



## **Bi-monthly Report**

### **Summary of Information on Jihadist Web Sites**

**The First Half of March 2013**

## Highlights

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

- The tenth issue of *Inspire*, an English-language jihadist magazine published by Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), appears, along with a pocket book of advice for the lone wolf attacker on choice targets of attack in the West.
- A senior leader of Al-Qaeda advises mujahideen how to keep themselves safe while traveling to arenas of jihad.
- A prominent contributor to jihadist Web forums suggests exploiting the increasing tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and the Arab Spring, to incite popular protests against the Saudi regime.
- AQAP clarifies attempts by Islamist scholars in Yemen to negotiate a cease-fire between mujahideen and the regime.
- AQAP's Military Council asked that requests for guidance and instruction not be made through the Internet, for security reasons.
- Ansar Al-Muslimeen fi Bilad Al-Sudan announced the death of the seven Christian hostages it had abducted on February 17, 2013 – the result of failed joint British and Nigerian rescue mission.

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## New Publications

### Ideology

- The jihadist propaganda organ Al-Fajr published an article titled, "A Letter to New Recruits", by Sheikh Abdullah al-'Adam, a noted leader of Al-Qaeda.<sup>1</sup> In it, al-'Adam offered advice to mujahideen wishing to guard their personal safety of while en route to arenas of jihad. He suggested that they conceal the reasons for their arrival in a given arena, avoid official country borders and the use of identity papers, and maintain absolute secrecy about their true identity.<sup>2</sup>
- A prominent contributor to jihadist Web forums who goes by the name Abu Osama al-Kubi published an article titled, "The True Promise Is Nigh, House of Saud".<sup>3</sup> Given changes in the geopolitical arena following the Arab Spring, al-Kubi discusses how to act toward the Saudi Arabian regime, which he claims is in a sensitive position, and is most afraid of Iran's growing strength and ties to the US. The region's slide into ethnic war and insecurity has compounded the Saudis' fear for the stability of their regime. This is therefore an opportune time, according to al-Kubi, for a popular revolt against the Saudi regime. He consequently recommends the following:
  1. With few exceptions, Saudi youth should remain in Saudi Arabia, where they can bolster internal resistance to the regime.
  2. Further efforts should be made to promote the liberation of prisoners.
  3. The honor of Muslim women must be defended.
  4. Coordination with Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) is essential.
  5. Clashes in southern Saudi Arabia, including those between Saudi citizens and Ethiopian Christian foreign laborers, should be exploited.
- Prominent forum contributor Sheikh Osama al-Kubi also published an article titled "Didactic Guidance and Encouraging Jihad" (96 pp.), this time through the Al-Masada propaganda center. The foreword to the article was penned by another well-known forum contributor, Sheikh Abu Sa'ad al-'Amili.<sup>4</sup>



<sup>1</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>2</sup> <http://al-jahad.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>3</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>4</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

- The jihadist media center Hittin published a book in Urdu titled, "The Call to the Caliphate and the Path of the Messenger of Allah PBUH" by Sheikh Omar Asem.<sup>5</sup>
- The jihadist propaganda workshop of Web forum Shumukh Al-Islam published a pamphlet titled, "What Is the Ruling on Fighting Alongside Our Brothers in Chechnya, and What Is the Muslims' Obligation toward Them?", containing a fatwa [religious-legal ruling] issued by Sheikh Hamoud al-Aqla al-Shuebi, an extremist Wahhabi scholar. According to al-Shuebi, the commandment to fight jihad is incumbent on all Muslims; he therefore ruled that Muslims should join jihad in Chechnya and help redress the difficulties of their brethren there, including through propaganda and financial aid.<sup>6</sup>
- A prominent visitor to the jihadist Web forum Shumukh Al-Islam published an article in which he suggested how to become a "lone wolf" – that is, an individual terrorist. He stressed that the potential attacker should mask his religious beliefs, maintain secrecy, and be guided by jihadist publications in the choice of a potential target. He also proposed tourist sites and commercial centers as potential targets.<sup>7</sup>
- During the first half of March 2013, a position paper appeared on the jihadist Web forum Hanein which addressed the implementation of shari'a [Islamic law] by Salafi-jihadist groups such as the Afghanistan-Taliban, Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen in Somalia, and Ansar Al-Din in Mali. The paper was written by Eyad Qunaibi, a native of Jordan and a graduate of Houston University Medical School who is currently a lecturer and researcher in the Faculty of Pharmacy of Jordan's University of Sciences and the administrator of the Al-Furqan Web site, which advocates for Islamic faith and the implementation of shari'a.<sup>8</sup> Qunaibi begins the paper by asking: "Would it have been better for the Taliban, Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen and Ansar Al-Din to implement shari'a by force or persuasion?" Qunaibi feels there is no decisive, unequivocal answer to this question. Nevertheless, as the paper progresses, it becomes clear that Qunaibi does not believe shari'a has been rejected by Muslims because it was forced on them in these three cases. To wit, he quotes Abdul Salam Zaeef, who was the Afghanistan-Taliban Ambassador to Pakistan until 2001, at which time he was captured and sent to Guantanamo along with other Al-Qaeda prisoners, and where he was held until 2005. According to Zaeef, the goal of the Taliban who took hold of Afghanistan after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union was to fight the oppression and plunder that had been rampant during the war. When liberating Afghanistan's cities, the Taliban were surprised at the people's outpouring of support,

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.jhuf.net> (Arabic).

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>7</sup> <http://shamukh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>8</sup> <http://al-furqan.org/PR> (Arabic).

which was so great as to deliver the regime into their hands even before they were prepared to rule (according to Zaef). In quoting him, Qunaibi wants to illustrate that shari'a was rejected in Afghanistan not because of any fault in it, but rather because the massive support for the Taliban was so threatening as to induce enemy forces to invade, attack, and besmirch the Taliban so as to turn the public against them. According to Qunaibi, enemy forces recruited the masses to their fight, and used them to form a resistance, an army, a police force and a government. He concludes that the citizens of Afghanistan, Somalia and Malia were never opposed to local Islamist movements, but rather were manipulated by the enemy and its destructive military interventions, which resulted in killing, torture, expulsion and untold human suffering. Under the burden of war and the necessity some felt to collaborate with the enemy, nothing could have persuaded the people to accept shari'a.<sup>9</sup>

- During the first half of March 2013, the Web site of global jihad published an article titled, "The Great Acid Test". As part of a broader discussion of international economics, the article claimed, once the way had been paved by Osama bin Laden in the attacks of September 11, 2001, current Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri could eradicate the US if he followed these guidelines to causing the US economy to collapse:
  - Al-Qaeda Central and its affiliates must declare absolute war on the dollar.
  - They must threaten to attack all merchant marine ships flying the American flag.
  - They must threaten to impose a blockade on the export of oil to the US.
  - They must declare a comprehensive electronic war against the Web sites of US financial institutions.<sup>10</sup>



**The legend reads, "How Sheikh Osama bin Laden 'killed' the US economy, and how Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri can cause it to collapse"**

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>10</sup> <http://aljahad.com/vb> (Arabic).

## Strategy

- The jihadist propaganda group Nukhbat Al-'Ilam Al-Jihadi [The Best of Jihadist Propaganda] published the transcripts of audio statements nos. 28-30 in the series "The Terrorism Industry Program", by Sheikh Abu Ubaydah Abdallah al-Adam, a prominent member of Al-Qaeda. Audio statement no. 28 addresses "intelligence and information gathering", audio statement no. 29 addresses "interrogation and information gathering", and audio statement no. 30 addresses "collecting and analyzing data on targets".<sup>11</sup> In addition, the jihadist media institution Al-Fajr published a new audio statement titled, "The Culture of War", part 31 in a series titled, "The Terrorism Industry: A Course in Security and Intelligence". It, too, was authored by Sheikh Abu Ubaydah Abdallah al-Adam.<sup>12</sup>
- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum Ansar Al-Mujahideen published a book titled, "The War of the Weak" (249 pp.), which is a translation of a book originally written in English by Robert Taber and titled, "War of the Flea: The Classic Study of Guerilla Warfare". The Arabic translation of the book is accompanied by the annotations of Sheikh Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, one of Al-Qaeda's most outstanding strategists. According to the visitor, al-Suri considered this a classic text on guerilla warfare. The book reviews the guerilla wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including that against the US in Vietnam, and suggests what might be learned from them.<sup>13</sup>
- During the first half of March 2013, a post was uploaded onto the jihadist Web forum Hunein from the Palestinian Web site Al-Majd Al-Amani, which focuses on security content in aid of the Palestinian struggle against Israel.<sup>14</sup> The post claimed that the Israel Security Agency (the Shin Bet) was administering Web sites that ostensibly offered financial, psychological and even sexual aid, but which actually represented a



<sup>11</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.almajd.ps/> (Arabic).

clever ruse to cull agents by exploiting the distress of those seeking help. Once a visitor to such a site had exposed sensitive details about his or her life, the site’s administrators would try to extract and extort additional intelligence, in part by threatening to publicize the intimate content that the visitor had willingly and unwittingly shared. The post recommended avoiding visiting such Web sites, which it claimed were the “lair of intelligence agents hungry for prey”, and to avoid revealing personal information on the Internet, in general. According to the post, no one would provide assistance via the Internet for free, such that if you were not asked to pay today, you would be asked to “pay” in the future.<sup>15</sup>

## Guidebooks and Instruction Pamphlets

- The supervisor of the military section of the jihadist Web forum Shumukh Al-Islam, who goes by the name Al-Irhabi [lit. “the terrorist”], posted a link to a video clip that explained how to use a compass and navigate open terrain. The video constituted the first lesson of an online course on this topic.<sup>16</sup>



### Learning to use a compass

- Al-Irhabi also uploaded to Shumukh Al-Islam a series of lessons about the Merkava tanks used by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) – and how to damage them.<sup>17</sup>
- A visitor to the Web forum Al-Minbar Al-Ilami Al-Jihadi published “The Complete Military Encyclopedia for Manufacturing Explosives: Direct Links to the Archive”, including multiple links to materials, lessons and instructions on the manufacture and use of explosives.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> <http://hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

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

<sup>17</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>18</sup> <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

- A supervisor of the jihadist Web forum Ansar Al-Mujahideen published a video guide to designing visual propaganda.<sup>19</sup>



**A video guide to creating pictures and banners for jihad**

- A visitor to the forum Al-Minbar Al-'Ilami Al-Jihadi published a call for information about smart missiles and sonar technology. Sonar (an acronym for "sound navigation and ranging") is a sound wave-based marine navigation and detection tool used by submarines and ships. Since everyone realizes the importance of smart missiles, among other weapons, to the Muslim Nation, the visitor urged that every scrap of information, every photograph, of smart missiles and sonar technology be gathered and pooled in one database. In response to this post, another visitor to the site posted a photograph of a missile, along with an explanation in English of its various parts.<sup>20</sup>

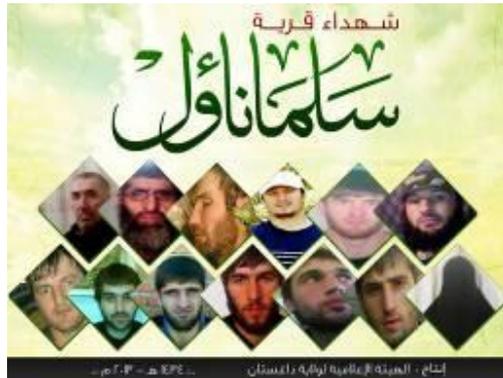
### Promoting the Myth of the Martyr

- A Dagestani propaganda organ published a video clip titled, "The Martyrs of Salmanaul Village", about mujahideen killed fighting Russian and Chechen security forces in February 2013.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>20</sup> <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).



