

Periodic Review: Summary of Information from Jihadist Web Forums

The Second Half of March 2012

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

- In two separate audio files, Al-Qaeda leader Ayman Al-Zawahiri exhorts the Pakistani people to oppose their army and government, and the Afghani people to join jihad and beware of Muslims who collaborate with the US.
- Muhammad Al-Zawahiri, brother of Ayman Al-Zawahiri, is released from prison in Egypt.
- The Pakistani Taliban will wreak vengeance on the Pakistani regime and gain control of Pakistan's nuclear weapons, according to top Taliban commander in Mohmand tribal region Sheikh Omar Khaled Al-Khurasani.
- Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) will strike at the heart of Germany, it says, unless the German government frees a Muslim woman prisoner in exchange for the release of a German hostage being held by AQIM.
- Contributors to jihadist Web forums praise Mohammed Merah, the terrorist from Toulouse, and urge Muslim youth in the West to emulate him.
- Leading jihadist Web forums Al-Fida, Shumukh Al-Islam, and Ansar Al-Mujahideen cease functioning during the latter half of March 2012. Ansar Al-Mujahideen and Shumukh Al-Islam resume activity in early April.

New Publications

Ideology

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Sahab published a new video clip of Al-Qaeda leader Sheikh Ayman Al-Zawahiri titled, "To the People of Pakistan on the American Attack on the Pakistan Army in Mohmand". In it, Al-Zawahiri calls on the people of Pakistan to rebel against the Pakistani Army and the corrupt government in Islamabad. Al-Zawahiri warns that Dr. Warren Weinstein, a Jewish American who was kidnapped in Lahore and has been held by the Taliban since August 2011, will not return to his family until Al-Qaeda's demands have been met. These include demands to release Aafia Siddiqui, Sheikh Omar Abd Al-Rahman, relatives of Sheikh Osama bin Laden, and anyone else arrested on suspicion or accusation of membership in Al-Qaeda.¹
- The jihadist media outlet Al-Sahab published a video clip by Al-Qaeda leader Ayman Al-Zawahiri titled, "To Our People in Afghanistan: The War for Honor and the Holy Places". Al-Zawahiri appeals to the Afghani people to recognize the true depraved nature of the so-called cultured citizens of the secular West. As ballast for his argument, he cites a video clip of US Marines urinating on the corpses of Afghans, which was widely disseminated on the Internet in early January 2012. According to Al-Zawahiri, the Crusader invaders daily trample the honor of Afghanistan and the Afghani people; he also speaks of the treachery of Muslims who collaborate [with the US] out of monetary greed, calling them more dangerous than the enemy. In conclusion, Al-Zawahiri exhorts Afghans to join jihad and the mujahideen under the banner of the Islamic Emirate led by Emir Mullah Muhammad Omar.²



To Our People in Afghanistan: A War for Honor and the Holy Places

¹ <http://www.shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

² <http://www.shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

- Sheikh Abu Saad Al-Amili, a prominent contributor to jihadist Web forums, addressed doubts regarding the “activities of the mujahideen in the Lands of the Cross”. He claimed that the enemies’ doubts had unconsciously seeped into the hearts of Muslims, who do not apprehend the enemies’ nefarious goals or pitiless crimes against Muslims. The desire of Muslims to avenge these crimes is justified, but is resisted by other Muslims, who dissociate themselves [from those desiring vengeance] on the pretext that acts of revenge will ultimately hurt Muslims in “infidel lands” and prevent da’wa [missionary outreach] in the West. Al-Amili explained that the governments and peoples of the Crusader West are *ahl al-harb* [people of the sword, enemies], to whom the laws applying to *ahl al-dhimmi* [protected peoples] should not be applied. He explained that if those who doubted the efficacy of the acts of the mujahideen were to examine them in depth, they would discover that some Western countries had never been targeted by the mujahideen. Those Western countries that had never been a target of the mujahideen were those that had never sought war against Islam, and that in fact treat Muslims with a certain degree of justice or at least neutrality. Therefore, as long as these countries persist in such policies, it is neither logical nor religiously sanctioned for the mujahideen to attack them. Al-Amili suggested that the Muslims first examine their own deeds; he recommended that doubters investigate the topic, and review the many studies and articles written on it. This, he stated, would lead them to conclude that their attitude had been mistaken, and would combat the suspicion sown by Islam’s enemies. Their very attack on jihadist propaganda, wrote Al-Amili, is the best proof that jihadist organs have leveled a fatal blow against them by uncovering their deception and disproving their doubts.³

