

Periodical Review: Summary of Information from Jihadi Forums - The First Half of February 2013

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

- The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan vows to continue armed resistance until it has routed the occupation and the last US soldier has left Afghanistan – in 2014, US President Obama has promised.
- Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) denounces France and its allies for fighting the jihadists in northern Mali, and reminds all Muslims that it is their duty to support jihad – physically, financially, verbally and in writing.
- AQAP mufti Sheikh Ibrahim al-Rubaish congratulates extremist Wahhabist Sheikh Sulayman bin Nasir al-'Alawi on his release from a Saudi prison on December 5, 2012 after nine years of incarceration, and urges him to join the propaganda effort for the mujahideen.
- According to a senior Yemeni security officer, AQAP's position weakened in 2012: it failed to establish an emirate in Mareb Governorate, it lost its hold on much of Yemen, and many of its leaders have been assassinated.
- The war and the French presence in northern Mali continue to inflame jihadists on and off the Web, who issue threats against French targets.
- A new Salafi-jihadist group is established in Mauritania: Ansar Al-Sharia fi Bilad Sinqit.
- Increasing numbers of Ethiopian and Kenyan militiamen are leaving the Ethiopian and Kenyan Armies to join Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen.
- The Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF), affiliated with Al-Qaeda, issues a new encoding program: Asrar Al-Dardasha [The Secrets of Chatting].
- A new jihadist Web forum devoted to Iraq is launched: The Islamic Caliphate.
- Members of the jihadist Web forum Hanein denounce a document issued by the International Union for Muslim Scholars, based in Qatar, concerning the establishment of a federal Islamic caliphate.

New Publications

Ideology

- A position paper uploaded to the global jihad Web forum, Al-Jihad Al-'Alami, addressed the importance of jihad to Muslim society in light of the French incursion into northern Mali to thwart the spread of terrorist organizations there and throughout West Africa, and in light of Muslims' attitudes toward events affecting them worldwide. The author of the paper began by asking his readers a pointed question: "The French Crusader war has already begun!...Why are you not fighting?!!!". He excoriated Muslims who do not fight jihad, especially now that Muslims are being attacked in Mali. To lend his words even greater weight, the author quoted from Qur'an 9:38: "O ye who believe! what is the matter with you, that, when ye are asked to go forth in the cause of Allah, ye cling heavily to the earth? Do ye prefer the life of this world to the Hereafter? But little is the comfort of this life, as compared with the Hereafter".¹ He insisted that he was not seeking praise for his words – a common response on jihadist Web forums – but rather wished to ask his readers to be honest with themselves about their contribution to the struggle for Islam. He asked whether his readers did not in truth recognize the clear indications of the obligation to jihad; if they do not, he wrote, then "We would ask that Allah teach you religion..." He then quoted Abu Mas'ab al-Suri, a suspected Al-Qaeda militant involved in the 2004 attack on Madrid's subway system.² The writer insisted that armed jihad is the only solution for were there no jihad, the Muslims would have been overcome by enemy incursions. He quoted Abu Mas'ab al-Suri's criticisms of Muslim society, including that Muslims spend too much time arguing on the Internet and engaging in ideological polemic under the domed roofs of parliament as the enemy chips away at the foundations of Muslim society day by day, hour by hour.

The writer likened Muslim society to a house invaded in the dark of night by thieves who had killed its inhabitants and stolen their goods unimpeded, even as the adults argued points of ideology in front of their computer screens, consumed with determining the validity of one or another useless point, with exhorting a neighbor to follow the straight path. It was the young – even the very young – who were raising the alarm, pelting the thieves with rocks while their elders were engaged in these less pressing matters. The parable of the ransacked house was meant to represent the insufficient effort of Muslim society to fight off those who threatened its security.

The author then trained his criticism on Muslim clerics, whom he depicted as engaged in preaching rather than in efforts to fight the enemy or overthrow traitorous infidel

¹ Trans. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, <http://www.islam101.com/quran/yusufAli/QURAN/9.htm> (English).

² <http://www.tawhed.ws/a?a=hqkfgsb2>; <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2006/05/03/23423.html> (both in Arabic).

governments. He asked worriedly what principles of faith they thought they could pass on to the younger generation, now that foreign ideologies and heretical norms (such as women's rights) had infiltrated even the most sacred of Muslim society's institutions: the mosque. He ranted against ineffectual Muslim politicians, who were unable to wrest society from the dictates of Christian nations.

After thus castigating the clerics and politicians, the author reiterated his belief that jihad was the only solution available to Muslim society, writing, "Truly sacrifice yourself; what exactly is it you want?". Lastly, he noted that France was knocking on the portals [of Islam] – a matter of the utmost urgency.³

- The International Union for Muslim Scholars (IUMS) [Al-Ittihad Al-'Alami lil-'Ulamaa' Al-Muslimin], which is headquartered in Qatar, aspires to be the umbrella organization for Muslim scholars worldwide.⁴ During the first half of February 2013, 12 venerated scholars, some of them members of the IUMS, expressed their support for a position paper that outlined a vision for the establishment of a federal Islamic regime that would encompass several Middle Eastern Muslim countries (which were not enumerated). The position paper must be understood in the context of increasing religious radicalism in the Middle East. The Islamic federation it proposes was inspired by the Muslim empire established by the caliphs who succeeded the Prophet Muhammad. The following ideological and operative aspects of the federation were outlined in the position paper:

1. Formulating theocratic policy: Muslim public discourse is concerned in part with the rule of Islamic law. The paper proposed that public fatwas [religious-legal rulings] be issued by theological committees, which would meet in the presence of politicians, ulamaa' [scholars] and other experts; these fatwas, arrived at through consensus and taking various sensitivities into account, would constitute a comprehensive religious-legal response to all issues.
2. Municipal and economic structure: The territory of the federation would be divided into provinces, based on the historic precedent set by the Prophet Muhammad and the righteous caliphs who, by appointing governors to head provinces, were able to rule a broad expanse of Muslim territory. Based on this precedent, the paper proposed that Medina [Al-Madina Al-Munawarah] be the capital of the federation, which would be headed by a caliph [Al-Khalifah] who would lead the entire Muslim Nation. The paper suggested that the governors be made responsible for the welfare and rights of the federation's residents, who would be expected to show loyalty to the caliphate. Charity [zakat] and public property would be used for the benefit of provincial residents, with any excess

³ <http://aljahad.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁴ <http://www.iumsonline.net/ar> (Arabic).

entering the coffers of the central authority, to be used as instructed by the late Prophet (e.g., donations for the poor).

3. Mechanisms of government: The caliph would not wield power as a despot or tyrant. He would appoint governors, who in turn would enjoy the latitude to appoint provincial functionaries and clerks. Under the watchful eye of the caliph, and with guidance from experts in economics and finance, these clerks would manage monies. The caliph himself would be responsible for security and seeing that justice was done. In the proposed federation, the people would be united around faith, rituals, feelings and fidelity, leading to political accord and obeisance.
4. The relationship between security and unity: The unity of the Islamic world was presented as a matter of security, and as a Qur'anic injunction to be implemented by every means possible. The dependence of security on unity is posited by theological, and not political, discourse, which should be drawn on lest anyone claim that the caliphs are encouraging divisiveness within the Islamic federation. The paper noted that some of the world's stronger regimes also follow the proposed federal model (e.g., the US, Malaysia).
5. Opposition to the federal regime: Any opposition to the caliph, the federal government or the rule of law – as expressed in fatwas, for example – would be considered divisive to the Muslim Nation. Islam allows for political discourse on any matter, as long as it does not contradict the spirit of the Qur'an and Sunna. The position paper noted the negative implications of unauthorized fatwas.
6. Support for Iraq: The proposed federation would be pan-Islamic; as such, all Muslims would be guarantors for each other, and the federation would support the demands of the oppressed Sunnis in Iraq, who have been fighting the Shi'ite-majority regime for some time for their rights. However, the ulamaa' [scholars] would have to exercise particular caution in issuing fatwas on political-religious matters not approved by a theological committee.⁵

