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## ISIS Looks to Expand Presence in Northern Afghanistan

Jason Ditz  
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ISIS forces in Afghanistan have mostly been confined to the eastern Nangarhar Province since trying to establish an affiliate in that country, but seem to be rapidly setting up shop further north in Jowzjan Province, where they've absorbed a pair of former Taliban groups that have switch affiliation.

The new ISIS force in the area has killed at least 10 Afghan troops in recent days, along with an unknown number of civilians, which included at least 15 hospital patients. The fighting centers on the Darzab District, which has long traded hands back and forth between Afghan forces and Taliban.

The influx of ISIS fighters and the absorption of the Taliban defectors make this an even bigger problem, as District Governor Baz Mohammad Dawar said the district briefly fell outright to an ISIS offensive, and that government forces recovered the district's center, but not the surrounding area.

Tribal elders in the area had frequently changed sides in the past, going with whoever is in power at any given time. ISIS appears to be pushing them very hard to accept their rule now, though locals are expressing concern about this meaning a major escalation in fighting.