Strategy

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Fajr published an audio file titled, “Intelligence and Methods of Collecting Information”. It is the 28th installment in a series titled, “The Terrorism Industry: A Course in Security and Intelligence”.⁴

³ <http://hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

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

Guidebooks and Instruction Pamphlets

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Qayrawan, which is associated with Ansar Al-Sharia in Tunisia, published an article titled, "Public Relations for the Mujahed: First Steps toward Acquiring Skills for the Propaganda Jihad". According to the article, the jihadist media is composed of two overlapping fields: "internal communications", and "external communications". By "internal communications", the article means the media – that is, radio, television, and local magazines and newspapers – in a country or arena where jihad is taking place. By "external communications" the article means, primarily, the Internet, which offers ease of communication, anonymity, and a relatively high level of security. The article claims that some of the skills needed for the two are similar. For example, the mujahed engaged in public relations for the cause must be very familiar with his country's radio and television stations, as well as with the Internet; he must know how to write, edit, do some basic graphic design, create video and audio files, and know how to use computer programs. He must remain abreast of current events, be an expert in data input and codification, and be proficient in guarding his own security and that of the people working with him. He must know other languages, both those of the enemy – English, French, Russian – and those of subjugated peoples – Urdu, Somali – so as to get the message of jihad to as many people as possible. He must be patient, dedicated, level-headed, moral – especially if he works with women – consistent, decisive and creative. He must follow the policy and guidelines established by his leaders, and contribute to a creative exchange of ideas with other mujahideen in the field. The article suggests establishing an archive of jihadist materials and offering online courses in the skills necessary for the mujahed engaged in propaganda and public relations. Lastly, the article stresses the importance of jihadist media institutions to efficiently coordinating jihad on all fronts.⁵

⁵ <http://www.shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).



Guidelines for the media-savvy mujahed

Promoting the Myth of Martyrdom

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Furqan published a biography of the *shahid* [martyr] Husein Matshar Al-Zaydi Abu Suhaib Al-Ansari. It is the fiftieth in a series of biographies of martyrs.⁶



Husein Matshar Al-Zaydi Abu Suhaib Al-Ansari

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Malahem, which functions under the auspices of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), published the tenth biography in a series on martyrs from the Arabian Peninsula. Its subject is Muwahid Al-Ma'ribi Ali bin Saud bin Jamil Al-Ubaydi.⁷

⁶ <http://www.shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁷ <http://www.shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).



Muwahid Al-Ma'ribi Ali bin Saud bin Jamil Al-Ubaydi

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Sahab published a video clip titled, "Daily Life of a Mujahid 6". The video clip describes a day in the life of the mujahideen in Afghanistan.⁸
- Ismail Jad Ismail, described as an historian of the mujahideen, published a short biography of Sheikh Osama bin Laden, the former leader of Al-Qaeda.⁹



Cover of a biography of Osama bin Laden

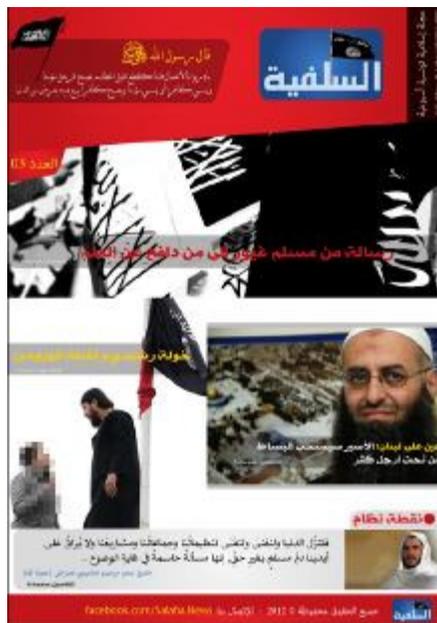
Magazines

- The third issue of the Tunisian Salafi-jihadist weekly *Majlat Al-Salafiyya* (16 pp.) appeared on March 18, 2012. That week's issue included comments on the need to defend Tunisia's Muslim identity; Sayyid Qutb's view that Tunisia

⁸ <http://www.shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁹ <http://www.shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

should be transformed into an Islamic society; and eulogies praising Sheikh Atiyah Allah (a senior member of Al-Qaeda killed in a drone strike in late August 2011) and Sheikh Osama bin Laden.¹⁰ The magazine was first published in late February, on Facebook. It is worth noting that in Tunisia, the Arab Spring gave Muslim extremist groups with a Salafist orientation the opportunity to expand their activities and influence. To date, this has amounted primarily to more energetic da'wa [missionary] and propaganda activities.