**A banner advertising a video about mujahideen martyred in Dagestan**

- The jihadist media institution Al-Malahem, which functions under the auspices of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), published a video clip eulogizing Sheikh 'Adil al-'Abab (aka Abu Zubayr), formerly AQAP's religious-legal authority, who was killed during a US attack on the southern province of Shabwa, Yemen, in 2012.<sup>22</sup> Similar video clips have been produced to eulogize other martyred AQAP leaders, including Anwar al-Awlaki, who was killed in a US drone strike in 2011, and Sheikh Harith bin Ghazi al-Nadhari.<sup>23</sup>

On March 15, 2013, Al-Malahem published an additional video clip dedicated to the memory of 'Ali bin Sa'id Jamil (aka Muwahid al-Maribi), who was killed by a US drone strike in July 2011. Al-Maribi had been an AQAP field commander in Abyan Governorate. This video clip was part five in a series titled, "And He Will Take Martyrs from among You".<sup>24</sup>

Al-Malahem also published a biography of two martyrs, Furqan al-San'ani (aka Salim Ahmad Muhammad al-Hibah) and Abu Hafz al-Hudarmi (aka Sa'id Salem al-'Akbari), parts 12 and 13, respectively of a series titled, "The Martyrs of the Arabian Peninsula".<sup>25</sup>



**Harith Bin Ghazi Al-Nadhari**



**Sa'id Salem al-'Akbari**

<sup>22</sup> <http://al-tagheer.com> (Arabic).

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>24</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).



**The martyr Muwahhid al-Maribi**

- The Ibn Taymiyya Media Center published a video clip dedicated to Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Muhammad Quneita,<sup>26</sup> formerly a member of the Izz Al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades, the military arm of Hamas in the Gaza Strip, who had engaged in training mujahideen. Following the Eid Al-Fitr holiday in September 2012, Quneita went to Syria to train rebels on the Syria-Turkey border. On December 27, 2012, he was killed in a Syrian mortar attack on the northeastern city of Maarat Al-Numaan and subsequently buried nearby, in Sarmada, on the Turkish border. He left a wife and three children.



**On the martyrdom of Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Muhammad Quneita**

- A mujahid named Muhammad bin Ahmad al-'Abduli left the Emirate of Fujairah, UAE to join the war against the regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria. Al-'Abduli participated in the liberation of Al-Raqqah, east of Aleppo. As a field commander he trained forces and fought alongside various Islamist groups, including Ahrar Al-Sham. At some point he returned to the Emirate of Fujairah, where he was arrested and



<sup>26</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

interrogated by intelligence forces of. However, after his release he returned to Syria, where he was ultimately killed.<sup>27</sup>

- The jihadist media institution Sawt Al-Islam, which functions under the auspices of the Turkistan Islamic Party, published a video clip in Arabic titled, "Lovers of Paradise: Part 7".<sup>28</sup>
- On March 10, 2013, the jihadist propaganda organ Nukhbat Al-'Ilam Al-Jihadi [The Best of Jihadist Propaganda] published an anthology of audio statements, essays, biographies and eulogies of Sheikh Jamal Ibrahim Ashtawi al-Masrati (aka Atiyatallah), the right-hand man of Al-Qaeda Emir Ayman al-Zawahiri. Atiyatallah was killed by a drone strike in Pakistan in August 2011.<sup>29</sup> Nukhbat Al-'Ilam Al-Jihadi also announced the launching of a new Web site, where this anthology could be downloaded: <http://sheikh-atiyah.nokbah.org>. The banner of the Web site is pictured below:



- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum Shumukh Al-Islam quoted an item from the Yemeni news portal Ahrar Press about the death of 'Abd al-Malik al-Danmarki, a Christian citizen of Denmark who converted to Islam 11 years ago and fought alongside the mujahideen against the Assad regime in Syria. After his conversion, al-Danmarki migrated among Muslim countries, including Egypt, where he stayed for three years. He subsequently moved to Libya with his family before going to Syria to join the mujahideen. His death was reported in early March 2013.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>29</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>30</sup> <https://shamukh1.info/vb>; <http://ahrarpress.com> (both in Arabic)



**The martyr 'Abd al-Malik al-Danmarki, outlined in red**

- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum Al-Fida published a biography of Obeidah al-Chadi, the first in an unofficial series of biographies of martyrs killed in East Africa.<sup>31</sup>
- Visitors to the jihadist Web forum Shumukh Al-Islam posted photographs and biographies of Arabs martyred in Syria while obeying the commandment to fight jihad against the regime of Bashar al-Assad. According to one Web surfer, the materials were culled from a Facebook page titled, "Foreigners in the Syrian Revolution", available at <https://www.facebook.com/Strangers.sy>, which follows foreign mujahideen in Syria.<sup>32</sup>



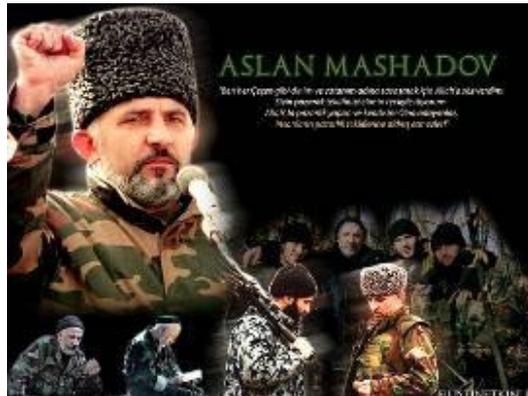
**From the Facebook page "Foreigners in the Syrian Revolution"**

- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum Al-Fida commemorated the eight-year anniversary of the death of Aslan Maskhadov (1951-2005), a secessionist Chechen leader and the third president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkaria – the name Chechen secessionists gave the state they established after the collapse of the Soviet Union, which was destroyed during the second Chechen war. When that war broke out in August 1991, Maskhadov went underground, leading guerilla fighters against the Russian Army. He was killed when the Russians stormed a village in northern Chechnya, on March 8, 2005.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>32</sup> <https://shamukh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>33</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).



**In commemoration of the Chechen martyr Aslan Maskhadov**

### **The Arab Spring in Jihadist Discourse**

- A visitor to the forum Al-Minbar Al-'Ilami Al-Jihadi published his view of the events culminating in the "Arab Spring". After the fall of the Soviet Bloc and the end of the Cold War, it appeared that history had ended, as Francis Fukuyama had prophesied, and a new world order had begun, he wrote. However, the events of September 11, 2001 proved that this was no more than the calm before the storm: The world after September 11 had changed – its conflicts, concepts and values. This, he wrote, was the reason the West had tied the events of September 11 to Samuel Huntington's theory about the clash of civilizations. According to the author, however, there is no clash of civilizations, but rather only a struggle, which is increasingly being cloaked in religion, unmasking the true motive for most of the struggles and wars in history. Such was the case during the period of the Muslim conquests and Crusader wars. It is only in this light, according to the author, that one can understand the strategic success of the acts of September 11, 2001 in drawing the US into the Afghani trap, just as Bin Laden had planned. Initially, America achieved a swift and easy victory, contrary to what Bin Laden had thought; this success encouraged the Bush government to invade Iraq and overthrow the regime of Saddam Hussein. But once the US had sent its forces to Iraq, a violent gang war erupted, which lasted seven years. War on two fronts – Iraq and Afghanistan – precipitated a severe economic crisis in America, which eroded its centrality and prestige and signaled the end of a unipolar age – that is, an age in which one superpower, in this case the US, holds sway – and a return to more balanced influences on world conflicts. Thus, while America was busy fighting its war against terrorism, Russia made an economic recovery and returned to the fore. America's ultimate defeat in Iraq and Afghanistan, its economic woes, and the decline in its

influence have caused it to focus its policies inward, and to distance itself from foreign affairs. According to the writer, this turn of events contributed to the outbreak of the Arab Spring.<sup>34</sup>

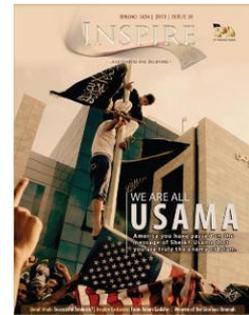
## Magazines

- The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan published new issues of its jihadist magazines in Arabic, English and Urdu: Issue No. 83 for March-April 2013 (56 pp.) of *Al-Sumud*, in Arabic;<sup>35</sup> Issue No. 50 for February 2013 (203 pp.) of the English-language magazine *In Fight*;<sup>36</sup> Issue No. 52 in Urdu for March 2013 (71 pp.) of *Nawai Afghan Jihad*;<sup>37</sup> and Issue No. 12 in Urdu of *Shariat* (52 pp.).<sup>38</sup>



Recent issues of, from l. to r., *In Fight*, *Nawai Afghan Jihad*, *Al-Sumud*, and *Shariat*

- Issue No. 10 of the influential English-language jihadist magazine *Inspire* was published by Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). *Inspire* appeals to both English-speaking Muslims in Arab lands,<sup>39</sup> whom it wishes to recruit to its ranks, and to Muslims in the West, whom it would spur to commit terrorist attacks as part of the jihad against the far enemy. Issue No. 10 covered the following topics:
  - AQAP’s opposition to France’s intervention in Mali and its call to the French government to withdraw its forces lest it suffer dire consequences.
  - AQAP’s belief in the need to defend the honor of the Prophet Muhammad against Western insults, for example by evicting US embassies from Muslim lands,



<sup>34</sup> <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).  
<sup>35</sup> <http://alsomod-iea.info> (Arabic).  
<sup>36</sup> <http://www.ansar1.info> (English).  
<sup>37</sup> <http://nawaiafghan.blogspot.co.il> (Urdu).  
<sup>38</sup> <http://theunjustmedia.com> (English).  
<sup>39</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

continuing protests in the Arab world, and perpetration of terrorist attacks in the West.