Islamic discourse is full of opinions opposed to this vision of a caliphate or federation.⁶ In this context, visitors to the jihadist Web forum Hanein, for example, expressed serious concern about the fate of Iraq, including the danger of dividing the country and relinquishing strategic territories such as greater Baghdad in order to create a Sunni enclave that would be part of the proposed federation. Some wrote that while the establishment of a Sunni territory independent of Shi'ite Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki is an exalted goal, abandoning lands that are part of Sunni heritage would only strengthen the Shi'ite alliance

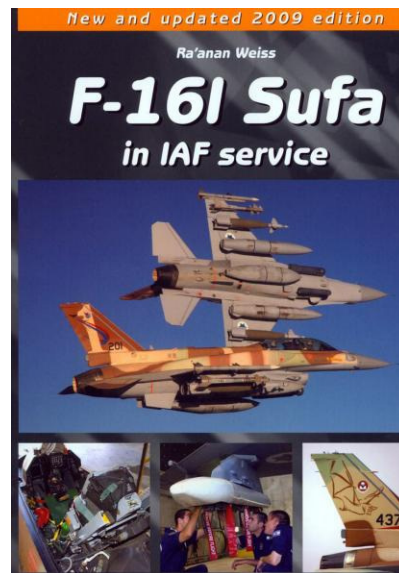
⁵<http://www.iumsonline.net/ar>; http://www.qu.edu.qa/ar/sharia/faculty_administration.php (both in Arabic).

⁶<http://www.ahlalanbar.net>; <http://www.haqnews.net> (both in Arabic).

between Iraq and Iran. One visitor to Hanein wrote that such an idea was a Shi'ite-Zionist-American plot to weaken the Sunnis in Iraq. Another forum visitor wrote that while he neither favored nor opposed an Islamic federation, he saw those who had signed the position paper as representing themselves alone. Moreover, he wrote, they are affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, which tends to act for its own aggrandizement.⁷

Guidebooks and Instruction Pamphlets

- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum Shumukh Al-Islam published a guide on the tanks used by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).⁸ Another forum visitor posted a translation of the technical specifications of the F-16I airplane used by the Israel Air Force (IAF).⁹



An English translation of a guide to one of Israel's premier fighter jets

- As part of an online course called "Defenses", a prominent contributor to the military section of the jihadist Web forum Shumukh Al-Islam who goes by the name Al-Irhabi [The Terrorist] posted several guidebooks dealing with the IDF and various of its weapons. For example, he posted instructions for using anti-tank missiles, rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) launchers, and Katyusha rockets.¹⁰ He also posted information about vehicles like the Hummer, which are used by the IDF to transport soldiers.¹¹

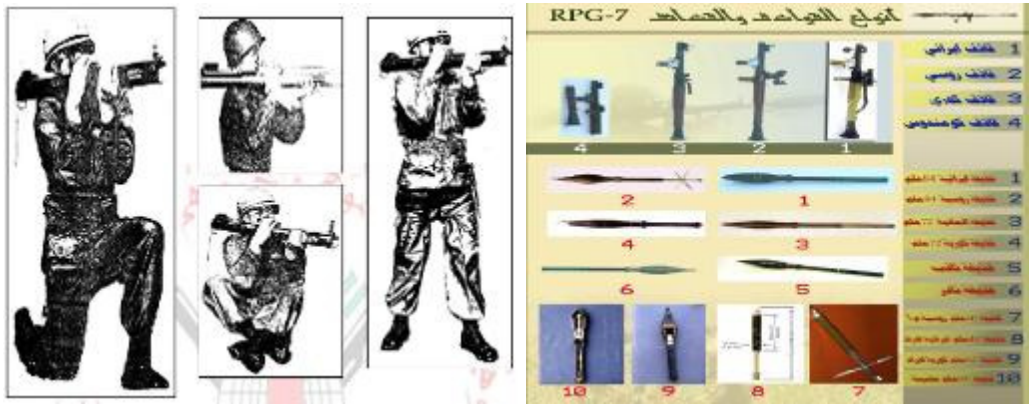
⁷ <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁸ <http://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁹ <http://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

¹⁰ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

¹¹ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).



How to recognize and fire an RPG from a shoulder-launcher

- On February 7, 2013, the Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF), which is affiliated with Al-Qaeda and other jihadist groups, published a guide to encoding messages transmitted by computer, titled *Asrar Al-Dardasha [The Secrets of Chatting]*.¹²



Promoting the Myth of the Martyr

- The virtual workshop sponsored by jihadist Web forum Shumukh Al-Islam announced the publication of a series of biographies commemorating Muslim martyrs and immortalizing their deeds during jihad against Islam’s enemies. The first biography, written by “a Sunni mujahid being held in a Shi’ite prison”, concerned Badr ‘Ashuri Abu Maysara Al-Maghrabi, a young man from Casablanca who had lived in Europe for some time. According to the biography, Al-Maghrabi later went to fight with the Islamic State of Iraq, Al-Qaeda’s affiliate in Iraq. After a year and a half contributing his extensive knowledge and experience to the Islamic State of Iraq, Al-Maghrabi was captured, imprisoned and tortured by US forces. Ultimately, he was executed by order of the Iraqi Ministry of Justice.¹³



“From the Biographies of the Martyrs: Badr ‘Ashuri Abu Maysara Al-Maghrabi”

¹² For more information, see the report of the ICT’s Cyber-Desk for March 2013.

¹³ <http://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum Al-Fida uploaded a video clip of a Kuwaiti citizen named Khalid Hadi Al-Dihani, who was killed in Syria at age 23 in an exchange of fire with Syrian security forces in Deir Al-Zour. Al-Dihani had been fighting with the Al-Nusra Front since December 2012, and purportedly had commanded the Homran Al-Nawather Company. His brother, 'Abd Al-'Aziz, was also reported killed while fighting jihad in Iraq.¹⁴



The martyr Khalid Hadi Al-Dihani

- A prominent contributor to jihadist Web forum Shumukh Al-Islam wrote a lengthy eulogy for a Cairene named Muhammad 'Abd Al-Majeed Mahraz, who had been fighting jihad against the regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria. Mahraz, age 27 at his death, had previously practiced law. He arrived in Syria in late January 2013 and within weeks, on February 12, was shot by a sniper while attempting to destroy a Syrian tank with a group of mujahideen.¹⁵



Lawyer and jihadist 'Abd Al-Majeed Mahraz

¹⁴ <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

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

Magazines

- The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan published the latest issues of its magazines in Arabic, English and Urdu, which cover the jihad in Afghanistan: Issue No. 82 for February-March 2013 of the Arabic-language magazine *Al-Sumud* (56 pp.);¹⁶ Issue No. 49 for January 2013 of the English magazine, *In Fight* (186 pp.);¹⁷ and two magazines in Urdu: Issue No. 50 for February 2013 of *Nawai Afghan Jihad* (71 pp.)¹⁸ and Issue No. 11 of *Shariat* (52 pp.).¹⁹



Clockwise, from l. to r.: The latest issues of *Nawai Afghan Jihad*, *Al-Sumud*, *Shariat*, and *In Fight*

Reports from the Field

Afghanistan-Pakistan

Early February was an active time for jihadists in Pakistan and Afghanistan. At the beginning of the month, UK Prime Minister David Cameron laid out a plan for combating

¹⁶ <http://alsomod-iea.info> (Arabic).

¹⁷ <http://ansar1.info> (English).

¹⁸ <http://nawaiafghan.blogspot.co.il> (Urdu).

