Periodical Review: Summary of Information from the Jihadi Forums

The First Half of March 2012

This report summarizes notable events discussed on Jihadi Web forums during the first half of March 2012. Following are the main points covered in the report:

- Given what he calls the Iranian-Shiite conspiracy to attack and take over Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Abu Sufyan Al-Azdi Al-Shari, the deputy head of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), urges Sunnis to wage jihad against the Shiite population of Saudi Arabia.

- Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) takes responsibility for assassinating an American military intelligence officer in Aden, Yemen.

- Ansar Al-Sharia declares Shabwa Province the Islamic Emirate of Yemen.

- Ahmad Faruq, Al-Qaeda's head of the propaganda department of Al-Qaeda in Pakistan, calls for jihad against the Pakistani Army. He confirms the death of Ilyas Kashmiri, the operations officer of Al-Qaeda in Pakistan.

- *Al-Balagh*, a new jihadist magazine that focuses on events in Syria, is published.

- *Majlat Al-Salafiyya*, a new electronic Tunisian Salafi-jihadist weekly, is published.

- Leading jihadist forums embark on a massive campaign advocating Ansar Al-Sharia in Yemen.

New Publications

Ideology

- The jihadist public relations group Nukhbat Al-Ilam Al-Jihadi [The Best of Jihadist Propaganda] published an article by Sheikh Muhammad bin Mahmud Al-Bahtiti, also known as Abu Dujana Al-Basha, titled, "The Mosques of the Preachers". In it, Abu Dujana Al-Basha refers preachers to a compendium of Qur'anic verses, which may be used as a spiritual guide or ethical code of conduct.[1]

- The jihadist media institution Al-Fajr published an article on the life of "Muhammad, Messenger of Allah", written by Sheikh Atiyyah Allah, a senior member of Al-Qaeda who was killed in a drone strike in August 2011. Atiyyah Allah also addressed the status of women in Islam, categorically denying that Islam oppresses women, as the religion's detractors claim. The article itself appears to have been written on January 27, 2006.[2]

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Malahem, which functions under the auspices of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), published a book titled, "The Word on the Oneness of God: Its Virtues, Conditions, Truth, and Foundations", by Hanith bin Ghazi Al-Nazari, who is also known as Muhammad Al-Murashidi.[3]

- As part of a series of publications titled "Lessons for Ramdan", the jihadist media outlet Al-Sahab published an audio file titled, "Hidden Dangers", by Sheikh Khalid Al-Husaynan Abu Zayd Al-Kuwayti, a Salafi-jihadist sheikh from Kuwait.[4]

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Masadah published an article by Sheikh Abu Saad Al-Amili, titled "The Essence of Things: Part Six". In it, Al-Amili stresses the importance of aiding and advocating for the mujahideen.[5]

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Malahem, which functions under the auspices of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), published an audio file titled, "Do Not Tend Toward the Oppressors" by Sheikh Abu Sufyan Al-Azdi Al-Shari, AQAP's second-in-command. In it, Al-Shari urges Sunni residents of Saudi Arabia to oppose the Shiite population, which is concentrated in the south of the country. According to Al-Shari, the recent clashes in the Qatif Region,

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[1] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[2] http://www.alfidaa.info/vb (Arabic).
[3] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[4] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[5] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).

which is home to a large Shiite minority, were fomented and backed by Iran, which wishes to attack Saudi Arabia and strike at the heart of Sunni Islam. Al-Shari sees this as justification for attacking the country's Shiites. Al-Shari also appeals to Sunnis to join the jihad in Yemen.[6]

Abu Sufyan Al-Azdi Al-Shari exhorts Saudi Sunnis to attack Shiites

- The jihadist media institution Al-Masadah published a book containing a collection of questions posed to Sheikh Abu Al-Fadl Umar Al-Hadushi, a Moroccan Salafi-jihadist recently released from a Moroccan jail. The questions are posed indirectly, through Sheikh Abu Yusuf Al-Urdun, a Jordanian Salafi-jihadist sheikh. Abu Yusuf Al-Urdun was formerly a student of the prominent Jordanian Salafi-jihadist Sheikh Muhammad Al-Maqdisi, who is currently serving a prison sentence in Jordan. The questions themselves concerned issues arising during imprisonment, such as the appropriate behavior of a prisoner toward prison authorities.[7]

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Masadah published a recording of a lecture delivered by Sheikh Mamun bin Abd Al-Hamid Hatm titled, "Who Is the One Who Knows?"[8]

- Gharib Al-Ikhwan, a senior contributor to the jihadist Web site Al-Fida, published an article he wrote titled, "The Oppressive Ruler: The Fall of Democratic Liberalism and the Rise of Islam". Al-Fida's administrators gave the article prominence.[9]

- The jihadist media center Markaz Ansar Al-Ilam published a video clip intended to be viewed only by Shiites, according to an accompanying written explanation. The video clip criticizes the actions of Shiite religious leaders,

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[6] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[7] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[8] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[9] http://www.alfidaa.info/vb (Arabic).

claiming that the latter are blinding and deceiving the Shiite Muslims, exposing them to invalid beliefs. The video clip urges Shiites to awaken from their ignorance and turn to Sunni Islam, which is the accurate, authentic religion.[10]

Strategy

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Yaqin published the seventh book in the series, "How to Gain Knowledge for Propaganda", titled, "Toward a Theory of Islamic Propaganda".[11]

Guidebooks and Instruction Pamphlets

- Al-Busyro Islamic Forum, an Indonesian jihadist Web forum, translated a guide to building bombs into Indonesian.[12]
- Al-Murasilun, a jihadist public relations group with a prominent presence on Facebook, published a guide to common errors in firing rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs). The guide also appeared on various jihadist Web forums.[13]

Common errors in firing RPGs
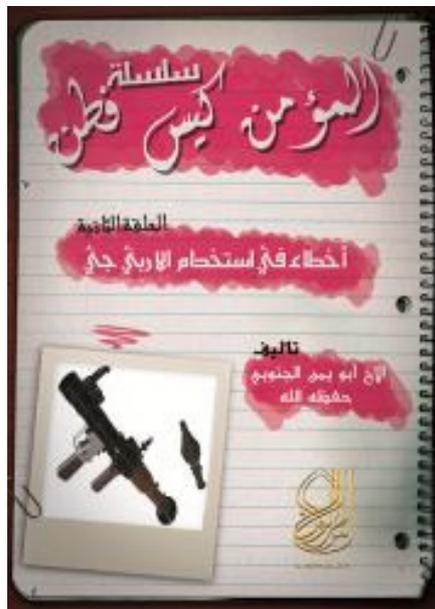
[10] http://snam-s.net/vb (Arabic).
[11] http://shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[12] http://shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[13] http://shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).