- References to *Inspire* in the Western media.
- Fulfilling the commandment of jihad.
- An interview with Sheikh Adam Garden about the Arab Spring, Al-Qaeda and the US.
- Suggestions of how to injure people and damage property by setting fire to parked cars causing and traffic accidents, either by spilling oil on the highway or throwing spiked objects on the road to puncture tires.



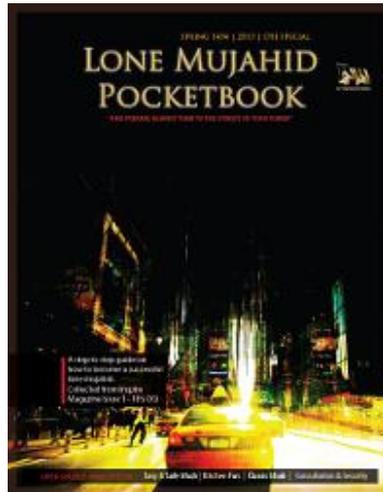
**How to set fire to a parked car (l.) and place sharp objects on the road (r.)**



**From Issue No. 10 of *Inspire*: A list of Westerners who are legitimate targets of attack**

Issue No. 10 of *Inspire* was accompanied by the "Lone Mujahid Pocketbook" (64 pp.), a compendium of advice for the "lone wolf" terrorist previously published in the magazine – including how to traverse forests, destroy buildings, and make bombs.<sup>40</sup>

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



**The cover of the book offered as an “addendum” to Issue No. 10 of *Inspire***

- Issue No. 3 appeared of the Swahili-language jihadist magazine *Gaidi Mtaani* (42 pp.).<sup>41</sup>



**The cover of Issue No. 3 of *Gaidi Mtaani***

## Reports from the Field

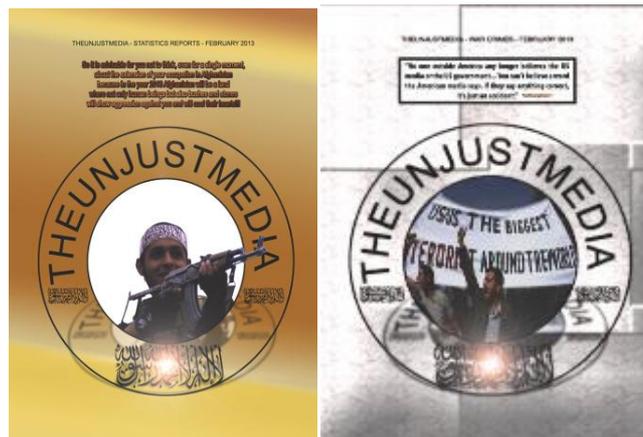
### Afghanistan-Pakistan

*Since NATO’s deployment in Afghanistan, it has often been argued that jihadist groups are losing ground. However, in early March 2013, newspapers reported that the planned 2014 US pullout is likely to benefit jihadist groups, including the Taliban, creating a strong armed opposition to an unpopular local government.*

*In other news, increasing weapons transfers from Pakistan have been giving jihadist groups ever-new opportunities to arm themselves, leading to greater insecurity along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. This has increased the fear of the Pakistani government its planned pipeline to Iran may become an easy target for jihadist infiltrators.*

<sup>41</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabizc).

- TheUnjustMedia, a Web site associated with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, published a statistical abstract for February 2013 (14 pp.) summarizing that month's activities, the number of lives lost, and the damage to property among its ranks and those of the enemy, and mapping the locations and types of attack. The site also published a four-page report of the alleged war crimes of the US, NATO, and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.<sup>42</sup>



**Two recent reports from TheUnjustMedia, a Web site of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan**

- The jihadist media institution Al-Sahab published a collection of sermons by Sheikh Maulana Asim Umar, a Pakistani Islamic legal scholar affiliated with Al-Qaeda and the Pakistan-Taliban.<sup>43</sup>
- The jihadist media institution Manba Al-Jihad, which functions under the auspices of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, published a video clip in Pashto titled, "The Badr Brigades: Part 3".<sup>44</sup>



**Jihad for speakers of Pashto in "The Badr Brigades: Part 3"**

<sup>42</sup> <http://theunjustmedia.com> (English).

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>44</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

- During the first half of March 2013, the jihadist media institution Umar, which functions under the auspices of the Pakistan-Taliban, published the following:
  - A video clip titled, "The Blows of the Believers (4): The Victories and Actions of the Mujahideen in Mahsud".<sup>45</sup>



**"The Blows of the Believers (4)"**

- A video clip titled, "Fight the Infidel Leaders", which documents suicide attacks and military operations against Pakistani security forces, including the execution of 23 Pakistani soldiers taken prisoner by the Taliban.<sup>46</sup>

## Iraq

*Sectarian clashes between Sunnis and Shi'ites continued during March 2013. Despite the violence, the Iraqi government has announced that it is close to finishing the design of a pipeline to carry Iraqi oil to Jordan and Egypt through the Gulf of Aqaba. Once completed, the project will be handed over to a specialized company, pursuant to investment regulations. This seeming normalization is overshadowed by threats from violent sectarian groups, which have issued direct warnings against newly-built infrastructure.*

- During the first half of March 2013, the Islamic State of Iraq published the following:
  - An announcement taking responsibility for 258 military actions in Nineveh Province in October-November 2012.<sup>47</sup>
  - An announcement taking responsibility for 158 military actions in Salah Al-Din Province between October and December, 2012.<sup>48</sup>
  - An announcement taking responsibility for 54 military actions in Baghdad in December 2012 and January 2013.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

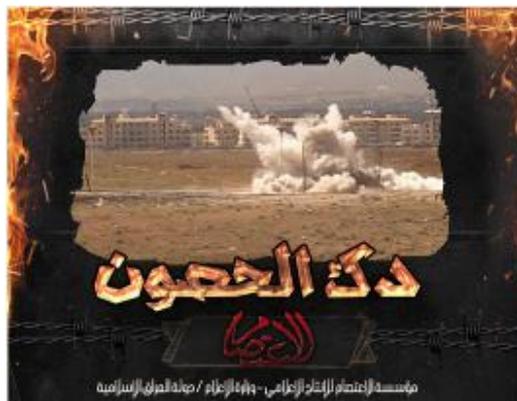
<sup>46</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

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

<sup>48</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>49</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

- An announcement taking responsibility for 40 military actions in southern Iraq during January 2013.<sup>50</sup>
- An announcement taking responsibility for an attack perpetrated on March 7, 2013, against a convoy of Iraqi Army vehicles in Anbar Province. The convoy was apparently conveying Syrian Army soldiers and shabiha militiamen into Iraq. According to the Islamic State of Iraq, the attack was meant to purify Iraq of the defilement of unclean Alawites. The announcement decried the cooperation between the Iraqi government of Nuri al-Maliki and the Syrian regime, of which the transportation of Syrian Army soldiers to and from training bases in Nineveh Province is a part.<sup>51</sup>
- Al-'Itisam, a jihadist media institution promoting the Islamic State of Iraq, used the Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF) to issue a video clip titled, "Pounding the Fortresses".<sup>52</sup> The video documents the military activities of the Islamic State of Iraq.



**"Pounding the Fortresses" of the enemy**

- During the first half of March 2013, Ansar Al-Islam, an Iraqi Salafi-jihadist group with ties to the Islamic State of Iraq, published the following:
  - A letter from the emir of Ansar Al-Islam, Abu Hashem Aal Ibrahim, to Sunni Muslim scholars [ulamaa'], tribal leaders, and other venerable people in Iraq. According to Aal Ibrahim, the Sunni people of Iraq today face an existential danger, posed by the oppression visited upon them by the Shi'ite government of Iraq. Consequently, and in order to preserve the integrity and identity of Iraq's Sunni community, Emir Aal Ibrahim recommended taking three steps: (1) inculcating the idea of Sunni independence, to ensure physical survival, self-rule,

<sup>50</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>51</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

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

and faith; (2) embarking on jihad to win a Sunni regime, territory, and natural resources, and to ensure self-determination; and (3) ensuring the economic security necessary to wage jihad for independence and honor. Aal Ibrahim then stated that it was the role of the ulama' [scholars] to promote this idea. Education plays a very important role in molding the younger generation, and should include the inculcation of values such as independence and the culture of jihad. In addition, all means must be used to fight the treason and collaboration of Sunnis who side with the tyrannical regime and its army.<sup>53</sup>

- A call to Sunnis serving in Iraq's military and police forces to resign their posts and not allow the Shi'ite leaders to use them to oppress their brethren.<sup>54</sup>
- A religious-legal ruling [fatwa] forbidding the sale of Sunni-owned land to Shi'ites, issued in light of persistent tension between Sunnis and Shi'ites everywhere, and particularly in Iraq. The fatwa begins by quoting from Qur'an 7:128: "...for the earth is Allah's, to give as a heritage to such of His servants as He pleaseth; and the end is (best) for the righteous."<sup>55</sup> This citation bolsters a central Muslim narrative, according to which the Arabian Peninsula – the cradle of Islam – was originally a land of monotheism temporarily overshadowed by pagan rites and idol-worship, until Islam could be reinstated through the liberating battles led by the Prophet Muhammad. Reference to this narrative, even obliquely, is meant to prove that Sunni Muslims are the exclusive owners of disputed territory, by tying their current conflict with Shi'ites to historic battles over territory purportedly granted to Sunnis by divine decree.