¹⁹ <http://theunjustmedia.com> (Web site in English).

the Taliban after the UK and US have withdrawn from Afghanistan, in 2014. For now, jihadist Web sites continue to feature videos of the beheading of Afghani soldiers.

- The Unjust Media, a Web site associated with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, published a statistical abstract for January 2013 (22 pp.) summarizing all of the group’s military activities for that month, the casualties and property damage sustained by it and its enemies, and a map of the location and type of attacks it perpetrated. The site also published a three-page newsletter describing the alleged war crimes of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, NATO and the US.²⁰



The litany of Western crimes and jihadist triumphs published on The Unjust Media Web site

- The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan published an announcement regarding a statement made by US President Barak Obama on February 12, 2013 promising the withdrawal of 34,000 US troops from Afghanistan. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan took this opportunity to warn Western countries to extricate themselves from this protracted war, which had done so much damage to the US and other countries: thousands of soldiers had been killed and wounded, millions of dollars had been spent, the economies of the countries occupying Afghanistan had collapsed, and their peoples were living in poverty. According to the Emirate, the solution to the problem of Afghanistan is to fully end the occupation and leave the Afghanis to rule their own land. It added, “As long as there is even one soldier in our land, we will fight to ensure the security of our people”.²¹

²⁰ <http://theunjustmedia.com> (English).

²¹ <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

- A letter published during the first half of February 2013 by the Afghan-Taliban, titled "The Islamic Emirate" [Al-Imarah Al-Islamiyya], stated that for some time now, significant effort had been invested in destroying the good name of the Taliban by depicting them as opposed to education, disrespectful of human rights in general and women's rights in particular, and unable to bring peace to the citizens of Afghanistan.²²

According to the Taliban, such accusations are baseless and originate among those who are fighting the Taliban to the death. Of late, these detractors had begun to spread new lies about the Taliban, by forging warning letters to foreign governments ostensibly by prominent Taliban leaders, these detractors hoped to obtain political asylum. The Taliban ascribed this behavior to Afghanistan's deplorable economic state, which forced its needy citizens to act in despicable ways – such as selling their children for money – to improve their quality of life. The American conquerors who had dismantled the Islamic Emirate were also making false claims – for example that they had invested many dollars in Afghanistan during their time there so that it would flourish, when in fact that had invested in themselves alone. This is evidenced by the abject poverty of Afghanistan's citizens, which will no doubt persist even after the US leaves; Afghanistan's young people try to secure false papers so that they can travel to other countries, even by the most dangerous means.

The Taliban strongly denied the accusations against them, insisting that their unthreatening Islamic message was one of respect for Afghans of all ethnic groups. Jihadist revolution was merely opposition to the American occupation of Afghani lands; this revolution would be necessary until all citizens of Afghanistan could live honorably under an Islamic government.²³

- During the first half of February 2013, Umar Media, which functions under the auspices of the Pakistan-Taliban, published the following:
 - On February 9, 2013, a propaganda video in Urdu titled, "The Raid of India – Malakand Division".²⁴ The video documents the military engagement and battles of the Pakistan-Taliban against the Pakistani Army, including the detonation of bombs and the execution of captives. In the video, Hakimullah Mehsud, emir of the Pakistan-Taliban, spoke of Aafia Sadiqi, an American of Pakistani descent who is incarcerated in the US for supporting and engaging in terrorism.

²² <http://www.annabaa.org/nbanews> (Arabic).

²³ <http://aljahad.com/vb> (Arabic).

²⁴ <http://ww.jhuf.net> (Urdu).

- On February 14, 2013, a video clip titled, "Tears of Joy: Storming Bannu Prison and Releasing All Muslim Prisoners".²⁵ The video documents the liberation of Islamists from Pakistan's Benon Prison.
- An item published on the Al-Jihad Al-'Alami Web forum related that Sheikh Khalid Al-Hussainan Abu al-Kuwaiti, a leader of Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan,²⁶ was killed during an American attack in Pakistan. Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri reacted strongly to news of his comrade's death, warning the US that Al-Qaeda would continue to fight it. He added that the mujahideen of Al-Qaeda "love death as much as US soldiers love alcohol".²⁷



Al-Jihad Al-'Alami lauds the martyr Khalid Al-Hussainan Abu al-Kuwaiti

Iraq

Sectarian unrest was continuously in the headlines in early February. Mutual exchanges of violence included the explosion of some eight car bombs in Baghdad and, for the first time in years, the bombing of an important oil pipeline. It should be noted that most of the participants in the current unrest in Iraq are local, as the arena becomes increasingly less attractive to foreign jihadists.

- During the first half of February 2013, the Islamic State of Iraq published the following:
 - A report documenting 44 military actions in Anbar Province in November 2012 and 13 additional military actions in September-October 2012.²⁸
 - A report documenting 36 military actions in Diyala Province in November 2012 and three additional military actions in October 2012.²⁹
 - A report documenting 43 military actions in southern Iraq in December 2012.³⁰

²⁵ <http://bab-ul-islam.net> (inaccessible without a password).

²⁶ <http://www.alyaum.com/> (Arabic).

²⁷ <http://aljahad.com/vb> (Arabic).

²⁸ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

²⁹ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

- A report documenting 69 military actions in Kirkuk Province in December 2012.³¹
- The jihadist media outlet Al-Battar published a video clip titled, "Iraq, Iraq...People of the Sunna".³²



A banner advertising the video clip, "Iraq, Iraq..."

- The jihadist media institution Al-Ansar, which functions under the auspices of Ansar Al-Islam, published a video clip titled, "I Cried Out (Part 2): Has Anyone Heard??! The Rabi'a Suicide Attack: Assistance to Our Free Sisters in the Land of Two Rivers [Iraq] and Syria".³³ The video documents the execution of Shi'ite Iraqi security personnel captured by Ansar Al-Islam, and a suicide attack perpetrated by Ansar Al-Islam in cooperation with the Islamic State of Iraq. In the attack, a booby-trapped car was driven into a government building in Mosul.



The banner for the video clip "I Cried Out (Part 2)..."

- An item appearing on the jihadist Web forum Hanein indicated that an Iraqi branch of the Shi'ite group Hezbollah had declared the establishment of a regional militia named Jaish Al-Mukhtar. The task of the militia would be to enforce the government's struggle against corruption, and to fight the tendency of Al-Qaeda and

³⁰ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

³¹ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

³² <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

³³ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

one of its local offshoots, Al-Jaish Al-Iraq Al-Hur [The Free Iraq Army] to exploit popular demonstrations to undermine the central government.

The item noted that Jaish Al-Mukhtar had no intention of interfering in the demonstrations of the Sunni minority in Iraq, which had proliferated in recent weeks as that minority attempted to protest what it saw as Shi'ite oppression.³⁴ Instead, Jaish Al-Mukhtar would attempt to prevent terrorist groups from exploiting these protests for their own ends.

Although this would appear to be a reasonable attempt at self-defense by the Shi'ite government – a response to multiple incidents of violence perpetrated by a plethora of Sunni groups against Shi'ites and against the government – it may be assumed that this new militia will actually provoke clashes between Sunnis and Shi'ites.³⁵

- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum Snam Al-Islam reported the launching of a new jihadist Web forum devoted to jihad in Iraq: The Islamic Caliphate, <http://dawlat-alkhilafa.com/vb/index.php>.³⁶



The logo of the new Web forum, The Islamic Caliphate

The Arabian Peninsula

- During the first half of February 2013, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) published the following:
 - Announcement No. 58³⁷ calling France's interference in Mali a "Crusader war against Islamic states and their residents". This aggression is unsurprising, as it reflects the anti-Islamic policy of France, which prides itself on its democracy even as it tramples the rights of the Muslims, for example by passing a law prohibiting women from wearing a niqab [face veil]. France would come to rue its aggression in Mali, which would provoke attacks against French citizens: "AQAP advises the government and people of France to abandon this hostility and focus on their own deteriorating economy and internal problems, rather than adding to their difficulties. Learn a lesson from the fate of the US", which sacrificed many victims in Iraq and Afghanistan.