Magazines

- The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan published new issues of jihadist magazines in Arabic, English and Urdu, which focus on jihad in Afghanistan: issue 70 for March 2012 of the Arabic-language magazine *Al-Somood*;[14] issue 38 for March 2012 of the English-language magazine *In Fight*;[15] and a new issue in Urdu for March 2012 of the magazine *Nawai Afghan Jihad*.[16]
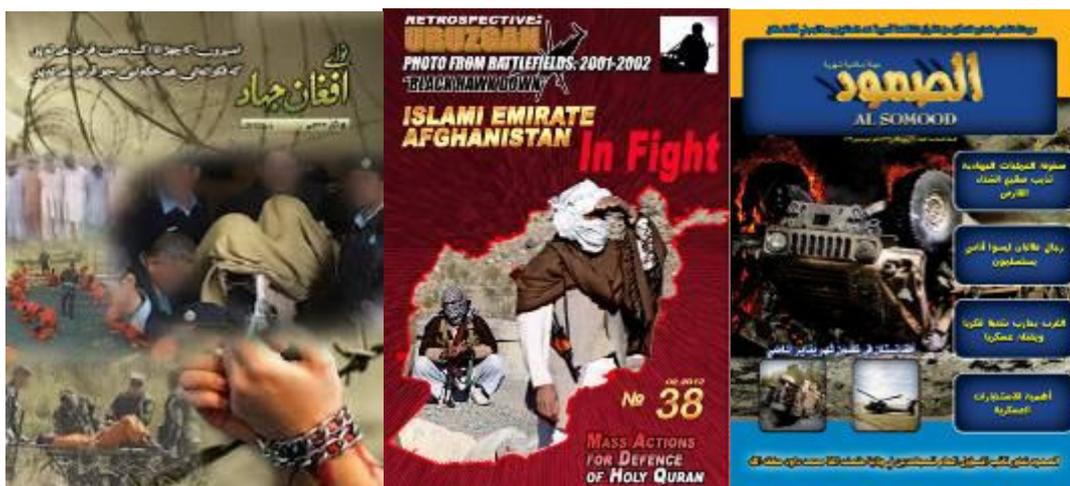
New issues of, from left to right, *Nawai Afghan Jihad*, *In Fight*, and *Al-Somood*

- A Tunisian Salafi-jihadist electronic weekly titled *Majlat Al-Salafiyya* began publication in late February, on Facebook. (The first issue appeared on February 26, 2012 and the second on March 3, 2012.) The weekly contains jihadist content, anti-American and anti-Israeli messages, and praise for Salafi-jihadist leaders such as Sheikh Muhammad Al-Maqdisi, a senior Salafi-jihadist from Jordan. The foreword to the weekly states that it is devoted to fighting secularism to "the death".[17]

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[14] http://shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[15] http://ansar1.info/ (English)
[16] http://nawaiafghan.blogspot.com (Urdu).
[17] http://www.facebook.com/Salafia.News (Arabic).

The covers of the first two issues of the Tunisian Salafi-jihadist weekly *Majlat Al-Salafiyya*, which appears on Facebook

Reports from the Field

Afghanistan-Pakistan

- The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan published a statistical abstract for February 2012 (IEA: Statistics Report [*sic*] for February 2012) citing the number of attacks carried out by Emirate members throughout Afghanistan, and both Emirate and enemy casualties.[18]

- The Pakistani Taliban published a video clip in Urdu titled, "The Persecution of the Pakistani Government and Army".[19]

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Sahab published a two-part video clip about the army and government of Pakistan.[20]

- Ahmad Faruq, head of the propaganda department of Al-Qaeda in Pakistan, featured prominently on the Internet during the first half of March, courtesy of the jihadist media outlet Al-Sahab. The latter published a eulogy delivered by Faruqon the death of Badr Mansur, a senior military commander of Al-Qaeda. Among other activities, Badr Mansur had helped recruit soldiers, and maintained contact with other jihadist organizations, among them the Pakistani Taliban. Mansur was killed in a drone strike in North Waziristan. Similarly, Faruq confirmed the death of Ilyas Al-Kashmiri, operations officer of Al-Qaeda in Pakistan, who was assassinated in a US air strike in South

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[18] http://ansar1.info/ (English and other languages).
[19] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (arabic).
[20] http://www.alfidaa.info/vb (Arabic).

Waziristan, apparently in June 2011. Faruq criticized Pakistan for being complicit in the deaths of innocent civilians, tribal leaders and mujahideen by letting the US fly drones over Pakistan. In Faruq's eyes, the Pakistani Army and the US are one and the same. Further, in a video clip in Urdu titled, "The Cry of the Qur'an", Ahmad Faruq urged mujahideen to embark on jihad and take revenge on the Americans and their allies, whose soldiers in Afghanistan had defaced the Qur'an.[21]

A eulogy for Badr Mansur

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Emara Jihadi Studio, which functions under the auspices of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, published a translation into Urdu of a video clip titled, "To the Puppet Karzai and American Terrorist Government Before You Talk See the Realities of Afghanistan: Capturing a Crusader Base in the Province of Nuristan".[22]

Iraq

- The issue was raised of Sunni prisoners being held by Shiites in Iraq. The Sunnis, most of whom are awaiting execution, are imprisoned under harsh conditions. Surfers mitigate for action on their behalf, or at least for an increased awareness of their plight. One surfer on the Web forum Hanein reported that attempts to free the prisoners had so far been unsuccessful.[23]

- On March 4, 2012, the Islamic State of Iraq announced that six of its members had used a "special method" to escape from a prison in the Al-Saydiya neighborhood of Baghdad on January 24, 2012, and had returned safely to the mujahideen in the field. It is possible that this official announcement was delayed to protect the escaped prisoners.[24]

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[21] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[22] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[23] http://hanein.info/vb (Arabic).
[24] http://hanein.info/vb (Arabic).

