

FRONTLINE PERSPECTIVE

TRACING THE SUPPLY OF COMPONENTS USED IN ISLAMIC STATE IEDs

OVERVIEW

ISIL forces have manufactured and deployed improvised explosive devices (IEDs) across the battlefield on a quasi-industrial scale. Responsible for a large number of civilian and military casualties, these improvised bombs endanger and significantly delay ground operations against ISIL positions, while threatening the safe return of displaced populations.

Made of components that are cheap and readily available, IEDs have become ISIL forces' signature weapon. Their chains of supply differ from those of military weapons. Indeed, for the most part, IED

components are commercial goods that are not subject to government export licenses and whose transfer is far less scrutinized and regulated than the transfer of weapons.

Since July 2014, Conflict Armament Research (CAR), has worked in concert with Iraqi and Syrian forces to document materiel recovered in military action against ISIL forces. CAR investigation teams examined more than 700 components used by ISIL forces to manufacture IEDs, identified their provenance, and traced their chains of custody.



A drum of aluminium paste produced in Brazil and shipped to Turkey in 2014

Tikrit, Iraq, April 2015



Nokia 105 RM-908 mobile telephone

Near Erbil, Iraq, December 2014

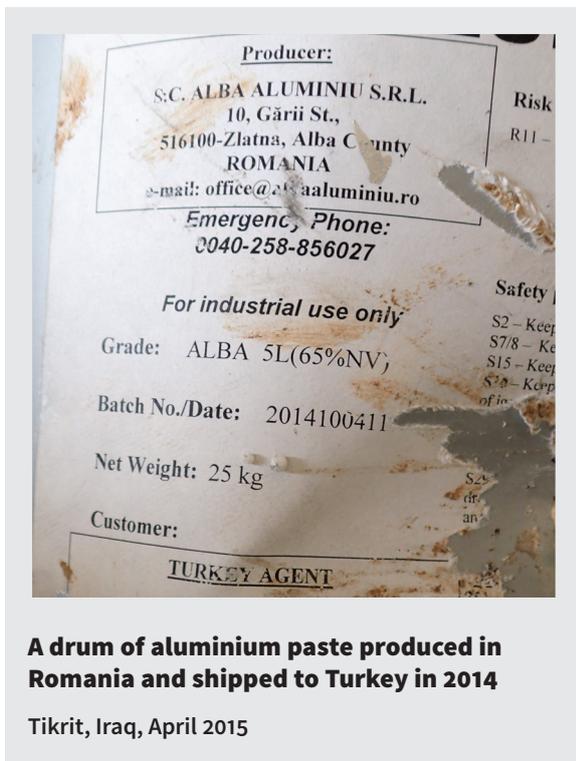
FINDINGS

- 51 commercial entities in 20 countries involved in the supply chain of components (e.g. chemical precursors, detonators, detonating cord, wires, cables, electronics, etc.) used by ISIL forces to construct IEDs.
- With 13 companies involved in the supply chain, Turkey is the most important choke point for components used in the manufacture of IEDs by ISIL forces.
- Seven Indian companies manufactured most of the detonators, detonating cord, and safety fuses documented by CAR's field investigation teams.
- ISIL forces acquired many components rapidly following their lawful supply to distributors and end users (1-6 months).
- As recently as February 2016, investigations in Ramadi identified several commercial entities to be the ongoing source of supply for IED components and precursors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

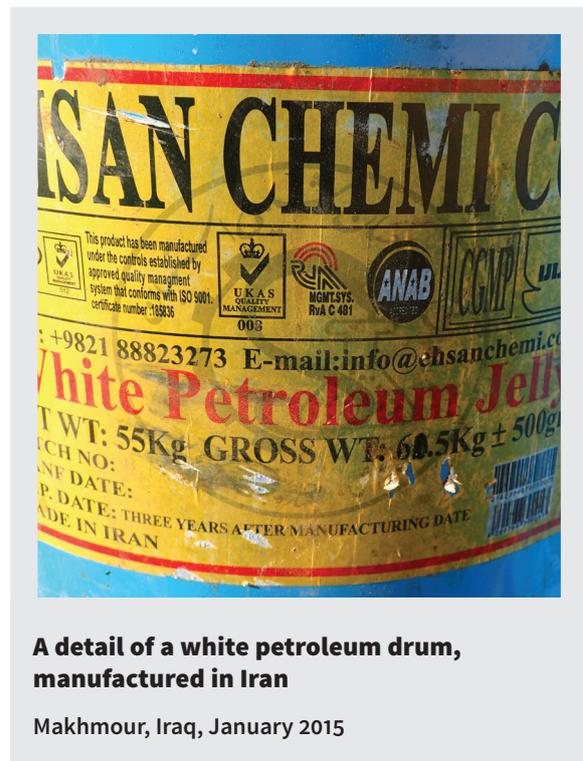
- Encourage manufacturers of products that are easily exploitable in the construction of IEDs to improve labeling in order to facilitate the identification and tracing process.
- Work with regional governments to develop policy requiring local distributors and middlemen to maintain sales records, enabling identification of end users.
- Advocate increased collaboration with international monitoring groups in sharing information and responding to trace requests.

To read CAR's full report, *Tracing the Supply of Components Used in Islamic State IEDs*, visit conflictarm.com/publications.



A drum of aluminium paste produced in Romania and shipped to Turkey in 2014

Tikrit, Iraq, April 2015



A detail of a white petroleum drum, manufactured in Iran

Makhmour, Iraq, January 2015