the Taliban, ISIS-DRC, ISIS-Core, al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, ISIS-West Africa, CODECO, Fulani Militants, ISIS-Mozambique, and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham. The top 10 perpetrators were responsible for an 11 percent increase in the number of fatalities over the previous year, 2019, and the total number of fatalities attributable to terrorism increased by 12 percent globally over the 2019 numbers. There were four exceptions to this general trend: the Taliban, ISIS, Boko Haram, and al-Shabaab all had small decreases in the number of fatalities they inflicted.

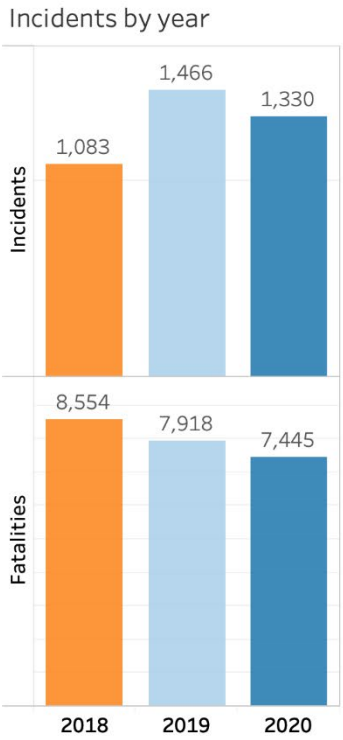
More 2020 details appear in section 2.3, Perpetrator Dashboards.

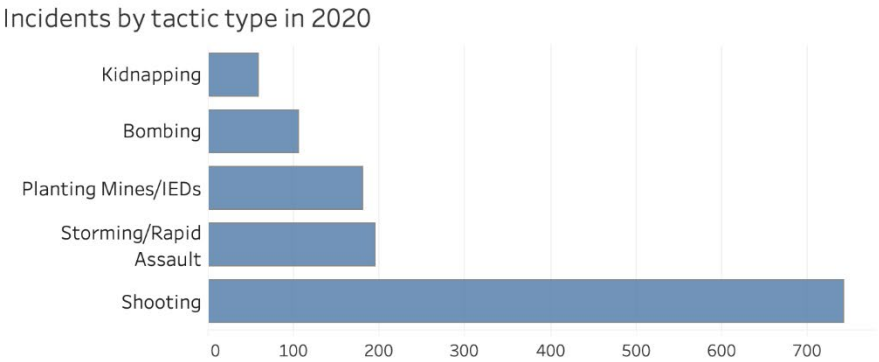
In 2019 the top 10 perpetrators ranked in the order of fatalities were the Taliban (30 percent of global fatalities in 2019), ISIS-Core (6 percent), al-Shabaab (5 percent), and Boko Haram (5 percent), followed by ISIS-Khorasan, ISIS Sinai Province, the Kurdistan Workers Party, the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-Maoist), the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army (CPP/NPA), and ISIS-DRC— with each individually contributing 1 percent of the global fatalities count of 2019.

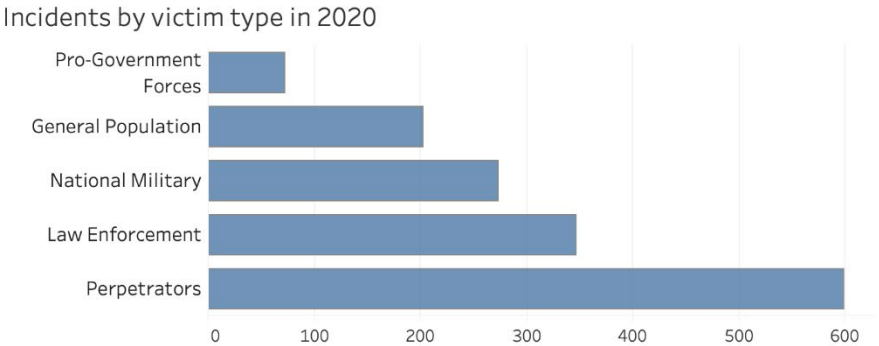
2.3. Perpetrator Dashboards

This new section disaggregates the data on global terrorism incidents to provide an analysis of specific perpetrators. The nature of modern global terrorism is that a select few perpetrators commit a large number of annual incidents. This section provides greater context for the terrorist activities to reflect consistent and emerging threats to global security in 2020 and beyond.







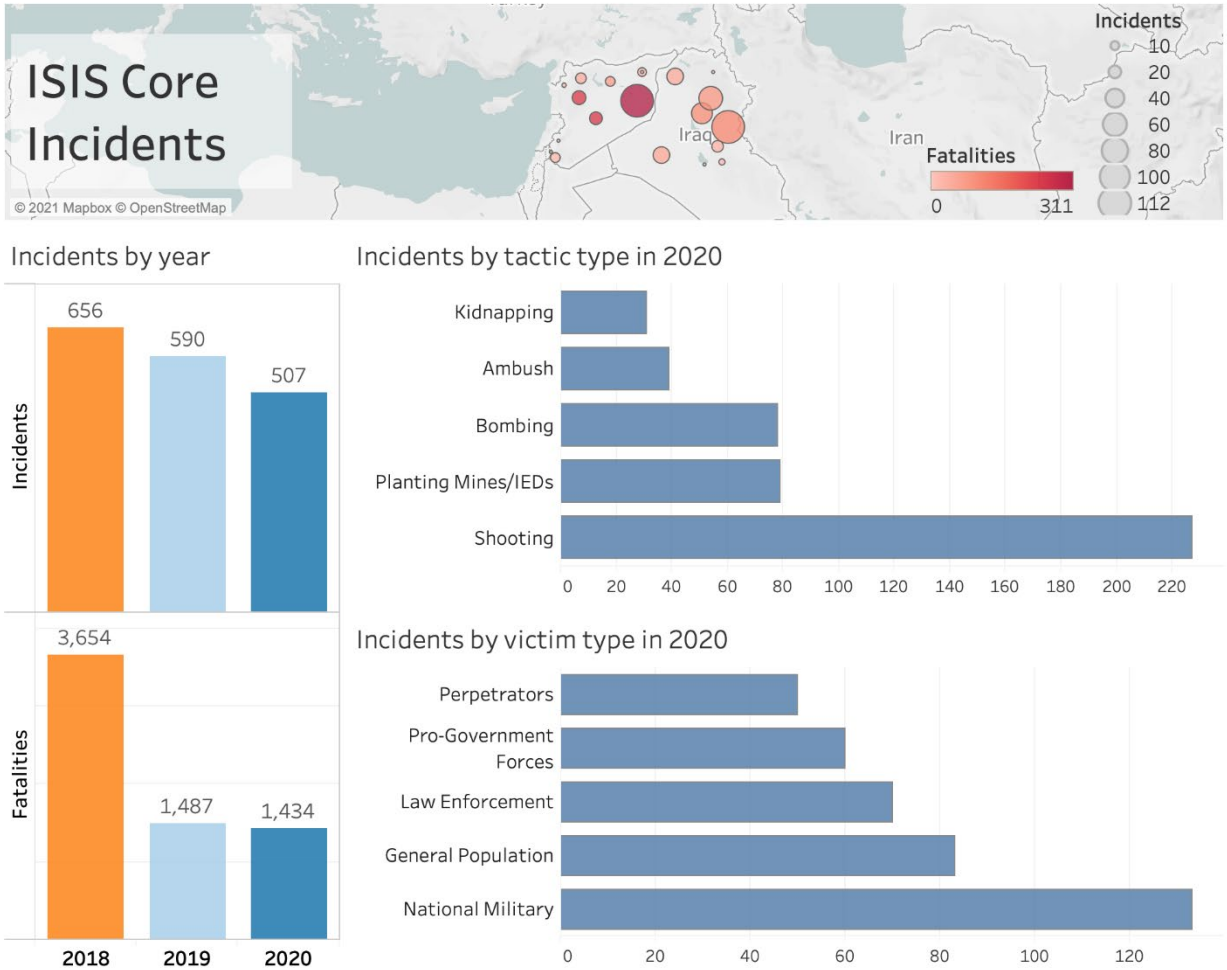


Taliban

In 2020, there were 1,330 incidents involving the Taliban, with 7,445 fatalities and 4,563 persons wounded. This constitutes a 9.2 percent decrease in incidents from 2019, as well as a 6 percent decrease in fatalities from 2019. All of the Taliban's incidents were concentrated in Afghanistan in 2020. Common tactics the Taliban employed in incidents included shootings (56 percent), complex assaults (15 percent), and the use of landmines or IEDs (14 percent).

Twenty-six percent of Taliban incidents involved law enforcement victims in 2020. Other prominent victims of Taliban violence included military (21 percent of incidents) and the general population (15 percent of incidents).

The provinces in Afghanistan that experienced the most Taliban incidents were Kunduz with 126 incidents (9.5 percent), Kandahar with 118 incidents (8.9 percent), and Ghazni and Helmand with 75 incidents each (each representing 5.6 percent of Taliban incidents).



ISIS-Core (which comprises the ISIS elements in Iraq and Syria, including connections into the surrounding countries operating in support of those elements).

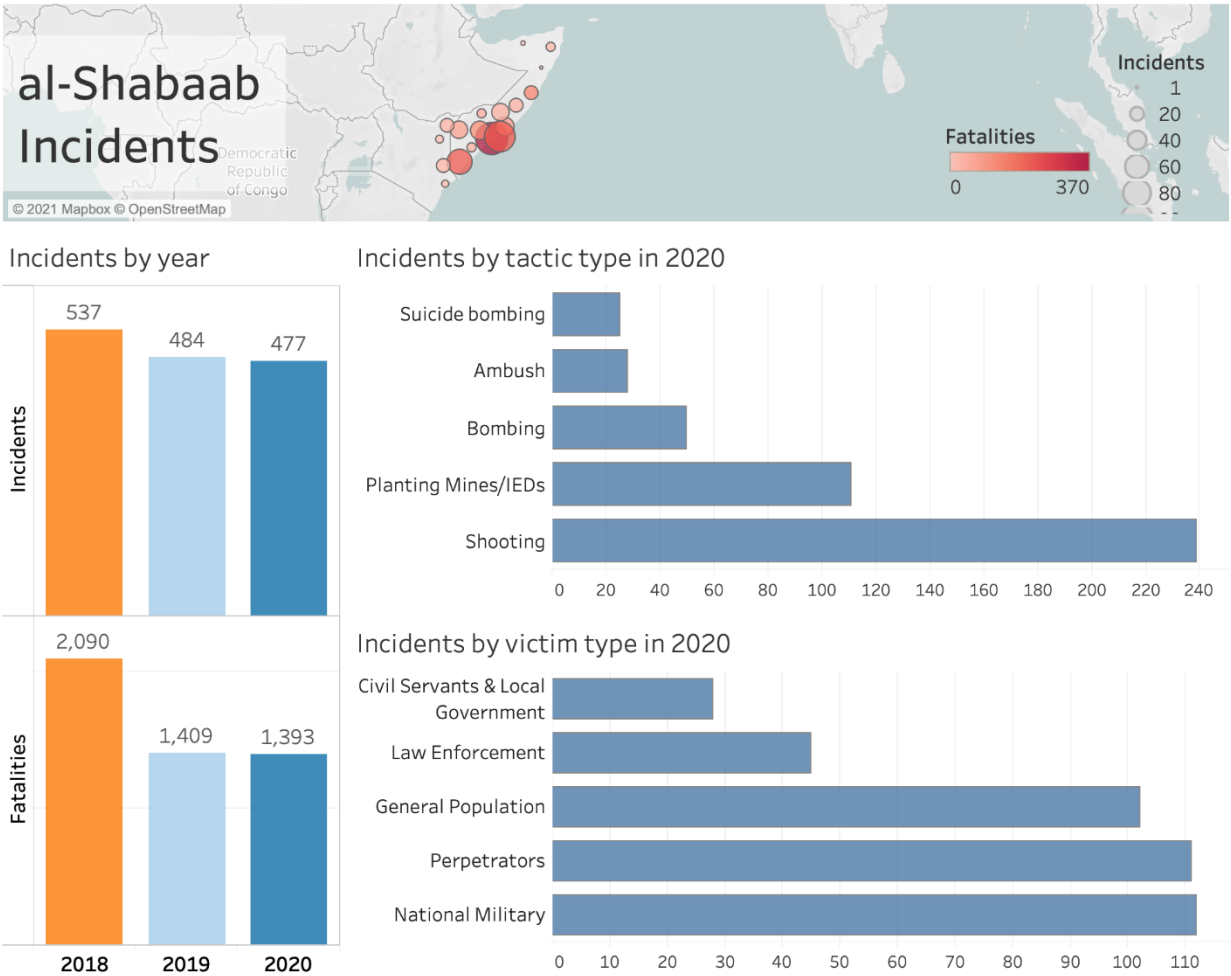
In 2020, there were 507 incidents involving ISIS-Core, with 1,432 fatalities and 650 persons wounded. This constitutes a 14 percent decrease in incidents from 2019, as well as a 3.6 percent decrease in fatalities from 2019.

ISIS-Core's incidents were primarily focused in Syria (199 incidents, 973 fatalities) and Iraq (296 incidents, 390 fatalities). They were also responsible for terrorism incidents in Algeria, Russia, and Lebanon.

Common tactics employed by ISIS-Core included shootings (54 percent), planting mines/IEDs (16 percent), and bombings (15 percent).

Twenty-six percent of ISIS-Core incidents in 2020 involved national military. Other prominent victims of ISIS-Core violence included the general population (16 percent of incidents), and law enforcement (14 percent of incidents). ISIS-Core terrorists were reported to have been killed in 10 percent of the incidents attributed to them in 2020.

ISIS-Core incidents in 2020 were spread across several provinces and countries, including 112 incidents (22.1 percent) in Dayr az Zawr in Syria, 111 incidents (21.9 percent) in Diyala in Iraq, and 59 incidents (11.6 percent) in Kirkuk in Iraq.