- The Islamic State of Iraq posted the number of terrorist attacks it had carried out in Baghdad (43),[25] Salah Al-Din Province and northern Baghdad (31),[26] and Diyala Province (63).[27]

- A Web surfer, apparently from Iraq, listed practical steps for impeding the Arab summit slated to be held in Baghdad at the end of March. He appealed to mujahideen to interfere with the summit, in retaliation for the crimes of Iraq's Shiite government, and for Arab leaders' ineffectuality regarding the situation in Syria. Among his suggestions were to infiltrate the ranks of the security guards at the summit; fire rockets or rocket-propelled grenades from near or far; conduct a suicide attack; collaborate [in nefarious deeds] with summit participants; assassinate [prominent participants]; plant mines; detonate bombs using a cell phone. Another Web surfer reported that the summit would last only three hours, and would be held at Baghdad Airport. He added that the US was pressuring Arab leaders to hold the summit, in its bid to lend Al-Maliki's Shiite government legitimacy.[28]

The Arabian Peninsula

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Malahem, which functions under the auspices of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), published an interview of Sheikh Fajd Al-Quso Al-Awlaqi, a senior member of AQAP who is on the FBI's list of wanted terrorists.[29] Al-Awlaqi used the interview, conducted by a journalist, to address the status of AQAP in Yemen, AQAP's future plans, and US involvement in Yemen.

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[25] http://shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[26] http://shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[27] http://shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[28] http://hanein.info/vb (Arabic).
[29] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).

Fahd Al-Quso Al-Awlaqi

- During the first half of March, the jihadist press agency Madad, which functions under the aegis of Ansar Al-Sharia, published newsletters Number 10, 11, 12, and 13,[30] which cover recent developments in Yemen.

Madad Newsletter Number 11

- During the first half of March, the jihadist press agency Madad, which functions under the aegis of Ansar Al-Sharia, published parts five,[31] six[32] and

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[30] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).

seven[33] of the video clip, "Viewing an Event", which survey recent developments in Yemen. For example, Part Six covers the funeral of Abd Al-Mun'im Al-Qahtani, an Ansar Al-Sharia commander killed in an American bombing in Abyan Governorate.

- Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) took responsibility for the assassination in Aden on March 1, 2012 of an American intelligence officer whose movements the group had followed for some time. The assassination was perpetrated in the wake of the recent influx of US soldiers into Yemen, which has changed the political situation. AQAP exhorted Muslims in Yemen to wage jihad against the Americans, whom it claims are plotting to take over and plunder Yemen. AQAP also expressed its view that the current situation obligates the ulaama [religious scholars] to issue a religious ruling [fatwa] ordering the faithful to fight the Americans.[34]

- Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) published an announcement detailing its attacks on Yemeni forces and installations, using mines and booby-trapped cars, in Abyan, Hadramawt, Baida'a and Sana'a between March 2-4, 2012.[35]

- A woman member of the jihadist Web forum Al-Fida reported that the Yemeni group Ansar Al-Sharia, an offshoot of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, had declared Shabwa Province the Second Islamic Emirate of Yemen. Last May the group declared Zinjibar in Abyan Governorate an Islamic Emirate.[36]

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Malahem, which functions under the auspices of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), expressed condolences on the death of Sheikh Muhammad Al-Hanq after an illness. Al-Hanq was considered a senior commander of Arhab on March 4th in the Emirate of Waqar in Abyan Province.[37]

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[31] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[32] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[33] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[34] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[35] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[36] http://www.alfidaa.info/vb (Arabic).
[37] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).

The late Muhammad Al-Hanq, a senior leader of AQAP

- Sheikh Abu Saed Al-Amili, a prominent contributor to jihadist Web forums, wrote in support of Yemen's Ansar Al-Sharia, given the offensive against the Muslim nation, particularly in the Arabian Peninsula. He iterated the importance of the region, and of the jihad being waged by Al-Qaeda and Ansar Al-Sharia. He noted the enemy struggle against the group's expansion in Sana'a and environs, but expressed his certainty that the group would prevail against its Crusader and Shiite enemies. Al-Amili urged religious leaders and scholars to highlight the importance of the Arabian Peninsula as an arena of jihad, adding that Yemen is the most appropriate territory in which to prepare, militarily, psychologically and religiously, for jihad. He stressed that mutuality between the mujahideen and their supporters was a religious obligation, and in that context urged that Muslims outside the Arabian Peninsula also aid the mujahideen in Yemen.[38]

- Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) published an announcement "in the matter of the officers and soldiers captured by the mujahideen in Abyan". In it, AQAP declared its intention of freeing the 73 officers and soldiers whom it had captured, in exchange for the release of its men who were being held in the National Security prison in Yemen. According to AQAP, the US Ambassador and the new President of Yemen, Abd Al-Rab Mansur, were responsible for the fate of these soldiers. Even as the Sana'a government has opened itself to dialog with all factions, including the (Shiite) Houthis, the president and ambassador seem determined to escalate the war against

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[38] http://hanein.info/vb (Arabic).

