



ICT
International Institute
for Counter-Terrorism
With the Support of Keren Daniel

ICT Jihadi Monitoring Group **PERIODIC REVIEW**

Monthly Report

Summary of Information on Jihadist Websites

April 2018

Highlights

- The **Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan**, announces the launch of “Operation Al-Khandaq”, claiming that the United States is not interested in ending the war, to defend holy sites, clerics and the village areas under attack by the US and due to the establishment of new American bases and the appearance of centers promoting promiscuity and alcohol consumption. According to the organization, the attack against the *madrasa* in Kunduz Province, in which dozens of people were killed, is proof that legitimate jihad must continue against “the invaders from outside and their supporters within”. It also stated that the operation will be based on guerilla warfare, attacks and infiltrations, focusing on the killing or capture of the “American invaders” and their local supporters.
- The leadership of **Al-Qaeda** and its branches condemn the air strike on the *madrasa* in Kunduz Province in Afghanistan, in which many children were killed. According to the leadership, the attack demonstrates the “Crusader’s” desire to weaken Islam, damage its symbols and destroy the young generation that is being educated on the Quran. For this reason, the Afghan army and the regime that leads it, as well as the United States, are considered enemies who undermine the Quran and see fit to attack, first and foremost, anyone involved in its study. As a result of the attack, Al-Qaeda leadership calls on Muslims to continue studying the Quran, spreading its principles and instilling it everywhere.
- **Abd al-Hasan al-Mujahid**, the spokesman for the **Islamic State**, calls on supporters of the organization to maintain a high morale for Allah has promised them victory over their enemies. According to him, the US failed in its efforts to wipe out the organization, and is showing signs of exhaustion and fatigue from the campaign against the organization. Moreover, according to him, many Muslims continue to swear allegiance to the Caliphate of the Islamic State and to assist it. In addition, al-Muhajir condemns the US decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem, and declares that the IS intends to liberate Palestine when it succeeds in overcoming its enemies. He even calls on IS supporters to attack Jews wherever they may be.

Al-Muhajir also threatens that the IS will continue to carry out attacks against the West and calls on its supporters to continue to carry out ramming and stabbing attacks in the West, especially to intensify armed activities against Russia and Iran. In addition, he calls on supporters of the organization to attack the polling stations in Iraq during the elections to Parliament, set to take

place on May 12, 2018, and to attack any Muslim who encourages participation in the elections.

- Sheikh **Abu Ubeydah Ahmad Omar**, the leader of **Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen**, Al-Qaeda's branch in Somalia, appeals to jihad fighters in Syria in a rare interview to maintain unity among the ranks and continue jihad against the enemies in order to, among other things, thwart plots by enemies such as Russia to attack the jihad movement through various peace conferences and attempts to achieve a cease-fire in Syria. According to him, jihad in Syria must be independent, without any external support from any country and without foreign considerations. In addition, he calls on Muslims, especially those living in Turkey, to help the jihad battle in Syria, and emphasizes that jihad in Syria is the individual obligation of every Muslim. Abu Ubeydah even addresses the Palestinians and calls on them to continue to attack the Jews' strongholds in Jerusalem and the Golan Heights.

In addition, Abu Ubeydah clarifies that the Turkish regime, led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, is a secular regime that presents itself as one that acts for the good of Muslims and Islam, but actually helps the Crusaders in their war against Islam and Muslims in Somalia, Afghanistan and Syria. In light of this, Abu Ubeydah calls on Muslims, including clerics, to wage a widespread media campaign to expose Turkey's hypocrisy.

- **Katibat 'Uqba bin Nafi'**, which is affiliated with **Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)** and operates in Tunisia, accuses France of the systematic persecution of the Tunisian people and of pillaging the country's natural resources. According to the group, this trend receives the cooperation of politicians and those with local interests, and therefore the people of Tunisia must wake up and act to change the existing reality through jihad. In addition, the group threatens to attack French targets as long as France continues to pillage Tunisia's natural resources, remains on Muslim land, and fights against the Muslims.
- **Ansar al-Tawhid** and **Huras al-Din**, which are affiliated with Al-Qaeda in Syria, announce their merger under an umbrella organization called, "**The Alliance of Supporting Islam**" (**Hilf Nusrat al-Islam**). According to them, the merger is designed to "implement the religion on Earth and push away the enemy".
- Supporters of the **Islamic State** launch an online campaign and call for the execution of terrorist attacks during the World Cup games in Russia, to be held in mid-June 2018. Alongside the threats published on social media, they also post instructions for carrying out an attack – selecting

crowded sites that are at least monitored by the security forces, and using a truck or firearms to attacks the crowds.

Table of Contents

Highlights.....	2
New Publications	7
Ideology	7
Publications by Al-Qaeda	7
Publications by the Islamic State.....	9
Opinion Leaders in the Jihadist Discourse	12
Strategy.....	15
Magazines	17
Reports from the Field	22
Afghanistan-Pakistan.....	22
The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.....	22
The Taliban Pakistan	23
The Islamic State in Khorasan Province	23
The Arabian Peninsula	24
Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.....	24
Iraq.....	24
The Islamic State.....	24
Al-Sham [The Levant]	25
Syria	25
Hayat Tahrir al-Sham	25
The Alliance of Supporting Islam (Hilf Nusrat al-Islam).....	31
The Islamic State.....	32
The Turkistan Islamic Party.....	33
The Islamic Emirate of the Caucasus in Al-Sham	34
Jaysh al-Islam.....	34
The Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula	35
The Islamic State in the Sinai Peninsula.....	35
Africa.....	35

The Maghreb.....	35
Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.....	35
Libya.....	37
The Shura Council of the Mujahideen in Derna.....	37
Tunisia.....	37
Mali.....	38
Jamā'at Nuṣrat al-Islām Wa-l-Muslimīn.....	38
The Islamic State.....	39
Somalia	39
Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen	39
The Islamic State.....	43
The Indian Subcontinent	44
Kashmir	44
Ansar Ghazwat al-Hind	44
Jaish-e-Muhammad	44
The Philippines	45
The West.....	45
Miscellaneous	45

New Publications

Ideology

Publications by Al-Qaeda

- Al-Sahab jihadist media institution, which belongs to Al-Qaeda leadership, published the following:
 - A statement condemning the attack by the Afghan Air Force on a Taliban stronghold in Kunduz Province, in which a madrasa was hit, and many children were killed. The Al-Qaeda leadership expressed regret over the children, students and sheikhs “who were killed in the slaughter by the Crusaders and their allies”. According to the leadership, they were killed during a graduation ceremony for Quran and hadith studies. It claimed that this attack demonstrated the Crusaders’ desire to weaken Islam, damage its symbols and destroy the young generation being educated on the Quran. Moreover, it was an attack aimed at the entire Muslim Nation. The organization’s leadership added that the Afghan army and the regime that leads it, as well as the United States, are considered enemies who undermine the Quran and see fit to attack, first and foremost, anyone involved in Quran study more than the strongholds of jihad fighters. In light of this attack, the Al-Qaeda leadership called on Muslims to continue studying the Quran, spreading its principles and instilling it everywhere.¹
- Bayt al-Maqdis jihadist media institution, which is affiliated with Al-Qaeda, published a book titled, “The View of the Worshiper [of God] Concerning the Reasons for the Mujahid’s Retreat” (201 pp.) by Abu al-Baraa al-Abi. The book discussed the challenges that jihad fighters face, the obstacles that stand before them and ways to cope with them. For example, it stated that a strong attitude and a firm belief in the justice of their path are a guarantee for preserving jihad fighters’ mental strength.²

¹ <http://www.alfidaaforum.net/vb> (Arabic).

² Telegram



The banner page of the book

- The Khayr al-Umma in al-Sham media group, which is involved in media for Al-Qaeda, published the following:³
 - A booklet for Muslim women containing 30 tips on how to please their husbands. For example, it stated that it is best not to burden one's husband with the wife's personal troubles. In addition to this publication, leaflets were also published emphasizing the importance of woman's obedience to her husband.