Al-Shabaab

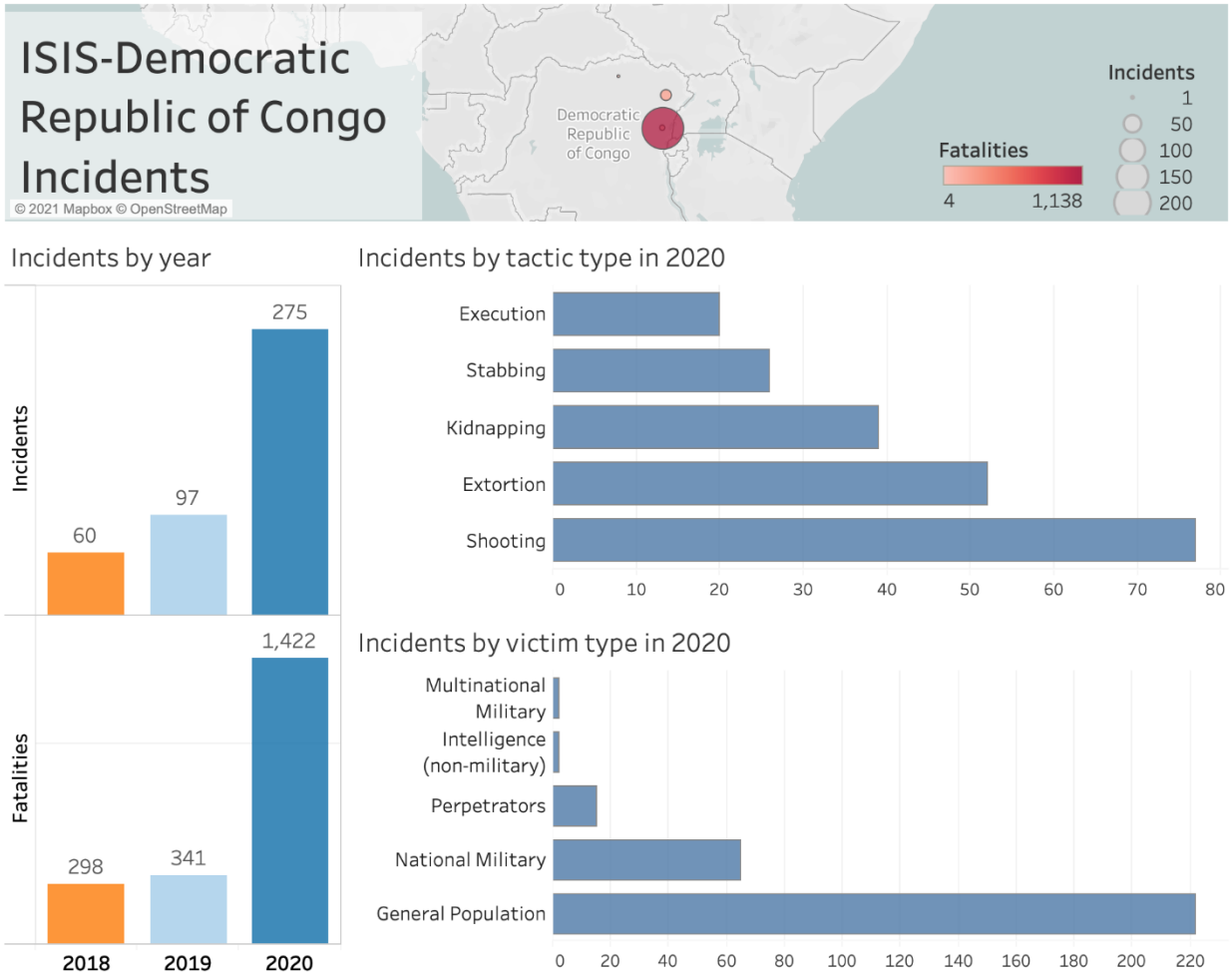
In 2020, there were 477 incidents involving al-Shabaab, with 1,393 fatalities and 781 persons wounded. This constitutes a 1 percent decrease in incidents from 2019, as well as a 1 percent decrease in fatalities from 2019.

All the al-Shabaab incidents in 2020 were concentrated in Somalia (433 incidents, 1,337 fatalities) and Kenya (44 incidents, 56 fatalities).

Common tactics al-Shabaab employed in incidents included shootings (50 percent), planting mines/IEDs (23 percent), bombings (10 percent), ambushes (6 percent), and suicide attacks (5 percent).

Twenty-three percent of al-Shabaab-involved incidents in 2020 included military victims. Other prominent victims of al-Shabaab violence included the general population (21 percent of incidents) and law enforcement (9 percent of incidents).

The regions in Somalia that experienced the most al-Shabaab incidents were Shabeellaha Hoose with 99 incidents (20.8 percent), Banaadir with 90 incidents (18.9 percent), and Jubbada Hoose with 60 incidents (representing 12.6 percent of al-Shabaab incidents).



ISIS-DRC

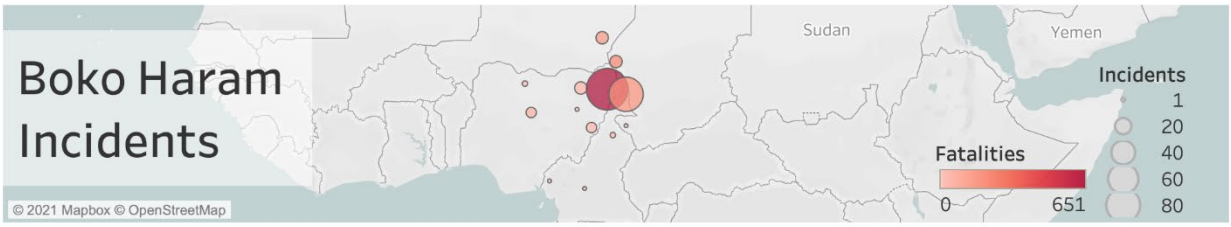
In 2020, there were 275 incidents involving ISIS-DRC, with 1,422 fatalities and 156 persons wounded. This constitutes a 185 percent increase in incidents from 2019, as well as a 321 percent increase in fatalities from 2019.

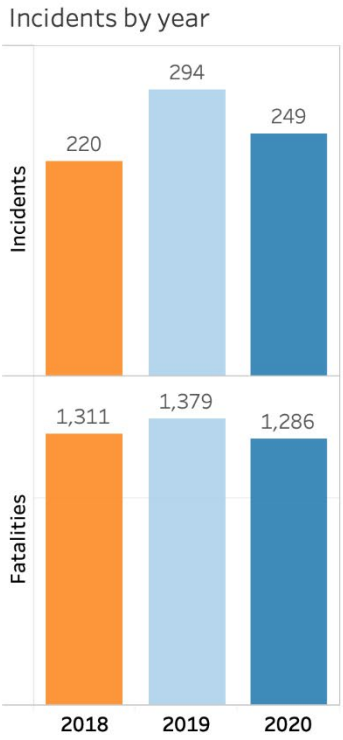
All ISIS-DRC's incidents were concentrated in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2020.

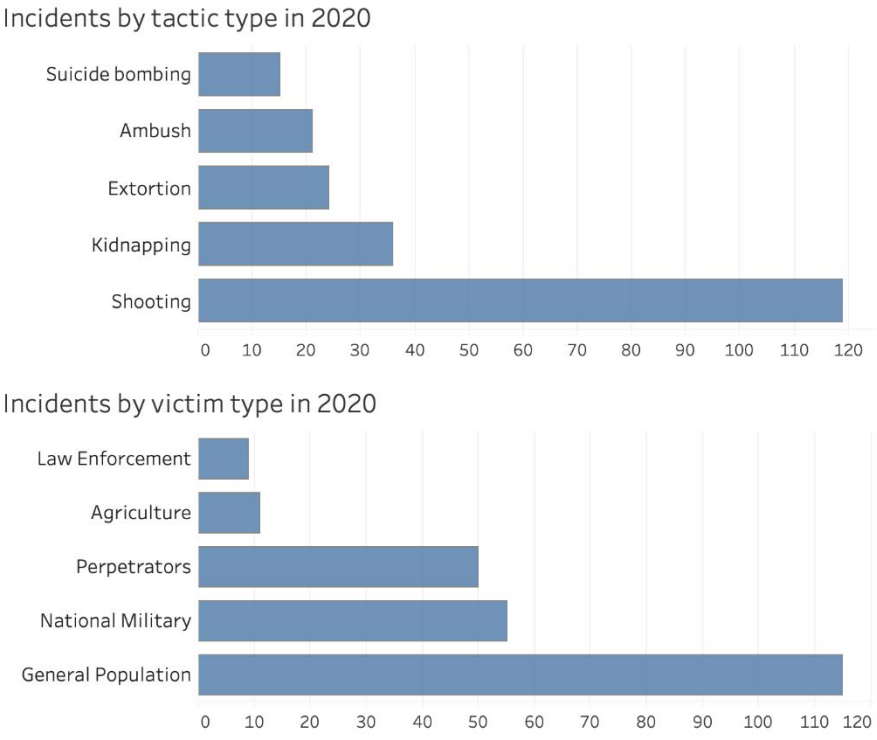
Common tactics ISIS-DRC employed in incidents included shootings (28 percent), extortion practices (19 percent), and kidnappings (14 percent).

Eighty-one percent of ISIS-DRC-involved incidents in 2020 included general population victims. Other prominent victims of ISIS-DRC violence included military (24 percent of incidents). Most ISIS-DRC incidents were concentrated in the Nord/North-Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of Congo with 257 incidents (93.1 percent), and Ituri with 17 incidents (6.2 percent).

On March 10 the Department of State announced the designation of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria-Democratic Republic of the Congo (ISIS-DRC) as an FTO.







Boko Haram

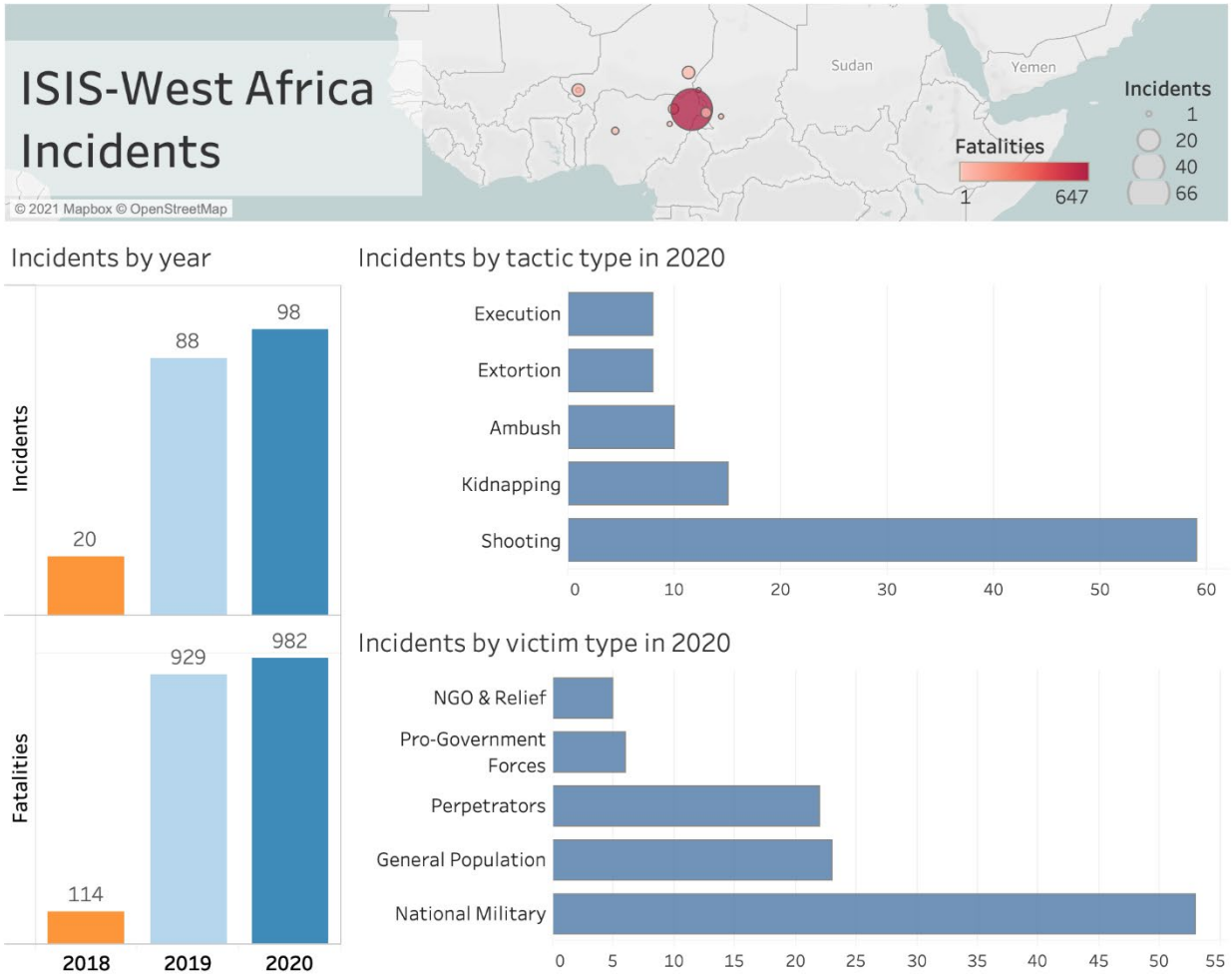
In 2020, there were 249 incidents involving Boko Haram, with 1,286 fatalities and 631 persons wounded. This constitutes a 15 percent decrease in incidents from 2019, as well as a 6.7 percent decrease in fatalities from 2019.

All the Boko Haram incidents in 2020 were concentrated in Nigeria (146 incidents, 778 fatalities), Cameroon (82 incidents, 164 fatalities), Chad (12 incidents, 204 fatalities), and Niger (9 incidents, 140 fatalities).

Common tactics Boko Haram employed in incidents included shootings (48 percent), kidnappings (14 percent), and extortion practices (10 percent).

Forty-six percent of Boko Haram-involved incidents included general population victims in 2020. Other prominent victims of Boko Haram violence included the military (22 percent of incidents) and persons in the agricultural profession (4 percent of incidents).

The Nigerian states that experienced the most Boko Haram incidents were Borno with 113 incidents (45.4 percent), Extreme-Nord with 77 incidents (30.9 percent), and Lac and Yobe states with 10 incidents each (each representing 4 percent of Boko Haram incidents).