³⁴ <http://bit.ly/Xwr2dC> (Arabic).

³⁵ <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

³⁶ <http://www.snam-s.net/vb> (Arabic).

³⁷ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

Muslims cannot sit idly in the face of this aggression, but must help the Muslims in Mali to fight France and its allies.

- Announcement No. 59,³⁸ denying reports in the Arabic-language press that AQAP intends to establish a political party that participates in the democratic party system.
- Announcement No. 60,³⁹ denying reports in the media that the Yemeni Army had conquered Wadi Dhaiqa in the Al-Mahfad District of Abyan Governorate.
- Announcement No. 61,⁴⁰ criticizing the Yemeni regime for signing agreements on the export of gas and petroleum. Only the Yemeni people can decide what to do with the natural resources of Yemen; any agreement not made in their name is dubious. It is therefore imperative to establish an independent council of right-minded Yemeni citizens who will oversee the management of the country's natural resources, independent of the Yemeni government.
- Announcement No. 62, criticizing France's intervention in Mali and its Crusader war against the Muslims there. In light of this aggression, AQAP insisted the following:
 1. All Muslims must aid the Muslims in Mali, financially and physically.
 2. This is an even greater obligation for Muslims who live near Mali, in France and in the countries aiding it in this war.
 3. The ulama' [scholars] must spur the Muslims to wage jihad in Mali: the fate of the French conqueror in Mali is akin to the fate of the Israeli conqueror in Palestine.
 4. All Muslims, including imams [prayer leaders], must engage in propaganda or da'wa [missionary work] for their brothers in Mali.
 5. The freedom the West preaches is false, it is an illusion, as evidenced by the West's intolerance of Muslims who wish to live according to shari'a [Islamic law].
 6. The campaign being led by France against those who wish to implement shari'a is no excuse for abandoning the law of Allah and accepting manmade law in its stead. Every Muslim must cleave to shari'a and declare jihad against those who would prevent him from doing so.⁴¹
- AQAP mufti Sheikh Ibrahim al-Rubaish sent a letter to Sheikh Sulayman bin Nasir al-'Alwan, a popular Saudi Arabian Salafi-jihadist. Al-Rubaish commends al-'Alwan on

³⁸ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

³⁹ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁴⁰ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁴¹ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

his release from prison, and asks him to join the effort to burnish the reputation of the mujahideen, which has been besmirched by their enemies.⁴²

- On February 12, 2012, the Saudi daily *Okaz* published an interview with a senior Yemeni security officer, who discussed AQAP. According to the officer, AQAP has been pushed out of most of its bases of power in Yemen. The following points were made by the Yemeni officer:
 - AQAP has lost its hold on most areas of Yemen – for example, it has been pushed out of Marib and Abyan Governorates.
 - What is left of AQAP's hold on the country remains in Wadi Abida in Marib Governorate; this is the site from which it launches attacks.
 - Ninety-four percent of AQAP's leaders in Abyan have been killed, and others have gone into hiding in Abyan, Shabwa and Al Bayda'. In 2012 alone, 460 members of AQAP were killed.
 - The majority of AQAP's leaders are drug dealers.
 - AQAP's attempt to establish an Islamic emirate in Marib Governorate has been thwarted by a tribal alliance and by the efficacy of Yemeni security forces.
 - Cooperation between Yemen's Shi'ite minority – the Houthis – and Al-Qaeda is exacerbating the Shi'ite threat.⁴³

This news should be read cautiously, since it reflects a deliberate intent to discredit AQAP as losing the war against the Yemeni regime.

- During the first half of February 2013, visitors to the jihadist Web forum Hanein posted aerial photographs of a US Air Force base located deep in Rub' Al-Khali [The Empty Quarter] of southeastern Saudi Arabia, on the border with Yemen. The photographs purportedly came up during an Internet search made using the search engine Bing.⁴⁴



An aerial photograph of a US Air Force base in southeastern Saudi Arabia, from the jihadist Web forum Hanein

⁴² <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁴³ <http://www.okaz.com.sa/new/Issues/20130212/Con20130212572228.htm> (Arabic).

⁴⁴ <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum alplatformmedia quoted an item from the new Yemeni portal <http://www.barakish.net>, according to which AQAP had attacked Zinjibar in Abyan Governorate on February 2, 2013, with the intention of capturing the coastal city of Shuqrah. AQAP fighters reached the coast between Zinjibar and Shuqrah by boat.⁴⁵

Al-Sham [Greater Syria]

During the first weeks of February 2013, numerous articles reported an influx of North American jihadists into Syria; most of them apparently joined the Al-Nusra Front, an Al-Qaeda-affiliate that is fighting the regime of Bashar al-Assad. The burgeoning of Sunni Islamist groups in Syria has implications for neighboring countries such as Iraq, whose Sunnis are encouraged and ideologically motivated by the drive of Syria's Sunnis.

- During the first half of February 2013, the Al-Nusra Front, a branch of Al-Qaeda in Syria, published the following:
 - Announcement Nos. 210-242 taking responsibility for several military activities against Syrian security targets.⁴⁶ For example, Announcement 236 takes responsibility for three suicide attacks at a security facility in Homs on February 6, 2013.



The plan for breaking into the security installation in Homs

- An announcement thanking all those who help disseminate the Front's publications. However, the Al-Nusra Front asked people not to distribute unofficial materials on the Internet or, if they did, to state outright that the materials were unofficial, if sympathetic. The Front made clear that Shumukh Al-Islam and Ansar Al-Mujahideen are the official platforms for its publications. In addition, the Front published the code of the Al-Manara Al-

⁴⁵ <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁴⁶ <http://www.jalnosra.com/vb> (Arabic).

Bayda media outlet for use with the computer message encoding program, Asrar Al-Mujahideen.⁴⁷

- A video clip titled, “The Beginning of the End – Part 6”, documenting several suicide attacks against members of the Syrian regime as revenge for the massacre of Al-Mastuma village in Idlib Province.⁴⁸



“The Beginning of the End – Part 6”

- The Al-Jihad Al-'Alami Web forum announced the establishment of the Echo of Al-Sham Media Outlet [Mu'asasat Sada Al-Sham] which, as of February 2013, will function under the auspices of the Salafi-jihadist Jund Al-Sham [Army of Al-Sham] as its official mouthpiece. According to the leader of Jund Al-Sham in Homs, Abu Suleiman Al-Muhajir,⁴⁹ the Echo of Al-Sham will publish opinion pieces, periodic reports, updates on events in Homs, in particular, and in the Levant in general. However, if the new media outlet did not meet its obligations to Jund Al-Sham, the latter would dissociate from it.⁵⁰



The logo of the new media outlet, Echo of Al-Sham

⁴⁷ <https://shamukh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁴⁸ <http://as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

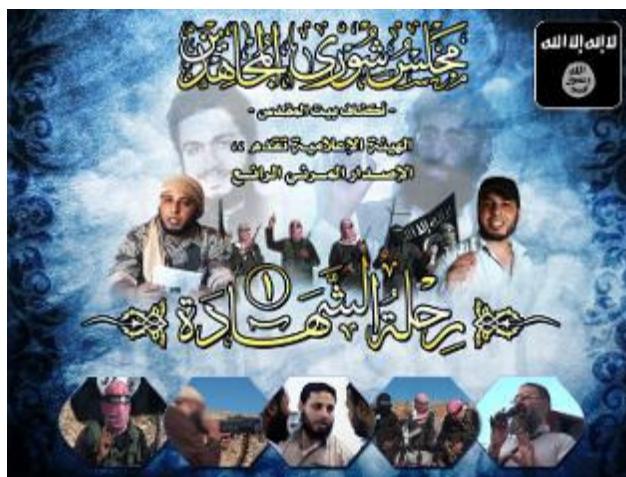
⁴⁹ <http://www.arabi-press.com> (Arabic).