The banner page of the booklet

- A new series of publications titled, "Biographies of Preachers", which told the life stories of prominent Salafi-jihadist thinkers, such as Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of Al-Qaeda.

³ Telegram

- A video titled, “Those Who Believe in the Right”. The video reviewed the various arenas of jihad and praised jihad fighters who migrated from their countries to join jihad in the various arenas of battle, especially in Syria, and praised them for their determination to fight against the enemies of Islam. In addition, the video issued harsh criticism at anyone who calls for the expulsion of foreign fighters from Syria.



A clip from the video, “Those Who Believe in the Right”

Publications by the Islamic State

- On April 24, Al-Furqan jihadist media institution, which belongs to the IS, published a recorded speech by Hasan al-Mujahir, the spokesman for the Islamic State. The speech was published on jihadist forums, social networks and various Telegram channels of IS supporters.⁴ In the beginning of the speech, al-Muhajir strengthened the morale of the organization’s fighters. For example, he boasted that the soldiers of the Caliphate caused 70 countries in the east and West to send to send their forces to Iraq and Syria to fight against them, and he promised that Allah, who loves his soldiers, will grant them victory over the enemies of Islam. In addition, al-Muhajir vowed that the IS would continue its series of terrorist attacks and battles against the West and its allies. Several times in his speech, al-Muhajir praised IS fighters in the various arenas of jihad, including Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Sinai, Libya, West Africa, Somalia, the Philippines and Tunisia, and praised their determination to defend Islam and Muslims and their desire to spread the word of God. He emphasized that the Islamic Caliphate is a source of pride for Muslims and casts fear

⁴<https://www.pastethis.at/is-alfurqan1>; <https://soundcloud.com/user-840268397/wk9o995aj9tx>; clipconverter.cc

on the infidels. According to him, since its establishment, the Caliphate declared its purpose to be jihad and battle for God's sake, and has frightened people ever since. For this reason, "the tyrants of the East and the West gathered against it and the nations fought against it." According to him, the battle against the infidels is an obligation that will reward the organization's fighters well in the world to come and relieve them of the pains of doomsday. Moreover, Allah will grant victory to the soldiers of the Caliphate in the near future.

Al-Muhajir mocked US efforts to wipe out the IS, and noted that today the US is showing signs of exhaustion and fatigue from the campaign against the organization. Moreover, according to him, many Muslims continue to swear allegiance to the Caliphate of the Islamic State and to assist it. In addition, al-Muhajir mocked the US air strike in Syria against the Syrian regime's chemical gas facilities and emphasized that it did not cover up or atone for the US crimes against the Sunnis. He accused the US of handing over Sunni territories in Iraq and Syria to Iran, which uses the help of Hezbollah and Shi'ite militias to purge the Syrian and Iraqi arena of a Sunni presence. Al-Muhajir also referred to the growing tension between the US and Russia, and claimed that in order to blur Russia's alleged success in defending the Syrian regime, Donald Trump declared Jerusalem the capital of the Jewish State. With this declaration, claimed al-Muhajir, Trump sought to draw the world's attention to the United States.

In this context, al-Muhajir vowed that the IS intends to liberate Palestine when circumstances will allow it to overcome its enemies. In addition, he called on IS supporters to attack Jews wherever they may be.

Al-Muhajir called on supporters of the organization to continue to carry out ramming and stabbing attacks against the West, such as in Paris, London, Manhattan and other cities. According to him, the battle against the American, Russian and European Crusaders is no different than the battle against their allies, the despotic Muslim regimes, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, and encouraged its continuation. He explained that *"every fighter of the Caliphate State will know that it will continue to keep its promise against its enemies, our swords have not drawn back, the wars have only begun"*. Al-Muhajir called on its supporters to focus especially on Russia and Iran:

"Soldiers of the Caliphate and their supporters everywhere, know that we are experiencing a new stage today and a sharp turn in the path of jihad. A jealous enemy seeks to take control of Muslim

lands and inherit what the US left after the mujahideen exhausted it with attacks and struggles that lasted two decades. It began to retreat beyond recognition, when its allies renounced it, unable to restrain the Russians and the Majus [a derogatory term for Persians and Iran]. These two countries [Iran and Russia] became a target for the theater of your attacks and jihad, so that the Majus and the Russians behind them will taste the inferno of their tyranny and the burning of Sunni areas in Iraq and in the Levant [...]" .

Al-Muhajir also called threatened to attack the polling stations in Iraq during the elections to Parliament, set to take place on May 12, 2018. According to him, Iran is winning the elections, continuing to take control of Iraq, and executing Sunni women in Iraq. In light of this, he called on supporters to attack anyone who supports and encourages participation in the elections, whether Sunni or Shi'ite, and to attack security infrastructure and sites.

Al-Muhajir's speech, therefore, contained instructions and guidance for IS fighters on which targets to focus on. In his opinion, jihad should be continued against the enemies of Islam, with emphasis on attacking Iranian and Russian targets, as well as election centers in Iraq in light of Iran's Shi'ite takeover of the Sunni space, which is supported by the West. It should be noted that al-Muhajir's speech is the second official statement by the IS leadership since the fall of the Islamic Caliphate in June 2017. The first public statement was a speech by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of the IS, in September 2017. In general, according to the IS leadership, and as expressed in the organization's Arabic *Al-Naba* magazine, the Islamic Caliphate continues to exist and should not be eulogized.



The banner published by Muta news agency, which supports the IS, summarizing al-Mujhajir's messages; a call to continue jihad activities against the enemies since victory is near; a call to attack election centers in Iraq; a call to attack Iranian and Russian interests and targets due to the countries' involvement in Syria and Iraq

- Visitors to the Shumukh al-Islam jihadist Web forum, which is affiliated with the IS, discussed the latest speech by Hamza bin Laden, the son of former Al-Qaeda leader, Osama bin Laden. One visitor ridiculed Hamza and claimed that it was clear that he had been educated by al-Zawahiri since he talks a lot and does little. Another visitor claimed that Hamza has no leadership ability or jihad experience, and that he is under the supervision of Iranian and Pakistani intelligence just like the other Al-Qaeda leaders.⁵

Opinion Leaders in the Jihadist Discourse

This section deals with the statements of opinion of several clerics, military commanders and publicists affiliated with Salafi-jihadist terrorist organizations seeking to shape the jihadist discourse and influence thoughts and actions in the field. The statements and their publication received a large number of views among global jihad activists, hence their importance.

- **Sheikh Abdul Razzaq-Mahdi**, a Salafi-jihadist cleric affiliated with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham in Syria, published the following:⁶
 - A call on the leaders of jihad factions in Syria to stop the mutual clashes and iron out the differences between them. In addition, al-Mahdi called on the youth who were forced to flee Al-Ghouta for Idlib and join various jihad factions, not to take part in the armed conflict between the factions.
 - A clarification that Hamas, Mohamed Morsi and the organization's supporters are not considered infidels for not instituting shari'a during their rule. According to him, it is a mistake to view them in such a light, and it is better to view them as weakened by their enemies, and hence to understand why they did not apply shari'a immediately. For example, he criticized al-Sisi, the President of Egypt, for suppressing any party that wants to apply shari'a.

⁵ <https://shamukh.net/vb> (Arabic).

⁶ Telegram

- **Sheikh Abu al-Fatah al-Farghali**, a member of the Shura Council of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham in Syria, published the following:⁷
 - A post on a Telegram channel in which he addressed the possibility of merging Hayat Tahrir al-Sham with Ahrar al-Sham and Suqur al-Sham. Al-Farghali claimed that such a merger is unlikely because the leaders of these factions are not really interested in joining the true jihad project because they fear being labelled as “jihadists” and not being able to find refuge in Turkey or Europe should jihad and the revolution fail. In several other posts that he published, al-Farghali referred to ceasefire violations by the other factions in Syria (especially Ahrar al-Sham), accusing them of failing to reach an agreement with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham.

