



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

# ICT Jihadi Monitoring Group **PERIODIC REVIEW**

## **Bimonthly Report**

### **Summary of Information on Jihadist Websites The Second Half of December 2013**

## Highlights

This report summarizes notable events discussed on jihadist Web forums during the second half of December 2013. Following are the main points covered in the report:

- Al-Qaeda released a video clip of Warren Weinstein, an American who was abducted in Pakistan, in which he asked the United States government to work for his release and his return to his family.
- Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) published a rare apology over the killing of Yemeni citizens by members of the organization in the December 5, 2013 attack on the hospital located within the Yemeni Ministry of Defense compound in Sana'a.
- The Al-Nusra Front, Al-Qaeda's affiliate in Syria, published a video documenting its seizure of the Al-Kindi Hospital, considered to be one of the most important strategic centers in Aleppo.
- Sirajuddin Zurayqat, a senior leader in the Abdullah Azzam Brigades, took responsibility for a terrorist attack that was carried out against the Iranian Embassy on November 19, 2013. He explained that all Lebanese Hezbollah sites were legitimate targets for terrorist attacks due to Hezbollah's participation in the civil war in Syria alongside Bashar al-Assad's regime and its battle against Sunnis in Syria and Lebanon. He called on Sunnis in Lebanon to come to their senses and defend their dignity in the face of such aggression.
- Jihad activists called on Muslims in Indonesia and on the mujahideen to revolt against the Indonesian government for its oppression of Muslims who want to implement shari'a [Islamic law] in the country.

## Table of Contents

Highlights .....	2
New Publications .....	5
Ideology .....	5
Strategy .....	6
Guidebooks and Instruction Pamphlets .....	6
Promoting the Myth of the Martyr .....	7
Magazines.....	8
Reports from the Field .....	8
Afghanistan-Pakistan.....	8
The Taliban in Pakistan.....	9
The Arabian Peninsula.....	10
Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.....	10
Iraq.....	11
The Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham.....	12
The Islamic Front for the Iraqi Resistance .....	14
Al-Sham [The Levant] .....	14
The Al-Nusra Front .....	15
The Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham: Operations in Syria.....	18
Lebanon.....	23
The Abdullah Azzam Brigades .....	23
The Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip .....	24
Ansar Beit Al-Maqdas .....	24
The Maghreb [North Africa] .....	25
Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb .....	26
Nigeria .....	27
Somalia .....	28
The Indian Subcontinent .....	28
China.....	29
The West.....	29
Miscellaneous .....	30
Facebook and Twitter .....	30



## New Publications

### Ideology

- The Al-Sahab jihadist media institution published a video in which kidnapped American, Warren Weinstein, called on United States President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry to make every effort to secure his release. Weinstein was appointed by a contracting company to carry out work for the U.S. Army in the region, and he was kidnapped from his home in Lahore in August 2011. In the video Weinstein said, “I arrived in Pakistan nine years ago in order to help my government at a time when most Americans were unwilling to come here. Now it seems that my government has completely abandoned me. Therefore, I am turning to you again so that you will discuss my release”. A letter written by Weinstein and obtained by the Pakistani media accompanied the video.<sup>1</sup>



**Warren Weinstein on the video released by Al-Qaeda**

- The jihadist media institution, Nukhbat al-‘Ilam al-Jihad, published an article titled, “Remaining Loyal to the Families of the Mujahideen and the Martyrs”, by Abu Mariyya al-Qahtani. In the article, the author refers to several stories about the good treatment shown by the Prophet Muhammad and his associates towards families of the mujahideen and martyrs, as a model for behavior in today’s day and age.<sup>2</sup>
- The Salafi-jihadist Web portal, Minbar al-Tawhid wal-Jihad, published an article titled, “Chapters on Leadership and Oaths of Allegiance” by Sheikh Abū al-Mundhir al-Shinqīṭī. In the article, al-

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<sup>1</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>2</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

Shinqīṭī justified why [readers] should swear allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, leader of the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham.<sup>3</sup>

## Strategy

- A prominent visitor to the Al-Platform Media jihadist Web forum published a collection of tips for the mujahideen in all arenas of jihad, including: Do not talk to anyone about your jihad work, not even your friends and family; Before migrating to one of the arenas of jihad, contact a comrade in order to coordinate your safe passage; Before traveling, prepare answers to anticipated questions and a cover story in case you are arrested; Remain discreet and do not draw too much attention to yourself; It is preferable to make contact with other comrades through written letters and not through telephone calls, which are more likely to be tapped by intelligence agencies; Every fighter that migrates to an arena of jihad needs someone to take him under his wing and ensure that he is trustworthy.<sup>4</sup>

## Guidebooks and Instruction Pamphlets

- The jihadist media institution of the Turkestan Islamic Party, Sawt Al-Islam, published an instruction video on how to construct an explosive charge (a roadside charge used in ambushes, primarily based on a barrel or jerrican of fuel, or several barrels of fuel activated by a small charge that creates a strong explosive effect like a firestorm). The video (No. 12) was published as part of the series titled, “Express Mail of the Mujahideen in Turkestan”.<sup>5</sup>



The video banner

- A visitor to the Hanein jihadist Web forum asked to start a discussion about ways to cope with

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.tawhed.ws/dl?i=28121305>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>5</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

the threat of drones. Among the suggestions given were: Hide behind buildings and trees, and use camouflage netting; Avoid using lights at night, including flashlights and car headlights; Wrap yourself in special blankets in order to disrupt the drone's ability to carry out an interception by identifying body heat; Carry out operations in inclement weather (strong winds, fog, rainstorms) as drones are unable to operate in such weather.