The third issue of *Majlat Al-Salafiyya*, the Tunisian Salafi-jihadist weekly

Reports from the Field

Afghanistan-Pakistan

- The jihadist media outlet Omar, which functions under the aegis of the Pakistani Taliban, published a video clip by the top Taliban commander in Mohmand, one of Pakistan's restive tribal agencies, Sheikh Omar Khaled Al-Khurasani, titled "The History of the Taliban in Pakistan". In it, Al-Khurasani reviews motives and milestones in the establishment of the Taliban in Pakistan. He then warns the Pakistani regime against retaliating against the Taliban or his Agency, calls for the implementation of shari'a [Islamic law], and asserts the Taliban's aim of controlling Pakistan's nuclear weapons and establishing a worldwide caliphate. The last of these aspirations reveals that, like Al-Qaeda, the Pakistani Taliban have a global agenda.¹¹

¹⁰ <http://www.facebook.com/Salafia.News> (Arabic).

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



Sheikh Omar Khaled Al-Khurasani and friends

- The jihadist media outlet Omar, which is associated with the Pakistani Taliban, published a video clip in Urdu titled, "The Truth about Today's War".¹²
- The Pakistani Taliban announced it had successfully ambushed a NATO supply convoy in Gulistan Province, killing a senior enemy officer named Muhammad Nabi Khan and 40 of his soldiers.¹³

Iraq

- A group of Iraqis calling themselves Jamaat Rayat Al-Haq wal-Jihad [Flag of Right and Jihad] claimed to be helping the mujahideen in Syria in their struggle to overthrow the Syrian regime. The group announced that it would welcome volunteers wishing to go to Syria. It is worth noting that this is the second Iraqi group to declare its involvement in jihad against the Syrian regime; the first was Al-Jabha Al-Islamiya lil-Moqawama Al-Iraqiya (JAMI) [The Islamic Front for the Iraqi Resistance]. Web surfers hailed the announcements of both groups and called on all such groups in Iraq to follow in their footsteps.¹⁴
- In an announcement titled, "The Invasion of the Commander Jarah Al-Shami", the Islamic State of Iraq took responsibility for a series of attacks in Haditha and Barwana, two cities in Anbar Province. Some 27 Iraqi security personnel, including senior officials, were killed in the attacks. According to the announcement, 90 mujahideen had vowed to fight to the death; many of them set out for Haditha with explosive belts. This series of attacks was

¹² <http://www.shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

¹³ <http://www.shahamat-arabic.com/index> (Arabic).

¹⁴ <http://hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

named for Jarah Al-Shami, a Syrian member of the Islamic State of Iraq's Shura Council.¹⁵

- The Islamic State of Iraq took responsibility for an attack in which a booby-trapped car was driven into the General Police Academy, which is responsible for training Iraq's security forces. The Islamic State of Iraq subsequently published a detailed report of all (29) of the attacks it had carried out in Baghdad in February 2012.¹⁶
- The Islamic State of Iraq took responsibility for a wave of attacks against security installations, which were meant to interfere with the security arrangements planned by the government of Iraq during a summit of Arab leaders in Baghdad.¹⁷
- A contributor to the jihadist Web forum Hanein wrote at length about the Baath Party, which he associated with the Shiites, claiming that both hate Islam and the mujahideen; he used Iraq, and now Syria, to illustrate this. According to the contributor, after the demise of the Iraqi Baath Party, its former members joined the Shiites in fighting the mujahideen. However, this relationship was one-sided: Iraq's Shiite regime had no mercy on the former Baathists, many of whom it imprisoned or executed. The Baathists nevertheless persisted, flouting the laws of Allah and accusing the Salafists of the most perverse things. In Syria, too, Baathists have joined the Alawite president – whose regime is being supported by Iran – in his struggle against Islam and the Sunnis. The contributor wished on the [Syrian] Baathists the same bitter end met by the Iraqi Baathists: death by hanging. Visitors to Hanein responded to these comments, which devolved into an argument about the role of the Baathists in the oppression of Islam and the Sunnis. One contributor who was adamant in his opposing view, wrote that Iraq's Baathists had been the ones to fight Iran, the ones who had exposed the Shiites' hatred of the Muslim nation (even before the religious authorities – who didn't raise a finger). They were the ones who had stopped Khomeini in his tracks and prevented Iran from exporting its revolution. They were the ones who had protected the Sunnis, who had stemmed the evil Shiites; and, although they had not succeeded in imposing Islamic law, they had succeeded

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

¹⁶ <http://aljahad.com/vb> (Arabic).