- **Sheikh Abu Malik al-Shami**, who belongs to Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, published the following:
 - Reference to the difficult situation of the mujahideen in Syria in recent months. Al-Shami explained that in some areas, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham itself did not choose the right ambassadors to represent it, but rather blamed most of the other factions for exploiting the weakness of the organization from the battles in the East. Al-Shami called on factions to focus the battle against the regime and avoid fighting each other, and made it clear that jihad will continue until Judgment Day.⁸

- **Abdurraheem Atun**, a senior Hayat Tahrir al-Sham cleric, published the following:⁹
 - Correspondence on his Telegram channel regarding negotiations with other factions. In one post that he published, Atun noted that members of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham met with members of the “Union of Popular Initiatives”, and that he was grateful for the attempt to solve the problems. At the same time, however, he had reservations about the involvement of elements who present themselves as neutral but actually want to exert media pressure on Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. Atun accused the rival factions of agreeing to a ceasefire aimed at buying time until the next attack, and emphasized

⁷ Telegram

⁸ Telegram

⁹ Telegram

that Hayat Tahrir-al-Sham would agree only to a viable ceasefire that would solve the problem rather than just postpone it. At the end of the post, Atun responded to ‘Umar Hudhayfa’s statements that the Syrian Liberation Front and Suqur al-Sham demonstrated greater flexibility in negotiations than did Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. Atun explained that while these two groups had shown flexibility in the ceasefire, they had toughened their demands in other areas more than once.

- **Sheikh Abu al-Yaqdhan al-Masri**, a member of the Shari’a Council and the General Supervisor of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham’s ‘Fighters and Suicide Bombers’ camps in in Syria, published the following:¹⁰
 - Correspondence on his Telegram account regarding Russia’s desire to break the willpower of jihad fighters in Syria in areas over which Russian forces are trying to exert control. According to him, breaking the willpower of the fighters is the “main reason for the fall of areas” such as southern Damascus, Al-Ghouta and Al-Qalamoun.
 - A call on the various jihad factions in Syria to end the disputes between them since they may result in the loss of all the revolution’s achievements. According to him, the publicized initiatives to exclude some of the jihad factions from the cycle of disputes and popular pressure to stop the mutual clashes without finding a real solution to the conflict is a great disaster for the battle fronts.

- **Sheikh Nail bin Ghazi**, a Salafi jihadist affiliated with Al-Qaeda in the Gaza Strip, published the following:¹¹
 - Harsh criticism against the Saudi Kingdom and the Saudi Wahhabi religious establishment for their support of the State of Israel and of the normalization process with it. For example, he accused Sheikh al-Kalbani, one of the senior clerics in Saudi Arabia, of ignoring the deaths of dozens of children who were killed in Afghanistan as a result of Afghan Air Force fire. According to him, instead of addressing this painful

¹⁰ Telegram

¹¹ Telegram

issue, he preferred to play a card game. He accused Crown Prince bin Salman of economic cooperation with Jewish bigwigs and of allowing them to build infrastructure and businesses related to leisure culture in Saudi Arabia.

Strategy

- Al-Malahim jihadist media institution, which belongs to Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), published the following:
 - Two videos titled, “Repulsion of Aggression: Parts 9-10”. The videos dealt with the campaign being waged by the US and its allies, especially the Emirates, against Yemen. In part 9, the US is accused of the systematic killing of civilians, including children living in Yemen. It documented a terrorist attack carried out by a member of the organization in Abyan Province against concentrations of “security belt” forces, the Emirate’s army forces stationed in Yemen. The video detailed how the attack was planned and executed. For example, it revealed that members of the organization used Google Maps to gather intelligence about the target of the attack. It also stated that the attack killed dozens, including very senior commanders who were entrusted with planning and executing attacks against jihad fighters and civilians.
In Part 10, the video focused on the activities of Emirate army forces in Yemen and accused them of carrying out a series of crimes against the civilian population. This part also documented a terrorist attack carried out by members of the organization against Emirate army forces in Yemen.¹²

¹² https://archive.org/details/Radae_Udwan9; <http://risala.ga/uk35>



A clip from the video in which a member of the organization used Google Maps to point to the target of the planned attack

- IS supporters published a threat to carry out terrorist attacks at the World Cup in Russia, to be held in mid-June 2018. They published posters containing threats in English and Russian under the title, “Just Terror”, alongside guidelines for carrying out the attack – select crowded targets with low security, and use a truck or firearms to attack the crowd.¹³



IS threats to carry out terrorist attacks at the World Cup 2018 in Russia

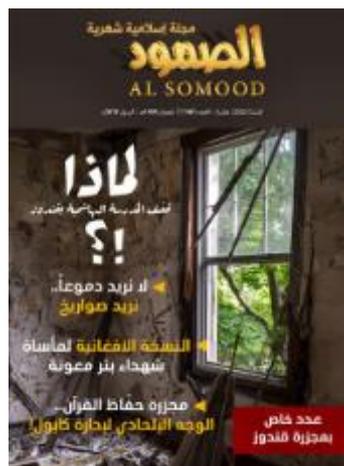
- Visitors to the Shumukh al-Islam jihadist Web forum published banners containing a link to torrent files that assemble all IS publications for the months January-March 2018. According to the banners, the assembled materials include videos, filmed reviews, photos, news, issues of *Al-Naba* magazine and Al-Abyan radio station recordings. The banners were published anonymously

¹³ <https://shamukh.net/vb> (Arabic).

by the media institution or by the source of the assembled materials, but it seems that the reason for distributing the materials via torrent files was to deal with the deletion of social media publications and other sites that are subject to greater supervision.¹⁴

Magazines

- The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan published issue no. 146 (April 2018) of *Al-Somood* magazine in Arabic. The issue was dedicated to the massacre at the *madrasa* in Kunduz Province. In the pages of the magazine, the attack was presented as “a Crusader military attack on religious education in Afghanistan”. The magazine also included an interview with one of the parents of a student who was killed in the attack as well as a statement of condemnation by the Association of Muslim Scholars, reviewed reactions to the attack on social networks, and included expressions of solidarity with the victims and condemnations of the attack from across the Muslim world.¹⁵



The banner page of the April 2018 issue of *Al-Somood*

- Issue no. 26 of the periodical, *Al-Nafir*, was published by Al-Qaeda. In the current issue, Saudi Arabia – both the Saudi Kingdom and the Wahhabi religious establishment - were accused of cooperating with the enemies of Islam, led by the US, blurring Muslim identity and severely violating the principles of Islam, such as the principle of the Oneness of God. The Saudi Kingdom

¹⁴ <https://shamukh.net/vb> (Arabic).

¹⁵ <https://files.fm/f/9mzkf4kk>

was accused of seeking normalization with Israel as reflected in, among other things, statements that were made in favor of the Jews' right to settle in the Land of Israel. It highlighted several interviews by senior Saudi government officials with the American press, which the organization claimed indicated the Saudi regime's disloyalty to Islam. For example, it quoted a senior Saudi official's statement to the New York Times in which he admitted that during the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, Saudi Arabia spread radical religious thought, supported and funded *madrassas*, mosques and various forums due to a request from its allies in the West to confront the Soviet Union and its Communist ideology. According to the organization, these and other statements demonstrate a great deal about the corrupt nature of the Saudi regime, and therefore the clerics and Muslims in Saudi Arabia must wake up and internalize that the Saudi regime is acting against Islam and that there is an obligation to defend the principles of Islam and shari'a.¹⁶



The banner page of *Al-Nafir* magazine

- Ansar al-Sharia, which is affiliated with Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), published issue no. 2 of the periodical, *Madad*. In the current issue, the organization accused the United Emirates of carrying out a wave of assassinations of clerics and imams of mosques in Yemen. According to the organization, the Emirate justifies the assassinations, claiming that the mosques in Yemen constitute a hot bed for terrorists. However, in practice, the Emirates are interested in promoting

¹⁶ Telegram.