ISIS-West Africa

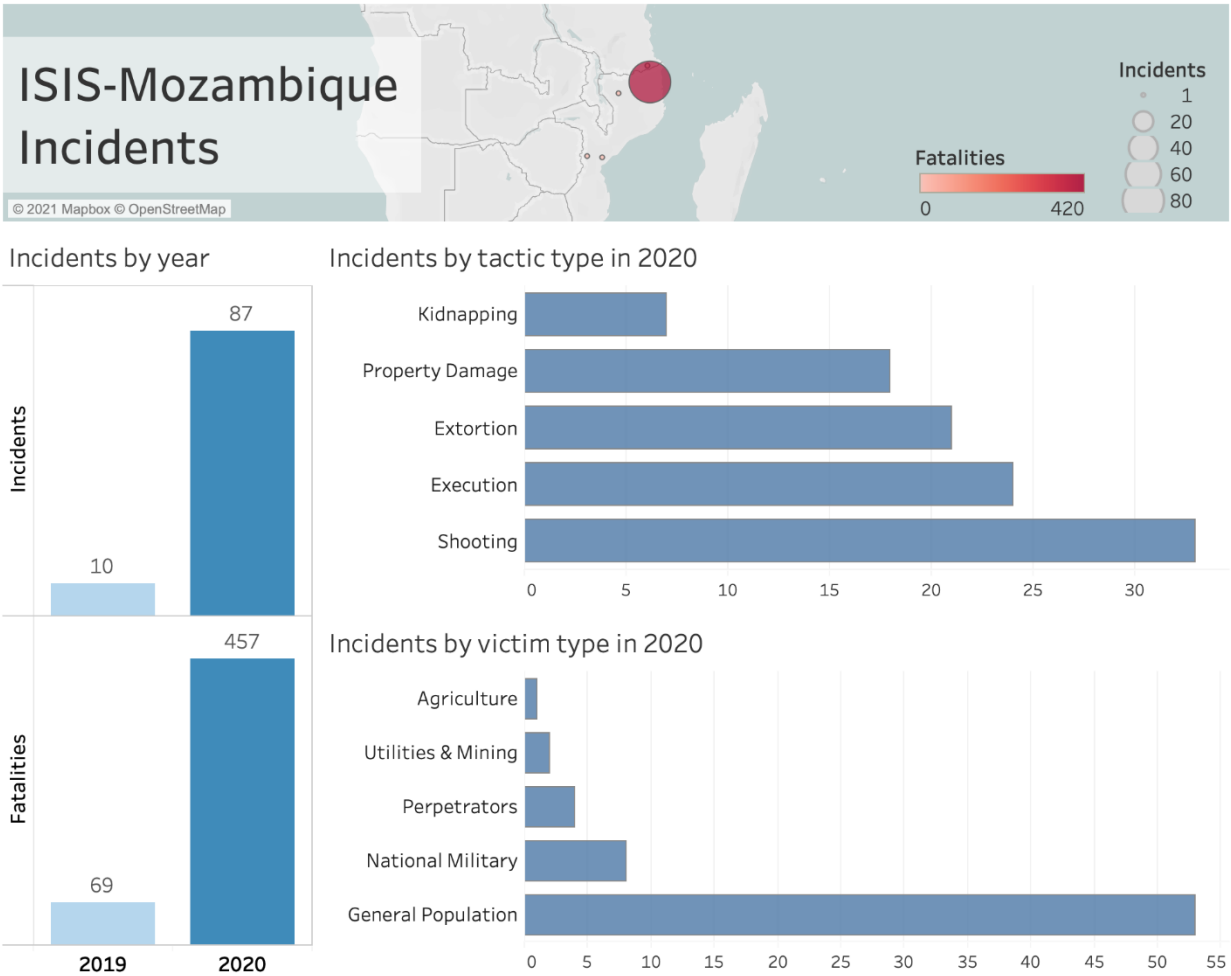
In 2020, there were 98 incidents involving ISIS-West Africa, with 982 fatalities and 397 persons wounded. This constitutes an 11 percent increase in incidents from 2019, as well as a 6 percent increase in fatalities from 2019.

ISIS-West Africa incidents were concentrated in Nigeria (77 incidents, 735 fatalities), Niger (14 incidents, 215 fatalities), Cameroon (4 incidents, 21 fatalities), and Chad (3 incidents, 11 fatalities) in 2020.

Common tactics ISIS-West Africa employed in incidents included shootings (60 percent), kidnappings (15 percent), ambushes (10 percent), and extortion practices (8 percent).

Fifty-four percent of ISIS-West Africa-involved incidents included military victims in 2020. Other prominent victims of ISIS-West Africa violence included the general population (23 percent of incidents) and other pro-government forces (6 percent of incidents).

The states in Nigeria that experienced the most ISIS-West Africa incidents were Borno with 66 incidents (67.3 percent), Diffa with 7 incidents (7.1 percent), and Tillaberi with 6 incidents (representing 6.1 percent of ISIS-West Africa incidents).



ISIS-Mozambique

In 2020, there were 87 incidents involving ISIS-Mozambique, with 457 fatalities and 29 persons wounded. This constitutes a 770 percent increase in incidents from 2019, as well as a 562 percent increase in fatalities from 2019.

Nearly all ISIS-Mozambique's incidents were concentrated in Mozambique (86 incidents, 435 fatalities), with a single incident in Tanzania in 2020 that resulted in 22 fatalities.

Common tactics employed in ISIS-Mozambique included shootings (38 percent), targeted murders (28 percent), extortion practices (24 percent), and property damage (21 percent).

Sixty-one percent of ISIS-Mozambique incidents in 2020 involved general population victims. Other prominent victims of ISIS-Mozambique violence included military (9 percent of incidents), and 25 percent of incidents involved damage to property but no injuries or loss of life. ISIS-Mozambique terrorists were reported to have been killed in 5 percent of the incidents attributed to them in 2020.

Most ISIS-Mozambique incidents in 2020 — 80 incidents (92 percent) — took place in Cabo Delgado.

3. Geographic Trends of Terrorism

Figure 3.1. Global Terrorist Incidents and Fatalities, 2020

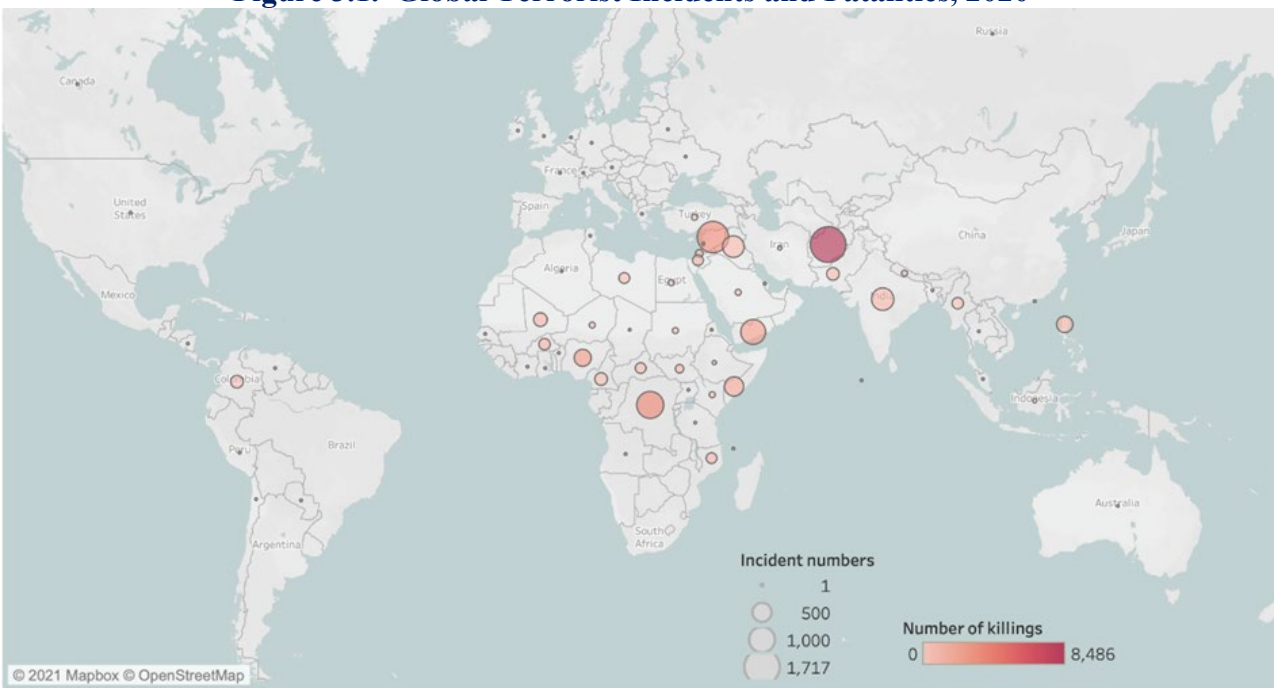


Figure 3.1 shows the country hotspots of global terrorist incidents for 2020, as defined by the highest number of incidents and fatalities. As in the previous two years, Afghanistan is at the top of the list. The continued expansion of terrorism in Africa — especially in the Sahel, in the DRC, and in Mozambique — resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of incidents and fatalities in these countries and regions.

3.1. Location of Terrorist Activity

Table 3.1 shows that during 2020 the three countries with the highest number of terrorist incidents were Afghanistan (1,722 incidents), Syria (1,332 incidents), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (999 incidents). Overall, there was a 22 percent increase in terrorism incidents in 2020 among the top 10 countries, compared with their 2019 incidents, and a 15 percent increase in incidents globally from 2019 to 2020. Pakistan, Colombia, and Cameroon fell off the top 10 list.

Table 3.1. Top 10 Countries With the Most Terrorist Incidents, 2020

Top Countries	Incidents 2018	2019	2020	*Three-year change*
1 AFGHANISTAN	1,295	1,748	1,722	33% ▲
2 SYRIA	875	1,051	1,332	52% ▲
3 DR CONGO	187	384	999	434% ▲
4 YEMEN	224	396	835	273% ▲
5 INDIA	673	655	679	1% ▲
6 IRAQ	765	542	629	-18% ▼
7 SOMALIA	528	486	504	-5% ▼
8 NIGERIA	546	460	390	-29% ▼
9 PHILIPPINES	351	359	362	3% ▲
10 MALI	164	225	253	54% ▲
Sub-total	**5,608**	**6,306**	**7,705**	**22% ▲**
Year-end Total	**8,117**	**8,872**	**10,172**	**15% ▲**

3.2. Fatalities by Location

Table 3.2 shows that the top 10 countries with the most fatalities during 2020 were Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Syria, Nigeria, Yemen, Somalia, Burkina Faso, Mali, South Sudan, and Mozambique. These 10 countries accounted for 96 percent of all fatalities in 2020. This shows a 19 percent increase in the number of fatalities in 2020 among the top 10 countries, compared with their fatalities in 2019, and a 12 percent increase in global fatalities from 2019.

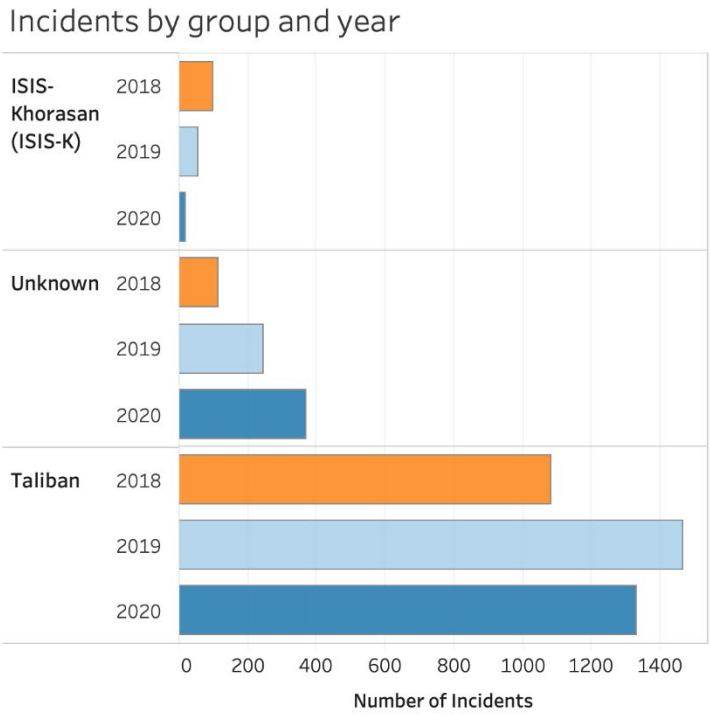
In 2019 the top 10 countries with the most fatalities were Afghanistan (33 percent of global total in 2019), Syria (11 percent), Nigeria (10 percent), Somalia (5 percent), Mali (4 percent), Yemen (4 percent), Iraq, Pakistan, India, and Libya.

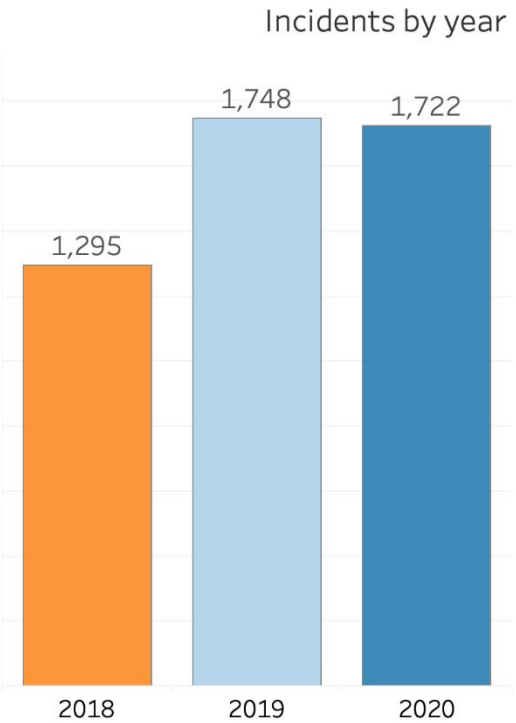
Table 3.2. Top 10 Countries With the Most Fatalities, 2020

Top Countries	Fatalities 2018	2019	2020	*2019-20 change*
1 AFGHANISTAN	9,974	8,727	8,514	-2% ▼
2 DR CONGO	680	1,125	3,522	213% ▲
3 SYRIA	3,906	2,920	3,172	9% ▲
4 NIGERIA	3,331	2,750	2,322	-16% ▼
5 YEMEN	3,038	940	2,132	127% ▲
6 SOMALIA	2,091	1,358	1,458	7% ▲
7 BURKINA FASO	183	977	891	-9% ▼
8 MALI	1,090	1,060	874	-18% ▼
9 SOUTH SUDAN	138	110	736	569% ▲
10 MOZAMBIQUE	150	373	609	63% ▲
Subtotal	**24,581**	**20,340**	**24,230**	**19% ▲**
Year-end Total	**32,952**	**26,273**	**29,336**	**12% ▲**

3.3. Profiles of Top 10 Countries/Regions With the Highest Number of Terrorist Incidents (in Order)

This section disaggregates the data on global terrorism incidents down to an analysis of specific geographic areas. The highly concentrated and localized nature of terrorism guides the selection of these countries and regions for further analysis and allows for crucial context to be provided to the great majority of incidents reported in 2020.





