

## **Threat Profile - Anti-Western Fighters (AWF)**

### **Background and Overview**

The UN has formally listed the AWF as a terrorist group. It is led by the young, charismatic leader, Sebastian Nazari (currently believed to reside in Northland, NFDK), who framed the philosophy of the group as self-determination and equal rights, achieved by force. Nazari, and the AWF, believe that Garland needs to be purified of modern values and innovations, and follow a more traditional path. As such, Nazari and his followers oppose the spread of Western/colonial secular values such as democracy, and those aspects of Western/colonial learning. The AWF is driven by a firm belief that their struggle is a divine cause, and that the Dotan sold their ancient ways and live in a false culture that requires cleansing. The AWF abhors any manifestation of external influence, including large international organisations. Indeed, the 7<sup>th</sup> CF considered the AWF a threat group.

The AWF came into being in late 2004 after a highly contagious flu-like virus struck North and North East Provinces. At that time there was a significant Abu population in this area, which had been moved to the area to work in the highly profitable lumber industry; a significant number of Northland refugees also moved to the area to work in this industry. However, despite having worked in the area for more than 25 years, these workers had no provincial voting rights, and very limited access to education and other basic services. The onset of the virus, and the concurrent drop in the price of lumber led to a large number of deaths among the ‘guest worker’ population and very high unemployment. With no place to move to, and no government support, including health support, the population slowly turned on the government of Garland. However, at that time, nascent uprisings against the GAF were easily suppressed and the problem was ignored at the strategic level; the government of Garland had more pressing concerns in the Eris.

In late 2004, Nazari began delivering a series of speeches to growing crowds of guest workers, blaming their situation on western-style governance and adherence to an externally imposed system or rules and regulations. Nazari also wrote pamphlets criticizing the manner in which the government of Garland copied colonial traditions and rules, claiming that Garland has simply replaced one ruling elite with another. Over time, the AWF emerged as an organized group, arming itself by raiding isolated GAF posts, and building its military know-how through its links with IK. The GAF focus on the Eris (the ENLF and the EIMF) allowed the group the space and time to grow, culminating in significant armed resistance to the GAF.

From 2005 until late 2008, the AWF engaged in a series of targeted assassinations, intimidation of government officials, and occasional attacks on small GAF outposts or lightly guarded convoys, facilitated by excellent links within the migrant worker community. This activity continued until late 2014, but little was achieved for the local population.

The group is understood to have a decentralized command structure, taking operational guidance from Nazari remotely (via recordings, sermons, and pamphlets), or from a small number of trusted aides who are unknown to the security services. The AWF area of operations is throughout the North-East and North Provinces, where it operates a series of Active Service Units; the actions of these ASUs are not very coordinated, though each has an approximate area of control. The ASUs appear to operate with a certain degree of independence, with each attempting to outdo the other with the relative daring of their operations. It is understood that Nazari only provides broad target sets, rather than issuing orders or controlling operations directly. The AWF auxiliary support network extends into the North-East Province and across the border into Northland. Operational cells seem to be formed through friends and family, which makes detection by counter terrorism units difficult. It is likely recruits come from the refugees from the ongoing civil war in Northland.

Nazari has raised funds through donations from within the Abu/Northarian expatriate community in the North and North-West Provinces. It has also been alleged that Nazari received funds from

government officials and the pro-government business community in Northland in return for disrupting the Northland rebel effort in Garland, and by disrupting GAF attempts to support these rebel groups (Garland is reliably reported to support anti-government elements in Northland).

Evidenced by the type of operations its conducts, AWF ASUs are equipped with a range of small-arms, including AK-series assault rifles, and heavier infantry weapons like general-purpose machine-guns (GPMG) and rocket-propelled grenade launchers (RPGs). Such weapons are readily available on the regional black market, and the AWF are heavily involved in regional smuggling networks. Although it is understood that neither the ENLF or the Linohas have allowed their personnel to have contact with the AWF, it is understood that men operating at lower levels for both groups have supplied middlemen with advanced weaponry without verifying their end-user.

In 2015, the AWF detonated their first Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) and Suicide VBIED (SVBIED). It is believed that the technical know-how required to make and deploy such devices came from IK fighters, recently returned from the Civil War on the 6th Continent. The AWF deployed these VBIEDs in every increasing numbers, including into regional capitals.

This led to a significant GAF-led Counter Terror campaign, facilitated by the GAF-EIMF secession of hostilities agreement. This almost wiped the AWF out, but the Government of Garland was highly criticized for alleged human rights abuses throughout the counter terror campaign.

Despite the success of its CT campaign, the Government of Garland failed to follow it up with the extension of state services to the migrant community; there was no build part of the campaign. This meant that by 2016 AWF recruits were even more radicalized than had been the case in the past.

It is understood that Nazari has instructed the AWF to lay low, to strengthen its networks and to prepare for a future battle with the GAF. It is also suspected that some Abu militants from the AWF have migrated to the Westland border region to join the IK with the express intention of gaining military experience. Smaller GAF units continue to be targeted and wealthy Dotan businessmen and families are targets for intimidation. The group also continues to assassinate symbols of government and international influence, including shutting down schools teaching what is considered to be western philosophies.

Overall, the 7<sup>th</sup> CF U2 briefed UNMIG that the AWF have achieved significant operational capability and that the current relative détente is not expected to last. Currently, there are vast tracts of North and North East province that the GAF will only enter in Company plus strength.

### **Recent and Significant Activity**

Jan to March 2015: the AWF explodes at least 10 VBIEDs, and three SVBIEDs in the regional capitals of North and North East provinces.

April to November 2015: large-scale GAF CT operation against the AWF.

Jan 2016: Nazari issues communique to AWF ASUs advising them to ‘show strategic patience’, counselling that ‘the GAF has watches, but we have time – generations if necessary’.

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Jan: The AWF commences a social media campaign urging local resistance to the 7CF.

Mar-Apr: The AWF organizes demonstrations against the presence of the 7CF after a woman is killed in a traffic accident by a 7CF vehicle.

Jul: The AWF promises resistance to the UN Force which it describes as ‘neo-colonial’. No further details were offered as to the form of such resistance.

Aug to Sep 18: UNMMIG reports incidents where their convoys were followed.

Oct 18: UNMMIG reports instances of the AWF recruiting in POC sites.

Oct 18: There have been unconfirmed reports that AWF has formalized links with extremist groups operating in UNMMIG Sector West.