another agenda that the West is encouraging, namely to secularize the Middle East and push shari'a to the margins. In light of this, the organization called on Muslims to defend the principles of Islam from such initiatives and urged them to migrate to arenas of jihad and take part in defending them.¹⁷



The banner page of *Madad*

- Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent published the April 2018 issue of its magazine, *Nawai Afghanistan*, in Urdu.¹⁸



The banner page of *Nawai Afghanistan*

¹⁷ Telegram

¹⁸ Telegram

- Issue no. 5 was published of the women’s magazine, *Baytuki*, by the Khayr al-Umma media group, which is involved in media for Al-Qaeda. Among the topics covered in the issue were: advice for a good relationship; an appeal to the husband not to hurry to divorce his wife due to differences of opinion and quarrels, but rather to try to find a solution and straighten things out; a recipe for preparing salsa sauce for children; advice on how to be a good housewife; feminine figures from ancient Islamic history as role models; and more.¹⁹



The banner page of the women’s magazine, *Baytuki*

- Issues no. 126-129 of the periodical, *Al-Naba*, were published by the Islamic State. Among the topics covered in the articles were: a transcript of the latest speech by the organization’s spokesman, Abul Hasan al-Muhajir; reports about the organization’s operational activities and attacks around the world (with emphasis on Afghanistan, Sinai and Damascus); infographic posters on various topics (for instance attacks in Sinai, advice for a *Murabit*, and more); and a series of articles titled, “Please Beware”, which dealt with the importance of planning operations, learning from mistakes and dealing with intelligence agencies.²⁰

¹⁹ Telegram

²⁰ <https://dawaalhaq.com/>



From left to right: the banner page of *Al-Naba* issue no. 129; a visual graph from issue no. 126 containing information about the organization’s military activities in Kabul

- Issue no. 12 of the periodical, *Al-Nafir*, was published by supporters of the Islamic State on Telegram channels. The issue reviewed the organization’s activities on various jihad fronts. For example, the periodical announced that its supporters were renewing the oath of allegiance to the Caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.²¹



From left to right: the banner page of *Al-Nafir* issue no. 12; an announcement regarding the renewal of the oath of allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi

²¹ Telegram

Reports from the Field

Afghanistan-Pakistan

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan

- The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (the Taliban-Afghanistan) published the following:
 - An announcement regarding the launch of a series of jihad operations under the name, “Operation Al-Khandaq”, which began on April 25, 2018. The announcement began by mentioning the attack on the *madrasa* in Kunduz Province, in which dozens of people were killed, as proof that legitimate jihad must continue against “the invaders from outside and their supporters within”. Among the reasons for launching the current ‘Spring attack’ were the need to protect holy sites and clerics, defend the village areas under attack as a result of “Trump’s new war strategy”, the establishment of new American bases, and the appearance of centers promoting promiscuity and alcohol consumption. The announcement also accused the Americans of not wanting to end the war, explained the background of the choice of the name “Al-Khandaq” (named after the battle of the trench where the Prophet Muhammad overpowered his enemies from among the Arab and Jewish tribes), and explained that the strategy of the operation will be designed by the “military commission of the Islamic Emirate”, and will be based on guerilla warfare, attacks and infiltrations, focusing on the killing or capture of the “American invaders” and their local supporters. The announcement ended with a call on all mujahideen in Afghanistan to take part in the operation and to pray for its success.²²



From left to right: a fighter from the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan taking part in the above-mentioned operation; the banner announcing the launch of “Al-Khandaq” military operation

²² <http://www.alemarah-english.org/?p=28060>

- Videos documenting various attacks and operational activities by the organization throughout Afghanistan. Among other things, the video published a video documenting an attack by the organization in the framework of Operation Al-Khandaq.²³
- A video regarding the attack on a *madrassa* in Kunduz Province in which dozens of students were killed. The video showed footage of the attack and interviews with eyewitnesses. Another video documented protests in Afghanistan following the incident.²⁴
- An announcement condemning Israel for killing Palestinian protesters on the Gaza-Israel border. Alongside the condemnation, the Emirate called on all countries and nations in the Muslim world to help the Palestinians. According to it, the US decision to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem strengthened the Jews' courage to commit massacres and crimes against the Palestinian people, and to increase their level of aggression. It emphasized that the US is partner to Israel's crimes in the region, and that Israel and the US partner together to carry out crimes against humanity.²⁵

The Taliban Pakistan

- The Taliban Pakistan published a video documenting the military activities that the organization carried out in North Waziristan against Pakistani security forces.²⁶

The Islamic State in Khorasan Province

- The IS in Khorasan Province published a claim of responsibility for a suicide attack against a gathering of voters in the Barchi area, in the city of Kabul, which killed approximately 40 people and injured over 60 others.²⁷
- The Amaq news agency published various operational reports about IS activities in Afghanistan, including a report about the assassination of a Taliban fighter in the Jabraḥār area in Nangarhar Province, the execution of a man accused of spying for the Americans in Jalalabad, the assassination of an Afghan officer and soldier in the city of Jalalabad, and the killing and injuring

²³ <https://alemarah-english.com/>

²⁴ <https://goo.gl/N1X2gK>; <https://goo.gl/eMggs5>

²⁵ Telegram

²⁶ Telegram

²⁷ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/83049>

of five Afghan army personnel in an explosion in a munitions center belonging to the Afghan Defense Ministry in the city of Kabul.²⁸

The Arabian Peninsula

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

- Al-Nur jihadist media institution, which is affiliated with Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) published a video titled, “The Generation of Determination”. The video included a quote from a speech by Abu Musab al-Suri, and a clip from a speech by the leader of Al-Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri, regarding the importance of the young generation in promoting jihad. The video also included a recorded clip from a speech by Ahmed al-Haznawi, one of the hijackers in the 9/11 attacks. After showing archival footage of the organization's fighters, the video ended with a call on all Muslims to join the "jihad convoy".²⁹

Iraq

The Islamic State

- The media departments of the Islamic State’s branches in Iraq and the Amaq agency in Iraq published the following:
 - *Al-Furat Province*: A video titled, “Will They Seek the Rule of Jahiliyyah for Themselves?”. In the beginning of the video, tyrants in the Western and Arab world were accused of applying laws based on the “Jahiliyya” [referring to the period of ignorance that preceded Islam] and demonic democracy," and the West was accused of taking control of the weak and poor nations of the world, and exploiting them through force and weapons. In contrast to this picture, it showed life under the Caliphate that included: the distribution of *zakat*, study of the Quran in mosques, product control activities and cigarette confiscation by *hisba* officials, and of course the application of *hudud* punishments (the stoning to death of criminals and cutting off the hands of thieves). The video also leveled accusations and criticism against residents of areas from which the IS had retreated for

²⁸ <https://dawaalhaq.com/>

²⁹ <https://risala.ga/rovq>

returning to their evil ways and not listening to the truth. The video ended with documentation of battles against PMF forces in the province.³⁰

- Reports on operational topics: the explosion of a device on the Hawijah-Riyadh road in Kirkuk that killed two PMF fighters, the killing and wounding of several Iraqi army soldiers in Al-Naqib village in Diyala Province, the killing of 17 PMF fighters in an ambush on a funeral procession in Dijla Province, the killing of a member of Iraqi Turkmen Front and three of his escorts in a car bombing in Kirkuk, the killing of a clerk in the Diyala governor's office, the killing of four Iraqi soldiers and the wounding of others in the al-Ishaqi area north of Baghdad, an attack on a meeting of candidates for the elections in Al-Anbar Province, the detonation of three explosive devices against PMF forces and a police officer in the city of Mosul, and more.³¹

Al-Sham [The Levant]

