

# Weekly Intelligence Brief

A Chanticleer Intelligence Brief Project



## Iranian Weapons Smuggling Routes to Hamas

**Ryan Kelly**  
Senior Analyst  
Middle East Desk

Inspections from Israel's Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center (ITIC) revealed an extensive network of weapons smuggling routes used by the Iranian government to supply Hamas in its conflict with Israel. These routes also supplied Hamas with financial resources with the intent to increase its overall military capabilities and its influence in Gaza.

The two main smuggling routes originate in Syria, one through Jordan and the other through Lebanon before the weapons make it to the West Bank.

The disclosure of these routes led the United States, Israel, and Jordan to resort to coordinated measures in an effort to disrupt the supply of these weapons. The ITIC also found information revealing Russian covert operations to limit all weapons trafficking within Syria, Israel, and Jordan. Previously, Russia had been utilizing smuggling routes to help facilitate arms into its military bases in Syria. However, after the fall of the al-Assad regime, Russia has taken steps to limit the arms trade.

Iran has a history of providing funds to the Axis of Resistance with the intent to disrupt Western and Israeli influence in the Middle East. Syria has been one of Iran's most critical allies for over a

decade with Syria as an origin of weapons and smuggling routes to Hamas. Following the fall of the al-Assad regime in Syria, Iran's facilitation of weapons smuggling will need to find a new route to ensure its regional proxies are well-equipped.

We can assess with high confidence it is likely that Iran will continue to supply its proxy armies with weapons and financial resources in overall efforts to control large portions of the Middle East and further-establish its presence. However, Iran faces demanding challenges in finding new countries and allies to help assist its efforts to supply its proxies.

# Florida's New Legislation on Immigration Enforcement

**Henry Patterson**

**Analyst**

**Americas Desk**

On 11 FEB, Governor Ron DeSantis and Florida lawmakers reached a compromise to end a two-week standoff over immigration enforcement legislation. This revised bill establishes a State Board of Immigration Enforcement composed of the governor, agriculture commissioner, attorney general, and chief financial officer, which requires unanimous decisions. The legislation allocates \$250 million for local law enforcement to assist federal immigration efforts, enforces stricter penalties on illegal immigrants, and repeals in-state tuition for undocumented immigrants

who came to the United States as children.

Since President Donald Trump returned to office in 2025, immigration has been a top national priority, with states like Florida taking increasingly aggressive measures to align with federal policy. Trump's administration has expanded programs like 287(g), which allows for local law enforcement to collaborate with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and encouraged states to adopt stricter immigration laws.

We can assess with high confidence that this legislation will likely strengthen Florida's role in federal immigration enforcement. However, we can assess with moderate confidence it is likely

the financial and administrative burden on local governments could strain resources, particularly amid a host of critical staffing shortages in law enforcement. We can assess with moderate confidence that it is highly likely that future immigration policies may continue to escalate, with other U.S. states possibly copying Florida's model.



## Jihadist Group Ambushes Military-Protected Civilian Convoy in Mali

**Connor Ellinghaus**

**Senior Analyst**

**Africa Desk**

On 7 FEB, over 200 members of the Islamic State of the Greater Sahara (ISGS), a militant jihadist group, ambushed a civilian convoy consisting of foreign gold miners in Gao, Mali. The convoy was being escorted by the Malian Armed Forces and the Wagner paramilitary group. Since 2012, various Islamic State and Al-Qaeda affiliates have carried out violent attacks on civilians in Northern Mali, leading the

Malian military to start near-daily escorts in the region.

Civilian attacks have increased in recent months following a push for removal of Western actors in Mali's mining sector. Malian Armed Forces claimed the terrorists deliberately targeted civilians who were fleeing in panic, killing 25 civilians and injuring 13 others. The majority of them were young foreign gold miners being transported to the N'Tahaka gold mine. Medical officials in Gao stated that 56 bodies had been brought into the hospital following the attack. The

General Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Oumar Diarra held a press conference on 8 FEB where he stated that the Armed Forces launched a retaliatory attack killing at least 19 terrorists.

We can assess with high confidence that it is likely Islamic militants will continue to attack civilian convoys in Northern Mali as Islamic militants fight the government so Northern Mali can be granted an independent status.

### Weekly Intelligence Brief

Editor-in-Chief

**Tessa Bentley**

Associate Editors

**Aubrey Belanger**

**Samuel Luckett**

**Jordan Maple**

For access to past issues and other Chanticleer Intelligence Brief projects, visit our website, [cibrief.org/publications/wib](http://cibrief.org/publications/wib)