⁵⁰ <http://aljahad.com/vb> (Arabic).

The Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip

Egyptian authorities continued to intercept weapons transfers in the Sinai Peninsula, which were believed to be headed for terrorist groups there or in the Gaza Strip.⁵¹ The continuation of these shipments illustrates the limited control Egypt has over the Sinai Peninsula, despite its efforts: the Sinai has become a weapons conduit for militants there and in the Gaza Strip.

- The Shura Council of the Mujahideen in the Environs of Jerusalem published a video clip titled, "Journey to a Martyr's Death: Part 1". The video describes indoctrination in jihad, through the legacy of an Egyptian terrorist named Khaled Slah Abd Al-Hadi Jadallah who together with another Egyptian terrorist crossed the border into Eilat, Israel on June 18, 2012 and murdered an Israeli citizen who was employed constructing the border fence there.⁵²



The banner advertising the video clip, "Journey to a Martyr's Death: Part 1"

Africa

The Maghreb [North Africa]

Following a terrorist attack on an oil field in Algeria in mid-January 2013, authorities in North Africa have bolstered security along their borders, and especially at oil and gas sites. The transnational nature and modus operandi of Al-Qaeda-linked organizations there and in the Sahel have compelled countries in the region to improve their cooperation and intelligence sharing, and have kept local authorities on high alert.⁵³ The Al-Qaeda affiliates captured during the Algerian attack in January revealed that additional

⁵¹<http://www.timesofisrael.com/egypt-foils-smuggling-attempt-of-2-tons-of-explosives-weapons/> (English).

⁵²<http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁵³<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/02/north-africa-oil-attacks.html> (English).

terrorist plots exist against oil and gas fields in Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and other countries in the region.⁵⁴ According to the plotters, the attacks are retaliation for the French military operation in Mali.

In Tunisia, the ruling Islamist party dissolved the government in an attempt to calm massive public protests following the assassination of a well-known opposition leader. Concern has arisen that Salafist militants may exploit the atmosphere of tension to further compromise security.⁵⁵ Some analysts have speculated that the slain opposition leader's strong condemnation of Islamists may have provoked homegrown jihadists.⁵⁶ According to experts, Tunisia remains one of the largest exporters of jihadists per capita – an observation strengthened by increasing reports that members of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) can be found among those fighting in Syria.⁵⁷

- Ansar Al-Sharia in Tunisia declared the launching of its new Web site and forum: <http://ansar-ashariaa.com>, and <http://www.ansar-alsharee3a.com/>.



The opening page of Ansar Al-Sharia in Tunisia's new Web site

- Asnar Al-Sharia in Tunisia published a video clip via the Web forum Hanein, which documented its members distributing hot meals to garbage collectors in the middle of the night.⁵⁸
- The jihadist media outlet Al-Bayareq, which functions under the auspices of Ansar Al-Sharia in Tunisia, published an interview with Sheikh Abu Iyad Al-Tunisi, the group's leader. In it, Al-Tunisi clarified that no one from of his group had joined jihad in Syria; in fact, he criticized this trend. The Salafists in Tunisia wished to remain there and engage in da'wa [missionary efforts] for Islam.⁵⁹ However, Al-Tunisi's comments contradict reality: reports indicate that some 40% of the foreigners who have joined

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/06/us-tunisia-politics-idUSBRE9150B820130206> (English).

⁵⁶ <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/02/14/experts-tunisian-government-unable-to-stop-jihadists-from-heading-abroad/> (English).

⁵⁷ http://al-shorfa.com/en_GB/articles/meii/features/2013/02/15/feature-01 (English).

⁵⁸ <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

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

jihad in Syria have Tunisian citizenship.⁶⁰ Moreover, the official Facebook page of Ansar Al-Sharia in Tunisia lauds Tunisian mujahideen who are fighting to rout Bashar al-Assad.



Emir of Ansar Al-Sharia in Tunisia, Abu Iyad Al-Tunisi

Mali

French forces continued to pursue Al-Qaeda-linked Islamist rebels in the mountainous areas of northern Mali, after having driven them out of urban centers and other strongholds. Intermittent suicide and other attacks throughout Mali stoke fears⁶¹ that the swiftness of the French offensive may be creating a security vacuum in towns that have been retaken by French troops and are set to be guarded by a larger African force that is still mobilizing.⁶² In one incident, a Malian soldier was injured in a suicide bombing near the city of Gao only days after it was taken from Islamist rebels by French forces. Increasing concerns over continued rebel attacks may force the French to rethink their plans for a quick handover of control to African and Malian forces.⁶³

One Algerian journalist reported that the lack of state control in northern Mali, the presence of the so-called “Crusader aggressor” (France) there, and the large flow of arms from Libya have made North Africa a jihadist breeding ground.⁶⁴

- The war raging between France and its allies against terrorist groups in Mali continues to concern visitors to the jihadist Web forum Hanein. An opinion piece posted on the site in early February compared the fighting in Mali to that in Afghanistan in 2011, as if to emphasize the negative effect of the West on the positive attributes of the territories under Muslim control.

The opinion piece claimed that the French incursion was generating infrastructure for the illicit trade in drugs (whose use is prohibited by Islam). This is similar to what

⁶⁰ <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/03/tunisian-jihadists-syria.html> (English).

⁶¹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/08/us-mali-rebels-idUSBRE91708I20130208> (English).

⁶² <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/08/us-mali-rebels-idUSBRE91708I20130208> (English).

⁶³ <http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21571451-french-may-have-stay-bit-longer-they-wish-battle-moves> (English).

⁶⁴ <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/security/2013/01/algeria-attack-shows-unprecedented-rise-of-militants-in-sahel.html#ixzz2LuZjh0FV> (English).

happened in Afghanistan under US occupation, despite Taliban successes in containing the drug trade. According to this article, the US victory over the Taliban had also been reflected in changes in the Afghani lifestyle: women had been able to remove the face veils that the Taliban had obligated them to wear, men had been able to shave their beards, and cinemas and radio stations had again opened. A similar scenario was recurring under the “Crusader onslaught” on Mali.

The piece averred that removal of the burka [full shroud] and niqab [face veil] and the shaving of beards were Crusader jabs at the heart of Muslim society, as if to show “who was boss”. Furthermore, this loathsome message was supported by The Union of Scholars of the Muslim Brotherhood [Ittihad ‘Ulamaa’ Al-Ikhwān Al-Muslimīn] headed by Yusuf al-Qaradawi and the Muslim Brotherhood in Tunisia and North Africa, which supported the [French] invasion of Mali financially, and by issuing misleading fatwas [religious-legal rulings].⁶⁵

According to the article, now that the Muslims’ appearance had changed, Malian Army soldiers had begun beating visibly observant Muslims, sometimes to the point where they drew blood. For example, in the city of Diabaly, an elderly Muslim was attacked for wearing a traditional Muslim garment.⁶⁶ The Islamist press agency Al-Haq, which is identified with global jihad, published photographs by Turkey’s Anatolian press agency showing hundreds Malian refugees fleeing Timbuktu for the border with Mauritania because of the crimes committed by the Malian Army, which was collaborating with French forces.⁶⁷

In a video clip posted on Hunein, Abu Mas’ab ‘Abd al-Wudud, the leader of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), sent a pointed message to the foreign forces on Malian soil, saying that the Muslims must be left to solve their own problems.⁶⁸



Scores of Malians flee Timbuktu for the Mauritanian border

- A visitor to the Web forum [alplatformmedia](http://alplatformmedia.com) posted an item from the Algerian daily *Al-Nahar*, according to which members of Al-Tawhid wal-Jihad in West Africa had

⁶⁵ <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁶⁶ <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁶⁷ <http://alplatformmedia.cim/vb> (Arabic).