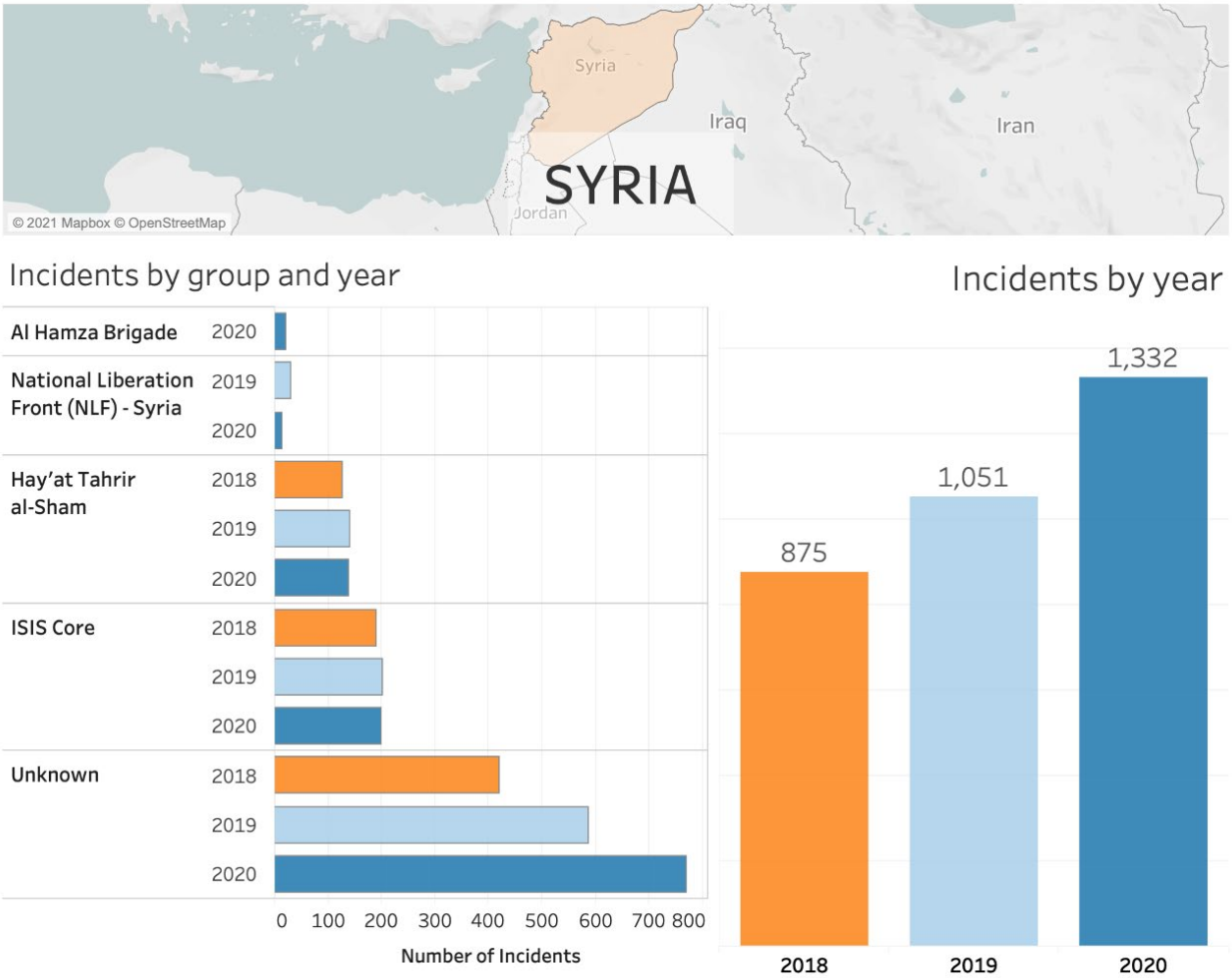
Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

In 2020, there were 1,722 incidents in Afghanistan, with 8,486 fatalities (29 percent of the global total of fatalities). This constitutes a 1.5 percent decrease in incidents from 2019 and a 2.4 percent decrease in fatalities.

The Taliban was the main perpetrator of incidents in Afghanistan in 2020, responsible for 77 percent of all incidents. ISIS-Khorasan was responsible for 1 percent of all incidents in the country. Twenty-one percent of incidents in Afghanistan were not attributed to a specific perpetrator group.

Common tactic types in Afghanistan included shootings (46 percent), landmines or IEDs (22 percent), and assault-bombing (13 percent). Twenty-six percent of all terrorist incidents in Afghanistan in 2020 primarily targeted law enforcement. Other prominent targeted groups included the general population (21 percent) and the military (18 percent). Also targeted but to a lesser degree were government officials, students/children, journalists, other members of terrorist or militant groups, and pro-government forces.

In Afghanistan, the districts that experienced the most incidents were Kandahar with 164 incidents (9.5 percent), Kunduz with 132 incidents (7.7 percent), and Kabul with 127 incidents (7.4 percent).



Syrian Arab Republic

In 2020, there were 1,332 terrorist incidents in Syria, with 3,172 fatalities (11 percent of the global total of fatalities). This constitutes a 26.7 percent increase in incidents from 2019 and an 8.6 percent increase in fatalities, as seen in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 previously.

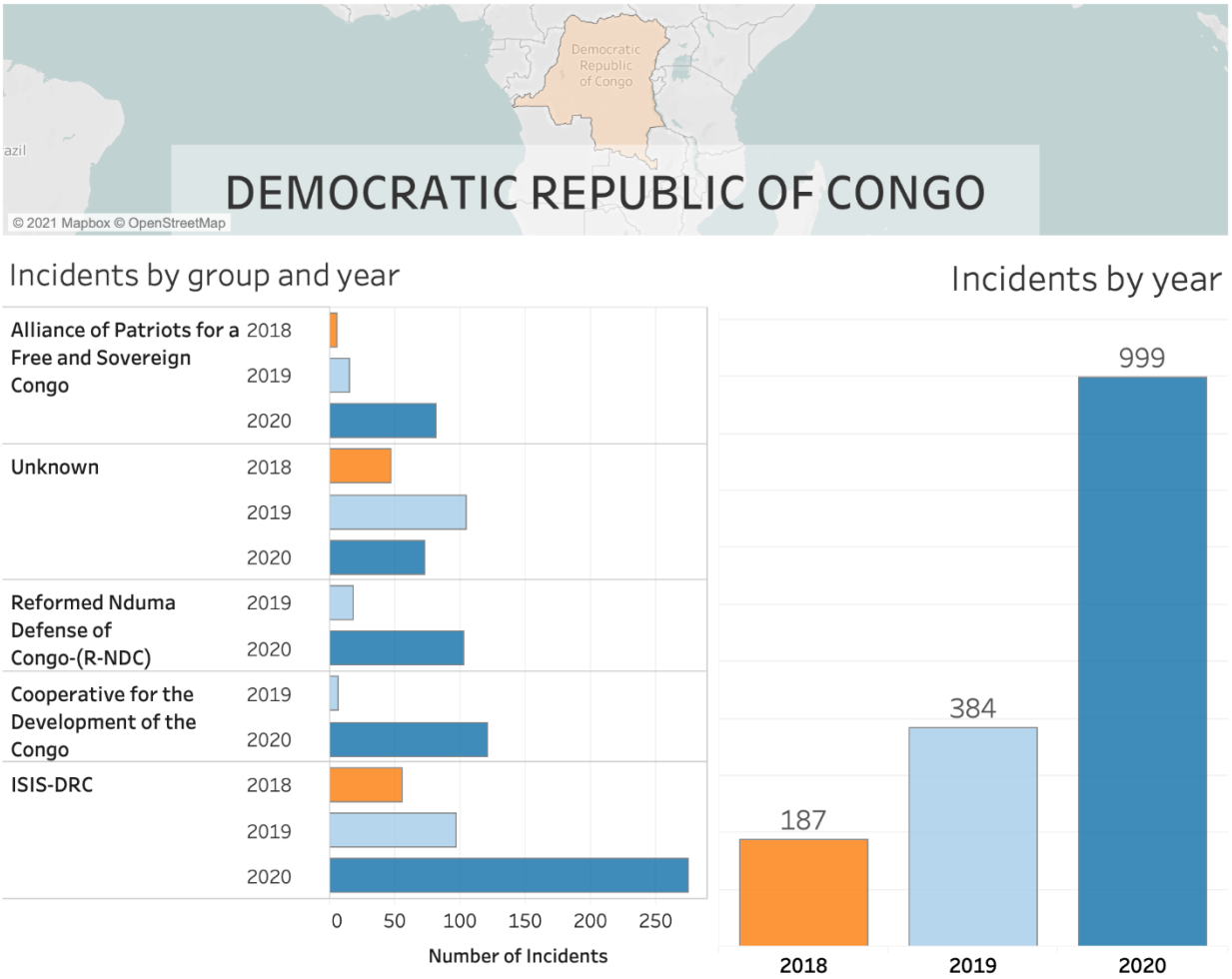
ISIS-Core was the main perpetrator of incidents in Syria in 2020, responsible for 15 percent of incidents. The next-most-active group was Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, responsible for 10 percent of

incidents. Fifty-eight percent of incidents were attributed to Unknown. In total, there were 44 different perpetrator groups active in Syria in 2020.

Common tactic types in Syria included bombings (48 percent), shootings (25 percent), and landmines or IEDs (11 percent).

Twenty-four percent of terrorist incidents in Syria in 2020 primarily targeted the general population. Other prominent targeted groups included the military (16 percent) and other victims (24 percent) — consisting of other violent nonstate actors and other perpetrators.

The Syrian provinces that experienced the most incidents were Aleppo with 290 incidents (21.8 percent), Dayr az Zawr with 239 incidents (17.9 percent), and Idlib with 197 incidents (14.8 percent).



Democratic Republic of Congo

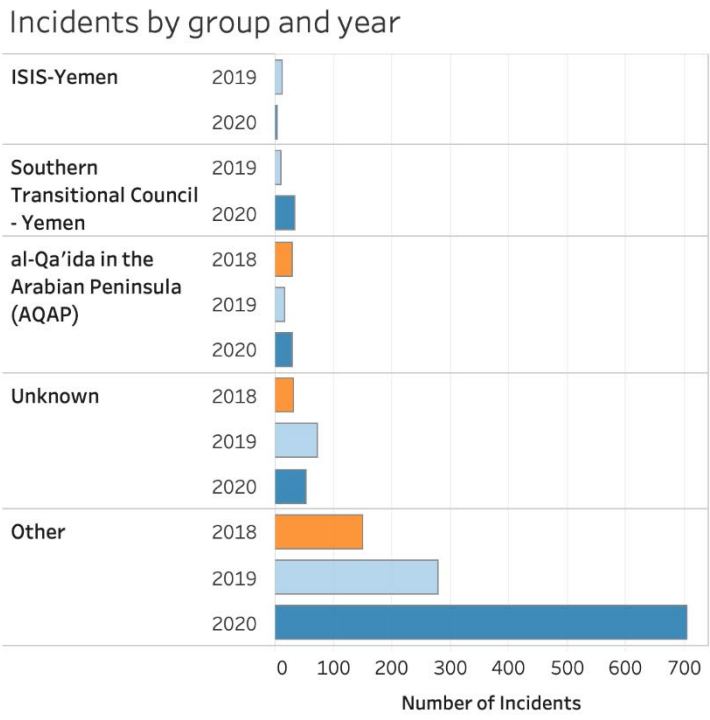
In 2020, there were 999 incidents in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), with 3,497 fatalities (12 percent of the global total of fatalities). This constituted a 160 percent increase in incidents over 2019, and a 213 percent increase in fatalities.

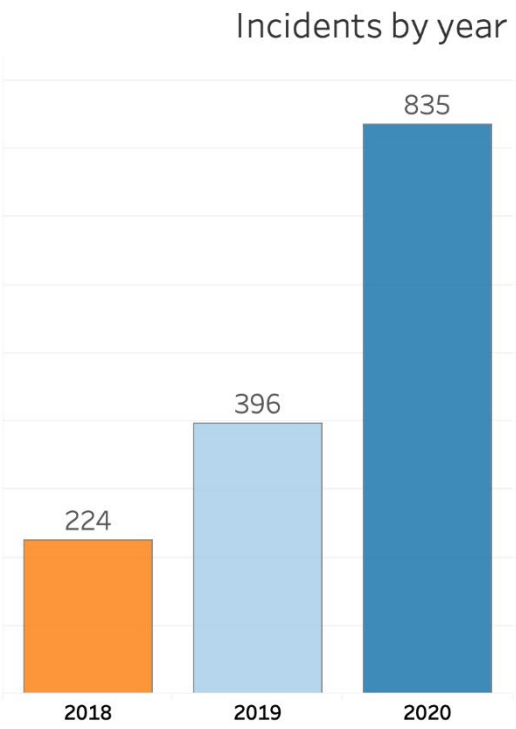
ISIS-DRC (labeled in past Annexes as Allied Democratic Forces) was the main perpetrator of incidents in the DRC in 2020, responsible for 28 percent of incidents. The Cooperative for the Development of the Congo (or CODECO) was responsible for 12 percent of incidents. Other groups — such as the Reformed Nduma Defense of Congo and the Alliance of Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo — were also active. Seven percent of incidents in the DRC could not be attributed to a perpetrator group.

Common tactic types in the DRC included shootings (29 percent), extortion (21 percent), and kidnappings (12 percent).

Fifty-three percent of terrorist incidents primarily targeted the general population in 2020. Other prominent targeted groups included the military (18 percent) and other victims (26 percent) — consisting of other perpetrators or members of terrorist or militant groups.

The states in the DRC that experienced the most incidents were Nord-Kivu with 622 incidents (62.3 percent), Ituri with 155 incidents (15.5 percent), and Sud-Kivu with 153 incidents (15.3 percent).