The visitor also advised avoiding the use of wireless communication devices such as cell phones and GPS, which reveal one's location. In addition, he said to scatter broken pieces of a mirror along the surface area in order to obscure the drone's cameras, and to use human images in order to mislead the drone's identification mechanism. The visitor also suggested trying to confuse or block the drone's connection to satellites, which hinders the ability of the operator to control it.

In response, another visitor posted a photo, which was published in the *Israel Defense* magazine, of all of the various types of drones that were developed in Israel in 2012.<sup>6</sup>



The photo that was posted to the forum under the heading, "All Israeli spy planes in one photo"

### Promoting the Myth of the Martyr

- A visitor that publishes news items for Al-Minbar Al-I'lami Al-Jihadi, a jihadist Web forum that was active until December 2013, published an announcement on the Al-Platform Media Web forum about the death of the martyr, Ibrahim Shaqot, Abu-Hamza al-Maqdisi. Al-Maqdisi was a Palestinian doctor who immigrated to the arena of jihad in Syria and was killed in battle. The article included a summary of his life story.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).



Abu-Hamza al-Maqdisi

## Magazines

- The ninth edition of the jihadist magazine, *Fursan al-Balag* (59 pp.), was published and included articles about the importance of joining jihad, the importance of delineating a strategic plan for the Salafi-jihadist movement, understanding the enemies of Islam in the age of globalization, stories of martyrs, descriptions of arena of jihad, and the recollections of those who fought in Afghanistan in the 1980's.<sup>8</sup>



The magazine banner

## Reports from the Field

### Afghanistan-Pakistan

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<sup>8</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

*In Afghanistan and Pakistan, targeted operations continued to be carried out by the Taliban on one side and by U.S. and NATO forces on the other side, in light of the attempt to reach a final agreement and security arrangement between the United States and Pakistan regarding the withdrawal of U.S. forces from the country.*

*On December 25, 2013, the Taliban launched two rockets that exploded at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan; no injuries were reported in the incident.<sup>9</sup>*

*On December 19, 2013, six American soldiers were killed when a NATO Black Hawk helicopter crashed during a mission in southern Afghanistan.<sup>10</sup>*

*On December 26, 2013, an American drone missile attacked a rural area of Pakistan on the Afghan border. Official American sources reported that three foreign militants were killed in the attack, without providing additional details.<sup>11</sup>*

### **The Taliban in Pakistan**

- The jihadist media institution of the Taliban in Pakistan, Umar, published a video titled, “Heroes of the Nation – Part 1”.<sup>12</sup>
- The Islamic News Agency – Haq published an announcement on the Hanein jihadist Web forum criticizing the Pakistani army. According to the news agency, which quoted the Taliban in Pakistan at length, the Pakistani army carried out a sudden bombing of the marketplace in Mir Ali, in northern Waziristan, which killed and injured hundreds of innocent people.

While the global media reported that the army’s action had been in response to a suicide attack that was carried out by the Taliban in Pakistan at a military checkpoint, the article tried to depict the military operation in Mir Ali as a random attack. The article also included many photos showing the great destruction left in the wake of the Pakistani army’s operation.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2013/12/two-rockets-land-us-embassy-kabul-compound-2013122584030685269.html> (English).

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/19/six-us-soldiers-die-afghanistan-blackhawk-crash> (English).

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/26/us-drone-strike-kills-three-militants>

<sup>12</sup> <https://alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic);

<http://www.skynewsarabia.com/web/article/501669/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%83%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A->



The ruins of the marketplace in Mir Ali, in northern Waziristan

## The Arabian Peninsula

*The attack that was carried out on December 5, 2013, by Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) at a hospital in Yemen’s Ministry of Defense compound in Sana’a, continued to provoke reactions and criticisms directed at the organization. As a result of the increasing public criticism, the organization issued a rare apology for the deaths of the people in the hospital and emphasized that the organization had only intended to harm members of the Yemeni regime. To express its condolences, the organization offered monetary compensation to the families of those who were killed.*<sup>14</sup>

### **Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula**

- During the second half of December 2013, the jihadist media institution of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Al-Malahem, published the following:
  - A video by Sheikh Qasim al-Rimi, leader of AQAP, in which he apologized for the attack that one of its members carried out on a hospital in Yemen’s Ministry of Defense compound in Sana’a on December 5, 2013, in which 52 people were killed. Al-Rimi claimed that the attacker, who was also killed during the attack, had ignored orders and

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[%D9%8A%D8%B4%D9%86-%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A9-%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A8-%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%94%D9%81%D8%BA%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86](#)

<sup>14</sup> <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/yemen/al-qaida-to-make-condolence-payments-to-its-own-victims-1.1269860> (English).

carried out the attack of his own volition. He added that the attacker was warned ahead of time not to enter the hospital or the place designated for prayer, but that he did not obey the order. Al-Rimi addressed the bereaved families and said, “We offer our apologies and our condolences to the bereaved families. [...] we take full responsibility for what happened at the hospital and we are prepared to pay compensation to the families of those killed”. At the same time, he emphasized that despite the mistake, “we will continue our jihad activities”.<sup>15</sup>