⁶⁸ <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

captured 150 rough-terrain vehicles and intended to use them against the French and Malian forces that were continuing to pound northern Mali. According to *Al-Nahar*, the armed group aspired to turn Mali into a second Afghanistan – that is, to mire the French Army in a labyrinthine crisis. *Al-Nahar* reported that the leadership of Al-Tawhid wal-Jihad had decided to fight the French using booby-trapped cars rather than on in the battlefield, because of the uneven balance of power. The majority of attacks against the French Army were occurring in cities under the control of the armed Islamist militias such as Al-Qaeda and Al-Tawhid wal-Jihad, which France sees as terrorist groups.⁶⁹

- Given the fighting in Mali, a visitor to the Web forum alplatformmedia appealed to Muslims everywhere to aid and support the mujahideen in Mali and thereby fulfill the commandment to jihad. The effort led by France and supported by Europe, the US, and other forces of evil was impelling the Muslims to use every the means at their disposal. The contributor noted exactly how to help the Muslims in Mali:
 - Pray fervently that Allah grant the mujahideen victory.
 - Hasten to offer practical and moral aid.
 - Make other Muslims aware of the situation.
 - Form an opposition force comprising all those fighting financially, militarily, and through the media.⁷⁰
- The Facebook page Mali Is Muslim featured a videotaped interview, in French, with a Muslim fighter of Senegalese extraction who had heeded the call of clerics and come from France to northern Mali to participate in jihad. The fighter warned the French Army to remove its forces from Mali.⁷¹



A Senegalese French Muslim fighting with the mujahideen in Mali

- Sheikh al-Qaradawi, one of the most popular and influential scholars in the Muslim world today, spoke out vehemently against what he termed the “inane and destructive behavior of extremist Islamists in northern Mali”, saying that they had

⁶⁹ <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁷⁰ <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁷¹ <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=215134545296638&set=vb.308411035945893&type=2&theater> (Arabic and French).

provoked France into attacking the region, caused scores of casualties, and threatened all of the local Muslims.

In response, visitors to the jihadist Web forum Hanein denounced the Sheikh. One of them distorted his name to form an epithet: Qaradaka Allah, "may Allah destroy you", adding "and may He smite you in Hell, neglect and humiliate you, just as you have abandoned the Muslims and the mujahideen". Another forum visitor retorted, "What do you expect [of al-Qaradawi]? Praise be to Allah that he at least has not accused [the mujahideen] of heresy and collaboration with France...". The first contributor responded to the second by writing that although al-Qaradawi is no hypocrite, he nevertheless deserved to be humiliated.

A third contributor added that it was appropriate to call al-Qaradawi "al-qiradawi" – that is, "the monkey". Calling him "the mufti of the White House", this contributor added that he remembered well al-Qaradawi's Islamic-legal rulings [fatwas] on the imperative of volunteering for the Iraqi Police Force during the US presence in Iraq – a harbinger of evil.⁷²

Yet another contributor to Hanein noted that 90% of the scholars of Islam were evil and in fact had abandoned Islam, "decorated" it with lies, and distanced themselves from the pure Islam of the Prophet Muhammad. Al-Qaradawi was not the only Muslim scholar who had gone astray; in fact, most of the scholars of this generation had joined the army of the great Satan, fawning on the countries of the Sykes-Picot Agreement (that is, Britain and France).⁷³

Mauritania

- During the first half of February 2013, the jihadist Web forum Hanein featured an announcement of the establishment of a new Salafi-jihadist group in Mauritania named Ansar Al-Sharia fi Bilad Sinqit. This represents an expansion of Salafi-jihadist activity deeper into western Africa. The announcement purportedly emanated from the civilian prison in Nouakchott,⁷⁴ and was signed by a Salafi-jihadist prisoner named Abu Ayub al-Mahdi.



"Declaration of the birth of Ansar Al-Sharia in the City of Sinqit"

⁷² <http://www.qaradawi.net/fatawaahkam/30/1326.html> (Arabic).

⁷³ <http://www.janein.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁷⁴ <http://tawary.com> (Arabic).

Aby Ayub al-Mahdi also praised Islamic values, and stated that the new group would liberate the Muslim Nation from the wars plaguing it from the east and west.

The new group described at length its attitude toward the West, which it claimed had declared war on anyone who wanted to implement Islamic law [shari'a], as well as on Islam itself and its leaders, preachers, and revered departed Prophet. This war had been for naught, however, because the believers were returning to the fold, ending Western intervention in the internal affairs of the Muslims. Moreover, the new group would fight these "Crusader wars", which had been raging since the overthrow of the caliphate, first in Sinqit and starting on February 11, 2013 (the date of the announcement), until history had seen the (re)imposition of Islamic law or all of the group's members died trying. The group rallied the Muslims of Mauritania to under the tutelage of Muslim scholars, and asked them to inflame the feelings of their fellow Muslims.⁷⁵

Interestingly, one day after the publication of this announcement, a contradictory announcement was posted on Hanein, which stated that the first announcement had been false. In addition, Salafi-jihadist prisoners being held in Nouakchott refuted the first announcement and rejected all ties to the new group. One visitor to Hanein outdid himself by directing readers to the Facebook page of Ansar Al-Sharia in Tunisia, where the first announcement had also "miraculously" been posted. Another forum contributor stated that announcements like the first one only helped the Mauritanian government by giving it a good reason to torture Salafist prisoners and prolong their incarceration. He doubted the validity of the first announcement, asking what good could possibly come from a group of people in prison.

Another contributor disagreed, stating that the first announcement had in fact been credible and posting links to position papers and newspaper articles that ostensibly proved his point.⁷⁶

Egypt

- President Mohamed Morsi recently declared his intention to establish a civil, equal and democratic state, rather than a theocracy. In response, the jihadist Web forum Hanein published a letter expressing pan-Islamic sentiment. The letter, addressed primarily to the Muslim Brotherhood but also to Muslims at large, stated: "This letter is from a Muslim to his Muslim brothers...it is not from a cleric, a philosopher or a politician, [but rather] from a member of the Muslim public". The writer then discussed the state of Egypt since the "January 25th Revolution", explaining his reasons for wanting to see an Islamic theocracy established.

⁷⁵ <http://hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁷⁶ <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

First he noted that Egypt's Muslims had the historic right to a theocracy, because they were descendents of the sahabah [the companions of the Prophet] and of Banu Kinanah, an ancient Arab tribe that had taken an active part in the Islamic conquest and, according to tradition, had settled in Egypt (and elsewhere). The writer expressed his belief that it was up to the Muslim residents of Egypt to determine the nature of their state, given that their ancestors had helped conquer it and had lived there ever since.

The writer added that the true nature of the "January 25th Revolution" was religious, because it had emanated from the mosques and not from "the lairs of secular political parties". Nevertheless, he noted, the revolution had taken on a civil-democratic cast once it hit the streets, because it had given the people an opportunity to experience what seemed like a "breath of free air". Many citizens had hoped that the revolution would finally liberate them from the oppressive policies of Hosni Mubarak and his predecessors; yet in fact, they were prey to the same tyranny as before.