Syria

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham

- The Amjad jihadist media institution, which belongs to Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, published the following:
 - An announcement regarding the proposed initiatives to end the fighting between the factions in Syria. In the framework of the announcement, the organization expressed its willingness to reach a ceasefire, while noting the fact that the mediation by Filak al-Sham and tribal elders was positively received. It also accused Ahrar al-Sham of raising its demands (thus thwarting the possibility of a solution) and expressed dissatisfaction with the replacement of the mediators, which caused a delay and a return to the starting point.³² In another announcement published in the middle of the month, the organization claimed that there was difficulty reaching understandings with Nour al-Din al-Zenki and Ahrar al-Sham because of their increasing demands from one round of talks to another.³³

³⁰ <https://vimeo.com/266385349>

³¹ <https://dawaalhaq.com>

³² <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/DZ98YxtXUAENQYW.jpg>

³³ Telegram

- An announcement referring to the arrest of a Syrian Liberation Front negotiations delegation at one of the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham checkpoints. The announcement included the response by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham security chief, Sa'ad al-Din Muhammad, who explained that the incident occurred as a result of the delegation's refusal to be escorted by a Hayat Tahrir al-Sham vehicle.³⁴
- An announcement regarding the agreement to remove the siege around Al-Yarmouk camp, south of Damascus. In the announcement, the organization reported that it was finally agreed that the residents of the camp would be released in exchange for the release of 1,000 residents of the Shi'ite community from Al-Fua'a and 40 Alawite captives from Ishtabrak. This agreement was presented as an achievement, as there are still approximately 6,000 residents remaining in Al-Fua'a who can be used as bargaining chips in the continuing negotiations.³⁵
- An announcement denouncing the chemical attack against civilians in Duma, in eastern Al-Ghouta in Syria. The announcement ended with a call on the mujahideen in Syria to unite and join forces against the Assad regime, which makes no distinction between combatants, women and children.³⁶
- An announcement of condolences in memory of the victims of the Kunduz massacre in Afghanistan. The announcement stressed that the incident was just another incident in which the forces of "evil and hostility commit crimes and massacres against innocent Muslims," which encourages Muslims to unite and wage jihad for the sake of Allah in order to defend the religion and the land.³⁷
- A video titled, "This is Our Way", which documented the lives of the organization's fighters in and off the battlefield. The beginning of the video presented jihad as a cooperation in which every fighter carries out his role, whether operational or logistical, and issued implicit criticism of those who ceased fighting. Another key message dealt with the family life led by the fighters while rejecting claims that they sacrifice their family's livelihood in

³⁴ Telegram

³⁵ Telegram

³⁶ https://pbs.twimg.com/media/DaQs_PnXcAEFQuY.jpg

³⁷ https://pbs.twimg.com/media/DaJX_u7XUAAjkar.jpg

favor of operational activity (since, according to religious belief, Allah is the breadwinner). Later, families who encourage their sons to wage jihad were presented as praiseworthy alongside documentation of a battle against IS fighters. The last part of the video emphasized the brotherhood of the fighters and the social connection between them, as they support one another on and off the battlefield in order to remain resolute.³⁸



Presenting a mujahid as a family man in a Hayat Tahrir al-Sham video

- A series of videos on the topic of religion titled, “To You, My Brother the Mujahid”. The messages conveyed in the April videos concerned how to deal with mistakes and the connection between the fear of God and faith.³⁹
- Videos no. 13 and 14 in a series of videos titled, “Glory from the Field” regarding the battle waged by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham fighters in northern Homs and southern Hamat in an attempt to repel attacks by the Syrian army. It should be noted that a large portion of the video was in the style of a First Person Shooter (FPS) Game.⁴⁰
- The Ibaa jihadist media institution, which is affiliated with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, published a poster detailing the cease-fire violations on the part of the al-Zenki movement, Ahrar al-Sham and Suqur al-Sham (mainly attacks against, or arrests of, members of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham).⁴¹

³⁸ <https://archive.org/details/HadaSabiluna>

³⁹ Telegram

⁴⁰ https://archive.org/details/imbjuventini1_tutanota_44

⁴¹ Telegram

- The military wing of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham published a poster for those interested in joining the organization in the field of military engineering. The poster explained that recruits are needed to for the construction of fortifications, camouflage and tunnel activity, and that candidates (ages 15 and over) must participate in a 15-day training course.⁴²

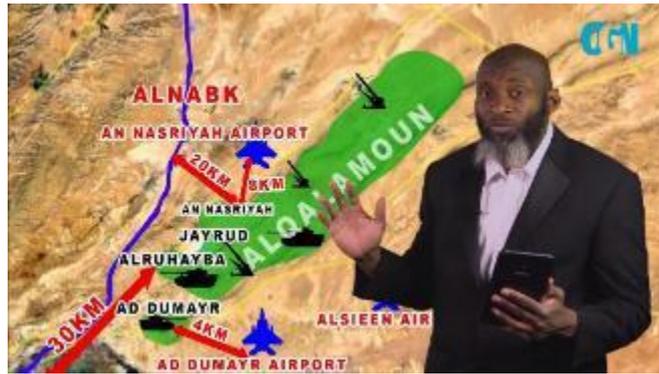


A poster calling for recruits to the military engineering department of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham

- Bilal Abd al-Karim, an American journalist who converted to Islam and is affiliated with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, published an article on his news site, OGN, about the situation in Qalamoun, Syria. According to him, the advance of the Syrian regime's military forces towards Qalamoun poses a threat to the rebels in the region because of its important strategic access routes, especially the airport.⁴³

⁴² Telegram

⁴³ <https://vimeo.com/266171172>



A clip from an article by Bilal Abd al-Karim About the danger posed to rebels in the Qalamoun region due to the Syrian regime's advance

- Two jihad factions in Syria, the Syrian Liberation Front and Suqur al-Sham, announced a ceasefire with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham.⁴⁴ In response to this move, al-Muhaysini, a senior Salafi-jihadist cleric affiliated with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, welcomed the accomplishment and noted that it is a positive trend that should lead to unity among all jihad factions in Syria.⁴⁵
- Six media groups operating on social networks, especially Telegram, and involved in media for jihadist organizations in Syria, published a call on jihad factions in Syria, including Huras al-Din and Ajnad al-Kavkaz, to unite under one banner and agree to heed "the advice of the brothers led by Al-Qaeda". Among the media groups that signed the initiative were: Islamic al-Sawarim Agency, Faris al-Quds, Rimag News Agency, Ibn al-Qaeda, Abu Himmam Jabha, Akhbar al-Sham and others.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ https://twitter.com/abdul_rezak_m/status/988860524367577092

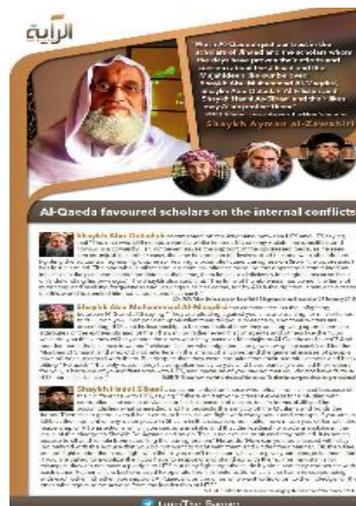
⁴⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79VIWBYoiMg>

⁴⁶ Telegram



The banner published by media groups on a Telegram channel calling on jihad factions in Syria to unite

- Al-Raya jihadist media institution, which is affiliated with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, published several announcements, including the opinions of Al-Qaeda leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and Al-Qaeda supporters such as Sheikh Abu Qatada al-Filistini, Sheikh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi and Sheikh Hani al-Sibai, regarding the need to put an immediate end to the confrontations and mutual clashes between jihad factions in Syria.⁴⁷



A banner containing the opinions of Al-Qaeda supporters, including Ayman al-Zawahiri, regarding the need to put an end to the clashes between jihad factions in Syria

⁴⁷ Telegram

The Alliance of Supporting Islam (Hilf Nusrat al-Islam)

- The Ansar al-Tawhid Group and Huras al-Din, which are affiliated with Al-Qaeda in Syria, announced their merger under an umbrella organization named “The Alliance of Supporting Islam” (*Hilf Nusrat al-Islam*). In a short statement that was published, it was explained that the merger of the two groups was designed “to implement religion on the ground and repel the feet of the enemy”.⁴⁸ It should be noted that Ansar al-Tawhid was established at the end of 2016 from the remnants of Hund al-Aqsa (which was dissolved) and Huras al-Din, led by Abu Humam al-Shami, and is composed of several jihadist groups whose merger was announced at the end of February 2018.