Ansar Al-Sharia's mujahideen in Abyan. AQAP urged the families of the captives to pressure the government in Sana'a to meet its demands.[39]

- An active contributor to jihadist Web forums named Abu Hafs Al-Sunni Al-Sunni drew the attention of Yemenis to the crimes of the Yemeni regime. He asked whether the people had started a revolution merely to replace one despot with another. According to Al-Suni, the Yemeni people now faced two options: a bogus democracy, which would lead right back to the situation that obtained prior to the revolution; or allowing Ansar Al-Sharia to implement shari'a [Islamic law] and renounce all forms of phony democracy. He explained that Ansar Al-Sharia had been established on behalf of the Yemeni people, for whom it fought. Now the people should gather under the group's banner, and not be led astray by the delusions of democracy.[40]

- The jihadist press agency Madad published a video clip of a speech given by Jalal Baleidi Al-Marqashi, the emir of Abyan Governorate, during a visit to soldiers and officers being held by the mujahideen. Al-Marqashi promised them that, unlike the cruel, inhumane treatment of the mujahideen in Yemeni jails, they would be treated by the mujahideen according to Islamic law. As noted 73 soldiers and officers were taken hostage by the mujahideen, who declared their willingness to free them in exchange for the mujahideen being held Yemeni prisons.[41]

The Maghreb [North Africa]

- A Web surfer from Libya wrote about the mujahideen in his country, citing a campaign to defame and discredit those who uphold the principle of the Oneness of God [tawhid] by accusing them of extremism and fanaticism. He reported that the mujahideen were trying to expand the jihad in Libya to the global arena by attacking NATO soldiers, who were driving around the country openly. He noted that the Libyan Transitional National Council in Libya was collaborating with [NATO], and promised to expose all of the military bases being constructed in the desert: an American base between Libya and Egypt; a British base between Chad and Libya; and a French base between Algeria and Libya.[42]

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[39] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[40] http://www.hanein.info/vb (Arabic).
[41] http://www.shamikh1.info.vb (Arabic).
[42] http://www.hanein.info/vb (Arabic).

- Through its media outlet Al-Bayariq, Ansar Al-Sharia in Tunisia posted a seven-minute video clip on YouTube about its humanitarian aid to the residents of Jendouba Province in northern Tunisia, following flooding there.[43]

- A Web surfer reported that two Tunisian mujahideen had joined the fighting in Syria. He added that this was not surprising, as Tunisians had joined many arenas of jihad, including in Bosnia.[44]

Two Tunisian mujahideen who have joined the jihad in Syria

Al-Sham [Greater Syria]

- The Al-Farouq Brigade of the Free Syrian Army asked Al-Qaeda not to intervene in the affairs of Syria and also commended Spain, Britain and France for having safely rescued their citizens from Syria. In response, contributors to the jihadist Web forum Hanein stressed that the mujahideen would not relinquish Syria to the Crusaders. They asked the Free Syrian Army to "stick to YouTube" and let the "real men" cope with the Shiites and infidels. Many of contributors wrote of the sanction against mujahideen, who aspire to implement shari'a [Islamic law], laying down their arms, leaving room for a new despot to take the place of the old one. In this regard, one contributor quoted Tunisian Sheikh Abu Iyadh's criticism of the Free Syrian Army. Other contributors defended the Free Syrian Army, stating that its request that Al-Qaeda and other, similar groups not intervene was meant to prevent the regime from being able to claim that armed groups were active in Syria.

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[43] http://aljahad.com/vb (Arabic).
[44] http://www.hanein.info/vb (Arabic).

Another contributor cited the Free Syrian Army's stand against the secularism of the Syrian National Council (SNC), and wondered how this could be squared with its request of Al-Qaeda. Other responded to his question that there was no contradiction between the two stands, as the former was directed at the Syrian people, and at Muslims, in general, while the latter was meant for a Western audience. This contributor noted that such equivocation was a common tactic of secular people and moderate Islam. Yet another contributor claimed that the Free Syrian Army was in fact an agglomeration of various groups, united at present by their overriding goal of overthrowing the despotic Syrian regime. For example, he noted that while the Al-Farouq Brigade calls for the establishment of a democratic nation, the Dhu Al-Nuraayn Brigade calls for the establishment of an Islamic state that will derive authority from the Qur'an and the Sunna. For this reason, he stated, one should not cast aspersions on the entire Free Syrian Army.[45]

- A contributor to the jihadist Web forum Hanein wished to raise a hue and cry among all Muslims who jealously guard their religion: How much longer will religious scholars be ineffectual, and Islamic groups submissive, given the bloodshed Syria? The writer urged that weapons be sent to the mujahideen in Syria, and called for an end to the conferences and talks being led by the US. Leaders and religious authorities throughout the Muslim world must motivate young people [to join jihad], he added, without waiting for their regimes' permission. Visitors to the Web site identified with these remarks. Some noted that many areas formerly under Sunni Muslim control were now under the thumb of Christians and Shiites, and that this must not be allowed to happen to Syria. All Islamic provinces should work to liberate all of the territories now occupied by Iran and the West.[46]

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Farouq published an article by Sheikh Jalal Al-Din Abu Al-Fatuh titled, "A Campaign to Aid Syria: Syria, the Road to Paradise…".[47] In it, the sheikh outlines the obligations of every Muslim, given the current situation in Syria: to pray devotedly; expose the turpitude of the Alawite regime and spread word that its heresy is worse than that of the Jews and Christians; donate money to the Syrian people through trustworthy charities; encourage Muslims, especially young people, to join jihad in Syria;

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[45] http://hanein.info/vb (Arabic).
[46] http://hanein.info/vb (Arabic).
[47] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).

pressure other regimes to sever their ties with the Syrian regime; boycott goods from countries that support the Syrian regime, especially Iran, Russia and China; expose the true face of Syrian agents, especially Sunnis, who grant legitimacy to the Syrian regime.[48]

Syria as the road to paradise

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Farouq published a video clip of a sermon in which Sheikh Ahmad Samir called on Muslims to assist the Syrian people.[49]

- A member of the jihadist Web forum Shumukh Al-Islam published an anthology of video clips and banners, titled "Al-Sham…The Neglected Wound". He stated that the anthology, which can be downloaded, is meant to support The Front for the Defense of the Syrian People, a Salafi-jihadist group established in late January 2012 to fight the Syrian regime.[50]

- Nasir Al-Qaeda, a prominent contributor to the jihadist Web forum Shumukh Al-Islam, listed the characteristics that differentiate the Syrian revolution from the other revolutions in the Arab world:

  1. The struggle in Syria is a dogmatic one, a stubborn fight between the Sunni majority and the Alawite-Shiite minority.

  2. The Alawite regime relies on international forces of heresy, like Russia and China.

  3. Failure of the revolution in Syria means success for the Shiite plot, which will then spread at the expense of the Sunnis.[51]

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[48] http://aljahad.com/vb (Arabic).
[49] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[50] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[51] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).