¹⁷ <http://www.shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

in converting some Shiites to Sunnism. The first contributor, whose comments had sparked this discussion, vigorously opposed this opinion, calling it unworthy and challenging the writer to expose his true face as a member of the Baath Party. He asked his readers not to forget how the Iraqi Baath regime [of Saddam Hussein] had assassinated mujahideen and Sunnis, placed restrictions on Islam, and distorted the message of important religious leaders. At this point, the administrator of Hanein intervened, and asked the first contributor not to denigrate those whose opinions he did not share. Additional contributors wrote of the disloyalty and treachery of the Baathists in their stand against Islam; they noted that one of the Baath Party's founders, Michel Aflaq, was a Christian. Most of the contributors opposed the Baath Party as a secular, communist party; some claimed it had been "born of a union between the Persians and the Zionists".¹⁸

- Following a broadcast on Al-Arabiya Television revealing the identity of the heads of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, a contributor to the jihadist Web forum Hanein warned the mujahideen in the Islamic State of Iraq, especially those engaged in propaganda and public relations, not to reveal secrets if they were arrested – as many already had done. To preclude such eventualities, the writer offered the following advice: encrypt materials and send them by email rather than over Web forums, which can be hacked into, and make sure the faces of mujahideen are not shown in photographs. He then asked why some mujahideen in Iraq had received jihadist literature one month before it was disseminated over the Internet. In response to this post, another contributor wrote that Al-Arabiya Television had only revealed the identity of Abu Muhammad Al-Adnani, the spokesman of the Islamic State of Iraq. The others whose faces had appeared in the broadcast were not part of the leadership.¹⁹
- Visitors to the jihadist Web forum Hanein wrote of the intensive security preparations for the Arab summit to be held in Baghdad. Contributors commented that they expected the mujahideen to seriously interfere with the summit, whose participants they denounced, despite equally expecting that it would be hard for the mujahideen to cause any real damage. Contributors ridiculed the small turnout to the summit, commenting that participants were from the lower echelons of government; they claimed that this was due to the

¹⁸ <http://hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

¹⁹ <http://hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

fear of terrorist attacks. A long-standing contributor to Hanein challenged those who claimed to be fighting the spread of the Shiites and Persians in Iraq, saying that they in fact were doing nothing. He added that he was not holding his breath in anticipation of Iraqi jihadists' attacks on the Arab summit, cynically adding that they had shown their dependability and ability to really fight the enemy.²⁰

The Arabian Peninsula

- The jihadist press agency Madad, which functions under the auspices of Ansar Al-Sharia, published its eponymous Newsletter No. 14,²¹ which focuses on recent developments in Yemen.
- The jihadist press agency Madad, which functions under the auspices of Ansar Al-Sharia, published a video clip of a speech delivered by Sheikh Muhammad Al-Hanaq subsequent to his visit to Waqar Emirate in Abyan Governorate.²² Sheikh Al-Hanaq was killed on March 4, 2012.
- Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) announced having killed Joel Shrum, an American teacher in Taiz, Yemen, whom it claimed was really engaged in Christian missionary work. AQAP insisted it would not tolerate Christian proselytizing, which it sees as one more facet of America's war against the Muslims.²³

The Maghreb [North Africa]

- Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) published a videotaped message to the German government, in which it threatened to "strike at the heart of Germany" unless it immediately released a Muslim woman named Umm Sayf Allah Al-Ansariyyah from prison. In exchange for her release, AQIM promised to free Edgar Fritz Raupach, a German engineer whom it had been holding for some three months. Raupach disappeared on January 25, 2012.²⁴

²⁰ <http://hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

²¹ <http://www.shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

²² <http://www.shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

²³ <http://www.shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

²⁴ <http://as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).