From left to right: the logos of Ansar al-Tawhid, Huras al-Din and the new umbrella organization, Hilf Nusrat al-Islam

- The Sham al-Ribat jihadist media institution, which is seemingly affiliated with Huras al-Din, Al-Qaeda’s branch in Syria, published the following:
 - The first announcement regarding the establishment of the Sham al-Ribat media institution. According to the announcement, the media institution was created in order to “support Islam and Muslims, and to report the heroic acts of the mujahideen in Syria” (this announcement did not mention an organizational affiliation of the media institution, but in other announcements it published a report on the activities of Huras al-Din).
 - An announcement regarding attacks against Shi’ite and Alawite sites in the town of Al-Hamamiyyat on April 26, 2018. According to the announcement, Huras al-Din fighters penetrated the front lines of the enemy, killed more than nine enemy soldiers in the town

⁴⁸ <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/Db9aTeAVwAY-zbt.jpg>

and damaged many vehicles. In addition, they launched rockets and shells at targets in the towns of Baniyas, Al-Mughayr and Tel al-Shaykh Hadid.⁴⁹

- Condolences to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (Taliban Afghanistan) and the families of the fallen who were killed in an attack by the Afghan army on a madrasa for the memorization of the Quran in Kunduz Province (according to media reports, over 100 people were killed and injured in the attack, including civilians).⁵⁰



The logo of the Sham al-Ribat jihadist media institution

The Islamic State

- The IS in Damascus Province and the Amaq news agency published the following:
 - A video titled, “The Tents of the Muslims”, which included propaganda against the Sahawat (the Sunni factions) operating in Syria, alongside documentation of some of the battles fought by IS fighters against the Syrian army south of Damascus. The video combined clips from a speech by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of the IS, in which he addressed the Syrian nation and said that the Syrian people are stuck between the hammer of the United States, and the anvil of the Alawites and their Shi’ite Iranian allies. In the video, the Sahawat were accused of trying to prevent the establishment of an Islamic state on Syrian soil, and of receiving American money to fight against the mujahideen who are actually protecting the Sunni residents from Shi’ite plots. The video ended with a call for new fighters to join the Syrian arena as well as threats against the

⁴⁹ Telegram

⁵⁰ Telegram; <https://goo.gl/bBpfrV>

Alawites, the presentation of weapons that were plundered and the abuse of the corpses of those who were killed.⁵¹

- A video titled, “Do They Not Intend to Repent to Allah”, which included criticism and propaganda against Al-Nusra Front (which would later become Hayat Tahrir al-Sham). The video reviewed the historical relationship between Al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State, beginning with the days when Abu Mohammad al-Julani swore allegiance to al-Baghdadi, and until the rift and mutual hostility that developed between the two groups. The narrator and one of the fighters filmed in the video accused Tahrir al-Sham of, among other things, fighting against the IS instead of the Syrian regime, inconsistency and loyalty to ideology (for instance, declaring members of the al-Zenki movement to be infidels and later severing alliances with them), failing to apply shari’a and refraining from judging according to its laws. Throughout the entire video, the Sahawat and other factions were accused of signing agreements with the regime, while only the IS continued to fight against it. For emphasis, the last part of the video included documentation of battles against the Syrian army while presenting the IS as the sole saviour of the Syrian nation.⁵²
- A claim of responsibility for the deaths of at least 37 members of the Syrian army forces in a battle against the organization south of Damascus. According to the announcement, IS forces managed to destroy a tank and its inhabitants, and pushed back the army’s advancement.⁵³
- Additional reports on various operational topics, such as the killing and wounding of several Syrian soldiers and the destruction of artillery east of Palmyra, as well as attacks against the Syrian army in the Al-Qadam and al-Tadhamun neighborhoods in southern Damascus.⁵⁴

The Turkistan Islamic Party

⁵¹ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/83185>

⁵² <https://vimeo.com/264320013>

⁵³ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/83067>

⁵⁴ <https://dawaalhaq.com/>

- The Turkestan Islamic Party for the Support of the People of Syria published condolences against the backdrop of the deaths of Quran students at a madrasa in Kunduz Province in an attack by the Afghan army. The announcement expressed condolences on behalf of the people of Turkestan to the families of the fallen and to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.⁵⁵

The Islamic Emirate of the Caucasus in Al-Sham

- Fighters belonging to the Islamic Emirate of the Caucasus in Al-Sham published an announcement regarding “recent events that took place in liberated areas”. In the opening of the announcement, the fighters presented themselves as an independent faction operating in Syria that has, thus far, refrained from addressing rivalries between the different factions in this arena. The Caucasus Emirate criticized the disputes and conflicts between the jihad groups in Syria, emphasized the importance of the clerics’ role in resolving conflicts, called on the mujahideen to continue legitimate jihad against the regime, explained that it is necessary to reach an agreement based on shari’a regarding the fighting while striving for reconciliation, and emphasized the negative consequences of the fighting between the factions, which only strengthens the enemy.⁵⁶

Jaysh al-Islam

- Jaysh al-Islam published an announcement proposing a political solution regarding the city of Duma, located northeast of the capital Damascus, in light of the clashes between the Syrian army and Jaysh al-Islam over the control of Duma. In the announcement, Jaysh al-Islam listed its demands (at the top of the list: the transfer of the organization’s fighters and activists north, the establishment of a comprehensive and viable cease-fire, and the establishment of a joint committee composed of Jaysh al-Islam and the Russian military police for the purpose of scanning the heavy weapons in the region). It should be noted that the announcement was published two days before the chemical attack on Duma that was attributed to the Syrian regime, and which eventually led to the entry of its forces into the city.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Telegram

⁵⁶ Telegram

⁵⁷ Telegram; <https://goo.gl/A1LDrR>

The Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula

The Islamic State in the Sinai Peninsula

- The IS in Sinai Province and the Amaq news agency published several reports regarding the organization's operational activities in Sinai. Among other things, it reported the killing of an officer and the wounding of three soldiers in a series of explosions south of Sheikh Zuweid, as well as the destruction of an APC west of Sheikh Zuweid.⁵⁸

Africa

The Maghreb

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

- The Katibat Uqbat bin Nafi group, which is affiliated with AQIM and operates in Tunisia, published an announcement about the exposure of documents regarding the involvement of foreign countries, especially France, in the country by the President of the Truth and Dignity Commission, the Tunisian commission for human rights that is entrusted with, among other things, gathering the testimonies of Tunisian citizens who were subjected to political repression by Ben Ali's regime. The announcement was seemingly published against the backdrop of the Tunisian government's intention to prohibit the activities of the commission.

According to the Katibat Uqbat bin Nafi group, the exposure indicates the extent of France's deep involvement in the affairs of Tunisia and the wave of systematic looting of the country's natural resources. It added that this trend was made possible thanks to the cooperation of local gangs, businessmen and politicians who tried to obscure their efforts to please their French patron. According to the group, since France gained independence, its collaborators have waged a war against Islam and subjugated the nation to the agendas of French hegemony. During the presidencies of the Bourguiba and ibn Ali, corruption, heresy, and sin abounded.

⁵⁸ <https://dawaalhaq.com>

The group then noted that the outbreak of the revolution in 2011 and ibn Ali's escape from the country were seen by many as the start of a trend of change, and an indication "that the revolution succeeded in dismantling the system of collaborators and corruption, and that the country was on the right track [...]". Soon, however, a counter-revolution began that was supported by the tyrants of the East and the West in order to restore the system of corruption, shattering the hopes and dreams of the Tunisian people for a better future. In addition, the counter-revolution was by an attempt to shun shari'a and not allow it to weaken corruption and oppression.