In another thread, Nasir Al-Qaeda recommends that the Syrian people abandon peaceful revolution and embark on an armed struggle that will include suicide bombings and land mines. According to Nasir Al-Qaeda, the Syrian people must rely on themselves alone and not on foreigners who claim they will provide aid. If the citizens of Syria don't wake up, he warns, and begin a mass armed struggle, the Syrian regime will continue to slaughter them.[52]

- Sheikh Abu Saad Al-Amili, a prominent contributor to jihadist Web forums, expressed support for The Front for the Defense of the Syrian People [Al-Nusra Li-Ahl Al-Sham]. He added that religious leaders have an obligation to lead the Muslim nation in deeds and not only in words, in practice as well as in theory, and that all Muslims have an obligation to fight the infidel Alawite regime. He lauded the establishment of The Front for the Defense of the Syrian people, representative of the Salafi-jihadists, which raises the banner of God's unity on the battlefield, and strives to implement shari'a [Islamic law], thwart heresy, and remove sacrilegious laws. According to Al-Amili, this distinguishes it from the Free Syrian Army, most of whose soldiers are not particularly devoted to Islam, nor do they have any previous experience with jihad; rather, many of them have defended the infidel Alawite regime and helped persecute the Syrian people for years. Nevertheless, Al-Amili did not reject the Free Syrian Army. He expressed hope that its members would become more religiously observant and disavow the infidel Alawite regime. He reminded readers of the West's efforts to make people afraid of any turning toward jihad, and its tendency to ignore jihadist activity in Syria, especially the "quality" attacks carried out by The Front for the Defense of the Syrian People, for example in Damascus. And were it not enough that the West opposes any jihadist tendency in the Syrian revolution, respected religious leaders have also cast doubt on The Front, its policies and backers – even its very existence. Although he does not mention him by name, Al-Amili reserved special rancor for Sheikh Abu Basir Al-Tartusi, who opposes The Front. Moreover, Al-Amili rejects what he called blind, unequivocal support of the Free Syrian Army, preferring instead to support The Front, which rightly gathers young people under its banner of tawhid [the Oneness of God]. Al-Amili urged his readers to join The Front, but added that this did not meant they should oppose the Free Syrian Army, even though its ideology

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[52] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).

contradicts that of tawhid, as this is neither the time nor the place for internecine fighting. Conversely, Sheikh Al-Amili reminded those who doubted The Front and its leadership for not having been authorized by the leadership of Global Jihad, that The Front has sworn allegiance to Global Jihad, and that jihadist Web forums have praised and sanctioned it. He further challenged such sheikhs to come lead the jihadist brigades in Syria themselves. He reminded them that they had yet to cast doubt on the leaders of jihad in Iraq, who are known to neither friend nor foe. In conclusion, Al-Amili urged Muslims to (re)turn to the true straight path, and base their words on the laws of Allah. He thanked them for their long years of work and sacrifice, adding that he had written these things to fill in gaps in the ranks of the followers of the mujahideen and to prevent a conflict that would tear their ranks asunder. He added that he had deliberately kept his comments general, and had not named names; yet, as noted, his comments were aimed first and foremost at Sheikh Al-Tartusi.[53] In this context, contributors to Hanein extensively discussed the comments of Sheikh Al-Tartusi. Ultimately, forum administrators were forced to end the discussion because of the accusations made against the sheikh. The administrators had asked contributors to keep their discussion civil, but the request had fallen on deaf ears.[54]

- A member of the jihadist Web forum Al-Fida posted a recording of a discussion conducted in the Ansar Al-Islam chat room, via PalTalk, with Sheikh Abu Iyadh Al-Tunisi, a leader of the Salafi-jihadist group Ansar Al-Sharia in Tunisia. Abu Iyadh defended The Front for the Defense of the Syrian People, and called on all those who had joined the Free Syrian Army to leave it and join the mujahideen. Abu Iyadh Al-Tunisi then answered participants' questions about the Salafi-jihadist camp.[55]

- A new jihadist media outlet called Liwa Al-Sham published the first issue of a new periodical titled *Balagh*, which focuses on events in Syria.[56]

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[53] http://hanein.info/vb (Arabic). See
http://www.ict.org.il/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=3psbJLoy7Dw%3d&tabid=344 , pp.18-19.
[54] http://hanein.info/vb (Arabic).
[55] http://www.alfidaa.info/vb (Arabic).
[56] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).

The first issue of *Balagh*, the newsletter of new jihadist media outlet Liwa Al-Sham

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Masadah published an announcement of support for The Front for the Defense of the Syrian People by Sheikh Abu Muhammad Al-Tahawi, a senior Salafi-jihadist sheikh in Jordan. Al-Tahawi criticized opponents of the involvement in Syria of the mujahideen under the banner of the Unity of God, and lambasted those who defame them on various pretexts, for example by urging them to reveal their faces or names. He also lobbed criticism at Sheikh Basir Al-Tartusi, without citing him by name. Al-Masadah also published a video clip calling to aid The Front for the Defense of the Syrian People in its fight against the Syrian regime.[57]

- The jihadist Al-Yaqin Center media institution reported that Christian missionary organizations were trying to convert Muslims in Syria to Christianity, and were especially active in hospitals.[58]

- The jihadist media institution Ibn Taymiyyah, which is affiliated with the Army of Islam (a Palestinian Salafi-jihadist group), published a video clip containing "media coverage" of a Salafi-jihadist demonstration held on February 24, 2012 in the Gaza Strip, in solidarity with the Sunnis of Syria and in support of the liberation of Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.[59]

Scenes from a Salafi-jihadist rally in the Gaza Strip

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[57] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[58] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[59] http://www.alfidaa.info/vb (Arabic).