The fatwa then describes the present-day dilemma: In Baghdad, Kirkuk, Mosul, Tikrit and environs, lands that have religious significance for the Sunnis, and whose purchase is limited, are nevertheless being negotiated over and sold apparently to Shi'ites; once the sale of these lands has been registered, it appears that the buyers have enjoyed the financial advantage of one fifth of the price of the sale. This is seen as an additional instance of the religious discrimination against the Sunni minority in Iraq, which is allowed by the Shi'ite authorities.

The fatwa consequently ruled that "heretical sects" should be entirely removed from Sunni areas of residence. In addenda to the fatwa, religious-legal

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<sup>53</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>55</sup> From the Abdullah Yusuf Ali translation of the Qur'an, <http://www.islam101.com/quran/yusufAli/QURAN/7.htm>.

- clarifications explained that Islamic law [shari'a] prohibits an infidel from holding Muslim property and obligates Muslims to destroy Shi'ite holy places, including statues. The fatwa concluded with a direct appeal to the ulamaa', tribal leaders, and other respected Sunnis to "take up the banner" and prevent Shi'ites from infiltrating into Sunni areas.<sup>56</sup>
- A renewal of the oath of allegiance to the emir of Ansar Al-Islam and to monotheism [tawheed], in light of the imminent threat facing the Sunnis from the Shi'ite and international Crusader enemies.<sup>57</sup>
  - An analyst named Abdullah bin Muhammad, who has a Twitter feed named "Strategic Issues" and who is often quoted on jihadist Web forums, published an opinion piece about Iraq. In it, Bin Muhammad warned that Iran's strategic interests required it to maintain absolute control over Iraq, in part by keeping Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki in power. While it would thus be difficult to overthrow the Iraqi regime as desired, he wrote, it is nevertheless possible to establish independent Sunni territories; this should therefore be defined as a strategic goal. Since war would only displace Shi'ites and Sunnis, effort should be focused on equipping Sunni areas of strategic depth with food and armaments before war breaks out.<sup>58</sup>

## The Arabian Peninsula

*Good news from Yemen: while counter-terrorism efforts in Yemen generally fall to that country's security forces, Yemeni youth have also responded to the challenge of uprooting terrorism – peacefully and effectively. For example, an organization named "Youth Creativity" has sworn to fight jihadism in schools. Although this offers hope for the next generation, clashes between Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the government continue to fill the news. Most disturbingly, Abyan Governorate in southern Yemen has been the site of a new wave of upheavals, exacerbated by the US's targeted killings. Although the Yemeni government has regained control over some strategic areas in the mountainous south, AQAP continues to use violent guerilla-like insurgency tactics against peripheral outposts.*

- Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) published an announcement relating the attempts of ulamaa' [Islamic scholars] and a coordination committee to broker a cease-fire between the mujahideen and the Yemeni regime in Sana'a. In this context, several ulamaa' published a statement reviewing the position of the mujahideen and that of the

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

government regarding the cease-fire; they wrote that the Yemeni regime had been “humiliated and dragged” by the US and its Gulf state “agents”. AQAP announced its intention to re-issue this statement, for clarity’s sake. Much of the announcement was devoted to the language used in the scholars’ statement, especially their chronicle of negotiations between the parties, which was initiated by the clerics, as noted, passed to the head of state security services and the president, and finally transmitted via the coordination committee to AQAP. The announcement then chronicled the specific conditions of the cease-fire, brokered by the coordinating committee together with clerics functioning under state auspices of the state; the state ultimately stated its willingness to accept a two-month ceasefire, to which AQAP’s leadership also agreed in writing, in the presence of religious leaders. The signed agreement was then presented by the head of state security services to the president, who was given three days to authorize it; this deadline was later extended, and although the extension was ended, the ulamaa’ and coordinating committee were nevertheless surprised that it had not been signed and so could not be enacted. Consequently, the leadership of AQAP asked for clarifications, including that the state would bear full responsibility for the consequences of its not having signed the cease-fire agreement, for the desecration of holy sites, for further bloodshed among the rivals, for allowing arrogant Americans to humiliate Yemen, as for the killing of Muslims. Indeed, Allah was witness to all and would remember these things [in torturing those responsible] in the next world. Lastly, the announcement exhorted all Yemenis to demand that the state sign the cease-fire for the good of everyone.<sup>59</sup>

- AQAP’s military council asked that no further efforts be made to contact it in regard to a project known as “Convoy of Martyrs”, for security reasons. The verbatim announcement (in English) was as follows: “Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula’s military committee announces the ceasing of communication with ‘Convoy of Martyrs’ via emails and the project’s public key. And that is due to security measures. We call upon the brothers who are already in contact to stop the communication”.<sup>60</sup> The “Convoy of Martyrs” project was described in Issue No. 9 of the English-language jihadist magazine *Inspire*, which was published in May 2012. The project was meant to recruit Muslim citizens of Western countries to commit terrorist attacks in the US. AQAP suggested that any Muslims motivated to hit Western targets contact it through the encoding program Asrar

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<sup>59</sup> <http://aljahad.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb/> (Arabic).

Al-Mujahideen [The Secrets of the Mujahideen], through which they would also receive instruction, guidance, and authorization of potential targets of attack.



**A banner asking potential attackers to cease contacting AQAP through the “Convoy of Martyrs” project**

- AQAP’s jihadist media institution, Al-Malahem, and Masame Al-Kheir lil-Inshad, which publishes jihadist hymns, published an interview with Abu Hajir al-Hadrami, a poet who writes jihadist odes. In the interview, al-Hadrami spoke about his life, the content of jihadist hymns and odes, such as attacks on Arab rulers, and the importance of their importance to jihad.<sup>61</sup>



**Abu Hajir al-Hadrami, renowned for his jihadist odes**

- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum Shumukh Al-Islam posted an interview which *Al-Yaman Al-Yawm* correspondent Abd al-Razaq conducted with Sheikh Mamun al-Hamid, a prominent propagandist for AQAP and a tribal leader from the Al-Saddah region of Ibb Governorate, on March 13, 2013. Al-Hamid discussed Iranian aid to the Shi’ite (Houthi) minority in Yemen, the role of Yemen’s tribes in promoting shari’a [Islamic law], the efforts of the US Embassy in Yemen to fight certain tribes, and cease-fire negotiations with the Yemeni regime.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>61</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>62</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).



**Abd al-Razaq interviews Sheikh Mamun al-Hamid**

- Visitors to the jihadist Web forum Al-Fida reported that, contrary to media reports, AQAP Deputy Emir Sheikh Sa'ïd al-Shahri Abu Sufian al-Azdi is alive and well, and was not killed in an American drone strike on January 21, 2013.<sup>63</sup>

### **Al-Sham [Greater Syria]**

*The cross-national violence between Iraq and Syria reached a new peak when the Islamic State of Iraq claimed responsibility for massacring Syrian soldiers who had been seeking temporary asylum in Iraq. This episode, one of the worst of the current crisis, coincided with an unexpected but noteworthy development: In a religious decree, Syria's grand mufti Sheik Ahmad Badr al-Deen Hassoun, a Sunni who is closely allied with Assad's government, urged all Syrians to enlist in the national army. This was the first time that Assad, who portrays himself as secular, has employed a Sunni cleric and religious Sunni terminology to elicit support – as do his rival jihadists.*

- During the first half of March 2013, the Al-Nusra Front, Al-Qaeda's branch in Syria, published the following:
  - Announcements Nos. 259-266, taking responsibility for military operations and terrorist attacks against Syrian regime forces.<sup>64</sup>
  - Two video clips, parts 9 and 10 of the series, "The Beginning of the End", documenting suicide attacks against Syrian security forces: one at the Sharkas checkpoint in Homs,<sup>65</sup> and the other against the Al-Mashtal outpost in Homs.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).



**Banners for Parts 9 (l.) and 10 (r.) of the video series, “The Beginning of the End”**

- During the first half of March 2013, an interview was held with Al-Hajj Mar’i, the leader of Liwa’ Al-Tawhid, a large unit of the Free Syrian Army which subsumes several fighting companies in the environs of Aleppo.<sup>67</sup> The interview, which was posted on the jihadist Web forum Hanein, shed light on Mar’i’s character: For example, prior to joining the revolution and taking command of over 8,000 mujahideen, Mar’i was a merchant. In fact, he admitted that before the revolution, he did not know how to shoot a rifle.



Tactically, Liwa’ Al-Tawhid holds some 60% of Aleppo and is fighting to capture its airport, police headquarters, and prison. Mar’i explained that the airport was particularly important to the war effort: If Liwa’ Al-Tawhid could hold it, it could prevent fighter jets from taking off, and this would put an end to the regime in Aleppo. Mar’i also noted in the interview that Liwa’ Al-Tawhid is not the only group fighting in the area; he discussed the relationship between it and the Al-Nusra Front, including their ideological differences. While they share military goals, he said, their political goals diverge. Mar’i explained their cooperation thus: “The West has not come to our aid. No one has, save the Al-Nusra Front, and so we will fight alongside them”.<sup>68</sup>

- A visitor to the forum Al-Minbar Al-'Ilami Al-Jihad published an interview with Abu Ammar al-Shami, the official spokesman of the Mujahideen Shura Council in Syria. Al-Shami related the Islamist brigades’ vision for Syria after the fall of Assad and the end of the revolution, including inter-ethnic relations and the future of the Islamists’

<sup>67</sup> <http://lewaaltawheed.com> (Arabic).