**Sheikh Qasim al-Rimi**

- A video titled, “Together with the Qur’an – Part 4”, by Sheikh Harith bin Ghazi al-Nazari Muhammad al-Mirshadi, a senior member of AQAP.<sup>16</sup>

## **Iraq**

*After the Prime Minister of Iraq, Nouri al-Maliki, appealed to U.S. President, Barack Obama, during the second half of October to request weapons, training and manpower in order to counter the rising threat of terrorism and violence in the country,<sup>17</sup> media outlets began reporting that the U.S. has shipped dozens of Hellfire air-to-ground missiles to Iraq.<sup>18</sup> However, despite the receipt of aid, Al-Qaeda continues to claim more victims. The tensions that erupted during recent weeks in Al-*

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<sup>15</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>16</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/10/iraq-appeal-more-us-military-aid-20131030225431170998.html> (English).

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/us-ships-dozens-missiles-iraqi-forces-2013122714844428885.html> (English).

Anbar Province between Sunnis and security forces claimed the lives of 13 more people. Even more worrying than the precarious situation in Al-Anbar was the announced resignation of 50 security officers.<sup>19</sup>

Tariq Hashemi, a Sunni Muslim and the former Vice President of Iraq who fled the country after he was accused of involvement in terrorist activity in 2012, sided with the struggle of the Sunni minority in Iraq in an interview that he gave to the Al-Jazeera news network, and he called on Saudi Arabia to intervene in the struggle.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to the increasing violence in Al-Anbar Province,<sup>21</sup> deadly terrorist attacks against Shi'ites and Christians were also reported in the capital city of Baghdad<sup>22</sup> and at a television station in Tikrit.<sup>23</sup>

### **The Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham**

- The jihadist media institution of the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham (ISIS) reported that two of its members had gone to the Salah al-Din television station, which [it claimed] spread lies criticizing the mujahideen, killed the guard, broke into the building, killed dozens of station employees and gained complete control over the station.<sup>24</sup> The attack took place on December 24, 2013, and the organization published an announcement later that day in which it claimed

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/iraq-anbar-violence-20131230222045598880.html> (English).

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/maliki-under-fire-as-iraq-violence-continues-2013123117718614835.html> (English).

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/at-least-15-army-officers-killed-iraq-201312219203178226.html>; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/iraq-security-forces-arrest-mp-deadly-raid-20131228836395606.html>; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/protesters-deadly-clash-with-iraqi-police-20131230134051187459.html> (all in English).

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/iraq-attacks-kill-at-least-12-people-2013121417337367872.html>; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/suicide-attack-targets-shia-pilgrims-iraq-20131219102921431365.html>; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/blast-hits-near-church-iraqi-capital-201312259356502237.html> (all in English).

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/iraqi-gunmen-kill-two-journalists-tikrit-20131223135148292176.html>; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/al-qaeda-group-claims-attack-iraq-station-20131224131945289704.html> (both in English).

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

responsibility for the attack.<sup>25</sup>

- The jihadist media institution of the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham (ISIS) in Nineveh Province published an announcement in which it claimed responsibility for the assassination of the district police commander of Al-Shirqat, Iraq, and other senior officers on December 27, 2013. According to the announcement, ISIS carried out the operation in response to the arrests, torture and killings of Sunnis carried out by police forces.<sup>26</sup>
- The jihadist media institution of the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham (ISIS) in Nineveh Province published an announcement regarding the attack at the police headquarters in Hamam Al-Alil. The announcement stated that ISIS militants from the southern district had successfully invaded the police headquarters by detonating a car bomb at the entrance to the building. The building was destroyed in the attack and many senior police officers were injured.<sup>27</sup>
- The jihadist media institution of the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham (ISIS) in Al-Anbar Province (a large province in western Iraq) published an announcement, in which it claimed that the government of Nouri al-Maliki, the Prime Minister of Iraq, was trying to harm residents of Al-Anbar Province and offend their honor by leading them astray from the Sunnah [the teaching and practices of the Prophet Muhammad], their natural and correct way [of living]. In response, ISIS militants ambushed a convoy of vehicles belonging to the Iraqi army and burned five of its cars, with all of the passengers inside. This was the first in a series of steps taken by the organization against the government's current policy.<sup>28</sup>
- The jihadist media institution of the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham (ISIS) in Al-Anbar Province published an announcement in which it claimed responsibility for the assassination of Muhammed al-Karwi, who had served as commander of the seventh division in the infidel army of Nouri al-Maliki, the Prime Minister of Iraq. ISIS militants had also set alight a convoy bringing military supplies to the infidel army. In the announcement, the organization promised that subsequent operations would be even bigger.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=116812>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

### ***The Islamic Front for the Iraqi Resistance***

- The Islamic Front for the Iraqi Resistance, a Sunni jihadist organization operating in Iraq known for its radical stance against the Iraqi government, published a letter regarding the actions of Nouri al-Maliki, the Prime Minister of Iraq. The letter stated that al-Maliki was an emissary of the Christians and Americans, and that he had taken actions against Sunnis in an attempt to force a secular regime on the country. As a result of these despicable actions, the Islamic Front for the Iraqi Resistance called on all members of its military wing, Salah Al-Din, to go to war against the regime; the fight would include [the use of] combat operation rooms and military coordination among the organization's fighters throughout Iraq in order to prevent the hostile secular camp from gaining control. The organization called on all Muslims, whomever and wherever they may be, both in Iraq and beyond, to help in the fight against al-Maliki. It also called on all Iraqis not to enlist in al-Maliki's army and to rise up against him. In response to the announcement, one visitor to Al-Minbar jihadi Web forum claimed that the organization was full of lies and spoke without taking any real action.<sup>30</sup>