Later in the announcement, France and its collaborators were accused of intervening in the African continent for 50 years, whether directly or indirectly, reflected in the systematic oppression of the masses, coups, assassinations, murder, imprisonment, exile, terrorism, etc. According to the organization, the Tunisian regime used the security mechanisms at its disposal to serve the agendas of the Jews and the Crusaders.

The group called on Tunisian residents to examine this reality and respond with popular protests, and to examine in-depth the economic agreements regarding exploitation of the country's natural resources. Furthermore, the group called on Tunisians to travel individually or in groups to oil and gas fields, mineral mines and salt mines to stop the acts of theft and looting of natural resources in any way possible. In addition, he called on residents not to believe media outlets since they are recruited by, and serve the interests of, the rulers of Tunisia.

In this context, the group emphasized that 60 years of rule by tyrants and collaborators proved that the regime and all the mechanisms at its disposal, supported by the West, are a tool of enslavement that oppresses the people and perpetuates their political and economic hegemony over the country. According to the group, the West and its collaborators are very afraid of Islam because they are aware of the power of its attraction and strength and, therefore, they are constantly trying to extinguish it.

Therefore, the group called on the Tunisian people to fulfil the commandment of jihad in order to defend Islam and put an end to France's involvement in the country. It addressed the Crusaders and their allies, and threatened to attack French interests and institutions as long as France

continues to pillage Tunisia's natural resources, remains on Muslim lands and fights against Muslims.⁵⁹

Libya

The Shura Council of the Mujahideen in Derna

- The Shura Council of the Mujahideen in Derna published the following:
 - An announcement addressing the Libyan nation along with a promise that the Shura Council seeks peace and is willing to forgive any entity that had done it an injustice. In addition, it expressed willingness to accept any complaint against the Shura Council to bring it to the clerics in Libya's institute for religious rulings for examination and judgment.⁶⁰
 - The al-'Ahd jihadist media institution, which is affiliated with the Shura Council of the Mujahideen in Derna, published a video titled, "Respite for the Mujahid", which presented the daily life and routine of the organization's fighters, such as preparing food, singing together and joint prayer. It should be noted that the faces of the fighters were not filmed throughout the video.⁶¹

Tunisia

- Visitors to the Shumukh al-Islam jihadist Web forum referred to several security incidents in Tunisia. One visitor discussed the stabbing of two European tourists in the city of El-Kef and claimed that the stabber was wrong not to defend himself when a local mob assaulted him because he thought the locals were Muslims and, therefore, avoided harming them.⁶² Another post reported on the death of "a soldier of the Caliphate" in a gun battle against security forces near Jebel Salloum, which is near the city of Kasserine.⁶³

⁵⁹ Telegram

⁶⁰ <http://www.jana-ly.co/%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%84%D9%8A/59519/>

⁶¹ Telegram

⁶² <https://shamukh.net/vb> (Arabic).

⁶³ <https://shamukh.net/vb> (Arabic).

- The Amaq news agency reported on the killing of a Raqīb (military rank) in the Tunisian army and the wounding of several other soldiers in a gun battle against IS fighters in the area of Djebel Mghilain Kasserine Province.⁶⁴

Mali

Jamā'at Nuşrat al-Islām Wa-l-Muslimīn

- Al-Zallaqa jihadist media institution, which belongs to Jamā'at Nuşrat al-Islām Wa-l-Muslimīn, a Salafi-jihadist umbrella organization with close ties to AQIM, published the following:
 - A claim of responsibility for an attack against a stronghold of the French army and international forces in Timbuktu on April 14, 2018. According to the organization, the attack was carried out in revenge for the deaths of several members of the organization at the hands of French forces. At the end of the announcement, the organization emphasized that the attack was a reminder that the mujahideen do not intend to let France rest, and are determined to eliminate every Crusader soldier and collaborator until shari'a is implemented in Muslim lands.⁶⁵
 - An announcement denying a claim made by a commander in the French Barkhane forces, General Bruno Guibert, that a woman was among the organization's fighters killed in an attack on the French base in Timbuktu. According to the organization, this is a false claim and a distortion of the facts. The organization emphasized that women have played a large role in the Muslim Nation since the days of the Prophet Muhammad, while men continue to defend their religion, land and dignity. To prove that it was speaking the truth, the organization further provided four of the names of the fighters who were killed during the Timbuktu raid, along with their pictures.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ https://dawaalhaq.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/IMG_20180412_143202_441.jpg

⁶⁵ Telegram

⁶⁶ Telegram



Photos of four of Jamā'at Nuṣrat al-Islām Wa-l-Muslimīn's fighters who were killed in an attack on a French base in Timbuktu

The Islamic State

- A group affiliated with the IS in Mali published a video documenting an attack by members of the group against a Niger army post that was carried out in October 2017. According to the report, 13 soldiers were killed in the attack, along with several of the organization's fighters whose photos as martyrs were published in the video.⁶⁷

Somalia

Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen

- Al-Kataib jihadist media institution, which belongs to Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, published the following:
 - An audio clip titled, "Sham is the Home of the Believer" by Sheikh Abu Ubeydah Ahmad Omar, the leader of the organization. In the beginning of the clip, Abu Ubeydah praised the jihad fighters who defend Muslim lands everywhere, especially the fighters of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, led by Mawlawi Haibatullah. He then praised Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of Al-Qaeda, as well as jihad fighters belonging to AQIS and Ansar al-

⁶⁷ <https://shamukh.net/vb/> (Arabic).

Sharia in Yemen, and jihad fighters in the Caucasus, Chechnya, Syria, Turkestan and the other arenas of jihad.

Later, Abu Ubeydah focused on the arena of jihad in Syria and expressed regret over the loss of eastern Al-Ghouta to enemy forces, and stressed that all the hardships facing jihad activists in Syria were a test from God. To strengthen their spirit, he quoted a hadith from the Prophet Muhammad about the existence of a community of believers in the heart of the Levant. According to him, the battle being waged today in Syria is a battle between the Quran and the Cross, between the Oneness of God and heresy, and between Muslims and infidels. He warned against manipulations by the enemies of Islam in an effort to harm jihad efforts in Syria, and called on his fighters to continue to wage jihad for the sake of the blood already spilled and to foil the plots being hatched against them in Riyadh, Doha, Ankara, Geneva and Astana; in other words, not to be drawn into peace conferences that are trying to establish an armistice and reconcile the rebel factions with Assad's regime. According to Abu Ubeydah, such initiatives are designed to sabotage Muslims' effort to adhere to God's path.

Abu Ubeydah warned the jihad factions in Syria not to enter a civil war with one another. Indeed, each faction is characterized by its uniqueness, but they must adhere to the single goal of fighting against the enemies of Islam and not against each other. He also emphasized that jihad in Syria must be independent, without external support from any country, so that the decisions made among the jihad factions will not be affected by external considerations.

Later in the speech, Abu Ubeydah appealed to all Muslims and stressed that the battle taking place today in Syria is not limited to the campaign waged by jihadist factions, but rather a campaign that involves all Muslims. He emphasized that every Muslim must help jihad in Syria as it is an individual obligation.

Abu Ubeydah then appealed to Muslims living in Turkey and called on them to help their brothers in Syria because of the geographical proximity between Turkey and Syria. He urged them to do their duty and join jihad in Syria, while being aware of the dangerous role played by Erdogan's secular regime in supporting the Crusaders in the war against Islam and Muslims, including its role in the killing of Muslims in Somalia, Afghanistan and

Syria. According to him, Erdogan is trying to present himself to Muslims as being loyal to Islam, but in practice he is misleading them and acting against the Muslim Nation. As he stated: "The secular Turkish regime is a member of the Crusader coalition. It recognizes Israel, which occupies Jerusalem and the rest of Palestine. It maintains fraternal ties with the United States, the head of world heresy. It defends the Cross with Russia, which bombards your brothers and helps the Assad regime against them. In Somalia, the infidel Turkish government stands alongside Crusader, American, English, French and other forces, supporting the Crusader trio - Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda – which occupies the land, spreading corruption, harming God's servants and propagating heresy".

