

Trump announces capture of five 'most wanted' ISIS terrorists who were lured from Syria to Iraq with fake Telegram app messages - including top aide to 'caliphate' leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi

President Trump tweeted on Thursday that five ISIS leaders had been captured. Iraqi agents took one of them – top lieutenant Ismail al-Eithawi - in February. They used Eithawi's cell phone to reach four of his top commanders with the Telegram messaging app and lure them into a trap.

Telegram has become the messaging app of choice among ISIS terrorists.

Telegram does store all of your messages afterwards, it turns out.

The ISIS terror army was created in 2012 as an al-Qaeda offshoot, re-branded from the previous group known as 'al-Qaeda in Iraq'.

ISIS was the most aggressive and effective rebel force in Syria before the U.S. and other Western nations started pushing back with vigor.

By [Reuters](#) and [David Martosko](#), Us Political Editor For [Dailymail.com](#)

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A jubilant President

Donald Trump announced Thursday on Twitter that five of the 'Most Wanted leaders of ISIS' have been captured after they were lured from Syria to Iraq with fake Telegraph messages.

A security adviser to Iraq's government used the phone of captured ISIS lieutenant Ismail al-Eithawi to send the messages via the app and snare the other four leaders.

The encrypted app was officially named by ISIS as one of its favored mobile messaging services in 2015 and has been regularly used by the terror group for private communication and to spread propaganda.

Al-Eithawi, who also uses the alias Abu Zaid al-Iraqi, was captured in February in Turkey by Turkish authorities and handed over to Iraqi agents, security advisor Hisham al-Hashimi said.

Hashimi described Eithawi as a direct aide to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, responsible for fund transfers to the group's bank accounts in different countries.



President Donald Trump rejoiced Thursday over a report that Iraqi agents have captured a group of high-ranking ISIS leaders



Iraqi state television broadcast images of four of the men arrested in the operation, including Saddam Al-Jamal, alongside Omar Al-Karbouli, Essam Al-Zawbai and Mohamed Al-Qadeer

 Trump tweeted about the capture, which included two of the highest-ranking ISIS commanders ever to be taken alive 

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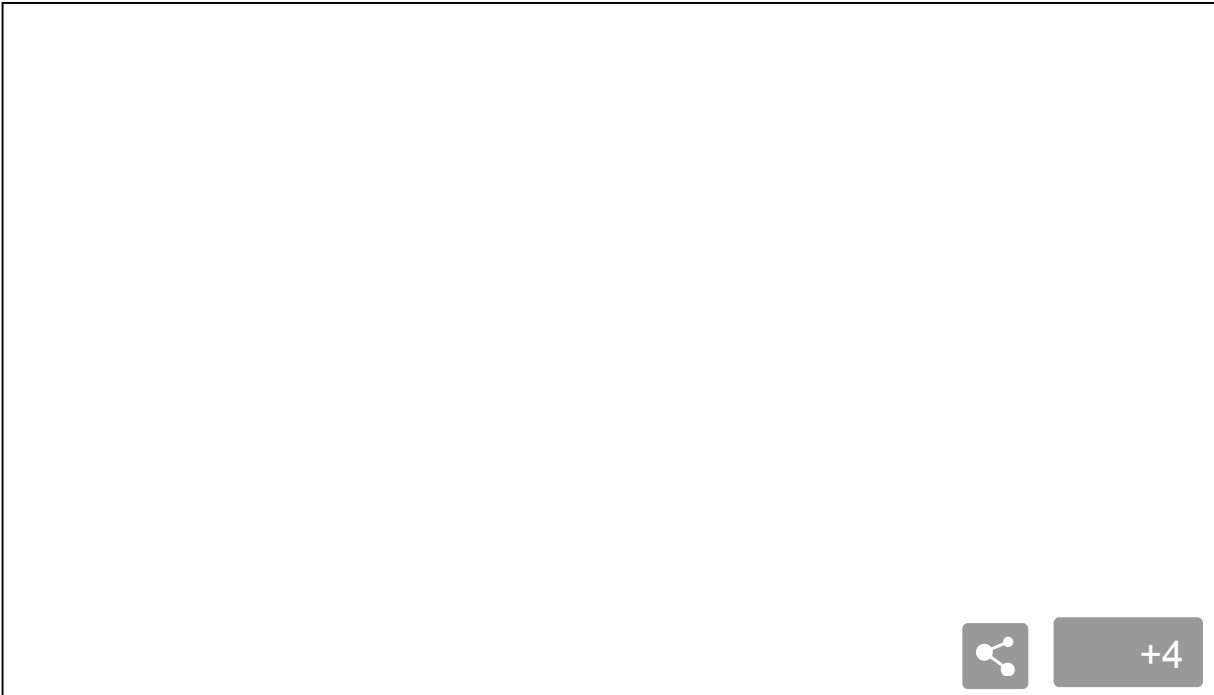
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Iraqi agents used the Telegram messaging app on Eithawi's mobile phone to lure other Islamic State commanders to cross the border from Syria into Iraq, where they were captured. Those held include Saddam Jamal, a Syrian who served as the group's governor of Syria's eastern Euphrates region.