From the video clip issued by AQIM to the German government

- Islamic elements in Tunisia made a show of force in favor of implementing Islamic law. A contributor to the jihadist Web forum Hanein noted that demonstrations and discussions would not help, as the Tunisian government was not likely to answer the call of the masses. According to him, although the current government knows that victory will be won thanks to Islamic law, it treats this truth lightly, deceiving the public. He assured readers that the number of supporters of shari'a [Islamic law] would grow by the day, and that the current government would face a humiliating end – soon.²⁵



People demonstrating in support of sending Tunisian Army troops to Syria

- Reports of a dance festival in Morocco in May, in which dancers from Israel will participate, elicited a flurry of protests from Web surfers. They claimed that although the Moroccan government is purportedly led by the Islamic party, authority has really remained in the hands of King Hassan II. Those

²⁵ <http://hanein.infor/vb> (Arabic).

serving in the government are corrupt; although they speak the rhetoric of resistance and opposition to normalization [with Israel] and to corruption, they act in contravention of their comments. Other Web surfers objected to criticism of the government, and placed blame on the corrupt king. They urged their compatriots not to waste energy criticizing the wrong target – the government – but rather to aim their arrows at the monarchy. In response, some questioned why the government lets the regime use it against the people.²⁶

- A visitor to the jihadist web forum Hanein leveled sharp criticism against the Al-Nahdha Party in Tunisia, which has declared that Islamic law would not be the chief source of legislation there. According to this writer, An-Nahdha has followed an erroneous path for years, despite the demonstrations throughout Tunisia in favor of the implementation of Islamic law. Another Web surfer asked (rhetorically) what the visitor expected governments that had come to power following the Arab Spring to do. If he had advice he should voice it, and if he had a magic solution for implementing Islamic law, he should reveal it. Other Web surfers supported the comments of the first contributor, citing Egypt as an example: although the Muslim Brotherhood had come to power there, it has tended toward secular a-religious elements rather than establishing a committee to form a constitution based on the Qur'an. Of late, the Muslim Brotherhood has become a target of criticism for purportedly including "secular infidel elements" in its ideology.²⁷
- On March 27, 2012, Sheikh Abu Basir Al-Tartusi left his permanent home in Britain and arrived in Tunisia, where he is teaching classes in Islamic law, and giving sermons and lectures. A relevant video clip has been posted on YouTube.²⁸



Sheikh Abu Basir Al-Tartusi teaching

²⁶ <http://hanein.infor/vb> (Arabic).

²⁷ <http://hanein.infor/vb> (Arabic).

²⁸ <http://aljahad.com/vb> (Arabic).

- A woman contributor to the jihadist Web forum Ansar Al-Mujahideen in Arabic posted a photograph of a Salafi-jihadist named Yasser Al-Budeiri, who was put on trial for having replaced the Tunisian national flag with Al-Qaeda's banner.²⁹



Yasser Al-Budeiri prefers Al-Qaeda's banner to Tunisia's flag

Al-Sham [Greater Syria]

- The Policy Committee of Fath Al-Islam, a Salafi-jihadist organization active in Al-Sham, published a position paper titled, "The Revolution in Syria and the Removal of the World's Mask", in which it discusses why the West has not intervened in events in Syria or tried to topple the regime of Bashar Al-Assad, despite its massacre of the Syrian people. According to the Committee, the main reasons for the West's failure to act are its desire to protect Israel's security and borders and its desire to weaken Islam, especially Sunni Islam, in light of the Arab Spring revolutions. According to the Committee, the intractable conflict between Syria's Sunni population and its Alawite regime, which is backed by Iran's Shiite regime and by Hezbollah, is in the West's interest.³⁰
- The Abdallah Azzam Brigades, a Salafi-jihadist group active in Al-Sham, published an announcement titled, "A Response to the False Claims of the Intelligence Authorities: Part One". The Brigades refuted an item that appeared in Hezbollah-backed newspapers, sourced from an intelligence division of the Lebanese Army, according to which a force affiliated with the

²⁹ <http://as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

³⁰ <http://www.shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

Brigades in northern Lebanon had been exposed as having planned to blow up an army base.³¹

