**Tunisia**

Tunisia is the North African state with the largest absolute and proportional representation of its nationals within the ranks of the Islamic State (IS). There are, it is claimed, some 2,500 Tunisians enrolled in the movement, compared with an estimated 1,500 Moroccans and between 100 to 200 Algerians. Many of the Tunisian recruits are located in Libya, despite the fact that Islamic State has been forced out of its stronghold in Sirte. Indeed, Libya is the ideal base, given its political chaos and the wide availability of arms from the stockpiles of the Qaddafi regime, fired up by the Libyan revolution in 2011. IS fighters have, as a result, been able to infiltrate Tunisia and launch the Ben Gardane (March 2016), Sousse (July 2015) and Bardo Museum (March 2015) attacks, as well as a devastating attack on the presidential guard in Tunis in December 2015.

Islamic State, however, is not the only extremist Salafi-jihadi actor in Tunisia. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghrib (AQIM) has been able to infiltrate the central portion of the Algerian-Tunisian border around Djebel Chazamba where it has been active in the past four years. Another movement, based in Libya – Ansar al-Sharia – has also infiltrated the country and probably been responsible for the assassination of at least two leading left-wing Tunisian politicians. It has, on occasion, collaborated with Islamic State, particularly in the training camp at Sabratha which was destroyed by the Americans in late 2015. In addition, a dissident faction of AQIM has been active along the Libyan border with Tunisia from where it launched an assault of a major gas pipeline in 2013 targeted the French oil company Total.

And that requires such movements to understand and play the political participation game with appropriate external support whilst recognising that they cannot co-opt or cooperate with their extremist counterparts. That is a lesson that Kangaba to Tunisia and the Justice and Development Party in Morocco have already learned but that companion parties in Libya and Egypt have yet to realise.

**Libya**

During 2016, Islamic State (IS) was obliterated as a territorial force in Libya. IS fighters have scattered in small groups in remote desert areas, or gone underground as small cells in cities. They are unlikely to again attempt to establish control over cities or territory, since this will expose them to US or French airstrike. They will also be unable to attract the large numbers of foreign fighters that had joined IS in its Libyan strongholds over 2015.

IS may continue to operate as a non-territorial force in Libya, both in remote areas and in cities. Foreign fighters dispersed from former Libyan IS strongholds may move into neighbouring countries, including their countries of origin – such as Tunisia, Niger or Sudan. But in none of these countries will they find the environment that enabled IS to establish territorial control, as they did in Syria, Iraq and Libya during 2014-15.

IS elements will therefore revert to a more conventional existence as jihadist groups. Whether they do so under the IS label or as al-Qaeda affiliates is largely irrelevant. The question, then, should be what the demise of IS as a territorial force and the change in wider conflict dynamics mean for Libya’s jihadist movement more generally. Jihadism is established in Libya, and deeply implanted in the social fabric of specific cities. Libyan IS affiliates were but the latest manifestation of Libyan jihadism, one born out of a particular set of circumstances that do not exist anymore – IS expansion in Syria and Iraq, free movement between Libya and Syria via Libyan airports and Turkey; political and territorial divisions in Libya that opened up space for IS.

All the conditions are there for Libya’s jihadist movements to remain stubbornly active after the demise of the caliphate. The jihadist subculture that has developed in certain Libyan cities will sustain the flow of recruits to jihadist groups for a long time to come. In the best-case scenario, the state will remain weak; it could plausibly also remain absent from large swathes of the country.

The most acute of current dangers is the eruption of open conflict in Western Libya as Haftar and his allies seek to advance in the region. A war in the greater Tripoli area would likely see jihadists emerge as a leading force in an anti-Haftarian coalition, much as it happened in Benghazi.

In Tripoli, a such war would likely last even longer and be much more destructive. It would provide a jihadist recruitment ground and fighting arena for many years to come. But a similar danger lurks in the potential eruption of conflict in south-western Libya as a result of an expansion of forces allied with Haftar.