Republic of Yemen

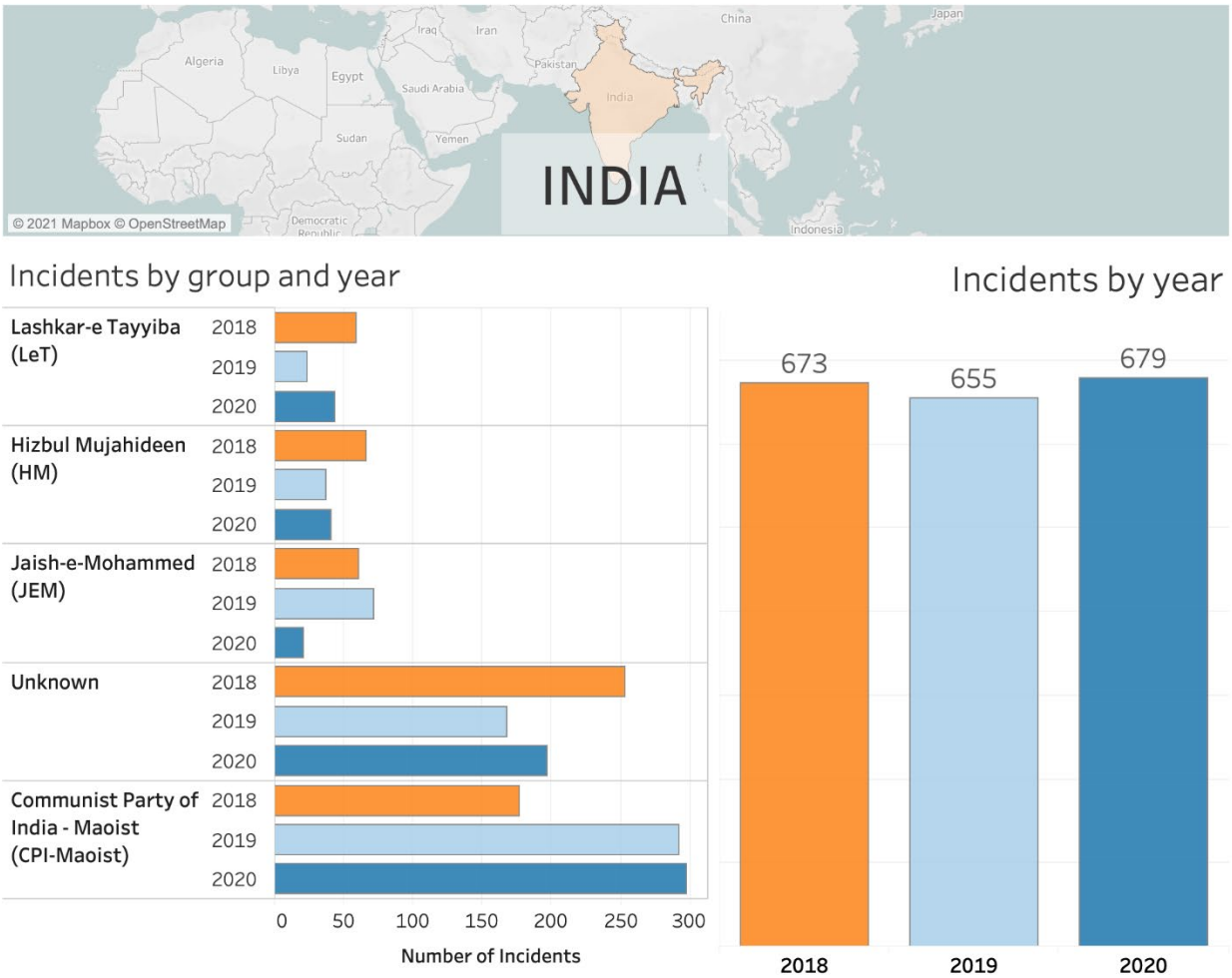
In 2020, there were 835 incidents in Yemen, with 2,132 fatalities (7 percent of the global total of fatalities). This constitutes a 111 percent increase in incidents from 2019, as well as a 127 percent increase in fatalities from 2019.

As we point out in the methodology section of this report, Yemen is illustrative of the challenges of gathering open-source reporting in a war zone and areas with weak media coverage. This was exacerbated in 2020 by COVID-19. Consequently, nearly 90 percent of the incidents in 2020 were attributable to either unknown or other perpetrators. Southern Transitional Council-Yemen was responsible for 4 percent of incidents, and another 4 percent of incidents were attributed to al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula. Other active perpetrator groups such as ISIS-Yemen were responsible for the remaining incidents.

Common tactic types in Yemen included bombings (46 percent), shootings (37 percent), and landmines or IEDs (13 percent).

Twenty-nine percent of terrorist incidents in Yemen in 2020 primarily targeted the general population. Other prominent targeted groups included military (8 percent) and other victims (23 percent) — consisting of other perpetrators, or members of terrorist or militant groups, or pro-government forces.

In Yemen, the provinces that experienced the most incidents were al-Hudaydah with 256 incidents (31 percent), Taizz with 92 incidents (11 percent), and Ad Dali with 67 incidents (8 percent).



Republic of India

In 2020, there were 679 incidents in India. There were 567 fatalities (2 percent of the global total of fatalities). While India was in the top 10 countries for most terrorism incidents, it is not in the top 10 for fatalities. There was a 3.7 percent increase in terrorism incidents over 2019, and a 3.7 percent decrease in fatalities from 2019.

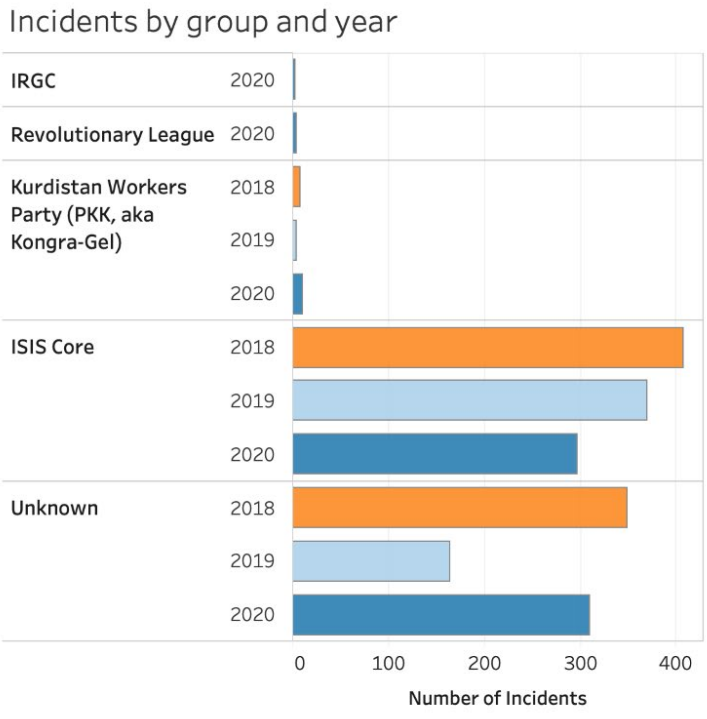
CPI-Maoist was the main perpetrator of incidents in India in 2020, responsible for 44 percent of all incidents. Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) was responsible for 6 percent of all incidents. Hizbul Mujahideen was responsible for 6 percent of all incidents. Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) was

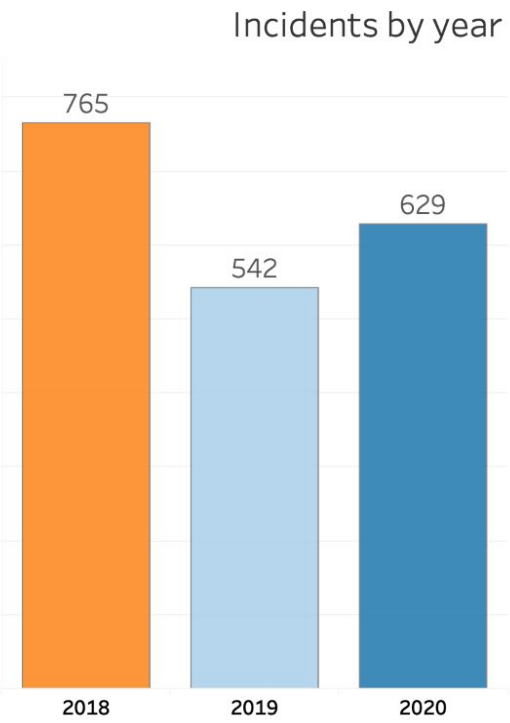
responsible for 3 percent of all incidents. And 29 percent of incidents were not attributable to any perpetrator group.

Common tactic types in India included shootings (50 percent), landmines or IEDs (19 percent), and bombings (12 percent).

Seventeen percent of terrorist incidents in India in 2020 primarily targeted law enforcement. Other prominent targeted groups included the general population (11 percent), military (6 percent), and other informants, terrorist, or militant group members (33 percent).

The states in India that experienced the most incidents were Jammu and Kashmir with 257 incidents (37.8 percent), Chattisgarh with 145 incidents (21.4 percent), and Jharkand with 69 incidents (10.2 percent).





Republic of Iraq

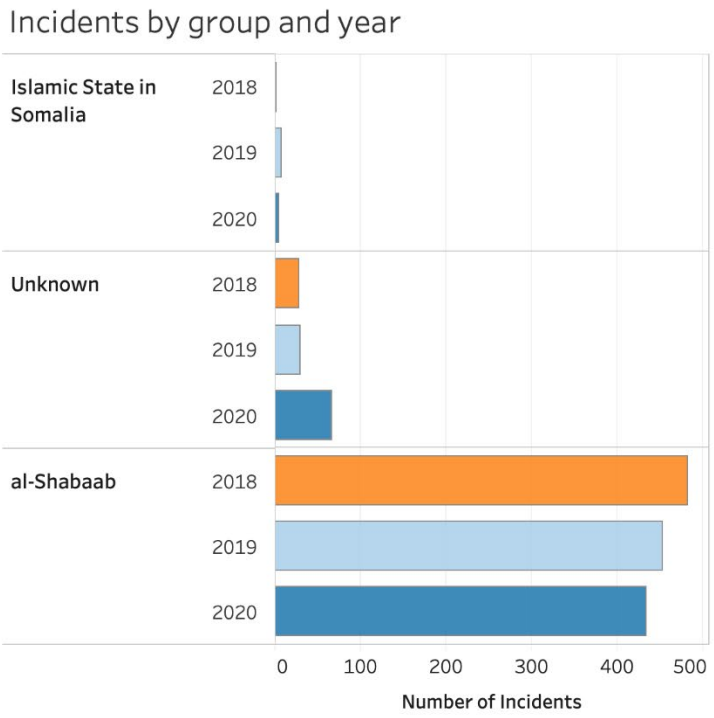
In 2020, there were 629 incidents in Iraq, with 563 fatalities (2 percent of the global total of fatalities). This constitutes a 16 percent increase in incidents from 2019, but a 13.9 percent decrease in fatalities from 2019. While Iraq was in the top 10 list for terrorism incidents in 2020, it was not among the top 10 countries with the most fatalities.

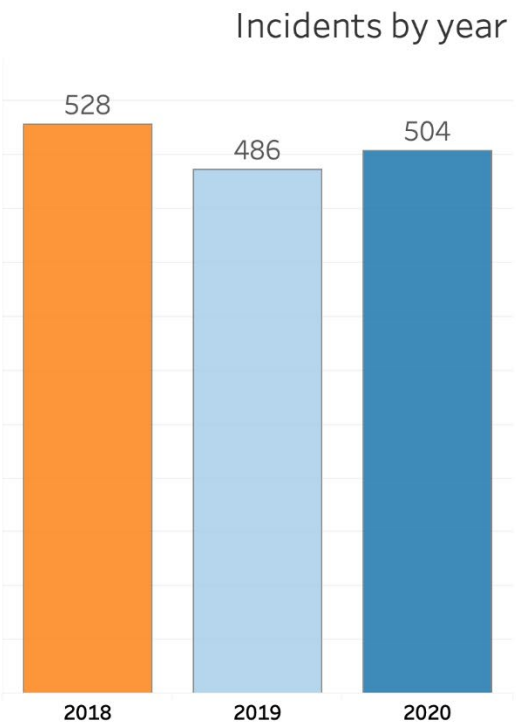
ISIS-Core was the main perpetrator of incidents in Iraq in 2020, responsible for 47 percent of all incidents. The PKK was responsible for 2 percent of incidents. Other active perpetrator groups — such as Revolutionary League (Usbat Al-Thairen), Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Qassim al-Jabbarin Brigade, and Hizballah-Iraq — were collectively responsible for 2 percent of the incidents. Forty-nine percent of incidents in Iraq were not attributed to a particular perpetrator group.

Common tactic types in Iraq included landmines or IEDs (40 percent), shootings (32 percent), and bombings (13 percent).

Twenty percent of terrorist incidents in Iraq in 2020 primarily targeted the general population. Other prominent targeted groups included law enforcement (16 percent), military (15 percent), and other victims (14 percent) — consisting of other perpetrators, members of terrorist or militant groups, or pro-government forces.

The provinces in Iraq that experienced the most incidents were Diyala with 161 incidents (25.6 percent), Baghdad with 120 incidents (19.0 percent), and Kirkuk with 84 incidents (13.4 percent).