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

arsenals. Following is a translation of the interview from Arabic, as it appeared on <http://orient-news.net>:

- *What is the fundamental idea behind the Mujahideen Shura Council in Syria?*  
The Mujahideen Shura Council is an armed jihadist organization which follows the Qur'an and the Sunna and aspires to impose Islamic law [shari'a] and establish a Muslim theocracy in Syria. The Council was established at the start of clashes in Syria, to aid our sisters and brothers.
- *What groups belong to the Council, and where are they located?*  
We have substantial forces in the Aleppo area. Many groups are part of The Council, including the Al-Sham Migrants battalion in Idlib, the Lions of the Sunna in Homs, Al-Tawhid wal-Jihad in Damascus, a recently-assembled brigade in Hama, and a large number of groups in and around Aleppo.
- *What is your part among all of the groups fighting in Syria?*  
I do not have such statistics, because we do not have exact data on the number of mujahideen and rebels in Syria. However, with Allah's help, we are an important force in military operations here.
- *Is the Al-Nusra Front fighting under the umbrella of the Mujahideen Shura Council in Syria?*  
We train alongside all of the groups in Syria, including the Al-Nusra Front.
- *If your group is not affiliated with Al-Qaeda and you do not coordinate your actions with it, why do you accept their symbol, their banner, and the color black? Is your slogan similar to Al-Qaeda's?*  
Our banner is not the same as Al-Qaeda's. It simply states, "There is no God but Allah". As for our colors, black and white, Allah's Messenger flew black, white and green banners, and because we follow the Sunna we use these colors.
- *What is your source of funding?*  
Our sources of funding are limited. We lack resources, like most of our brothers in the Islamic brigades. Our basic source of "funding" is the loot we raid from Assad's army.
- *Some say the jihadist groups in Syria will one day massacre people because of their ethnic affiliation, and brandish the sword of takfir [accusing another Muslim of heresy] in Syrian society, especially among the Muslims. What do you think?*  
We are innocent of crimes and of such accusations. Our way, our faith, do not permit us to commit such acts. We do what is commanded by the Qur'an and

- Sunna, and shun what is forbidden us. We are absolutely not interested in anything except implementing shari'a [Islamic law] in Syria.
- *In other words, you will not kill anyone because he belongs to a particular sect or religion?*  
Of course not, we are not murderers.
  - *In that case, what is your view of the minorities in Syria?*  
The minorities have the rights set for them by Allah and His Messenger Muhammad.
  - *How do you intend to establish a Muslim theocracy in Syria? Will you use gentle da'wa [missionary efforts] in the mosques, or more aggressively take up arms?*  
Islam was not spread by the sword. I think the question is premature, because the war against Bashar al-Assad's regime is not over. Our goal is to evict the Safavid<sup>69</sup> regime entirely.
  - *Supporters of secularism in Syria accuse you of being extremists and heretics whose only concern is to seize power and turn Syria into the next Kandahar.*  
And if we were to make Syria a Paradise? We've had years of experience with secularism. What have we gained, other than the rule of the Assad family and the ruin of all that was good in this country? Our goal is neither power nor money. There's a difference between someone who risks his life to eradicate tyranny, and someone who is waiting for an opportunity to benefit from the blood [of the dead]. I believe people are very aware of the difference.
  - *After the regime falls, what will you do with the weapons you've amassed?*  
It is too soon to say. We don't know what tomorrow will bring. However, our goal is clear. Our weapons will not be used against any but the enemies of Allah who reject His law.
  - *In other words, you support weapons anarchy after Assad's fall?*  
Of course not. We are against weapons anarchy after the regime falls. But if we have to lay down our arms, we will only hand them over to a legitimate regime that rules through shari'a – not to anyone else.
  - *If your aim is to establish an Islamist state, what form will it take? Is your inspiration the Turkish experience, or the Taliban?*

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<sup>69</sup> The reference is to the Safavid Dynasty, which ruled the Persian Empire from the early 16<sup>th</sup> to the early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and which was largely responsible for the spread of Shi'ism. The intent is derogatory.

Our goal, our focus, and our current efforts are to eliminate the regime of Assad and Iran. We will build our state as Muhammad built his. We learn from everyone.

- *In that case, do you not have a clear vision of the type of state you wish to establish?*

This matter requires much time and discussion. We have a political vision, which we will present to the public when the time comes. Right now our goal is to wipe out the Safavid regime.

- *Most of the Syrians want Syria to be a democracy [after Assad falls]. Do you believe in this democracy, or do you have a different point of view?*

We believe in shura [hierarchical consultation] and in Muhammad's method of establishing a state. Besides, the demonstrators were always calling for an Islamic state.

- *But some people are calling for a civil society.*

We are the majority.

- *After the regime falls, will you enter the political process by establishing a political movement or party, or will your group dissipate?*

Since our goal is to establish an Islamic state, a Muslim theocracy, we are obligated to do whatever we must to reach this goal, including participating in a political process. We support state institutions that do not contradict the Qur'an and Sunna. And why would we "dissipate"? It is our duty to establish [an Islamic] state.

- *What about the foreign mujahideen in your ranks?*

They are our brethren and kin. I believe they will go aid Muslims elsewhere.<sup>70</sup>

- A video clip posted on the jihadist Web forum Hanein showed members of the Salafi-jihadist group Ahrar Al-Sham baking pita bread and distributing it to residents of Syria, as part of what appears to be a missionary [da'wa] effort.<sup>71</sup>



**The production of pita bread (l.) and its distribution to the public in Syria**

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

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum Al-Minbar Al-'Ilam Al-Jihad published an article titled, "When Will Assad Fall?". Two years had passed since the start of the Syrian revolution, he wrote, yet opinions were still divided between optimists who claimed that the regime would soon fall, and pessimists who believed that no one would benefit from the struggle. In the writer's opinion, the king of Jordan gave the most balanced assessment: The regime could last for another two years, but it was equally likely to become economically or morally bankrupt.

The regime's political and military budgets have given it the flexibility to keep fighting, to the chagrin of those who insisted that [Assad's] fall was imminent. The writer noted that none of the military developments in Syria had psychologically pressured or confounded the regime – until matters shifted in Damascus and Homs. The regime's strategy was not to fall with the north, east or south; rather the actual and political center [of Syria] were in the capital, Damascus, and along the coast. Damascus is the political symbol of Syria; if it falls [to the rebels], Assad will lose his legitimacy as president. That is why his forces are concentrating on keeping Damascus. If Damascus nevertheless falls, Assad will retreat to the coast, where his sect resides. There, with [Alawite] help, Assad will be able to declare a new state.

The regime has planned its military campaign so as to stand strong to the last bullet, leaving Damascus in tatters if it must retreat to the coast. Since Homs lies at the heart of the planned Alawite state, and is on the "escape route" from Damascus to the coast, the regime must only continue to hold Homs to succeed in its plan.

The success of the armed brigades in breaking the the southern route to Damascus had the regime teetering between the fall of Damascus and the road to retreat. This is when the regime began to change its behavior: to negotiate with armed brigades, issue Islamic-legal rulings, recruit young people.

According to the writer, this scenario is an echo of the one that attended the fall of Nazi forces. When the Allies moved in from the East and West, Hitler began to recruit the young – a desperate step that portended his fall. "Today, two years after the start of the revolution in Syria, I say that the beginning of the end of the Assad regime has come", concluded the writer.<sup>72</sup>

- An analyst named Abdullah bin Mahmoud who maintains a Twitter feed titled "Strategic Issues" and who is often quoted on jihadist Web forums, published an opinion piece about the battles being fought by Ahrar Al-Sham in Al-Raqqa, Syria. These battles,

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<sup>72</sup> <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

which began with a simultaneous assault on six sites, marked a new phase in the war in Syria, he wrote: The transition from an attack on one target to attacks on multiple targets signals the beginning of the fall of all of the regime's bases. Moreover, the success of jihadist brigades in coordinating their attacks gives them a strategic advantage that will enable them to topple the regime's bases without a fight. The war has become like a game of chess, he wrote, played to neutralize several sites at once so as to eliminate other sites. The liberation of Al-Raqqah by Ahrar Al-Sham will boost morale for the liberation of all of Aleppo, and then of Idlib, Al-Hasakah and Deir-Azzour.<sup>73</sup>

In another opinion piece, Abdullah bin Mahmoud wrote that Assad had ordered his forces to fight to the last bullet – not so much to win as to inflict as much destruction as possible, even to the point of their own elimination; this will ensure that Assad's forces do not turn against him in the end. This strategy explains why some brigades have remained without supplies or aid; it also explains Assad's use of Scud missiles. If Assad persists in this strategy, he will decimate all of Syria's cities, except those on the coast.

In an attempt to increase the extent of destruction and death in areas not suited to the fighting of a regular army, Assad established the national army and Iran sent additional Shi'ite militias.

According to the writer, the jihadist brigades should now concentrate most of their military on the coast, so as to block the path of retreat of the Nuseiri<sup>74</sup> regime. Moving the war to the coast will surprise and confuse Assad; if his base of power there falls, he will be forced to withdraw troops from other areas to reinforce those on the coast – and this will swiftly bring about his downfall.<sup>75</sup>

- Jordanian Salafi-jihadist Eyad Quneibi published an opinion piece about the state that will be established in Syria after the fall of the Assad regime.<sup>76</sup>
- The Islamic press agency Al-Haq, which is affiliated with global jihad, published an announcement from the founder of the Salafi-jihadist movement in Lebanon, Dai al-Islam Chahal, indicating that he might issue a fatwa [religious-legal ruling] sanctioning anyone who attacks Sunnis. He also called on the Lebanese military to change its ways, and guard Lebanon's security.

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<sup>73</sup> <http://twitmail.com/email/1073730258/35/%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%82-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%83-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%82%D8%A9> (Arabic).

<sup>74</sup> A derogatory epithet, which refers to certain Christian elements of the Alawite faith.

<sup>75</sup> <http://twitmail.com/email/1073730258/41/%D8%AE%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%AF%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7> (Arabic).

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

Chahal's comments were made at a press conference, which was convened after an incident involving the Lebanese Army. Chahal had been traveling to the Bekaa Valley to deliver a Friday sermon at a mosque in Majdal Anjar. When his convoy reached a military checkpoint, his men were asked to hand over their weapons before the convoy could continue. According to the announcement, word of this incident spread to Tripoli (in Lebanon), where several young people and elders closed main roads in protest against this "inappropriate behavior" toward Sheikh Chahal.

Chahal wrote: "...either the Army was trying of its own volition to humiliate us in Tripoli, Akkar and Aarsal, or it was forced to do so by Hezbollah and its allies, Syria and Iran". He wondered whether the Army was following Iranian and Syrian orders, adding that the target – the victim – was the whole Sunni sect. Chahal warned that Hezbollah's continued involvement in quelling the revolution in Syria would spark civil war [in Lebanon], for it was no secret that Hezbollah wanted to seize control of Lebanon's political and security apparatus. "We feel the danger to [our] peace and harmony, and warn against that the involvement of Lebanese elements in Syria's struggle will have implicaitons", he wrote. In response to a question, Chahal stated that if the current state of affairs continued, he would be forced to issue a fatwa to fight jihad against anyone who harmed Sunnis.<sup>77</sup>

- Jordanian intelligence sources reported that Sheikh Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi, a prominent Salafi-jihadist currently incarcerated in a Jordanian prison, refused their request that he forbid his followers from joining the forces fighting the regime of Bashar al-Assad. On the contrary, Al-Maqdisi chose to stress the importance of joining jihad in Syria.