- A first announcement has been published by Al-Manarah Al-Baydhah, a jihadist media outlet affiliated with the Salafi-jihadist Front for the Defense of the Syrian People. In it, the Front took responsibility for attacking the intelligence division of the Syrian Air Force and the administration of the Internal Security Forces in Damascus.³²
- Contributors to the jihadist Web forum Hanein wondered why the media focused on terrorist attacks against strongholds of the Syrian regime while it treated the massacre of the Syrian people relatively lightly. They asked why there was opposition to the jihad in Syria, and why doubts were being cast on the motives for jihad there, as well as on the mujahideen. Other contributors explained that the hatred of Al-Qaeda rampant in the media and the corrupt regimes that control the media have caused an outcry [against jihad and the mujahideen] and prevented the public from uniting around the mujahideen. They claimed that if US or NATO airplanes were to hit Syrian strongholds, they would be applauded. A different contributor explained that the [terrorist] attacks were receiving attention because they were "deadly weapons". Other contributors noted that the Free Syrian Army had denounced the most recent attacks against regime strongholds by The Front for the Defense of the Syrian People, even as it was demanding international intervention.³³
- The jihadist media institution Ibn Taymiyyah, which is affiliated with the Palestinian Salafi-jihadist group Army of Islam, published a video clip titled, "Media Coverage of the Determined Residents of the Sinai Peninsula and Their Encircling International Military Posts to Insist on the Liberation from Egyptian Government Prisons of Their Brethren the Mujahideen".³⁴

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

³² <http://www.shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

³³ <http://hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

³⁴ <http://www.shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).



From a video clip posted by Ibn Taymiyyah

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Rayah published an audio file titled, "Patience, Our Al-Sham: Dawn Is Near", by Sheikh Abu Abdallah Al-Ghazi, a member of the Shura Council of the Palestinian Salafi-jihadist Army of the Nation – Bayt Al-Maqdis.³⁵
- The Salafi-jihadist Web portal Minbar Al-Tawhid published a second video clip about Sheikh Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi, the father of the Salafi-jihadist camp in Jordan. Al-Maqdisi is currently serving time in a Jordanian prison for abetting terrorism and for having established the portal.³⁶

Egypt

- The jihadist media outlet Al-Faroq, which concentrates on events in Egypt, extended blessings to "the Islamic world, the Islamic and jihadist movement, and Dr. Ayman Al-Zawahiri" on the release of his brother Sheikh Muhammad Al-Zawahiri from an Egyptian prison. Al-Faroq also published a video clip immortalizing his release.³⁷ Muhammad Al-Zawahiri had joined jihad in Afghanistan several times; he had also worked for the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), and had visited multiple Muslim countries. Muhammad Al-Zawahiri was ultimately captured in a Persian Gulf nation, from which he was extradited to Egypt. While in prison, he had unified and instilled faith in the prisoners.

³⁵ <http://66.225.155.72/~leyothin/vb/> (Arabic).

³⁶ <http://as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

³⁷ <http://www.shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).



Muhammad Al-Zawahiri, brother of Al-Qaeda leader Ayman Al-Zawahiri, is released from an Egyptian prison

Africa

Somalia

- During the latter half of March, 2012, Al-Kataib, the media outlet of the Somali jihadist group Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, published the following announcements:³⁸
 - Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen took responsibility for an attack conducted by its Suicide Brigade on March 15 at the presidential palace in Mogadishu. The attack destroyed several buildings in the presidential compound and killed and wounded many, including officers, members of parliament, senior officials, guards, and senior members of African Union Forces.
 - Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen responded to a video clip in which Abu Mansour the American, an Al-Qaeda representative embedded in Al-Shabab, expressed his fear that he would be assassinated by Al-Shabab; apparently he had held this fear since joining Al-Shabab in 2006. Al-Shabab expressed surprise; it stated that, until a complete investigation could be conducted of the motives for releasing the video clip, everything in it should be treated as baseless: Abu Mansour the American's life was not in any danger whatsoever.
 - On March 19, the Banaadir Explosives Brigade detonated a bomb in the midst of a gathering of Somali soldiers in Huzin, killing nine and wounding 15.
 - On March 19, a hand grenade was hurled at Somali soldiers in the city of Baidoa.

³⁸ All items are taken from <http://hanein.infor/vb> (Arabic) and <http://www.alfidaa.info/vb>.