Federal Republic of Somalia

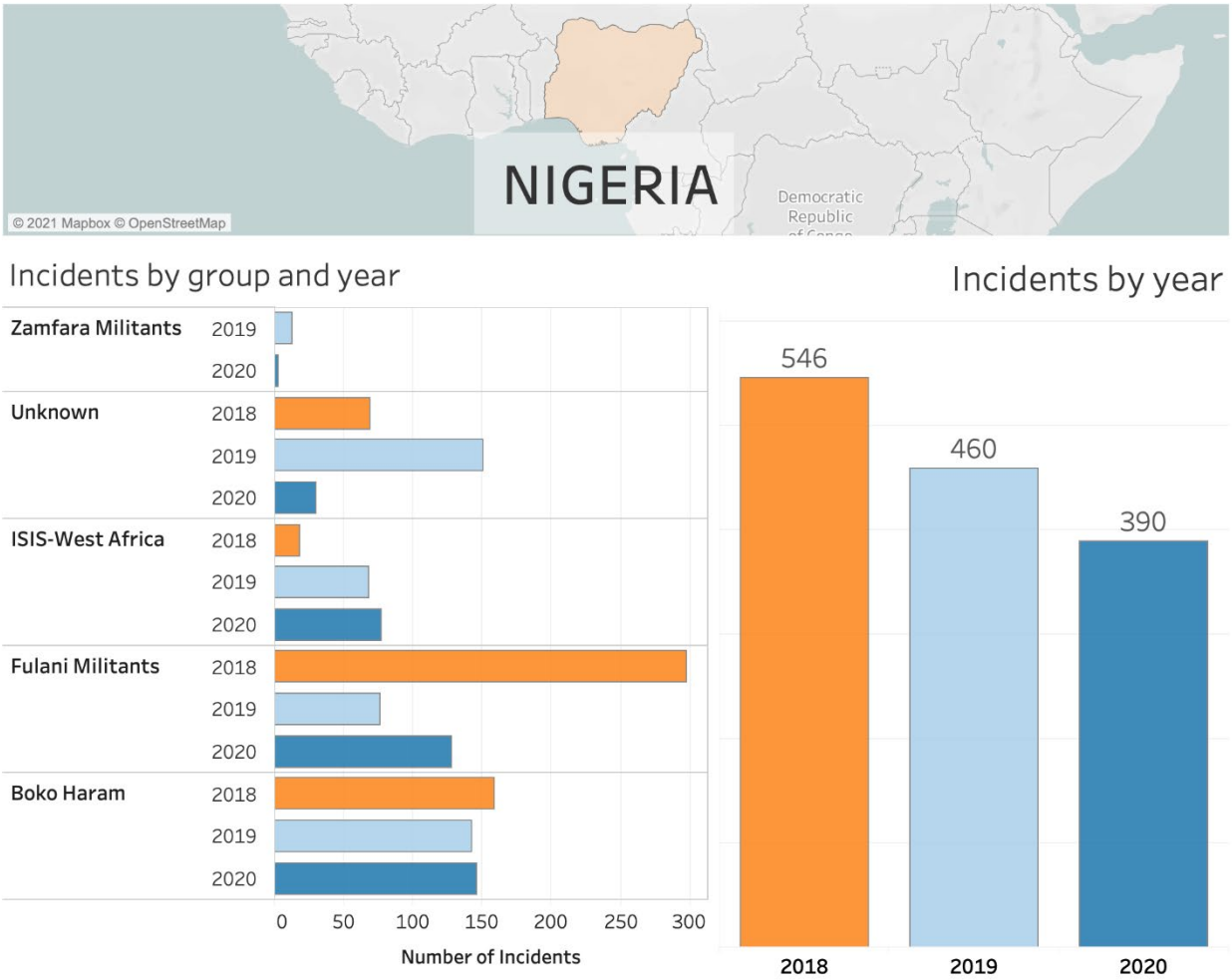
In 2020, there were 504 incidents in Somalia with 1,458 fatalities (5 percent of the global total of fatalities). This constitutes a 3.7 percent increase in incidents from 2019, as well as a 7.0 percent increase in fatalities from 2019.

Al-Shabaab was the main perpetrator of incidents in Somalia in 2020, responsible for 86 percent of incidents. ISIS-Somalia was responsible for 1 percent. Thirteen percent of incidents in Somalia were not attributed to a perpetrator group.

Common tactic types in Somalia included shootings (49 percent), landmines or IEDs (27 percent), and bombings (9 percent).

Twenty-four percent of terrorist incidents in Somalia in 2020 primarily targeted the general population. Other prominent targeted groups included the military (23 percent) and law enforcement (10 percent).

In Somalia the provinces that experienced the most incidents were Banaadir with 110 incidents (21.8 percent), Shabeellaha Hoose with 105 incidents (20.8 percent), and Jubbada Hoose with 64 incidents (12.7 percent).



Federal Republic of Nigeria

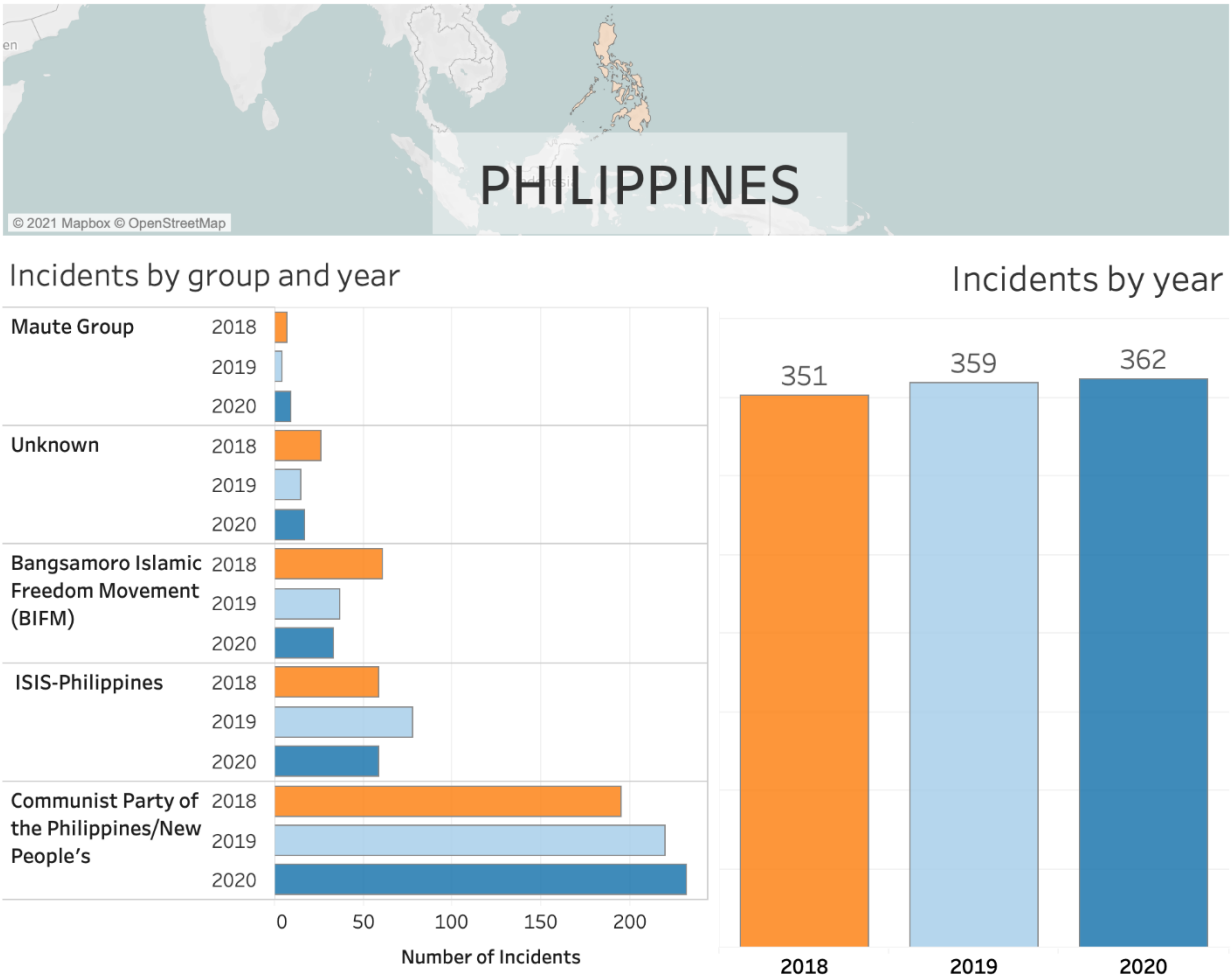
In 2020, there were 390 incidents in Nigeria, with 2,322 fatalities (8 percent of the global total of fatalities). This constitutes a 15 percent decrease in incidents from 2019, as well as a 16 percent decrease in fatalities from 2019.

Boko Haram was the main known perpetrator of incidents in Nigeria in 2020, responsible for 37 percent of all incidents. ISIS-West Africa was responsible for 21 percent of all incidents. As noted earlier, local sources do not always differentiate between Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa. Other groups such as the Zamfara Militants and Ansaru were also active in Nigeria. Eight percent of incidents in Nigeria were not attributed to a particular perpetrator group.

Common tactic types in Nigeria included shootings (57 percent), hostage-taking/kidnappings (16 percent), and ambushes (7 percent).

Thirty-seven percent of terrorist incidents in Nigeria in 2020 targeted the general population. Other prominent targeted groups included the military (23 percent) and specifically targeted groups of civilians (22 percent) — consisting of those identified by gender, identified by race or ethnicity, identified by religion (Muslim, Christian, or other religion), refugees/internally displaced persons, and students/children.

The Nigerian states that experienced the most incidents were Borno with 184 incidents (47.2 percent), Kaduna with 84 incidents (21.5 percent), and Benue with 23 incidents (5.9 percent).



Republic of the Philippines

In 2020, there were 362 incidents in the Philippines, with 506 fatalities. This constituted less than a 0.8 percent increase in incidents over 2019. While the Philippines made the top 10 list of countries with the most terrorism incidents, it was not among the top 10 countries with the most fatalities.

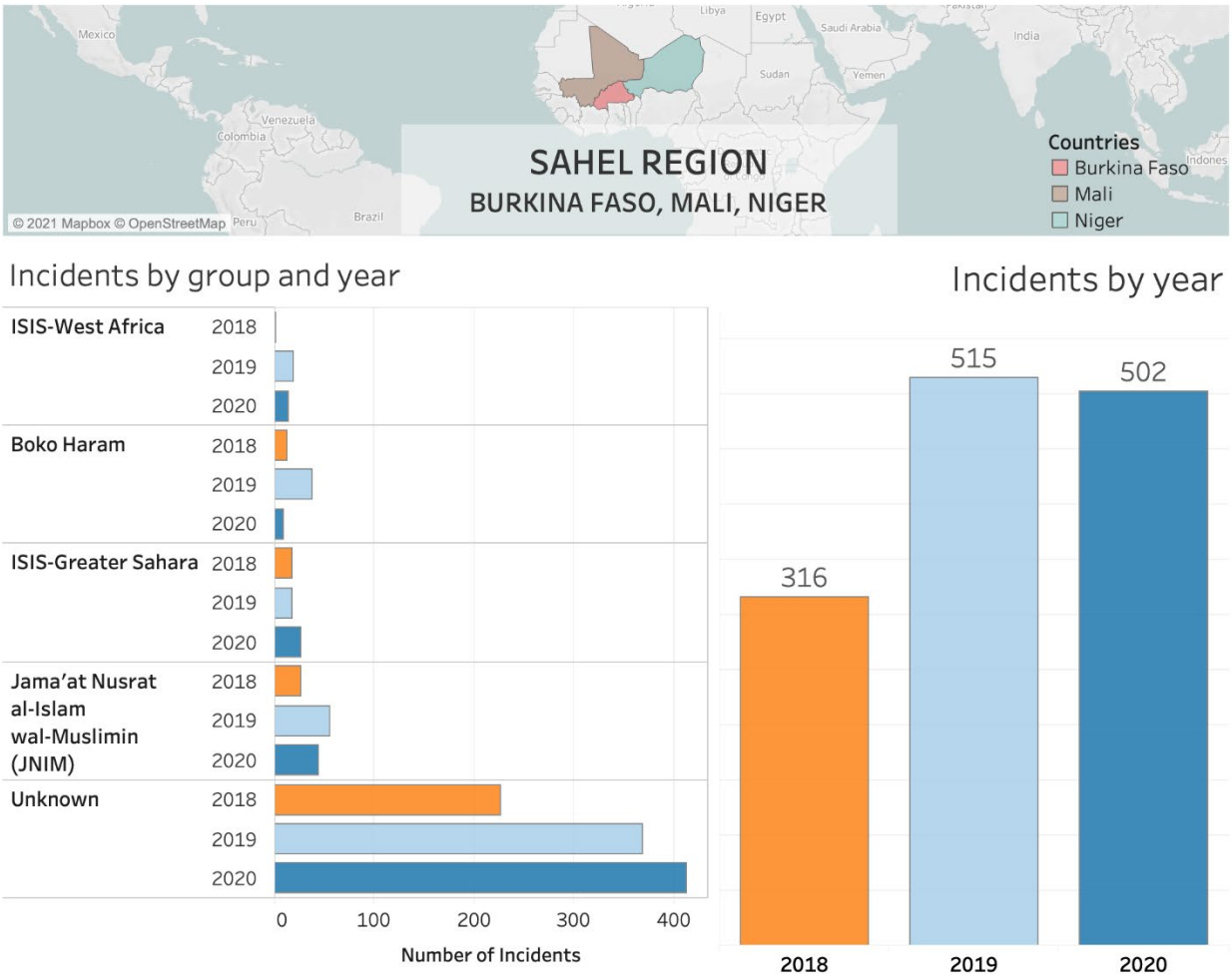
The Communist Party of the Philippines/News People's Army was the main perpetrator of incidents in the Philippines in 2020, responsible for 64 percent of all incidents. ISIS-Philippines was responsible for 16 percent of incidents. Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement was responsible

for 9 percent of incidents. Other groups such as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front were also active in the Philippines. Five percent of incidents in the Philippines were unattributed.

Common tactic types in the Philippines included shootings (78 percent), landmines or IEDs (7 percent), and bombings (6 percent).

Thirty percent of terrorist incidents in 2020 targeted the Philippines military. Other prominent targeted groups included the general population (12 percent) and law enforcement (9 percent).

In the Philippines in 2020, the provinces that experienced the most incidents were Maguindanao with 44 incidents (12.2 percent), Sulu with 31 incidents (8.6 percent), and Negros Oriental with 19 incidents (5.2 percent).



The Sahel Region

In the Sahel, terrorist groups — including affiliates and adherents of al-Qa'ida, ISIS, and nonaligned groups — expanded their operations in north and central Mali and the tri-border region of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger.

In 2020, there were 502 incidents in the Sahel, with 3,013 fatalities (10 percent of the global total). This constituted a 2.5 percent decrease in incidents from 2019.

Burkina Faso

In 2020, there were 197 incidents in Burkina Faso with 891 fatalities. This represents a 4.8 percent decrease in terrorist activity from 2019 and an 8.8 percent decrease in fatalities over 2019.

Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin was the main perpetrator of incidents in Burkina Faso in 2020, responsible for 13 incidents (7 percent). ISIS-Greater Sahara was responsible for seven incidents (4 percent). Eighty-nine percent of incidents in Burkina Faso were unattributed.

Common tactics in Burkina Faso included shootings (39 percent), ambushes (16 percent), and property damage (12 percent).

Twenty-eight percent of terrorist incidents in Burkina Faso in 2020 primarily targeted the general population. Other prominent targeted groups included military (20 percent) and government (14 percent).

In Burkina Faso, the provinces that experienced the most incidents were Tapoa (13.2 percent), Soum (13.2 percent), and Bam (10.2 percent).

Republic of Mali

In 2020, there were 253 incidents in Mali, resulting in 874 fatalities. While Mali experienced a 12 percent increase in terrorist activity from 2019, it experienced a 17.4 percent decrease in fatalities from 2019. Notably, Mali was the country with the 10th-most terrorism incidents in 2020, and the country with the 8th-most fatalities in 2020.

Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin was the main perpetrator of incidents in Mali in 2020, responsible for 30 incidents (12 percent). ISIS-Greater Sahara was responsible for 18 incidents (7 percent). Eighty-three percent of incidents in Mali were not attributed to a specific perpetrator group.