### **Al-Sham [The Levant]**

*Hassan Aboud, leader of Ahrar Al-Sham, a prominent Salafi-jihadist organization in the Syrian civil war, said that he and his organization did not intend to participate in the peace talks in Geneva planned for January 2014 and would not recognize any agreement made there.<sup>31</sup> In an interview conducted with Abu Mohammad al-Julani, leader of the Al-Nusra Front, Al-Qaeda's affiliate in Syria, al-Julani said that his organization also rejected the peace talks in Geneva and added that the conflict would soon be over, with his fighters claiming victory.<sup>32</sup>*

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/syria-rebel-chief-rejects-geneva-peace-talks-201312213147535137.html> (English).

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/al-qaeda-leader-syria-speaks-al-jazeera-20131218155917935989.html> (English).

Meanwhile, the Syrian civil war continued to claim victims,<sup>33</sup> mostly children.<sup>34</sup> In light of the severe humanitarian crisis<sup>35</sup> facing the citizens of Syria, the United Nations made an appeal for 6.5 billion dollars in financial-humanitarian aid,<sup>36</sup> even after humanitarian assistance began making its way to Syria via Iraq on December 16, 2013.<sup>37</sup>

The Syrian civil war has also trickled into Lebanon as a result of Hezbollah's support for Bashar al-Assad's forces. Two significant security-related events took place during the second half of December – a suicide attack in the heart of the Hezbollah stronghold in the Baalbek region<sup>38</sup> and a terrorist attack in Beirut, in which the former Lebanese politician, Mohamad Chatah, was killed along with six other people.<sup>39</sup>

### **The Al-Nusra Front**

- During the second half of December 2013, the media institution of the Al-Nusra Front, Al-Manarah Al-Bayda, published the following:
  - Announcements (No. 441-445) claiming responsibility for various terrorist attacks against the Syrian regime's security forces.

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<sup>33</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/deaths-reported-syria-shelling-20131231124120936847.html>; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/deadly-barrel-bombs-aleppo-market-20131228142838121763.html>; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/rebels-killed-ambush-damascus-2013122715240539649.html>; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/syrian-regime-air-raids-kill-dozens-aleppo-2013122305743259925.html>; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/uk-doctor-dies-syrian-jail-20131218025176511.html> (all in English).

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/deadly-aerial-assault-aleppo-continues-201312241658548857.html>; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/syrian-bombing-kills-children-near-school-2013122211955116895.html>; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/syrian-army-air-raids-kill-14-children-20131215131325730660.html> (all in English).

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/starvation-syria-yarmouk-20131228151752853749.html>; <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/syria-rebels-moadamiyeh-food-2013122619255443322.html> (both in English).

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/un-makes-huge-65-billion-appeal-syria-2013121616196201575.html> (English).

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/un-starts-aid-delivery-syria-from-iraq-2013121691014688775.html> (English).

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/suicide-blast-hits-hezbollah-area-lebanon-201312176519884722.html> (English).

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/12/large-explosion-rips-lebanon-capital-beirut-2013122785524614.html> (English).

- Videos in the framework of a series titled, “During the Battles”, documenting the organization’s battles against Syrian security forces.<sup>40</sup>
- A video titled, “The Purification of the Al-Kindi Hospital in Aleppo”,<sup>41</sup> documenting the takeover of the Al-Kindi Hospital in Aleppo on December 20, 2013, in a joint operation by the Al-Nusra Front and other Islamic rebel groups, including Fajr al-Sham and the Islamic Front. In the attack, two suicide bombers blew themselves up in two trucks packed with explosive material at the hospital, killing 80 Syrian soldiers.

The Al-Kindi Hospital was considered one of the most important strategic centers in Aleppo due to its elevated location overlooking the city and its outskirts. In December 2012, Syrian security forces turned the hospital into a military outpost after which it stopped accepting patients.



**The video banner**

- During the second half of December 2013, the jihadist news agency Hemm, which tracks developments in Syria in general and the actions of Al-Nusra Front members in particular, published the following:
  - A video (No. 46) documenting the supply of dialysis machines to the Modern Medical Hospital in Deir Ezzor.<sup>42</sup>
  - A video (No. 47) documenting attempts by the organization’s Islamic Legal Council in the east to resolve disputes between Muslims.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> <https://alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>41</sup> <https://alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>42</sup> [https://twitter.com/Hemm\\_Agency](https://twitter.com/Hemm_Agency)

<sup>43</sup> [https://twitter.com/Hemm\\_Agency](https://twitter.com/Hemm_Agency)



**The video banner**

- A video (No. 48) documenting a visit to Ansar al-Din’s office in Daraa, which is involved in providing children with an Islamic education.<sup>44</sup>
- The Qatari Al-Jazeera network held the first interview of its kind with Abu Bakr al-Julani, leader of the Al-Nusra Front, conducted by Tayseer Allouni (born: 1955), a Syrian journalist for the Al-Jazeera television station. Allouni moved to Spain in 1983 and received Spanish citizenship in 1988. In 2001, he interviewed Sheikh Osama bin Laden. The Spanish government claimed that he had ties to Al-Qaeda and accused him of involvement in terrorist attacks that took place in Madrid in 2005, for which he served seven years in a Spanish prison. On January 17, 2012, he was released from prison.