The writer then exhorted Egypt's Muslims to fulfill their duty to promote a theocracy: the only thing that would prevent Egypt from falling into the hands of minorities (secular people, Copts, homosexuals) and agents of pre-Islamic ignorance. In indicating what he felt was the correct plan of action, the writer quoted Qur'an 47:7: "O ye who believe! If ye will aid (the cause of) Allah, He will aid you, and plant your feet firmly".⁷⁷

In the writer's analysis democracy is not an option in a country inhabited by Muslims because democracy is inherently secular, and it is inconceivable that a Muslim would relinquish his religion. Moreover, the "democratic" regimes in the Arab world have been shown to be despotic, such that there is no reason to revert to democracy – in fact, it was this that the revolution came to protest. Even if democracy has positive attributes, such as election of the leader, he added, Arab democracies forbid this, and in actuality each political party strives to satisfy its own interests.

The writer concluded by stating that the "revolution of the peoples" [the "Arab Spring"] had created a golden opportunity to fight the secular regime. Woe to the Muslims who did not avail themselves of it! Since believing Muslims are a majority in Egypt, they must not surrender their right to impose shari'a [Islamic law] as the law of the land. Any small problems by Islamist groups and ulama' [scholars] can be overcome by requiring Muslim citizens not to blindly follow any political leader. One visitor to Hanein asked other visitors to disseminate this letter on every Egyptian Web forum.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Trans. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, <http://www.islam101.com/quran/yusufAli/QURAN/47.htm> (English).

⁷⁸ <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

Sudan

- On February 1, 2013, the Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF) and the Al-Hajiratoun media outlet published a video clip titled, "Breaking the Bonds 2". The clip documents the escape of four mujahideen from a heavily-guarded prison in Khartoum. The prisoners had been accused of attempting to assassinate an American diplomat named John Granville and his driver in Khartoum on January 1, 2008.⁷⁹ Part 1 of the video clip was published on jihadist Web forums on December 28, 2012.



A banner announcing a video featuring the daring escape of four mujahideen from a Khartoum prison

Somalia

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) maintains control over the country's cities, but Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, which has sworn allegiance to Al-Qaeda, maintains a presence in rural areas, where it continues to stockpile weapons and from which it continues to launch guerilla-style attacks and suicide bombings in Mogadishu and other cities.⁸⁰ According to UN monitors, arms distributed by Somali networks with ties to Yemen and Iran are ending up in Al-Shabab strongholds in southern Somalia.⁸¹

- Ethiopia and Somalia have long been engaged in a struggle against Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, an Al-Qaeda ally that threatens the Horn of Africa. According to an item posted on the jihadist Web forum Hanein by Wikalat Al-Anba' Al-Islamiya – Haq, members of state militias have begun defecting to Al-Shabab and other terrorist groups. For example, 78 Ethiopian and Kenyan militiamen who had been fighting to contain terrorism in Gedo Province, Somalia, recently joined the ranks of the Islamists – even though some of them are Christian. The Ethiopian government has

⁷⁹ <http://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁸⁰ <http://dawn.com/2013/02/11/shebab-suicide-bomber-kills-four-in-central-somalia/> (English).

⁸¹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/10/us-somalia-arms-un-idUSBRE9190E420130210> (English).

consequently increased its forces by some 120 men in the adjacent Bay and Bakool Provinces.



The Somalia-Ethiopia-Kenya border and the provinces where a struggle is raging between Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen and the militias of the three states

The plethora of defections has roused frustration in the Ethiopian Army, which has ordered that any soldier leaving an Army camp without notice is to be shot. The item claimed that the increased percentage of soldiers and militiamen defecting to the Islamists is the result of poor salary and harsh treatment. Apparently, Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen teaches the defectors the fundamentals of Muslim faith, and gradually trains and indoctrinates them until they have “repented” – after which they are allowed to join the Islamic faith as true “brothers”.⁸²

⁸² <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).



Members of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen (standing, with faces covered) welcome defectors from militias in the Horn of Africa

- Al-Kataeb, a media center affiliated with Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, published a video clip titled, "A Tour of the Beaches of Shabelle Province, in Brawa City".⁸³



The banner for a video clip published by Al-Kataeb

- On February 1, 2013, the Muslim Youth Center (MYC), an offshoot of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen in Kenya founded in 2008, reported that mujahideen fighting in far-flung arenas of jihad had succeeded in receiving the MYC's news in Arabic, on the jihadist Web forum Ansar Al-Mujahideen. The emir of the MYC, Ahmad Iman Ali, was very moved by this information.⁸⁴ Ali, who had previously been active in Somalia, had been authorized by Al-Shabab to head the MYC.

The Caucasus

*Suicide bombings targeting police and other officials and perpetrated by Islamist militants continued to plague Chechnya and Dagestan.*⁸⁵

- The jihadist media outlet Echo Kavkaz published an article titled, "The Revolutions of Russia and Substantive Challenges", by Muhammad Aal Muhammad.⁸⁶ According to Aal Muhammad, the Islamic Emirate of the Caucasus had developed a great deal during 2012, most significantly in fulfilling the hope, first expressed in 1997, of moving the battle from Chechnya to Dagestan. This had been tried unsuccessfully in

⁸³ <http://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁸⁴ <http://themovingcaravan.tumblr.com/post/42017288216/for-immediate-release-myc-news-goes-arabic> (English).

⁸⁵ <http://en.ria.ru/crime/20130215/179475765/Six-Suspected-Militants-Killed-in-Dagestan-Operation-----html> (English).

⁸⁶ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

1998-1999, at which time the mujahideen had retreated to Chechnya. Aal Muhammad reviews the changes in the region:

- In 2009, Russia reduced its forces in Chechnya to some 75,000 soldiers.
- Russia had been forced to rescind emergency law because its economy was in crisis.
- In 2012, Russia moved 25,000 soldiers from Chechnya to Dagestan.

According to Aal Muhammad, two of the Caucasus states, Nogais and the Karachay Circassian Republic, were strategically located. In fact, Hitler had hoped to use them to cement his conquest of the Caucasus and block the Russians from ever returning. For 300 years, the Russians had plundered and killed in the region, forcing millions to emigrate from the northern Caucasus in general and from Nogais and Circassia in particular. Consequently, the local tribes still hated Russia and pined for their homeland. Aal Muhammad added that Russia was doing its utmost to maintain security, because it is slated to host the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi – the site of a Russian massacre of Circassians. Russia hopes to eliminate the mujahideen before the beginning of the Winter Olympic Games. At the same time, Russia's transfer of more than 25,000 soldiers from these areas to Dagestan, despite the importance of Nogais and Circassia, indicates that the situation in Dagestan is deteriorating. Moreover, the movement of jihadist groups to the forests of Idal-Ural has led Russia to concede its incompetence in confronting the mujahideen. Aal Muhammad described the current composition of the leadership of the Caucasus Emirate:

1. Long-time, prominent leaders who fought in Chechnya and devised the strategy for the Caucasus war.
2. Active commanders, Islamic-legal clerics and scholars renowned in Russia.
3. Young recruits.

According to Aal Muhammad, the Russian opposition has begun to believe the ideology of the Caucasus Emirate. In addition, Russia is losing its political and strategic allies in Europe, Tajikistan, and Libya and is struggling to keep alive another ally: the Syrian regime. The escalation of tension in the Caucasus Emirate has forced Russia to reduce its aid to Syria, under the guise of "a plan to withdraw from Syria". Aal Muhammad noted that Russia is again facing events similar to those that preceded the fall of the Soviet Union. Moreover, the war in the Caucasus echoes the Soviet war in Afghanistan in its depletion of Russia's economy and natural resources, its fomenting of divisiveness, and the falling away of allies – all of which may yet cause the Russian state to crumble. Aal Muhammad therefore advises [the jihadists] to remember how fruitful it was to cooperate with the Soviet opposition. Such a

recollection will frighten the Russians – especially if the Caucasus Emirate openly proposes dialog with the opposition, with the aim of toppling the [Russian] regime.⁸⁷



The cover of the article by Muhammad Aal Muhammad, showing a map of Russia

- The propaganda department of Dagestan Province reported that a car booby-trapped with 120 kilograms of TNT was driven into a security checkpoint in Khasavyurt, killing four Russian security personnel and injuring six collaborators.⁸⁸ Dagestan, which has a Muslim-majority population, is considered one of the most violent areas of the northern Caucasus, and the site of multiple terrorist attacks against Russian security forces.