- The jihadist media institution Ibn Taymiyya, which is affiliated with the Army of Islam (a Palestinian Salafi-jihadist group), issued a press release on "the decline in health" of Yasri Atiyyah Al-Misri 'Abu Hajir Al-Filastini, a security prisoner serving a 20-year sentence in Israel. According to the press release, 'Abu Hajir's health as declined because the Israeli authorities have ostensibly refused to allow him to receive medical care. The press release also called for concerted efforts to free the Palestinians from Israeli prisons, whether by paying "ransom", through prisoner exchanges, or by storming the prisons and forcibly liberating their inmates, as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and the Islamic State of Iraq have done.[60]

- The jihadist media institution Ibn Taymiyya, which is affiliated with the Army of Islam (a Palestinian Salafi-jihadist group), published a filmed interview with mujaheed Abu Al-Muhtsib Al-Maqdisi, also known as the engineer Abdallah Al-Ashqar, who was exiled from the Gaza Strip two years ago by Hamas security forces.[61]

Africa

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Kataeb, which functions under the auspices of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, published a number of announcements during the first half of March:

  - Members of Al-Shabab's explosives unit succeeded in blowing up an Ethiopian Army vehicle using a roadside mine. The vehicle was destroyed and the Ethiopian soldiers traveling in it were killed.[62]

  - An attempt was made to fire anti-aircraft missiles at the plane of Somali Minister of Defense Hussein Arab Isa while it was flying over the Islamic Lower Shabelle Province.[63]

  - In Mogadishu, a hand grenade was hurled at three Somali government soldiers, killing them.[64]

  - A ceremony was held to celebrate the rebuilding of a bridge in Afgooye, which was destroyed in 2006 by heavy Ethiopian [Army]

[60] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[61] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[62] http://aljahad.com/vb (Arabic).
[63] http://aljahad.com/vb (Arabic).
[64] http://aljahad.com/vb (Arabic).

traffic. The city's merchants and the governor of Lower Shabelle Province cooperated in the bridge's reconstruction.[65]

- Muhammad Ali Hareth, a senior leader of the Somali government forces, was killed.[66]

- An Ethiopian Army base in the city of Bidwa was attacked.[67]

- Seven Somali government soldiers were killed in Hiran Province, in an attack initiated by Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen.[68]

- A Burundian officer and his bodyguards were killed by a roadside explosive device planted by Al-Shabab in Banaadir Province.[69]

- Three Ethiopian soldiers and five Somali soldiers were killed in Bidwa by a roadside bomb.[70]

- At the Maslah Military Base in northern Mogadishu, four roadside bombs killed scores of Crusader soldiers.[71]

- A hand grenade was tossed by a member of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen into a Djibouti Army Base in Mogadishu, killing two Djiboutian soldiers and four others.[72]

- More than 30 enemy Somali government soldiers were killed in the city of Busaso in an attack by Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen.[73]

- Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen attacked a number of Somali Government Army bases.[74]

- In Juba Province, Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen has successfully taken control of Diff, a city on the Kenya-Somalia border.[75]

- Ground-to-air missiles hit an army helicopter flying over Lower Shabelle Province.[76]

- Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen distributed humanitarian aid to over 1,900 needy and impoverished families.[77]

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[65] http://aljahad.com/vb (Arabic).
[66] http://aljahad.com/vb (Arabic).
[67] http://aljahad.com/vb (Arabic).
[68] http://aljahad.com/vb (Arabic).
[69] http://aljahad.com/vb (Arabic).
[70] http://aljahad.com/vb (Arabic).
[71] http://aljahad.com/vb (Arabic).
[72] http://aljahad.com/vb (Arabic).
[73] http://aljahad.com/vb (Arabic).
[74] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[75] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[76] http://aljahad.com/vb (Arabic).
[77] http://aljahad.com/vb (Arabic).

- The detonation of a bomb planted by Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen in Beledwyne killed four Ethiopian soldiers and seven others.[78]

- Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen succeeded in killing more than 70 Ethiopian soldiers in battles in Yurkud village.[79]

- In Juba Province, five Somali government soldiers recanted and turned themselves in to Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, which welcomed them warmly.[80]

Five Somali soldiers who turned themselves in to members of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen

- A member of the jihadist forum Al-Fida reported that a Somali government "gang" in Mogadishu defaced and defiled a Qur'an. Radio Al-Furqan, which functions under the auspices of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, followed up the story by contacting the imam of the mosque where the event took place. According to the imam, the event was a surprise to everyone. This thread was highlighted by Al-Fida's administrators.[81]

- Issue Number 5 of the eponymous news report of jihadist media outlet Shahadah, identified with Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, covers recent developments in Somalia and news of Al-Shabab.[82]

- A member of the jihadist Web forum Al-Fida noted that a jihadist group in Nigeria had executed two Westerners, whom it had kidnapped in May 2011:

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[78] http://aljahad.com/vb (Arabic).
[79] http://aljahad.com/vb (Arabic).
[80] http://aljahad.com/vb (Arabic).
[81] http://www.alfidaa.info/vb (Arabic).
[82] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).

Chris McManus, a British citizen, and Franco LaMolinara, an Italian citizen. Both had come to Nigeria to participate in a project to construct new headquarters for the state central bank. The men were executed after a failed rescue attempt by the British and Nigerian governments.[83] It is almost certain that the kidnappers belonged to Al-Qaeda in the Land Beyond the Sahel, who in early December 2011 published a video clip of their demands in exchange for release of the two hostages.[84]

Chris McManus, who was recently executed by radical Islamists in Nigeria

The Caucasus

- The leadership of the mujahideen in Ingushetia published a eulogy on the death of Adam Katsiyev, also known as Abu Dujana, the jurist of Ghalghaycho Province on January 7, 2012, following a battle in Ghalghaycho Province. It stated that Abu Dujana had played an active role in resolving conflicts between the emir of the Caucasus Emirate and several mujahideen.[85]

The West and Elsewhere

- The jihadist media institution Sawt Al-Islam, which functions under the aegis of the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), published a video clip of a sermon in Uighur delivered on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha.[86]

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[83] http://www.alfidaa.info/vb (Arabic).
[84] See http://www.ict.org.il/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=muUlpROH6Gc%3d&tabid=344 , p.18.
[85] http://hanein,info/vb (Arabic).
[86] http://www.shamukh1.info/vb (Arabic).