Hashimi described Eithawi and Jamal as the two most senior Islamic State figures ever to be captured alive. The capture of all five was announced on Iraqi state TV on Wednesday.

Hashimi said the operation was carried out in cooperation with U.S. forces, part of an American-led coalition fighting against Islamic State on both sides of the Iraqi-Syrian border.

Following Eithawi's capture, Iraqi and American intelligence agents were able to uncover bank accounts used by the group and also secret communication codes he used, Hashimi said.



Saddam Jamal, one of the five captured commanders, is the notorious Syrian who served as ISIS's governor of Syria's eastern Euphrates region

How Telegram became the app of choice for ISIS terrorists

Telegram is a free app that lets people exchange messages, photos and videos in groups of up to 5,000 people.

It has attracted more than 200 million users since its launch in 2013, promising end-to-end encryption and the ability to store data on the cloud rather than each individual advice.

Although many of its users are political activists, groups such as ISIS favor the app because it allows them to communicate both in one-to-one chats and large public groups.

They use it to recruit members, raise money and coordinate terrorist activity. ISIS also set up large public groups to issue claims of responsibility, such as after the Manchester Arena terror attack, and broadcast news.

In 2015, Telegram was named on a list of recommended messaging applications released by the ISIS propaganda office, which lauded it for being 'secure'.

Telegram founder Pavel Durov dismissed concerns about ISIS using the app at a TechCrunch conference in September 2015, telling the audience that the 'right to privacy is more important than our fear of bad things happening'.

Just two months later, ISIS murdered 130 and wounded a further 350 in Paris during the deadliest attack on French soil since World War Two.

Telegram now claims to remove ISIS accounts from public channels but still refuses to intervene in private chats.

Source: Counterextremism.com

Telegram (logo pictured) has become one of ISIS's favorite means of communication



Apart from Eithawi and Jamal, the operation captured three field commanders: Syrian Mohamed al-Qadeer and two Iraqis, Omar al-Karbouli and Essam al-Zawbai, Hashimi said.

'The noose is tightening around him,' Hashimi said, referring to Baghdadi, whose real name is Ibrahim al-Samarrai.

Baghdadi declared himself ruler of all Muslims in 2014 after capturing Iraq's main northern city Mosul. He is now believed to be hiding in the Iraqi-Syrian border region after losing all the cities and towns of his self-proclaimed caliphate.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi said last month he would 'take all necessary measures' against militants based in Syria.



 One of the captured men is a top aide to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (pictured preaching in 2016)

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The Iraqi air force has carried out several air strikes since last year against Islamic State positions in Syrian territory.

Abadi declared final victory last December over the ultra-hardline group within Iraq. But the militants still pose a threat along the border with Syria and have continued to carry out ambushes, killings and bombings across Iraq.

Islamic State militants last month restated their loyalty to Baghdadi, in what is believed to be their first public pledge of allegiance to him since his self-proclaimed caliphate collapsed last year in both Syria and Iraq.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5713603/Iraq-used-Baghdadi-aides-phone-capture-Islamic-State-commanders.html#ixzz5F7cQh2kb>

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