Common tactic types in Mali included shootings (77 percent), landmines or IEDs (15 percent), and coordinated, multilocation attacks (10 percent).

Thirty-one percent of terrorist incidents in Mali targeted the general population in 2020. Other prominent targeted groups included military (23 percent) and groups identified by race or ethnicity and refugees or internally displaced persons (10 percent).

In Mali the provinces that experienced the most incidents were Mopti (49.0 percent), Gao (11.5 percent), and Tombouctou (6.7 percent).

Republic of the Niger

In 2020, there were 52 incidents in Niger, with 493 fatalities. This constituted a 37 percent decrease in terrorist activity from 2019 and a 51 percent increase in fatalities from 2019.

ISIS-West was the main perpetrator of incidents in Niger in 2020, responsible for 14 incidents (27 percent). Boko Haram was responsible for 9 incidents (17 percent). Fifty percent of incidents in Niger could not be attributed to a specific perpetrator.

Common tactic types in Niger included shootings (37 percent), kidnappings (13 percent), and landmines or IEDs (12 percent).

Thirty-three percent of terrorist incidents in Niger targeted the general population. Other prominent targeted groups included military (23 percent) and law enforcement (12 percent).

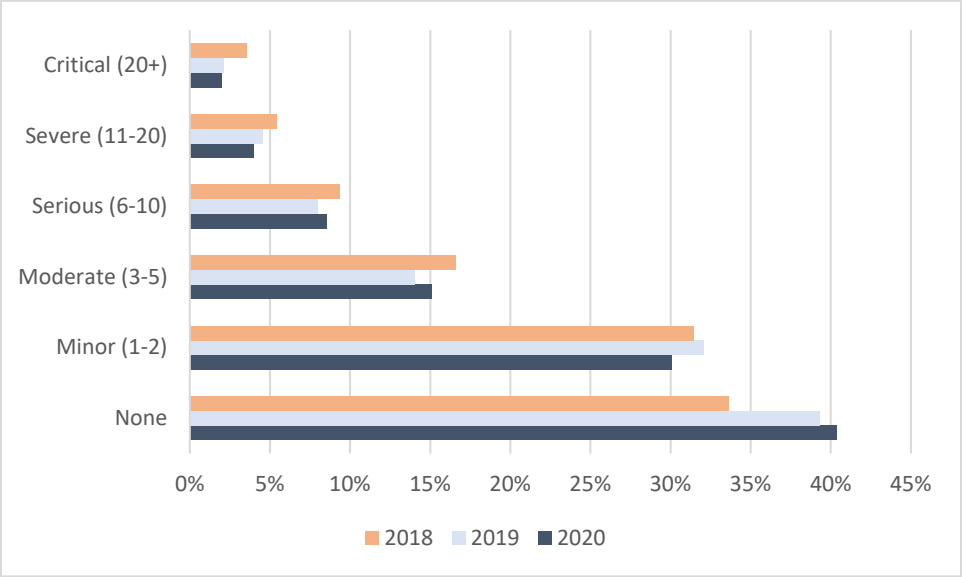
In Niger the provinces that experienced the most terrorism were Diffa (42.3 percent), Tillaberi (36.5 percent), and Tahoua (7.7 percent).

4. Global Characteristics of Incidents

As with the Perpetrator Dashboard, this is a new section presented for this year's Annex. This section disaggregates the corpus of records on global terrorism events into their component characteristics to present the different aspects of incidents in 2020. Terrorism can be a highly localized phenomenon, and analysis at a global scale does not always provide for an adequate understanding. By examining the different characteristics of global incidents, our goal is to shed light on the nature of global terrorism in 2020.

4.1. Severity of Incidents

Figure 4.1. Severity of Incidents by Fatalities



The principal unit of measurement for this report is the number of terrorism incidents in a particular year. However, not all terrorism incidents make the same impact or cause the same damage. It is difficult, for example, to measure property damage — whether it occurs on government or commercial property or results in people losing their homes. It is even more difficult to measure the trauma and fear of those areas victimized by terrorism on a continual basis. One relatively simple measure of the severity of an attack is the number of fatalities the incident causes, as seen in Figure 4.1. In 2020, there were 1,473 incidents with six or more fatalities (14.5 percent of 2020 incidents). In 2019, there were 1,297 incidents with six or more fatalities (14.6 percent of 2019 incidents).

Figure 4.1 also shows that there has been an increase in the share of incidents recorded in which there were no fatalities — such as incidents damaging land, houses, or infrastructure. These represented 34 percent of incidents in 2018 and more than 40 percent of incidents in 2020.

4.2. Related Incidents

Some terrorist attacks recorded by GTTAC involve related incidents that took place in different locations or times. When an attack involved multiple incidents discontinuous from one another across space and time, but which were clearly part of the same attack, the events were given their own incident record, but also linked in the data. The related incidents reported cover several different scenarios. For example, the kidnapping and the execution of a hostage by a terrorist group would be classified as two related incidents.

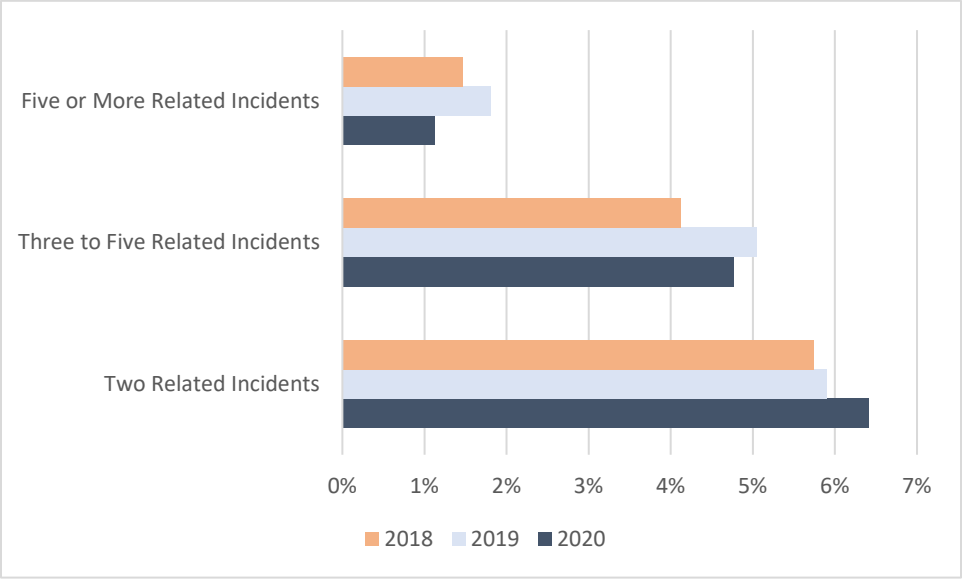
> On July 12, 2020, in Maiduguri, Borno state, Nigeria, Boko Haram kidnapped the leader of the pro-government militia group, Hunter group). On August 27, 2020, in Zambisa forest, in Borno state, Nigeria, the captive leader of Hunter group was murdered by Boko Haram.

Most other related incidents were coordinated attacks on the same day or on multiple days in one or multiple locations, most often within the same region.

> During October 20 and October 21, 2020, in North Darfur, Sudan, Rapid Support Forces attacked the villages of Ed Dekka, Donkey Abyad, and Haddad and the Um Asal and Um Zagrad camps. The total number of reported casualties were 13 killed and 29 injured. These figures are distributed for the five communities as follows: Haddad community (3 killed and 7 injured), Um Sal community (3 killed and 6 injured); Um Zagrad village (3 killed and 6 injured); Donkey Abyad community (2 killed and 5 injured); and Ed Dekka village (2 killed and 5 wounded).

The great majority of incidents recorded in 2020 were single incidents (87.8 percent). However, this share has been decreasing slowly since 2018, when single events represented 88.7 percent of all incidents. In 2020, 1,250 incidents were part of a multiple-incident attack. Figure 4.2 represents the small increase in the share of related incidents from 2019 to 2020, split out by the number of related incidents.

Figure 4.2. Percentage of Related Incidents, 2020



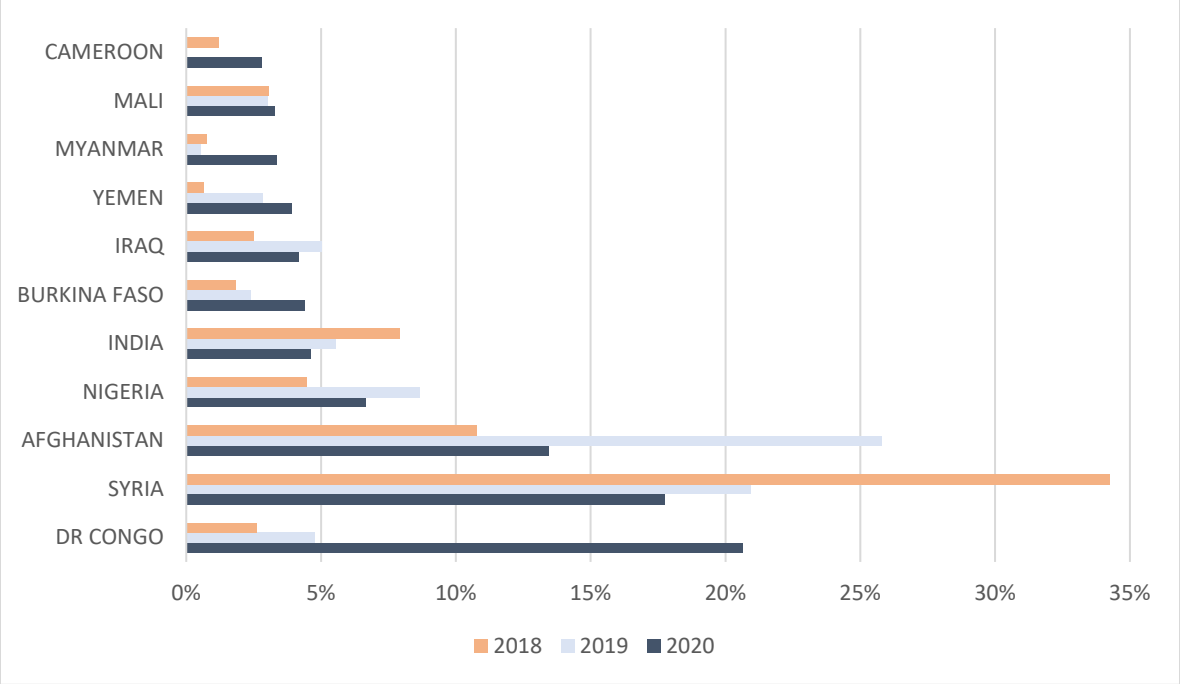
While the share of very complex attacks with five or more related incidents decreased slightly (from 1.5 percent of incidents in 2019 to 1.1 percent of incidents in 2020), the share of events with two related incidents represented 6.4 percent of all incidents recorded in 2020.

On average in 2020, a related incident caused 3.12 fatalities, compared with single incidents, which caused 2.86 fatalities on average. This is a small but statistically significant difference ($p<.01$), indicating that related incidents tended to be more lethal than single incidents in 2020.

In 2020, 86.6 percent of related incidents occurred on the same calendar day. While 5.5 percent of related incidents took place over two calendar days, only 1.7 percent of incidents took place over three days. Of all related incidents in 2020, 6.2 percent took place over four or more calendar days.

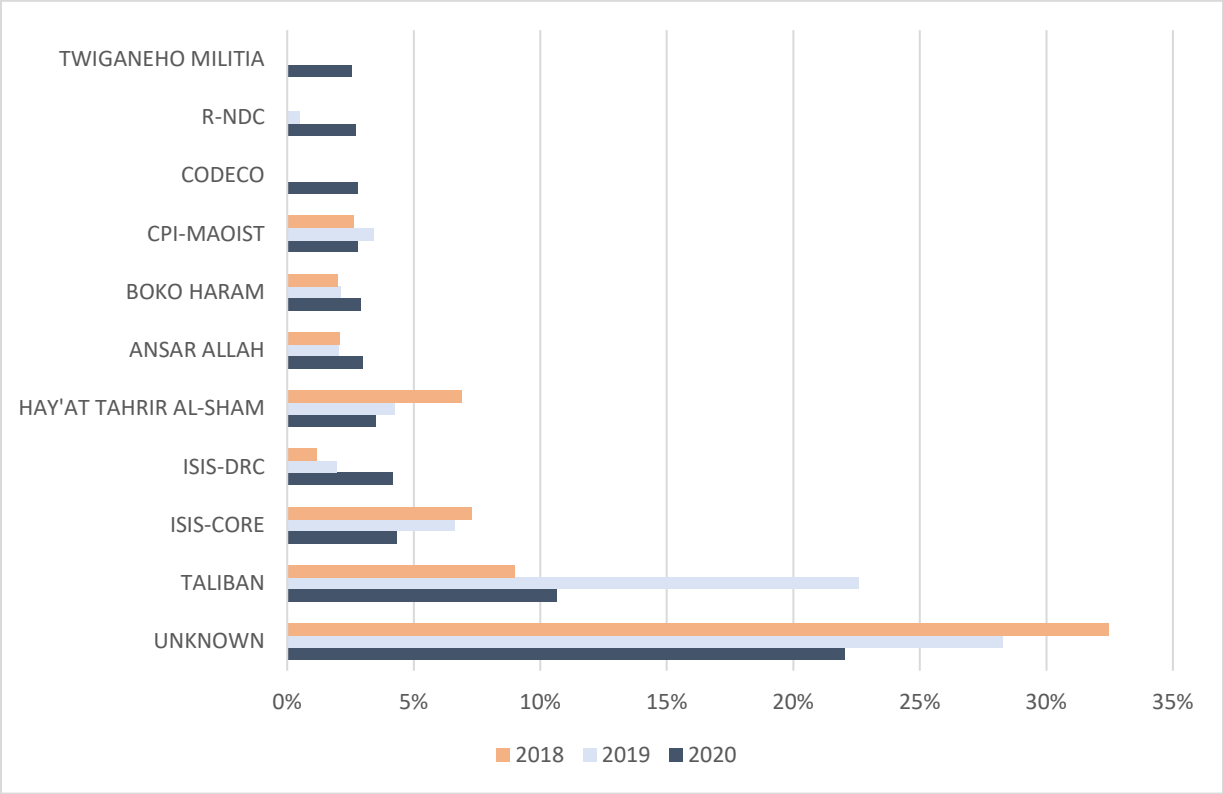
As with terrorist incidents in general, the related incidents were heavily concentrated in a small number of countries. Figure 4.3 shows the distribution of related incidents among the countries where they were most common. These countries account for 85 percent of all related incidents reported in 2020. The Democratic Republic of Congo accounted for 20.6 percent of the related incidents in 2020, the highest share of any country. This represented a dramatic increase, up from 2.6 percent in 2018 and 4.8 percent in 2019. Syria had the second-highest share of related incidents, with 17.8 percent of all related incidents in 2020. However, unlike the DRC, Syria had a notable decrease in related incidents over the past three years, down from 34.2 percent in 2018 and 20.9 percent in 2019. Afghanistan, which had the highest share of related incidents in 2019 with 25.8 percent, saw its share nearly halved to 13.4 percent in 2020.