In the interview, al-Julani discussed the circumstances involved in the founding of the Al-Nusra Front, terrorist attacks that his organization carried out against the Syrian regime, the state of Bashar al-Assad’s army, the future political plan for Syria, the use of violence and the act of “takfir” (the labeling of a person, group or nation as infidels), the second Geneva Conference and the political arrangement being prepared regarding Syria, and the Iran-led war between Shi’ites and Sunnis. Regarding what form the future state would take after the fall of the Assad regime, al-Julani said that the Islamic Shura Councils would meet together in order to determine how to rule the country according to Islamic law.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> [https://twitter.com/Hemm\\_Agency](https://twitter.com/Hemm_Agency)

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.net/File/Get/e453ed19-b642-46c6-ba7e-dd997656de02>

### ***The Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham: Operations in Syria***

- During the second half of December 2013, the Al-Furqan jihadist media institution published the following:
  - A video (No. 15) titled, “The Mujahideen Lion Cubs”, as part of the video series, “Messages from the Land of Battles”. The video focused on a series of interviews conducted by a member of the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham, in which he asked Syrian children questions about religion. In response, the children recited answers to the satisfaction of the interviewer. One of the children said, “Where are the mujahideen of Al-Sham and Iraq? We want jihad...We do not want to sit [idle] without doing anything...our brothers in the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham are fighting and dying as martyrs...may peace be upon you!”<sup>46</sup>



**The video banner**

- A video (No. 16) titled, “A Message to Our People in Egypt”, as part of the video series, “Messages from the Land of Battles”, documenting a speech given by Abu Muslim al-Masri, a member of the organization and judge in the Islamic court in Aleppo. In the beginning of his speech, al-Masri noted that many Muslims left Egypt after the revolution broke out on January 25, 2011, and arrived to the arena of jihad in Syria in order to strengthen their faith in Allah. Nevertheless, he emphasized that the sights of the Egyptian mujahideen were still set on Egypt because of the persecution, corruption, oppression and poverty that exist there. According to him, the main lesson to be learned

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<sup>46</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

from Egypt is that democracy in Muslim countries must be thwarted. Those who win in democratic elections are not respectable people nor are they faithful to Islam, and they will always have a stain on their reputation for cooperating with the Jews, Americans and other evil forces. He further claimed that any cleric who ruled that participation in the democratic process was legitimate according to Islam gave an incorrect ruling.

After al-Masri's speech another member of the organization spoke, this time about the importance of dawah [the preaching of Islam] and of fulfilling the commandment of jihad. At the end of the video, a member of the organization of Qatari origin, who was [later] killed in a suicide attack, called on Muslims in Qatar to join jihad and defend Islam.<sup>47</sup>



The video banner

- During the second half of December 2013, the jihadist media institution of the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham (ISIS), Al-'Itisam, published the following:
  - A video titled, "Window to the Land of Wars (Part 36)", documenting an ISIS militant teaching Syrian children how to properly fulfill the commandment to pray. No additional details were provided about the location of the instruction.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>48</sup> <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).



**The video banner**

- A video titled, “Window to the Land of Wars (Part 37)” documenting the execution of a Shabiha [a member of an armed militia working for the Bashar al-Assad regime] by a shot to the head, according to shari’a. He was killed after he asked for forgiveness for the sins that he committed during his service to the Syrian regime.<sup>49</sup>



**The execution of a Shabiha by ISIS militants in Syria**

- A video titled, “Window to the Land of Wars (Part 38)” documenting a speech given by Abu Hafs al-Qirshi, a Saudi mujahid and member of the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham. In his speech, al-Qurshi criticized the religious sages who presented the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham as a criminal [entity] that affixes explosive belts to foreign fighters in Syria without training them – in an effort to get rid of them. Even though al-Qirshi did not name names, he most probably meant the Syrian preacher, Adnan Mohammed al-Aroor, who lashed out at the organization using the same words during his program, “With Syria until Victory”, which is broadcast on the Shada Al-Huriyya

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<sup>49</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

television channel in Syria.<sup>50</sup>



**The Saudi mujahid and ISIS militant, Abu Hafs al-Qirshi**

- A video titled, “Window to the Land of Wars (Part 39)” documenting an interview with a mujahid that left Tunisia to join the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham, as well as a raid on an Iraqi police patrol in the area of Salah al-Din.<sup>51</sup>



**Photo of the ISIS mujahid**

- A video titled, “Window to the Land of Wars (Part 40)” documenting a graduation ceremony for children who completed a training course to become mujahideen. The end of the video documented an attack against an Iraqi police post in Salah al-Din.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic);

[http://www.aksalser.com/?page=view\\_articles&id=80751f23ceab0b417b0576da615fe533](http://www.aksalser.com/?page=view_articles&id=80751f23ceab0b417b0576da615fe533)

<sup>51</sup> <https://twitter.com/e3tesamo>

<sup>52</sup> <https://twitter.com/e3tesamo>



**Children dressed in military uniform after completing a training course to become mujahideen**

- A visitor to the Hanein jihadist Web forum posted a photo of a black flag with a message indicating that the Al-Nusra Front had established a military training camp named after former Al-Qaeda leader, Osama bin Laden.