To date, the media have reported that 400 Jordanians are fighting the Syrian regime. At least 20 Jordanians have died in clashes with the Syrian Army.<sup>78</sup>

## The Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip

*Egypt declared a state of police emergency in the Sinai Peninsula – a sign that the Egyptian authorities are becoming more concerned about the deteriorating security situation there.<sup>79</sup> This decision followed a warning by Egyptian intelligence that jihadists intended to attack policemen and soldiers serving in the Sinai. Jihadist groups operating in the Sinai have indeed escalated their activities, including test firing a long-range missile during a*

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

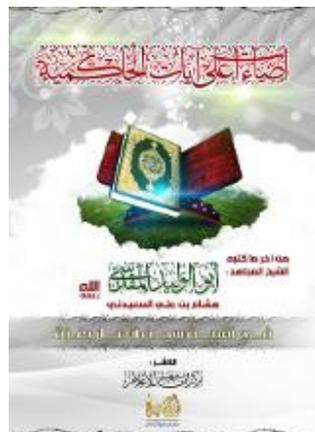
<sup>78</sup> <http://www.islamtoday.net/albasheer/artshow-12-181765.htm> (Arabic).

<sup>79</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/03/09/us-egypt-security-sinai-idUSBRE92808A20130309>

military exercise.<sup>80</sup> Military units have been deployed to main roads and checkpoints in the Sinai, and patrols along Egypt's borders with the Gaza Strip and Israel have been augmented.<sup>81</sup> Concurrently, Egypt continues to destroy underground tunnels linking the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip in an effort to block smuggling and the infiltration of Palestinians into Egypt.<sup>82</sup>

Friction between Egypt and Hamas has further intensified, with the Egyptian government reportedly accusing Hamas of carrying out the August 2012 attack in the Sinai that claimed the lives of 16 Egyptian soldiers. Hamas's military wing responded by accusing the Egyptian media of spreading "lies".<sup>83</sup>

- During the first half of March 2013, the Ibn Taymiyya Media Center published the following:
  - An item titled, "Jewish Women Remove Muslim Women's Hijab in Jerusalem: Where Are the Guardians of Honor?" The item urged Muslims to oppose the increasing trend of attacks by extremist Jews on the honor and religious freedom of Muslims, especially in Jerusalem, as reflected in bans on Muslims from praying at Haram Al-Sharif [the Temple Mount].<sup>84</sup>
  - An article titled, "Elucidation of Qur'anic Verses on the Rule of Allah [Hakimiyya]" (17 pp.), by Sheikh Hisham bin 'Ali al-Sa'idni (aka Abu al-Walid al-Maqdisi), the emir of Palstinian Tawhid and Jihad, who was assassinated in October 2012 by the Israel Defense Forces.<sup>85</sup>



**The cover of an article by the late Sheikh Hisham bin 'Ali al-Sa'idni**

<sup>80</sup> <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=573421> (English).

<sup>81</sup> <http://rt.com/news/egypt-declares-sinai-emergency-040/> (English).

<sup>82</sup> <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/03/09/military-forces-deployed-in-sinai/> (English).

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALEqM5i1iealJmB5mlnoH0jrsnlyX8yUYA?docId=d181a9dd5b204905b0b95f76e440526a> (English).

<sup>84</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>85</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

- In early March 2013, the Hanein jihadist Web forum featured a review of notable events in Palestine. In this context, forum members discussed a purportedly “official announcement” in which the Izz Al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades, the military arm of Hamas, threatened to attack the Egyptian Army in protest against the decision by the Egyptian Ministry of Defense to destroy tunnels on the Egypt-Gaza Strip border.<sup>86</sup> In an authorized response, Hamas denounced the audacity of the Egyptian media in publicizing a “false announcement” in its name, adding that whoever had published it cared nothing for either Egypt or the Palestinian people. Hamas called the item an obviously cheap attempt to attack the Palestinian resistance movement, which is struggling against an entity that is also an enemy of Egypt and indeed of all Arabs and Muslims. Hamas reiterated its objection to intervening in the internal affairs of Arab countries, especially Egypt, which it respects, adding that it would not embark on a military campaign against Egypt in any form. Lastly, Hamas asked the Egyptian media to vet the materials they publicize for validity, so as to avoid spreading lies “that fool no one”. Hamas averred that it is not responsible for every announcement ascribed to it that is not published on its official Internet site.<sup>87</sup>



#### **Hamas’s official condemnation of a false announcement made in its name**

- In an interview with the Ma’an News Agency, senior Hamas leader Ahmed Yousef indicated that the removal of Hamas from the UN’s list of international terrorist organizations was only a matter of time. Yousef added that, with the help of Arab and Muslim nations such as Qatar, Egypt and Turkey, Hamas was attempting to convince certain large and European countries to have it removed from the list – and that these attempts had elicited a positive response from some European nations, which he refused to name. He did state that visits to the Gaza Strip by Western emissaries indicated that things were “moving in a positive direction”. Despite demands by the Quartet that Hamas recognize Israel if it wished to be removed from the list of terrorist organizations, Yousef insisted that Hamas would never recognize

<sup>86</sup> <http://taamelbyot.cinebb.com> (Arabic).

<sup>87</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

Israel. He added that missiles fired by Hamas are not aimed at Israel's civilians but rather at its army bases, as armed struggle against an occupier is sanctioned by international law. However, the West is unfairly biased towards Israel. Moreover, according to Yousef, it is illogical for the West to support the Islamic regimes of Tunisia and Egypt but to boycott Hamas and keep it on the list of terrorist organizations, for Hamas emanated from the same source as these Islamic movements.<sup>88</sup>

In response to the positive tone of the announcement, a visitor to the Al-Minbar Al-'Ilami Al-Jihadi Web forum posted an announcement congratulating Hamas.

## The Maghreb [North Africa]

*Mokhtar Belmokhtar, the Algerian Islamist leader believed to have masterminded the January attack on the Ain Amenas gas site, has reportedly been killed in a Chadian assault on an Islamist rebel base in northern Mali.<sup>89</sup> However, the French Army reported that Belmokhtar's death could not yet be confirmed. Analysts believe Belmokhtar's death is a heavy blow to AQIM, and may affect its operational activities.<sup>90</sup>*

*Tunisian officials have become increasingly concerned that the military is ill-prepared to protect Tunisia's borders from the growing Islamist militant threat,<sup>91</sup> in part because it has lacked adequate training since the fall of former Tunisian leader Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali in 2011. Concerns over extremist Islamist activity have increased since the assassination of a popular secular politician in February, of which Tunisian authorities accused Salafist militants.*

*These growing fears coincide with recent statements made by Abu Iyadh – a Tunisian Salafist leader accused of orchestrating the attack on the US Embassy in Tunis last year – opposing the departure of Tunisian Salafists to other jihadist arenas, such as Syria and Mali.<sup>92</sup> While Abu Iyadh denied that jihad was being waged in Tunisia, he discouraged the migration of militants to other battlefields, saying that they were needed at home. These comments seem to contradict statements made by Ansar Al-Sharia in Tunisia, with*

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<sup>88</sup> <http://www.alplatformmedia.com/vb>. For the full interview with Ahmed Yosef, see <http://maannews.net/arb/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=573623&MARK=%D8%A3%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF%20%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%B3%D9%81> (both in Arabic).

<sup>89</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/algeria/9905707/Mokhtar-Belmokhtars-death-a-significant-blow-to-al-Qaeda.html> (English).

<sup>90</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/algeria/9905707/Mokhtar-Belmokhtars-death-a-significant-blow-to-al-Qaeda.html> (English).

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/03/06/us-tunisia-army-idUSBRE9250I320130306> (English).

<sup>92</sup> <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=56818> (English).

which Abu Iyadh is affiliated. In fact, the group's Facebook page openly approves of, and celebrates, Tunisian "martyrs" fighting in Syria.<sup>93</sup>

Meanwhile, analysts say that Al-Qaeda is using the fighting in Mali and Syria to boost recruitment, particularly in poor neighborhoods and mosques across the Maghreb.<sup>94</sup> Young recruits are being trained in Mali, armed in Libya, and then sent to Syria to join the war against the Assad regime – part of an Al-Qaeda scheme to turn Syria into a breeding ground for global jihad.

## Mali

In January 2013, France launched a military offensive in an attempt to recapture northern Mali from Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Recently, France urged the UN to hold a vote in April to approve the deployment of peacekeeping forces to replace the French and African ones currently fighting Al-Qaeda-linked Islamist rebels in Mali.<sup>95</sup> However, Western officials are concerned that ongoing recruitment efforts and tough retaliatory attacks by the rebels may prevent French forces from withdrawing in April, as planned.<sup>96</sup> After two months of fighting, the French have recaptured northern Mali, driving hundreds of Islamist fighters into mountain and desert hideaways, where they have stashed weapons and supplies.<sup>97</sup> There is a risk that Islamist recruits from West African countries will regroup in Mali once the French offensive abates.

In fact, Western diplomats have warned that Islamist fighters are moving freely between Nigeria and northern Mali, despite the French offensive.<sup>98</sup> According to an expert from the Council on Foreign Relations, extremists have boosted recruitment by taking advantage "...of diminished counter-terrorism capabilities, porous borders, and internal stresses, most especially a high proportion of unemployed young males" in the Maghreb and Sahel.<sup>99</sup> There are also reports that efforts are being made to recruit men of North African origin in the UK to fight in Mali. The men have reportedly been offered money in exchange for training in the Sahara and kidnapping Westerners.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/03/in\\_early\\_february\\_a.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/03/in_early_february_a.php) (English).

<sup>94</sup> [http://www.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en\\_GB/features/awi/reportage/2013/03/08/reportage-01](http://www.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/reportage/2013/03/08/reportage-01) (English).

<sup>95</sup> <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/france-april-vote-mali-peacekeepers-18726580> (English).