Abu Ubeydah then elaborated on Turkey's role in Somalia on the cultural, political, military and economic levels. According to him, Turkey is waging an all-out war in Somalia against the belief in the Oneness of God and the application of shari'a, and is helping the Crusaders in the battle against Muslims in Somalia. Abu Ubeydah also accused Turkey of killing Muslims in Afghanistan because of its position as the head of the NATO alliance, "which was founded to fight Islam."

Abu Ubeydah emphasized that Muslims must take these facts into account and formulate an appropriate policy towards the Turkish regime. In addition, he called on Muslim clerics to engage in propaganda that would expose the crimes of the Turkish regime against Islam and Muslims, the corruption within it, and its cooperation with the enemies of Islam.

Later in his speech, Abu Ubeydah again addressed jihad fighters in Syria, and asked them to maintain unity among their ranks and to maintain a firm belief in God. If they do these two things, Abu Obeida promised that the jihad front in Syria will be maintained.

Abu Ubeydah also praised several jihad leaders in the past and present as role models for the mujahideen. For example, he mentioned Sheikh Osama bin Laden and his war against the US. According to him, the US will never live in security as long as Palestine continues to be occupied and as long as "infidel armies" remain on Muslim lands.

Abu Ubeydah even addressed the Palestinians, and called on them to continue to attack the Jews' strongholds in Jerusalem and the Golan Heights.

His speech also included recordings by Sheikh Aby Yahya al-Libi, a former senior member of the Al-Qaeda leadership who was killed in a US drone strike in Afghanistan in 2012. In

the recording, al-Libi appealed to jihad fighters in Somalia to show determination, cling to God and remain steadfast in the battle against the enemies of Islam. At the end of his speech, Abu Ubeydah blessed the Muslims in Syria in particular and all Muslims in general.⁶⁸

It should be noted that since Abu Ubeydah's appointment as leader of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen in Somalia four years ago, he has rarely been interviewed. The current speech was his third public statement since his appointment, and the timing of its publication can be understood against the background of the successes of the Syrian army and its allies, Russia and the Shi'ite militias, in capturing more territory from the rebels.



The banner of Sheikh Abu Ubeydah Ahmad Omar's speech

- A series of videos documenting a Quran knowledge competition among youth in religious schools in the Islamic provinces. At the end of the competition, three children were declared the winners and each one received a sum of 800, 1,000 and 1,5000 dollars.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ <https://risala.ga/npnc/>

⁶⁹ Telegram; <http://shahadanews.com/?p=1353>



Children who participated in a competition held by Al-Shabab on knowledge of the Quran

- A video titled, “Whoever Wants to Follow an Example, Let Him Follow the Example of Those Who Have Passed #1: You Have No Excuse”. The video focused on an appeal by Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, one of the founders of Al-Qaeda, to the organization’s supporters to maintain unity among the ranks, show determination on the battlefield and be imbued with faith in God.⁷⁰
- A video titled, “Whoever Wants to Follow an Example, Let Him Follow the Example of Those Who Have Passed, Part 2: Verify and Discern the Truth”. The video focused on an appeal made by Sheikh Osama bin Laden, the former leader of Al-Qaeda, to the organization’s supporters to show determination on the battlefield, maintain complete faith in God, maintain unity among the ranks and not spread rumors. Later, the film praised former jihad leaders as worthy role models.⁷¹

The Islamic State

- IS supporters in East Africa published several banners on Telegram stating their intention to liberate Al-Aqsa and Jerusalem when the circumstances will allow it. For example, one banner stated (see photo): “We are fighting in East Africa and our eyes are raised to Jerusalem”.⁷²

⁷⁰ Telegram

⁷¹ Telegram

⁷² Telegram



The banner disseminated by IS supporters on Telegram until the title, “We are fighting in East Africa and our eyes are raised to Jerusalem”

The Indian Subcontinent

Kashmir

Ansar Ghazwat al-Hind

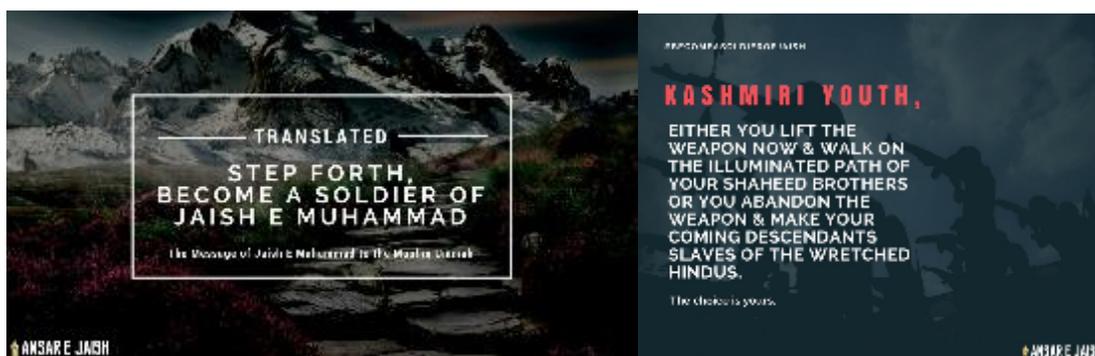
- Al-Hurr jihadist media institution, which belongs to Ansar Ghazwat al-Hind, published the following:
 - A video in memory of three members of the organization who were killed in battles against Indian security forces in Kashmir last month.⁷³

Jaish-e-Muhammad

- Supporters of Jaish e-Muhammad, a terrorist organization operating in Kashmir with the support of the Pakistani intelligence services, published: a series of banners in English and Hindi on its Telegram channel calling on the youth in Kashmir to wage an armed uprising against the Indian security forces; banners on the importance of self-sacrifice for Islam and the liberation of Kashmir; and banners calling for enlistment to the ranks of the organization (see photos).⁷⁴

⁷³ Telegram

⁷⁴ Telegram



From left to right: A banner encouraging recruitment to the ranks of the organization; a banner encouraging self-sacrifice and the use of weapons against Indian security forces in Kashmir

The Philippines

- The Amaq news agency reported on the killing of 13 soldiers in the Philippines army in an exchange of fire against IS fighters in Jolo-Sulu in the southwest of the country.⁷⁵

The West

- IS supporters continued to disseminate threats to attack Western countries and called for “lone wolf” attacks while emphasizing that it is a holy war against infidel forces. In April, threats to attack the US intensified.⁷⁶



Banners containing threats that were posted on Telegram

Miscellaneous

⁷⁵ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/82581>

⁷⁶ Telegram

- The Khayr al-Umma media group, which is involved in media for Al-Qaeda, announced that its publications can also be read on a new application developed for installation on mobile phones.⁷⁷



An illustration of the Khayr al-Umma application on mobile phones

⁷⁷ Telegram

ABOUT THE ICT

Founded in 1996, the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) is one of the leading academic institutes for counter-terrorism in the world, facilitating international cooperation in the global struggle against terrorism. ICT is an independent think tank providing expertise in terrorism, counter-terrorism, homeland security, threat vulnerability and risk assessment, intelligence analysis and national security and defense policy. ICT is a non-profit organization located at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC), Herzliya, Israel which relies exclusively on private donations and revenue from events, projects and programs.

ABOUT THE JIHADI MONITORING GROUP

The Jihadi Websites Monitoring Group (JWMG) is a specialized research and analysis team at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT). Composed of researchers fluent in Arabic, the JWMG monitors websites that support and serve the Global Jihad organizations. The unique characteristic of JWMG publications is the team's integration of diverse materials from a wide variety of Arabic sources. JWMG connects each source to larger trends, providing a complete understanding of events on both a local and a global scale.

[Click here for a list of online JWMG publications](#)

For tailored research please contact us at JWMG@ict.org.il.

International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT)
Additional resources are available on the ICT Website: www.ict.org.il