During the second half of December 2013, it was published that the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham had established a military training camp in Syria named after the leader of the organization in Iraq, Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi.

This was another indication of the rivalry between the groups, largely based on the historic tensions between the leadership of Al-Qaeda Central (AQC), led by bin Laden, and the leadership of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), led by al-Zarqawi.<sup>53</sup>



**A photo showing a black flag with the writing, “Al-Nusra Front: Sheikh Osama bin Laden Training Camp”**

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<sup>53</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb/> (Arabic);  
[http://www.gulan-media.com/arabic/t\\_detail.php?section=1&id=16133](http://www.gulan-media.com/arabic/t_detail.php?section=1&id=16133);  
for further reading, see:  
<http://www.ict.org.il/ResearchPublications/JihadiWebsitesMonitoring/JWMIInsights/tabid/320/Articlsid/1231/currentpage/1/Default.aspx>

- The online jihadi workshop, Shumukh al-Islam, published a “Letter from a Prisoner (in Fatah al-Islam): From the Darkness of the Rumiya Prison”. The letter described the torture and suffering that a Salafi-jihadist prisoner from Fatah al-Islam experienced in the Rumiya Prison in Lebanon.<sup>54</sup>
- The Al-Masada jihadist media institution published a letter by Sheikh Abu Muhammad al-Tahawi, a senior member of the Salafi-jihadist movement in Jordan, in which he declared support for the mujahideen in Al-Sham and praised them for their devotion to jihad. He also called on them to preserve unity among the ranks and avoid a rift, and to beware of ruses used by the Gulf States, especially Saudi Arabia, which he claimed are trying to sabotage jihad efforts. In addition, he called on the mujahideen to reinforce jihadist propaganda and maintain the support of the civilian population to guarantee the success of the jihad project and more.<sup>55</sup>

## Lebanon

### *The Abdullah Azzam Brigades*

- The Al-Fajr jihadist media institution published an audio clip by Sheikh Sirajuddin Zurayqat, a senior leader in the Abdullah Azzam Brigades, which operates in Lebanon, regarding the suicide attack that took place at the Iranian Embassy in Beirut in November 19, 2013. On the clip, Zurayqat accused Iran of intervening in Muslim countries in order to weaken Sunni Muslims and strengthen Shi’ite Muslims at their expense, as happened in Yemen and Iraq and is happening now in Syria. According to him, the Lebanese Hezbollah organization serves as an Iranian partner focused on implementing Iran’s plan in the region; namely, to create Iranian and Shi’ite domination. According to Zurayqat, Hezbollah sends many of its fighters to battle in Syria and even to fight against Sunnis in Lebanon itself. In light of this, he emphasized that his organization, and not Israel, was the one responsible for the terrorist attack at the Iranian Embassy in Beirut, in which a senior Hezbollah commander named Hassan al-Lakis was killed. He asked, “How could the Jews have assassinated him, since he and his party [meaning Hezbollah] protect the borders and the killers of Muslims in Syria, and serve as a tool of the West in

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<sup>54</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>55</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

oppressing the Sunnis?”

Sheikh Sirajuddin Zurayqat emphasized that the attack on the Iranian Embassy was meant to send two central messages: Expel Hezbollah fighters from Syria and put an end to their actions against Muslims, and release Sunni prisoners from jail in Lebanon, especially the Rumiya Prison. Finally, Zurayqat emphasized that his organization did not intend to harm Shi’ite civilians, as per the instructions of Ayman al-Zawahiri. He added that the main target was Hezbollah and its allies fighting against the Sunnis in Syria and Lebanon. He called on Sunnis in Lebanon to be resourceful in the face of Hezbollah’s provocation and defend their honor.<sup>56</sup>



A photo of the two suicide terrorists that carried out an attack on the Iranian Embassy in Beirut

## The Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip

*Following the Egyptian military’s major operation to damage the terrorist infrastructure in the Sinai Peninsula, jihadist organizations seem to be having a hard time recovering and carrying out militant operations.*

*On December 25, 2013, the Egyptian army announced that it had thwarted a large terrorist attack that Hamas had planned to carry out against Egyptian security forces in the Sinai Peninsula using a Palestinian infiltrator.<sup>57</sup>*

## **Ansar Beit Al-Maqdas**

<sup>56</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>57</sup> <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=/2706481> (Hebrew).

- During the second half of December 2013, Ansar Beit al-Maqdas, a Salafi-jihadist group operating in the Sinai Peninsula, published the following:
  - A letter to Egyptian military and police conscripts and their families, calling on them to distance themselves from places with a military and police presence “since they are considered a legitimate target due to their war against Islam and Muslims, and due to their alliance with the infidels”. Later in the letter, the organization brought justifications from Islamic law for “takfir” (the labeling of a person, group or nation as infidels) against Egyptian military or police forces, based on sources such as the Qur’an and the Sunnah. For instance, the letter claimed that anyone who calls for the rule of shari’a can find justification for his war against others in the following chapter in the Qur’an (Surah 4, Chapter 76): “Those who believe fight in the way of Allah, and those who disbelieve fight in the way of the devil. So fight against the friends of the devil; surely the struggle of the devil is ever weak.”<sup>58</sup>
  - An announcement in which it claimed responsibility for a terrorist attack that one of its members carried out at an Egyptian security building in Dakahlia Province. Later in the announcement, the organization called on soldiers and commanders in the Egyptian army to leave “Sisi’s militias” if they want to protect their religion and their lives. According to the organization, the Egyptian regime, headed by Sisi, sanctifies war against the Prophet Muhammad and Islam, and therefore he may be killed.<sup>59</sup>