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/03/13/us-mali-rebels-recruits-idUSBRE92C05V20130313> (English).

<sup>98</sup> <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/03/14/islamic-extremists-moving-freely-between-nigeria-mali-raising-terror-attack/> (English).

<sup>99</sup> <http://blogs.cfr.org/zenko/2013/03/13/worldwide-threats-briefing-highlights/> (English).

<sup>100</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-21754405> (English).

- Western and Arab media reported the death of Sheikh Abd al-Hamid Abu Zayd, one of the leaders of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in the Sahara, who was killed in Mali in early March 2013 by French forces. Abu Zayd was thought to have raised millions of dollars for AQIM by kidnapping and ransoming over 20 foreign hostages since 2008.<sup>101</sup>



**Abd al-Hamid Abu Zayd**

- A visitor to the Web forum Al-Minbar Al-'Ilami Al-Jihadi published an article titled, "The Tragedy in Mali: Where Are the Muslims?!". The heart breaks to see the enemies of Islam gaining strength and uniting against the Muslim Nation, which yet slumbers, mired in bloodshed and licentiousness, he wrote. The cries of Mali's people, whose only crime was to raise the banner of shari'a [Islamic law] fall on deaf ears! Shari'a will secure ensure their honor and end their humiliation at the hands a tyrannical secular regime, which is only interested in enslaving them to the Western master who exhausts them and plunders their natural resources. But the fault lies not with the West, according to the writer, which seeks only to benefit its faith, and which praises Zionism. The problem lies with the Muslims: Where are the Muslims? When will the sleeping lion awaken? When will the sick man be healed? When will he impose Islam, justice and godness on the world?<sup>102</sup>
- A visitor to the Web forum Al-Minbar Al-'Ilami Al-Jihadi posted an item titled, "What Is Happening in Mali?". According to the item, on March 21, 2012, a Malian Army junta took power in a military coup, by seizing the presidential palace in Bamako, the capital. The junta claimed it had staged the coup because the previous government had not sufficiently supported the Malian Army in its fight against Arab mujahideen in the north of the country.  
According to the item, the only reason for the coup was enmity towards the Muslims in northern Mali – and this had not changed. The secular, lower-ranking army officers who had organized the coup were threatened by the Muslims' takeover of northern Mali, and rightly so, since they are secular while the majority (90%) of the people in Mali, the

<sup>101</sup> <http://www.islamtoday.net/albasheer/> (Arabic).

<sup>102</sup> <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

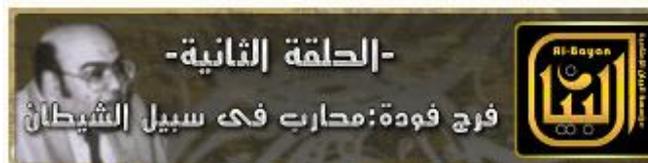
largest country in West Africa, are Muslim (5% of Mali's population is Christian, and another 5% practice other religions).

Concurrently, a number of Islamist groups declared the independence of the Azawad region of northern Mali, to both protect the Muslim identity of the region's residents and enable them to impose Islamic law [shari'a]. Ansar Al-Din, which had captured Timbuktu in northern Mali, added that it was waging a war for Islam in Mali, and opposed any revolution that was not in the name of Islam.

It is important to note that these events do not reflect a desire of the Islamists in the north to secede from Mali, but rather a rebellion against the secular coup and a demand that shari'a rule the everyday lives of the Muslim citizens of Mali. It is this that has spurred Western nations, chiefly France, to attempt to push back the mujahideen lest they establish an Islamic theocracy and export their ideas to neighboring countries.<sup>103</sup>

## Egypt

- The jihadist media institution Al-Bayan, which functions under the auspices of the Salafi-jihadist group Ansar Al-Sharia, published an article titled, "Faraj Foda: Fighting for Satan". Written by Sheikh Hazem al-Masri, an Egyptian Salafi-jihadist, the article is the second in a series titled, "The Despicable Acts of Secular People in Egypt".<sup>104</sup>



**The banner for the article**

- A visitor to the Web forum Al-Minbar Al-'Ilami Al-Jihadi published an article titled, "Egypt and the Civil War". According to the writer, a woman, although the electronic and print media tend to exaggerate, there is indeed anarchy Egypt's streets, as evidenced by the false demonstrations, by attacks on people and property, and by cheap political efforts to both fight the West and appeal to it for support. According to the writer, the goal of these despicable acts is to send Egypt into a maelstrom of both terrorist and criminal violence, and to foment civil war among the Muslims. According to the writer, everyone knew who was playing this game, chiefly the scandalous church and the Crusaders who fund Christian militias and hoard weapons for distribution to Christian citizens in time of

<sup>103</sup> <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>104</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

need. Also in the game are the heretical secularists, headed by Mohamed el-Baradei and El-Sayyis el-Badawi Shehata. They are but a political fig leaf covering deplorable acts. Lastly, survivors of the Mubarak period also play this game, with the help of the decades' worth of billions of dollars they stole from the Egyptian.

According to the writer, President Morsi and his advisors were also well aware of these facts, as was anyone involved in politics in Egypt or abroad – and indeed anyone with brains. She claimed that the Republican Guard, the intelligence, army, interior ministry and others with influence on Morsi did not really want him to remain in power, but also did not want to appear to be enemies of the revolution. They were therefore both helping to isolate him, and failing to defend him. The writer disparaged members of the Muslim Brotherhood and Saad el-Katatni and Essam el-Erian, two of its prominent leaders, for their loyalty to the movement, right or wrong.

According to the author, the Egyptian people are fodder for the destructive civil war engineered by the secular parties of Satan and the remnants of the previous regime. Not only have the people strayed from the straight path by watching movies and listening to [pop] songs, but they have also strayed in their thinking. The heretical media broadcast poison day and night, leading the Egyptian people astray.

The writer stressed that the civil war was rumbling under the surface. The war would be devastating. It would have no losers, because the majority would annihilate its enemies. It would be a war between Islam and the infidels, devoid of flowery rhetoric and games. "Citizenship", "change", "innovation", "modernity" – all were heretical concepts, meaningless, and in contravention of the word of Allah and His Messenger.

In the author's opinion, the Salafists do not realize what is happening. Those whom they insist on seeing as Muslims are plotting [this war]. The Salafists insist on negotiating with them, because they are purportedly "nationalists". Yet the war, she wrote, exists.<sup>105</sup>

- A visitor to the Web forum Al-Minbar Al-'Ilami Al-Jihadi published an article titled, "The Struggle between Islam and the Secular People of Egypt". According to the writer, the fight between the Muslims and the infidels is ancient, and began when Adam struggled against Satan. For tens if not hundreds of years this struggle has persisted, its goals clear and constant; the only thing that changes is the identity of the soldiers of Satan. According to the writer, the infidels were not always united in their protracted struggle against Islam, but they always persevered, whether in Baghdad, Lebanon or Syria. In today's Egypt, he wrote, the soldiers of Satan call themselves "secular". These infidel forces include secular political parties such as the Wafd Party, Alghag Party, and the

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<sup>105</sup> <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

Free Egyptians Party [Al-Masreyeen Al-Ahrar]. Its representatives are Mohamed al-Baradei and El-Sayyis el-Badawi Shehata.

These secular forces are supported by others who share their goal, but differ from them in their political aspirations. For example, the Muslim Brotherhood, like the secular movement, wants to establish a mendacious democracy, heretical parliament and infidel constitution, but disagrees with them as to who should hold power. The Salafists, who want to Islamize democracy and participate in the political game, are puppets in the hands of both sides; they are ignorant fools. According to the writer, the Muslim Brotherhood has stated that it does not want to Islamize anything, but rather has adopted the secular program. Moreover, it has changed its slogan from "Islam is the solution" to "democracy is the solution", "the majority is the solution" – all heretical solutions.

According to the writer, the real solution is power and struggle, not a parliamentary argument grounded in cooperation. Tragically, many clerics have yet to realize this. Most Muslims, enchanted by democracy, believe that the cure lies in the illness.<sup>106</sup>

## Somalia

*The UN Security Council has extended the mandate of the African Union peacekeeping force in Somalia for another year,<sup>107</sup> and has partially lifted the arms ban on Somalia for one year to enable the Somali government to better protect the areas it recaptured from Al-Qaeda affiliate Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen. However, some analysts express concern that the government may not be able to control what happens:<sup>108</sup> The lifting of the arms embargo could trigger a proliferation of weapons, which could end up in the hands of terrorists.<sup>109</sup> Although Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen was driven out of Mogadishu in 2011, it still controls areas of southwest Somalia, from which it carries out attacks.*

- Following elections in Kenya on March 3, 2013, Sheikh Mokhtar Ali Zubeyr, the emir of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, was interviewed in Somali by Radio Andalus, a Somali Islamic radio station. The Shahada Media Center published an Arabic-language version of the interview, which Zubeyr addressed to the Kenyan people.

Zubeyr stated that the Kenyan government had infiltrated Islamic territories in northeastern Kenya, which everyone knows are the source of Kenya's security and

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<sup>106</sup> <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>107</sup> <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=44303&Cr=Somalia&Cr1=#.UUH7xhyG0mE> (English).

<sup>108</sup> <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/03/its-still-a-bad-idea-to-sell-arms-to-somalia/273889/> (English).

<sup>109</sup> [http://sabahionline.com/en\\_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2013/03/12/feature-01](http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2013/03/12/feature-01) (English).

economic progress: There is less theft there, more commerce, fewer displaced persons crossing into Kenya. For this reason, many refugees had come to live in the Islamic territories, under Islamic law [shari'a], in safety and honor.

According to Zubeyr, the Kenyan government had destroyed these good things when it invaded the Islamic territories, and in so doing also did a disservice to all of Kenyan society: Security vanished, the economy declined, unemployment and the number of displaced persons increased, social services diminished – all because the government had used its resources for war. Yet the war was only just beginning; the life of the Kenyan people was about to change.

On the eve of elections, Zubeyr stressed that whomever the Kenyan people chose would determine what would happen to Kenya's economy and security in the future. The government, he said, had forced them into a war that was not their own, and had used them, and the war, to benefit the colonialist West.