- A member of the jihadist Web forum Shumukh Al-Islam, who is participating in the forum's online course in jihadist propaganda, reported that Sheikh Abu Bakar Bashir, an extremist preacher who is considered to be the spiritual leader of the Islamists in Indonesia, has called for a fight to the destruction against the US. Bashir delivered this message while en route from prison to a hospital, where he was to undergo an eye operation. Some of his supporters had gathered outside the US Embassy, which is near the hospital, to protest his having been sentenced to 15 years in prison for abetting terrorism.[87]

General Reports

- Sheikh Abu Basir Al-Tartusi reached out to Ansar Al-Sharia in Yemen as "a brother who loves and is afraid for his brothers". According to Al-Tartusi, Ansar Al-Sharia is wedged between "an attacking enemy, and the fool[s] who applaud[s] [its] deeds, whether justified or errant". Al-Tartusi warned the group that "wasting the cream of your young people on so-called 'acts to glorify the name of Allah', in which they die to take one or more Yemeni soldiers with them, is an unwise tactic…a tactic that is not grounded in Islamic religious law. You who spout the slogan of acting on behalf of Islamic law should be the first to ensure that your deeds are in accordance with Islamic law". Al-Tartusi then noted the futility of speaking of the perpetrators of such acts; rather, he would like to be referred to a contemporary religious scholar who sanctions them. Al-Tartusi asked, rhetorically, why Ansar Al-Sharia treats Yemeni soldiers as if they were American soldiers [that is, enemies of the same magnitude], especially as Yemeni soldiers stood shoulder to shoulder with the populace during the revolution. "Does Islamic law permit this? We expected," he wrote, "that you would support the revolution of the Yemeni people and…change your strategy to suit an age of revolution, [so] we were surprised at the persistence of the old methods of fighting and killing, as if the president of Yemen had not stepped down. Does the desire to implement Islamic law require the continued shedding of innocent, sacred Muslim blood in the name of Islamic law? This method has not succeeded for over ten years, and you have not given anyone else a chance to implement it. There are many religious scholars in Yemen with whom one should work to impose Islamic law. You are not fighting the US. You are killing the Yemeni people."

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[87] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).

Al-Tartusi asked Ansar Al-Sharia to carefully reassess its strategy, and not give the US an excuse to intervene in Yemen. He urged religious leaders in Yemen, and anyone intelligent, to mediate to engender a change. "You must not be silent when innocent, sacred blood is being shed. The new regime in Yemen must give this first priority." Al-Tartusi clarified that he was writing in his own name and of his own volition. Nevertheless, Web surfers did not believe he stood behind these words; rather, they thought that a politician or pundit had penned them as, in their opinion, Al-Tartusi's comments were not anchored in Islamic sources. Some contributors wrote that although the previous president had stepped down, the new one was from the latter's camp, and had been elected to continue his path. This was therefore not the time for advice [such as Al-Tartusi's], which is akin to a knife in the back. Other contributors responded that, since US Marines were fighting alongside the Yemeni Army, what could be expected of the mujahideen? Why didn't the sheikh mention that mujahideen and innocent civilians were being imprisoned or murdered by the Yemeni Army? Some accused Al-Tartusi of fomenting a civil war at a time when Muslim honor is being trampled in the prisons. Others asked Al-Tartusi not to incite Muslims to stray from the true path. One contributor told Sheikh Al-Tartusi that the religious leaders he was asking to act were the ones following the path of Bin Laden and Al-Zarqawi.[88]

- A prominent contributor to jihadist Web forums who calls himself Abu Hafs Al-Sunni Al-Sunni urged the use of the media to attack Syria, Russia and China, as cyber-war is no less serious than a war on the battlefield. Al-Suni noted that the media could be used to distort any situation, and suggested the following: uploading graphically enhanced photographs in support of the Syrian people; opening multiple Facebook pages; establishing a "cyber-army" of Al-Qaeda to fight the "cyber-army" of the Syrian regime; hacking into [enemy] regimes' Web sites every day and causing them to crash. The soldiers of the "cyber-army" will be members of jihadist Web forums who specialize in "cyber warfare". Al-Suni exhorted the hackers active on jihadist Web forums to make sophisticated attacks against the computer systems of the Syrian government; he directed his comments at the Saudi hacker, X-Omar, who had hacked into Israeli Web sites. Alternatively, Al-Suni recommended paying Arab hackers to hack into Syrian Web sites. He then

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[88] http://hanein.info/vb (Arabic).

offered some advice to Web surfers with a military background: Al-Suni suggested they teach others how to counter the weapons of the Syrian regime. He also suggested making documentary films in Arabic, which would be translated into other languages, and used to pressure the regime, which he claimed is about to fall. In conclusion, Al-Suni suggested using psychological warfare against the Syrian regime, for example by disseminating video clips of the Free Syrian Army's victories and the heroism of the Syrian people, photographs of the regime murdering Syrians, and accounts of the Iraqi victory over the US and of the Afghans over the USSR. One contributor responded by citing his efforts on behalf of the Syrians: he reported talking to two Spanish journalists, a man and a woman, who had been in Syria and one of whom (the man) the regime claimed was "assassinated by terrorists". He claimed he was in contact with people in Syria, and that he had translated video clips into Spanish.[89]