## The Maghreb [North Africa]

*In an interview conducted with Sophie Bessis, head of the Institute for International and Strategic Relations in Paris, she was said that as a result of the lenient treatment shown by the Islamist Tunisian party, Ennhada, towards jihadists, the latter used the grace period granted to them to establish a jihadist movement on the Tunisia-Algeria border, calling it a “situation never seen before in Tunisia”. Bessis added that Tunisia was hostage to the regional context and explained that as a result of the difficult situation in Libya, which is currently controlled by militias that*

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<sup>58</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb>; <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (both in Arabic).

<sup>59</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

distribute weapons via “porous borders”, there is an arc of crisis stretching from northern Africa to Somalia – via Nigeria. In addition, Bessis stated that the security situation is dependent on the political situation, and explained that things will only improve if the right government is in power in Tunisia – and not before then.<sup>60</sup>

The strategic analyst, Badra Gaaloul, also expressed concern about the situation in the Maghreb, and in Tunisia in particular. She revealed that 300 emirs (commanders) in the Ansar al-Shari’s Salafi-jihadist movement who were training in Libya had recently sworn their allegiance to the platform of the organization, and that they intended to enter Tunisia in order to establish terrorist groups. Gaaloul also emphasized that the terrorists were arriving from a number of countries, such as Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Mali, and that they had arrived in Tunisia after training in Libya. Nevertheless, Gaaloul said that “Tunisia is lucky to share its borders with a strong country like Algeria”.<sup>61</sup>

Ali Zidan, the Prime Minister of Libya, said regarding his country’s forlorn situation that “the threat the Libya is not an external danger, it is an internal danger”, and explained that the army and police force are still being formed. He also referred to the dispersion of arms in northern Libya and said that [the weapons] must be collected and disposed of.<sup>62</sup> However, according to many opinions, Libya is indeed in a very alarming situation and its residents fear that their country will turn into a new Iraq.<sup>63</sup>

In a newspaper interview conducted with the political analyst, Jamal Farhani, he emphasized that without a close relationship among the countries of the Maghreb, long-awaited stability cannot be achieved. The sociologist, Souhaila Mamouni, said that “the carpet must be pulled out from underneath the feet of the terrorist networks that exploit the poverty and vulnerability of young people in the region in order to recruit them for their criminal plans.”<sup>64</sup>

### **Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb**

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<sup>60</sup> [http://magharebia.com/en\\_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/12/16/feature-03](http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/12/16/feature-03) (English).

<sup>61</sup> [http://magharebia.com/en\\_GB/articles/awi/reportage/2013/12/27/reportage-01](http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/reportage/2013/12/27/reportage-01);  
[http://magharebia.com/en\\_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/12/25/feature-01](http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/12/25/feature-01) (both in English).

<sup>62</sup> [http://magharebia.com/en\\_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/12/17/feature-03](http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/12/17/feature-03) (English).

<sup>63</sup> [http://magharebia.com/en\\_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/12/23/feature-01](http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/12/23/feature-01) (English).

<sup>64</sup> [http://magharebia.com/en\\_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/12/26/feature-01](http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/12/26/feature-01) (English).

- During the second half of December 2013, the jihadist media institution of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), *Al-Andalus*, published the following:
  - An announcement that the Algerian Salafi-jihadist group, Protectors of the Salafi Dawah, had joined AQIM.<sup>65</sup>

“Protectors of the Salafi Dawah” was originally called the “Terror Squadron” and was one of the first Salafi-jihadist organizations to be established in Algeria during the 1990’s (1997). In the absence of activists and in light of its limited military capability, the organization was inactive for many years. In response to the publication of the announcement, the founders of the Hanein jihadist Web forum welcomed the move and expressed hope that members of the organization would fight those who conspired with the French Crusaders against “their brothers in Mali”.<sup>66</sup>
  - A video titled, “The Path to the Caliphate” by Abu Aayf al-Awrasi, a former member of the organization’s military council, in which he noted that the United States has found itself in a state of weakness and that there are many signs pointing to its decline, such as the economic crisis in which it is mired. According to him, the mujahideen have enjoyed many successes and now have the upper hand, a trend that ensures that the establishment of an Islamic caliphate is near. In addition, al-Awrasi called on Muslims to cleanse the Maghreb from the presence of Jews, to strive for the liberation of Palestine and the return of Al-Aqsa to the Muslims, and to fight against the invasion of French culture and American avarice.<sup>67</sup>

## Nigeria

- Jama'at Ahl Al-Sunnah, a jihadist organization operating in Nigeria and affiliated with Boko Haram in Africa, claimed responsibility for an attack on a military barracks in Nigeria. The attack

<sup>65</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic); <http://www.alarabiya.net/ar/north-africa/tunisia/2013/12/27/-%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B6%D9%85-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%BA%D8%B1%D8%A8.html>