The Kenyan government had infringed on the rights of the country's Muslims, in particular, he stated. It had massacred and oppressed them: "The Kenyan regime has treated you like foreigners and second-class citizens, it has stolen your lands, jailed your clerics and even killed them. You must boycott the elections! Fight the Kenyan Army! Only through jihad can you preserve your wealth and honor and regain your rights".<sup>110</sup>

- The jihadist media institution Al-Kitaab, which is affiliated with Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, published a video clip by the group's leader in Kenya, Sheikh Ndugu Ahmed Iman, titled, "Democracy Is Heresy".<sup>111</sup>
- Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen took responsibility for a series of attacks perpetrated during the first half of March 2013 against African Coalition and Somali government forces throughout Somalia, including in Mogadishu. Al-Shabab also announced the conclusion of the month-long course in shari'a [Islamic law]; reported meeting tribal leaders in Juba Province; and reported seizing contraband drugs.<sup>112</sup>
- A news item posted on Hanein, a jihadist Web forum, stated that Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen had assassinated Mustafa 'Amer, the head of the intelligence department in the Somali capital Mogadishu, and another senior official. According to Al-Shabab, Uthman Fufuli, head of the intelligence department in Karan Province, also died in the attack. Al-Shabab further reported looting weapons and documents from the bodies, and

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<sup>110</sup> <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>111</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>112</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

expressed pride that they had succeeded in assassinating these men in the capital, in broad daylight – a sure sign of the regime’s weakness.<sup>113</sup>



The banner reads, “The crown on our heads: Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen”

## Nigeria

- Al-Qabidhun, a media institution that functions under the auspices of the jihadist Web forum Snam Al-Islam, published an announcement by Ansar Al-Muslimeen in the Land of Black Africans, a Salafi-jihadist group with ties to the Nigerian group Boko Haram. The announcement trumpeted the execution of seven Christian hostages who were captured on February 17, 2013 at an installation of the Setraco building concern in Nigeria. Translated from the Arabic, the announcement read: “As we announced in the past, Ansar Al-Muslimeen in the Land of Black Africans captured seven Christians and warned against any attempt to free them by force, which would endanger their lives. The government of Nigeria ignored this warning, and issued a command and tried every military means to free the Christian prisoners. In addition, the British government sent five bomber planes, soldiers and intelligence agents to liberate the Christian prisoners. Moreover, British forces arrested civilians, including women and children, and even killed some of them. As a result of the joint Nigerian and British military action, the seven Christian prisoners were killed. The world must know that the soul of one Muslim is worth the souls of thousands of infidels who do not believe in Allah”.<sup>114</sup>

## The Caucasus

*In separate operations in the northern Caucasus province of Kabardino-Balkaria, Russian security forces killed several Islamist militants, apparently including Islamist leader Adam Khushalayev, who was wanted by the Russian authorities for over a decade.*<sup>115</sup>

<sup>113</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>114</sup> <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>115</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/03/07/us-russia-chechnya-idUSBRE9260VM20130307> (English).

*Although the Russian government regained control of Chechnya a decade ago, Islamist rebels continue to launch frequent attacks from Chechen territory. The Caucasus Emirate has said it plans to attack the Winter Olympics in Sochi next year.*

*At the same time, Chechen Islamist fighters continue to trickle into Syria to participate in the war to bring down Bashar al-Assad's regime. According to Syrian soldiers and analysts, dozens of North Caucasus fighters are in Syria.<sup>116</sup> Not only is the Chechen presence in Syria said to be considerable, but in some areas, Caucasus mujahideen are reportedly leading the fighting.*

- The Caucasus Islamic Emirate published a report detailing its actions in various provinces of the Caucasus between January 11 and February 11, 2013.<sup>117</sup>
- Valiat Dagestan, a jihadist Web site, summarized the activities of mujahideen in the Caucasus between February 13 and March 13, 2013. According to the data, the mujahideen carried out a total of 31 operations, in which 18 of "Allah's enemies" were killed and 30 of them wounded, and 15 mujahideen were martyred. Also, the mujahideen intercepted 10 supply convoys and destroyed five buildings.<sup>118</sup>
- In early March 2013, Valiat Dagestan launched an Arabic-language site and a new engine which site visitors could use to post announcements, without spreading Spam. The appearance of an Arabic-language Web presence for Valiat Dagestan (at <http://VDagestan.com/ar>) is an indication of its expansion, and follows the launching of its official Twitter feed several months ago.<sup>119</sup> Even as it expands, however, Valiat Dagestan continues to be plagued by cyber attacks that interfere with its regular operation. According to the site's administrator, these attacks are perpetrated by the FSB [Russia's federal security service].<sup>120</sup>
- Sada Al-Kavkaz, a jihadist media institution, published a letter written by Vakha Umarov, the brother of Doku Umarov, emir of the Caucasus Islamic Emirate. In the letter, Facha addressed the ongoing collaboration of certain Muslims with Russian intelligence agencies in their war against the Caucasus Emirate, claiming their enmity has both personal and ideological foundations.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/03/06/us-syria-crisis-russia-militants-idUSBRE9251BT20130306> (English).

<sup>117</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>118</sup> <http://vdagestan.com/svodka-boevyx-operacij-modzhaxedov-ik-za-mesyac-rabbi-as-sani-1434-goda-po-xidzhre-12-fevralya-12-marta-2013-g.djihad> (Russian).

<sup>119</sup> <http://vdagestan.com/novosti-sajta-otkryta-arabskaya-versiya-sajta-vdagestan.djihad> (Russian).

<sup>120</sup> <http://vdagestan.com/informacionnaya-vojn-na-nash-sajt-obrushilas-moshhnaya-ddos-ataka.djihad> (Russian).

<sup>121</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

## The West

- The Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF) published a video clip titled, “The Nationalism of the Crusaders Is Under My Feet” by Sheikh Abu Osama al-Gharib, an Austrian citizen who is a member of the German Salafi-jihadist group Millat Ibrahim. The video shows al-Gharib tearing up and setting fire to his European passport.<sup>122</sup>



**An advertisement for a video clip featuring Sheikh Abu Osama al-Gharib**

## Miscellaneous

- The Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF) published an audio-taped sermon by Sheikh Khalid al-Hussainan, a member of Al-Qaeda’s Shari’a [Islamic Legal] Council, delivered on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha in 2012. Originally from Kuwait, al-Hussainan was killed in a US drone strike in the tribal areas of Pakistan in December 2012.<sup>123</sup>
- Masmu’a Al-Kheir lil-Inshad, a jihadist propaganda group, published an album of hymns praising fulfillment of the commandment of jihad.<sup>124</sup>
- The virtual workshop of the jihadist Web forum Shumukh Al-Islam published a series of banners to promote the liberation of Sunnis imprisoned in Iran, who faced execution by the Iranian regime.<sup>125</sup>



**A banner urging Muslims to remember their brothers who were being executed by Iran**

<sup>122</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>123</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>124</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>125</sup> <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

- A link posted on the jihadist Web forum Hanein led to a caricature originally posted on Facebook. The caricature, emblematic of the tendency of Islamic, and especially jihadist, discourse to criticize wealthy Muslims, depicts two such Muslims whose thinking has been clouded by alcohol – whose consumption is prohibited by Islam. In the caricature (shown at right), a young Arab warns that “Al-Aqsa is in danger!”. But the sheikh in the armchair is too drunk to understand him, and his assistant, who is also drunk and befuddled, relates what the young man said, but switches two letters in Arabic, such that instead of saying that Al-Aqsa is in danger, he says “Al-Aqsa is in Qatar”.<sup>126</sup>



## Facebook and Twitter

- On March 3, 2013, Al-Bayan, the jihadist media institution of Ansar Al-Sharia in Egypt headed by Sheikh Ahmad Ashush, launched a Facebook page. By April 2013, the page had received 700 “likes”.<sup>127</sup>



The logo of Al-Bayan

- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum Al-Fida reported that a Web site called Jihad of the Muslim Nation had a presence on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/jihadul\\_ummah](http://www.facebook.com/jihadul_ummah)), Twitter (<https://twitter.com/Jihadulummah>), and YouTube ([www.youtube.com/user/jihedalomma](http://www.youtube.com/user/jihedalomma)).<sup>128</sup>

<sup>126</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>127</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%B3%D8%B3%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9/481423225239231> (Arabic).

<sup>128</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com> (Arabic).



The logo of Jihad Al-Ummah [Jihad of the Muslim Nation]

- According to a visitor to the jihadist Web forum Al-Fida, Dagestan Province of the Caucasus Islamic Emirate opened a Twitter account in Arabic on September 22, 2012 ([https://twitter.com/VDagestan\\_Ar](https://twitter.com/VDagestan_Ar)).<sup>129</sup>



The Twitter feed of Valiat Dagestan

- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum Al-Fida initiated a propaganda campaign on behalf of the mujahideen, which promotes “revival of the Sunna” – that is, implementation of shari’a [Islamic law]. He asked that other Web surfers add a banner he had designed, which bears the legend “Reviving Sunna”, to their Facebook page(s), to disseminate the idea and draw supporters.<sup>130</sup>



The logo that a visitor to Al-Fida urged friends to add to their Facebook page

<sup>129</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com> (Arabic).z

<sup>130</sup> <http://al-fidaa.com> (Arabic).

- During the first half of March 2013, an article was uploaded to the jihadist Web forum Hanein, which originally appeared on the official Web site of the Al-Quds Brigades, the military wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ).<sup>131</sup> According to the article, social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter are a fertile ground for the espionage activities of the “Zionist Mossad”. The article also stated how to protect oneself when using a social network. To understand the dangers inherent in using social networks, a “guest” who participated in the forum discussion named Abu Huzaifah, apparently a commander in the Al-Quds Brigades, explained how the Israeli Mossad gathers information. He added that the security mechanisms of the Al-Quds Brigades had witnessed tens of attempts to steal data and recruit people through Facebook. For example, Abu Huzaifah explained that anyone using a social networking site was unwittingly revealing information about when he logged onto the site, where he liked to go for fun, who his friends and contacts were, how he used social networking sites – even what he and his friends look like. All of this information, current photographs, and more, can be stolen by hacking into social networks. Clearly, the Al-Quds Brigades have a “technological unit” of their own, which monitors warnings and disseminates security guidelines to mujahideen regarding the dangers of the Internet in general, and of social networks in particular.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> <http://www.saraya.ps> (Arabic).

<sup>132</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).