Miscellaneous

- The supervisor of the Arabic-language jihadist Web forum Ansar Al-Mujahideen appealed to visitors to the forum to join the propaganda campaign to free Yemeni journalist Abd Al-Elah Haider Shaye, who was arrested in 2010 by Yemeni security authorities on suspicion of membership in Al-Qaeda. In January 2011, a Yemeni court sentenced Shaye to five years in prison. Former Yemen President Al-Salah had intended to grant Shaye clemency, but relented under pressure from US President Obama. The reason for Obama's intervention was unclear; commentators posted that the reason lay in Shaye's reports of a 2009 American air strike in which 47 Yemeni civilians were killed. It is worth noting that Shaye had interviewed Anwar Al-Awlaki, a renowned American Muslim religious leader of Yemeni origin with ties to Al-Qaeda, under whose influence many Muslims, especially English-speakers, became radicalized. Al-Awlaki was killed in a US drone strike in Yemen in 2011.[90]

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[89] http://hanein.info/vb (Arabic)/

[90] http://www.as-ansar.com/vb (Arabic). For further information about this incident, see also http://www.salon.com/2012/03/14/obamas_personal_role_in_a_journalists_imprisonment (English).
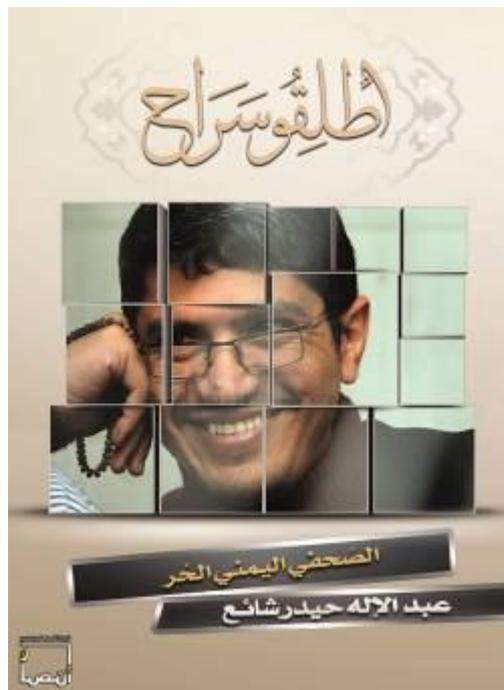
Journalist Abd Al-Elah Haider Shaye, who is imprisoned in Yemen

- A contributor to the Web forum Al-Jihad Al-Alami wrote of the difficulties facing producers of jihadist text, audio and visual materials, not least of which is that they may be killed. He urged that every effort be made to promote and disseminate such materials as widely as possible: "on the battlefield, on the street, in universities, in mosques, in schools, in homes, to every Muslim and even every infidel". He stressed the importance of visual publicity, which transmits its message fast, and powerfully. He advised disseminating recent jihadist materials on Syria through electronic files weighing 700 megabytes that have been burned onto CD-Roms, which can be purchased blank. Such CDs could be disseminated in the wee hours of the morning, he suggested, in populous areas that are not impoverished, by individuals who would take strict precautions.[91]

- The Al-Maqrizi Center for Historical Research, London, published a recording of a Friday sermon delivered by Sheikh Hani Al-Sibai, an Egyptian exile who heads the Center. In the sermon, Al-Sibai discussed the burning an defacement of a Qur'an by infidels.[92]

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[91] http://aljahad.com/vb
[92] http://www.alfidaa.info/vb (Arabic).

- A surfer on the Web forum Al-Jihad Al-Alami warned that the Israeli company "Viber" provides cellular services to unwitting Muslim subscribers, and should be boycotted.[93]

- The jihadist Web forum Ushaq Al-Hurr Al-Islamiyyah produced and published a video clip titled "Afia Siddiqui and Prisoners Like Her".[94] Siddiqui is a Pakistani brain scientist who is thought to [also] be a member of an Al-Qaeda sleeper cell. In 2008 she was extradited to the US to stand trial for the attempted murder of American agents and military officers during interrogation in Afghanistan. Since that time, she has been serving a sentence in a US prison.

- Members of Ansar Al-Sharia claim to have incontrovertible information that two American pilots have arrived at a Yemeni Air Force base.[95]

- Ismail Jad, a member of the jihadist Web forum Al-Fida, published a short biography of Abu Turab Al-Urduni (1962-2001), who instructed the perpetrators of the attacks of September 11, 2001.[96]

- A member of the jihadist Web forum Shumukh Al-Islam and a member of the jihadist Web forum Al-Fida jointly opened a virtual workshop to promote a propaganda campaign on behalf of Ansar Al-Sharia in Yemen. The workshop, which was given prominence by the administrators of both forums, gathers video clips, news items published by Ansar Al-Sharia, banners and other propaganda materials for dissemination.[97] Another member of Al-Fida asked his fellow Web surfers to design banners praising Ansar Al-Sharia as part of this propaganda effort.[98] Also as part of this campaign, the jihadist Web forum Ansar Al-Mujahideen published a video clip praising Ansar Al-Sharia.[99]

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[93] http://aljahad.com/vb (Arabic).
[94] http://www.i7ur.com/vb (Arabic).
[95] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[96] http://www.alfidaa.info/vb (Arabic).
[97] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic).
[98] http://www.alfidaa.info/vb (Arabic).
[99] http://www.alfidaa.info/vb (Arabic).

Two of the banners praising Ansar Al-Sharia, which have recently been posted on jihadist Web forums

A video clip published by the jihadist Web forum Ansar Al-Mujahideen

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Qadisiyyah, which translates jihadist materials into Asian languages (primarily Urdu), announced the merger of the Salafi-jihadist Web site Ansarullah and the jihadist Web forum Bab Ul-Islam. The cooperative venture is now located at the url: **http://bab-ul-islam.net**.[100]

Facebook

- A social group on Facebook calling itself Minbar Al-Ilami, which has 300 "friends", claims its aim is to address and publicize any issue of relevance to Sunni Muslims. In effect, most of the materials posted by the group's "friends" are jihadist, and praise jihad against the West.[101]

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[100] http://www.shamikh1.info/vb (Arabic and Urdu).
[101] https://www.facebook.com/groups/227248297374518.

Images from the Facebook page of Minbar Al-Ilami