<sup>67</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

took place on December 27, 2013 in the area of Bama, in northeast Nigeria, and caused heavy losses on the enemy side. The claim of responsibility was published in an official video from the leader of the organization, Abu Bakir Shikao.<sup>68</sup>

## Somalia

*The apparent trend in Somalia is that of a tense silence occasionally broken by the sporadic operations of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen.*

*On December 27, 2013, at least eight citizens, including three soldiers, were killed in a remote-controlled bomb blast in Mogadishu. The police suspected that the attack was carried out by Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen and claimed that the goal had been to strike government targets. However, so far no organization has claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>69</sup>*

*Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen opened a new Twitter account after all of its previous accounts were shut down by the network. After six hours, the new account was also removed and the organization issued a condemnation of Twitter's hostility towards it.<sup>70</sup>*

## The Indian Subcontinent

- The G.I.M.F. jihadist media institution published an announcement in three languages – Arabic, Indonesian and English – from Sawt Al-Jihad fi Nusantara, a jihadist media institution operating in Southeast Asia. In the announcement, the government of Indonesia condemned the use of force and the policy of oppression being waged against Muslims who want to implement shari'a. According to the announcement, this policy of oppression is carried out via the establishment of the National Counter Terrorism Agency and via Special Forces 88. For example, the announcement stated that Abu Qutayba Iskandar, a Muslim religious leader in Indonesia who called for monotheism and the implementation of shari'a, had been arrested and humiliated by having his beard shaved and drugs injected into his body. In light of this, the announcement called on Muslims to come to their senses and act against this oppression, and

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<sup>68</sup> <http://www.alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>69</sup> <http://uk.mobile.reuters.com/article/idUSBRE9BQ05P20131227?irpc=932> (English).

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/12/al-shabab-long-running-battle-with-twitter-2013121711271555968.html> (English).

called on the mujahideen in Indonesia to strengthen themselves, unite their ranks and carry out terrorist attacks against Indonesian government forces.<sup>71</sup>

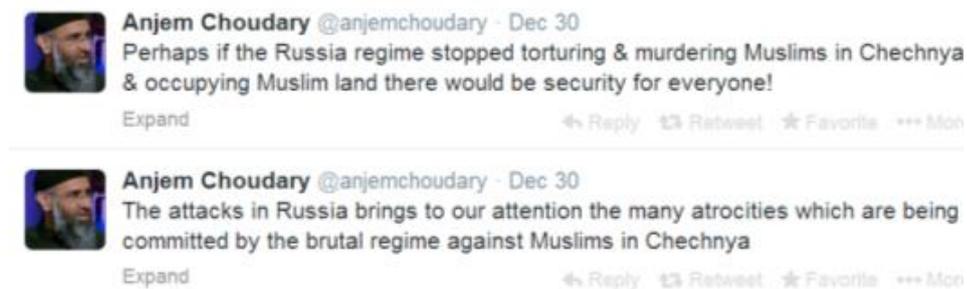
## China

- The jihadist media institution of the Turkestan Islamic Party, Sawt Al-Islam, published a video titled, “Dawah: In Honor of Jihad Operations”,<sup>72</sup> and a video titled, “Dawah: Migration for the Sake of Allah’s Path”.<sup>73</sup>

## The West

- Sheikh Anjem Choudary, a radical Islamist preacher in England, continued to use his Twitter account to accuse various governments of [implementing] policies of oppression against Muslims. During the second half of December 2013, Choudary accused David Cameron, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, and his government of fighting against Muslims and invited him to a public meeting to discuss the UK’s foreign policies against Muslims. On December 30, 2013, Choudary accused Russia of persecuting and torturing Muslims in Chechnya.<sup>74</sup>

Choudary founded the al-Muhajiroun extremist group with the militant leader, Sheikh Omar Bakri Muhammad. The group was banned in 2004 but has re-emerged under different names and in various guises. He also established the radical Islamist group, Islam4Uk, which was banned in 2010.



**Posts from Anjem Choudary’s Twitter account**

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<sup>71</sup> <https://alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>72</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>73</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>74</sup> <https://twitter.com/anjemchoudary>

## Miscellaneous

- A visitor to the Hanein jihadist Web forum announced that the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham had created another Web site called “Links” (<http://wabit.tv>). The visitor said that the new Web site distributed the publications of the organization’s official jihadist media institutions: Al-Furqan, Al-I’tisam and Ajnad, and he asked the other visitors to spread the word.<sup>75</sup>



The home page of the new “Links” Web site

- A visitor to the Al-Minbar jihadist Web forum asked for information about the stages of preparing gunpowder for the purpose of making explosive material. The visitor asked for clarification of the amounts of required materials (such as the recommended amount of ammonium chloride) and was answered, in detail, by other visitors to the forum.<sup>76</sup> One visitor posted an instruction booklet on how to prepare a bomb “in your mother’s kitchen”, which was copied from Al-Qaeda’s popular jihadist magazine, *INSPIRE*.<sup>77</sup>

## Facebook and Twitter

- On December 31, 2013, the Al-Nusra Front, Al-Qaeda’s affiliate in Syria, announced the re-opening of its official Twitter account at <https://twitter.com/JabhtAnNusrah> after it was previously shut down. In addition, it noted that the organization did not have an official Facebook account.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>76</sup> <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>77</sup> <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>78</sup> <https://twitter.com/JabhtAnNusrah>

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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.

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