Figure 4.3. Countries With the Most Related Incidents, 2020



The decrease in Afghanistan matched the decrease that can be seen in Figure 4.4 for the Taliban, which perpetrated 10.6 percent of related incidents in 2020, down from 22.6 percent in 2019. Figure 4.4 represents the share of the related incidents that can be attributed to the top perpetrators of related incidents, representing 61 percent of related incidents. More than one fifth (22 percent) of related incidents in 2020 involved an unknown perpetrator; however, this share has been decreasing consistently since 2018. The number of related incidents attributed to ISIS-Core decreased from 7.3 percent in 2018 to 6.6 percent in 2019 and to 4.3 percent in 2020. Its affiliate in the Democratic Republic of Congo, ISIS-DRC, was responsible for a 1.1 percent increase in related incidents in 2019 and a 4.2 percent increase in 2020, possibly indicating a greater complexity and coordination in its activity.

Figure 4.4. Top 10 Perpetrators of Related Incidents, 2020



4.3. Weapons Used in Terrorist Incidents

Figure 4.5. Weapon Types by Terrorist Incidents Worldwide, 2020

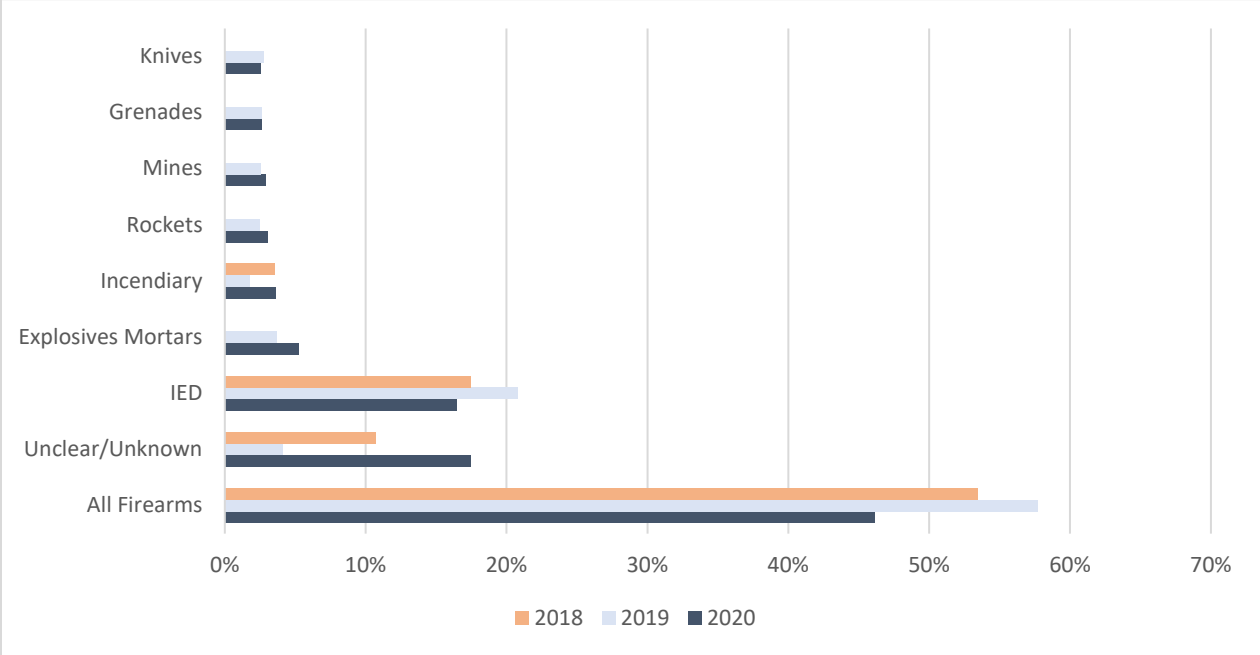


Figure 4.5 shows that, during 2020, all types of firearms combined were used in 46 percent of the terrorist incidents, followed by IEDs in 16 percent of terrorist incidents. Compared with the previous year, we see a decrease in usage of firearms by 12 percent and a 5 percent decrease in the use of IEDs. We also note a general increase in unclear or unknown weapons reported (from 4 percent of incidents in 2019 to 17 percent in 2020), which may reflect diminished open-source media reporting attributable to the global pandemic.

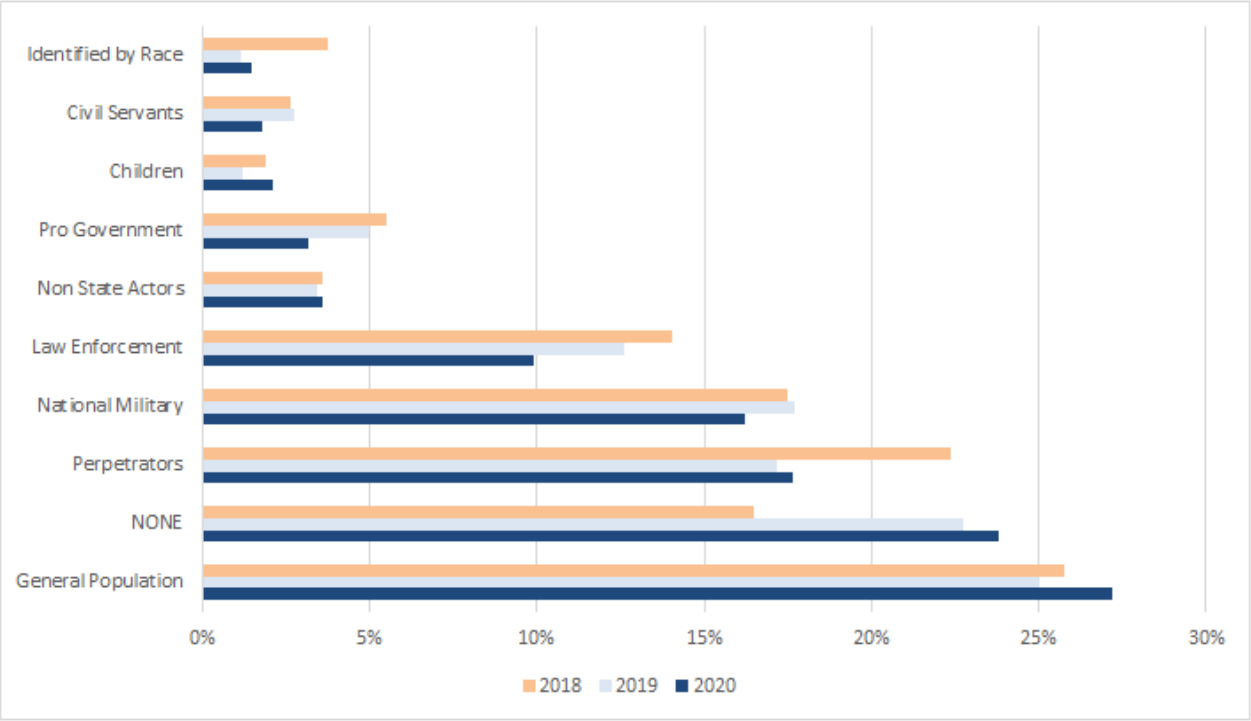
4.4. Hostage-Taking and Kidnapping

There were 4,471 persons kidnapped or taken hostage by terrorist groups in 2020. This was a 39.3 percent increase from 2019. The perpetrators responsible for the most terrorism-related kidnappings were Boko Haram (547 hostages), the Taliban (539 hostages), ISIS-West Africa (288 hostages), ISIS-DRC (265 hostages), and al-Shabaab (222 hostages).

4.5. Victims of Terrorism

Many incidents are complex, and a single incident may affect diverse types of victims directly and indirectly. While most reporting will give a rough estimate on the loss of life, it is extremely hard to quantify the loss of individual property and human trauma from many of these incidents. According to our methodology, we included only the military as a victim when it was a target, when the attack was initiated by the terrorist. Many terrorists — for example ISIS-West Africa, Boko Haram, Taliban, and al-Shabaab — brazenly attacked military targets as a sign of strength.

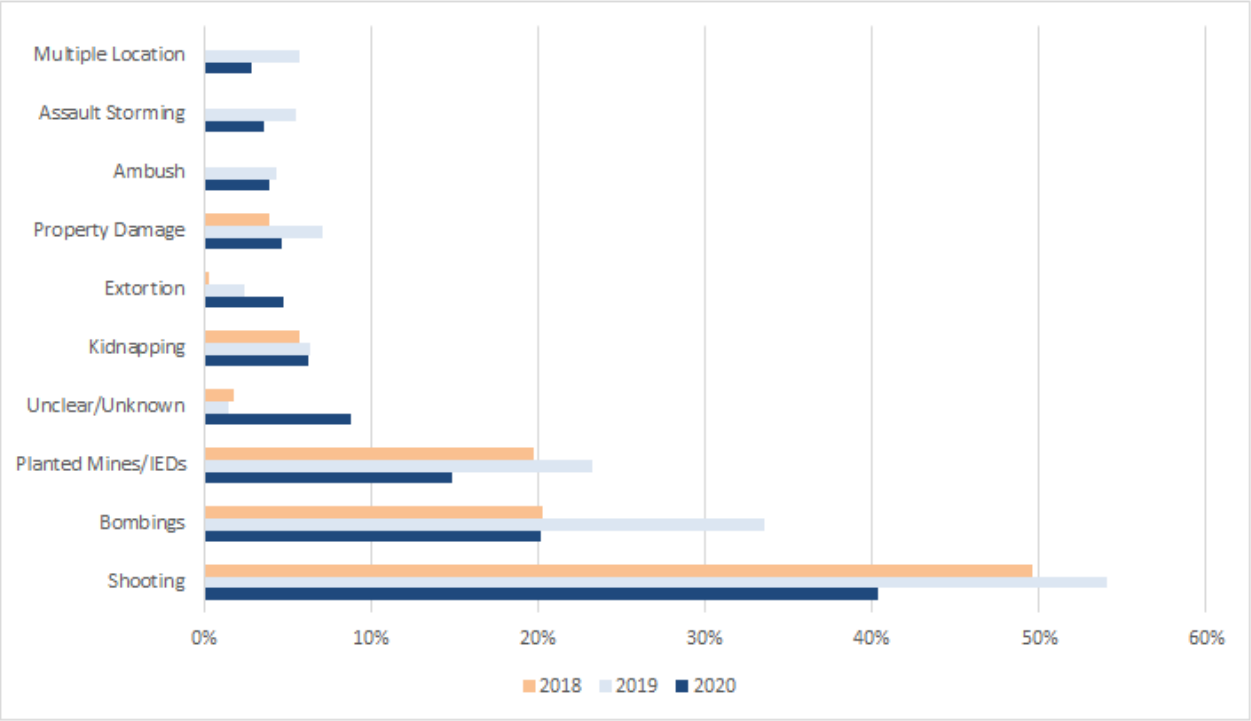
Figure 4.6. Victims of Terrorism Incidents Worldwide, 2020



As shown in Figure 4.6, the general population were victims in more than 27 percent of incidents. As noted in the Methodology section, open-source media reports can often be imprecise when trying to identify the victim of an incident, especially in certain regions. Individuals associated with governments (such as civil servants, local government, high-level officials, judiciary, or law enforcement and legislators) were collectively found to be victims in 19 percent of incidents globally in 2020.

4.6. Tactics of Perpetrators

Figure 4.7. Top 10 Tactics of Perpetrators, 2020



The GTTAC database recorded 30 different tactics. Figure 4.7 shows the top 10 tactics used in 2020.

Forty-seven percent of incidents were armed attacks. Among these, 40 percent (of all attacks) were shootings, 4 percent were storming/rapid assaults, and 4 percent were ambushes. Thirty percent of incidents were carried out with bombs and explosives; among these, 15 percent (of all attacks) were IEDs, or landmines planted in a static location, 20 percent were bombings used in an assault, and 1 percent were suicide bombings. Six percent of all incidents were kidnappings.

5. Glossary of Terms

5.1. Tactic Types

Suicide Attack	A suicide attack is when a perpetrator deliberately intends to die during their attack. These cases usually — but not always — involve use of a bomb or other explosive device.
Hostage-taking	In a hostage-taking, unlike a kidnapping, the victims are generally held at the site where they are captured until the hostage-takers' conditions are met. The victims of a hostage-taking often are random individuals who are captured at the site of the attack.
Kidnapping	The main distinctions between a kidnapping and a hostage-taking are the location and the targeting of the victims. Kidnapping is usually more targeted, with the perpetrators selecting specific victims in advance, taking control of them, and moving them to a different site. In a hostage taking the victims may be random individuals who find themselves at the attack site.
Bombing	A bomb or munition is used to cause destruction to an intended location or target. This category includes attacks with commercial explosives such as TNT but also reflects car bombs, mail bombs, and pipe bombs, as well as other types of IEDS and suicide bombs.
Mines/IEDs	Mines and IEDs refer to antipersonnel mines and antivehicle mines or IEDs strategically placed to deny access to an area, route, or structure.

5.2. Victim Types

General Population or Unknown	This category is used in cases where there is insufficient information about the victims or when they appear to have been victimized for no apparent reason other than they were at the site of the incident.
Identified by Gender	This category is used in cases such as attacks on women's schools, or other cases when either men or women formed a large majority of the targeted victims.
Identified by Race or Ethnicity	This category is used in cases where a specific racial or ethnic group formed a large majority of the victims and may have been targeted for their group identity.
Perpetrators	This category records any deaths and injuries among the perpetrators of the attack.
Pro-Government Forces	This category is used for pro-government forces that are present in a country, whether or not they are funded or otherwise supported by the government, as long as they are not the official forces of a national government.
Other Violent Nonstate Actors	This category accounts for members of other groups, members of factions, individuals in the perpetrator's group who are deemed to be disloyal, or members of the perpetrator's own group who were accidental victims.