A photograph of three of the Russian security personnel killed in the attack in Khasavyurt

- A rally convened by Muslims in the Republic of Dagestan, in sympathy with the suffering of the Muslims in Syria, was documented on video and uploaded to the jihadist Web forum Hanein. The bulk of the rally was taken up by a speech promoting Salafi-jihadist values and the establishment of an Islamic caliphate to the exclusion

⁸⁷ <http://www.alplatfrommedia.com> (Arabic).

⁸⁸ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

of all other forms of government and the implementation of Islamic law [shari'a]. The video clearly showed banners associated with Al-Qaeda and other Islamist terrorist groups.⁸⁹



Dagestani Muslims rallying in support of the Syrian people

These images are consistent with media reports received during early February of violent clashes between the Russian Army and Muslim opposition forces in the northern Caucasus, in general, and Dagestan, in particular. This conflict has claimed the lives of tens of fighters on both sides during the past two years.⁹⁰

Iran

- Sheikh Abu Hafs al-Balushi, leader of Ansar Al-Iran, asked the Sunni population of Baluchistan in southern Iran, where it is a majority, to take up arms and choose violence to stanch Iranian oppression once and for all.⁹¹

The West and Elsewhere

- The Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF) published a hymn in German titled, "The Ummah [Muslim Nation]", by a German Muslim named Abu Azzam al-Almani, a member of the German Salafi-jihadist group Millat Ibrahim, which has been declared illegal. The hymn exhorts to jihad and prays for the destruction of Germany and the deaths of German Chancellor Angela Merkel and US President Barak Obama.⁹²

⁸⁹ <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁹⁰ <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁹¹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6m1PETRMDrs> (Arabic).

⁹² <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).



The banner for a hymn in German extolling the virtues of jihad

- As the fighting in northern Mali continues, threats against France continue to appear with some frequency on jihadist Web forums. In a thread begun on January 21, 2013 on Ansar Al-Mujahideen, forum frequenters urged terrorist attacks inside France in retaliation for the war in Mali. For example, one forum contributor encouraged Muslims to commit individual acts of terrorism against various targets in France; he even went so far as to propose a detailed plan for interfering in France’s public transportation system – especially its railways. Such acts require no expertise or financial investment, and the risk of being caught by French security forces is nil. Another contributor suggested blowing up dams throughout France; he even posted detailed maps showing their location. Later in the thread, this same contributor suggested destroying Western edifices, especially diplomatic installations such as French embassies.⁹³



A map showing the location of a dam in France – a proposed target of attack

⁹³ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

Miscellaneous

- *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*, an Arabic-language daily published in London, noted that on January 27, 2013, Turkish intelligence agents arrested Sulaiman Jasem Abu Ghaith, Al-Qaeda spokesman and son-in-law of the group's former leader, Osama bin Laden.⁹⁴

Formerly a citizen of Kuwait, Abu Ghaith was expelled from Iran in January 2013 after spending some time under house arrest and apparently crossed the border into Turkey on a faked Saudi Arabian passport. However, according to the Turkish Islamic Web portal Takva Haber, it was actually Iranian Intelligence that had spirited Abu Ghaith across the border. Thanks to cooperation between US and Turkish Intelligence, Abu Ghaith was arrested at a luxury hotel in Ankara by the counter-terrorism unit of the Turkish Police.

Abu Ghaith was born in 1965. As a young man, he fought the Soviets in Afghanistan and belonged to the Kuwaiti branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, until it entered politics. He married four women, fathered six children, and taught Islamic law and preached in Kuwait. In 1994, he left Kuwait to fight the Serbs in Bosnia – and act that caused Kuwaiti authorities to remove him from his post as a teacher and cleric. It seems he joined Al-Qaeda in 2000, at which time he married a daughter of Osama bin Laden.

Abu Ghaith is thought to have been a member of Bin Laden's inner circle and one of the strategic planners of the attacks of September 11, 2001. According to American counter-terrorism expert Tom Lynch, during his time in Iran Abu Ghaith helped send monies to Al-Qaeda and transport mujahideen to Pakistan and Iraq and, perhaps, Yemen.⁹⁵



Sheikh Sulaiman Jasem Abu Ghaith

⁹⁴<http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=1&issueno=12485&article=715534&feature>
(Arabic).

⁹⁵<http://www.takvahaber.net/dunya/abu-ghaith-bugun-hakim-karsisina-cikiyor-h3847.html>
(Turkish).

- On February 15, 2013, the jihadist media outlet Al-Sahab published a sermon by Khalid Al-Hussainan Abu al-Kuwaiti, which was delivered during Eid al-Fitr in August 2012.⁹⁶
- Salafi-jihadist Sheikh Hani al-Sibai, the head of the Al-Maqrizi Center for Research in London, announced the opening of a weekly online course on the popular chat forum PalTalk, beginning on February 2, 2013.⁹⁷ The course will address the Islamic principle of al-wala wal-bara, which posits universal fealty among Muslims but renunciation – if not denunciation – of anything or anyone who is not Muslim or who strays from Islam.



Sheikh Hani al-Sibai announces an online course in al-wala wal-bara

Facebook and Twitter

- On February 1, 2013, the Ibn Taymiyyah Media Center declared the expansion of its Internet communications, including the launching of an official Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/bentymia.center>. As of March 2013, the page had received 4,800 “likes”. Ibn Taymiyyah also announced that it had begun a Twitter feed, at <http://twitter.com/bentaymia>, and a blog at <http://bentaymia.tumblr.com>. The media center also made available an access code to Asrar Al-Mujahideen, an encoding program that enables Web surfers to communication with each other and jihadist sites.⁹⁸



Ibn Taymiyyah announces its expanded presence on social networks

- On February 9, 2013, Ansar Al-Sharia in Tunisia launched a Facebook page – which was removed by Facebook administrators in March 2013.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁹⁷ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁹⁸ <http://www.alfidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁹⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/ansar.shari3a.touness> (Arabic).



A banner bearing the Facebook url for Ansar Al-Sharia in Tunisia

- On February 1, 2013, the Muslim Youth Center (MYC), a Kenyan offshoot of Somalia's Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, issued a warning to its supporters who have Facebook pages. The MYC warned of the worrisome tendency of "infidel" intelligence agencies to access the old Facebook accounts of mujahideen, as a means of infiltrating their ranks in Somalia and Kenya. The MYC urged its supporters to avoid revealing identifying information to chat partners who pose as mujahideen.¹⁰⁰
- On February 4, 2013, Somali Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen launched a new Twitter feed in English, at <https://twitter.com/HSMPRESS1>.¹⁰¹



The logo of the English-language Twitter feed of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen

- Anjem Choudary, a prominent Salafi-jihadist preacher in London, used his Twitter feed to accuse Benedictus XIV, who abdicated his pontificate in February 2013, of insulting the Prophet Muhammad. Choudary insisted that Benedictus be tried before an Islamic court.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ <http://themovingcaravan.tumblr.com/post/42016236088/for-immediate-release-facebook-security-warning> (English).

¹⁰¹ <http://www.wacaal.com/ururka-al-shabaab-oo-shabakadda-twitter-ka-ka-furtay-bar-cusub/> (English and Somali).

¹⁰² <https://twitter.com/anjemchoudary> (English).



anjem choudary @anjemchoudary

Feb 11

Pope Benedict XVI will be remembered by us for insulting the Messenger Muhammad (saw) for which he should stand trial before a Shariah Court

[Expand](#)

Anjem Choudary laces into the previous Pontiff on Twitter