- On March 20, eight soldiers of the Somali regime were killed when the Banaadir Explosives Brigade detonated a bomb under a military vehicle traveling just north of Mogadishu.
- On March 20, the Mujahideen Brigades laid an ambush for a Kenyan convoy traveling near Badadi in Juba Province. The Brigades succeeded in destroying an armored personnel carrier and setting fire to a military truck carrying food and ammunition; many Kenyan soldiers were killed.
- The Artillery Brigade has resumed activity after a hiatus. On March 20 and 21, it bombed the presidential palace in Mogadishu, "sowing terror among the heretics and Crusaders who fled the palace". In the attack on March 21, 16 people were killed.
- On March 21, the Galguduud Mujahideen Brigades launched a surprise attack on infidel strongholds in Dhusamareb. The infidels fled the city within minutes, and the mujahideen managed to completely occupy it, take booty, and kill more than 15 people. They subsequently withdrew from the city, to positions very nearby.
- On March 22, Ethiopian forces were pushed back after having tried to progress toward mujahideen strongholds near Tidh. The enemy sustained loss of life and property.
- On March 22, the Banaadir Explosives Brigade assassinated Somali government spies using a booby-trapped car near the Ambassador Hotel.

Activities of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen in Kenya

- On March 21, the Mujahideen Brigades of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen attacked Dif in Juba Province, near the border with Kenya. Militia forces took flight, and the mujahideen took the city without a struggle. They were welcomed by Muslim residents of the city, but withdrew after they had explained their beliefs.³⁹

Nigeria

- The official spokesman for the Nigerian group Boku Haram held a press conference about negotiations with the Nigerian government.⁴⁰ Boku Haram, which is affiliated with Al-Qaeda and strives to establish an Islamic theocracy

³⁹ <http://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁴⁰ <http://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

in Nigeria, has plagued that country with a series of murderous terrorist attacks.

The West and Elsewhere

- The jihadist media outlet Sawt Al-Islam, which functions under the aegis of the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), published a video clip in Russian and Uighur bearing a message for the mujahideen in the Caucasus.⁴¹

Mohammad Merah: The Terrorist from Toulouse

- Mohammad Merah,⁴² a 24-year-old French citizen of Algerian origin affiliated with an extremist French Salafist group known as Foursane Alizza,⁴³ went on a rampage in Toulouse, murdering three French Muslim soldiers and three Jews, two of them young children. His deeds aroused much debate on jihadist Web forums. The majority of the visitors to these forums expressed delight at Merah's actions; some even called for more such attacks in France and the West in general.
 - Web surfers praised the terrorist attacks, and called for revenge against France, which they deemed one of the greatest enemies of Islam, and the country that had built Israel's nuclear reactor in Dimona.⁴⁴
 - Web surfers reported that mosques in Lyon held prayer vigils for the soul of Mohammed Merah. Some Web surfers wondered about the deliberate killing of children, an inhuman act that would reflect badly on Islam and jihad. They asked jihadist religious leaders to clarify the issue, and wondered why Merah had not chosen to strike adults. In response, other Web surfers claimed that Merah had not killed the children deliberately; they made the counter-claim that Israel intentionally killed women,

⁴¹ <http://www.shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁴² In recent years, Mohammad Merah lived in Toulouse and worked as a car mechanic. According to the BBC, France's intelligence services had him in their sights for several years, subsequent to his visits to Pakistan and Afghanistan and his contacts with Islamic extremists. Merah trained with the Taliban in Pakistan before crossing the border into Afghanistan, where he fought alongside the rebels. The warden of a prison in Kandahar, Afghanistan, reported to Reuters that Merah had previously been convicted of planting bombs and mines throughout the city, and sentenced to three years' incarceration. According to the prison warden, Merah fled prison along with some 400 other Taliban prisoners who made an escape en masse in 2008, when their compatriots stormed the prison.

⁴³ For more information about this group, see:

<http://www.ict.org.il/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=99fFLwpcQLQ%3d&tabid=320>.

⁴⁴ <http://hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

children and elderly Muslims. One Web surfer wrote that although he supported Merah's deeds, he would have preferred that revenge be carried out on Palestinian soil – something he himself wished to do.⁴⁵

- Web surfers used Mohammed Merah's deeds as an example of individual jihad. They praised his acts, especially for their surprise element. Some surfers wrote that the West thought it would end jihad by killing Bin Laden, never imagining that he and other jihadist leaders, each of whom was a model of sacrifice, had shown the younger generation the way.⁴⁶
- Nasir Al-Qaeda, a prominent contributor to the jihadist Web forum Al-Fida, wrote that several lessons could be derived from the actions of the Toulouse terrorist: (a) Merah proved that one Muslim is capable of disgracing all of France, of bringing France to its knees, of threatening its security and killing its elite soldiers. If this is what one man could do, then the Muslim nation, if it united and sanctified sacrifice, could efficiently and successfully defeat the enemies of Islam. (b) Disrupting French security on French soil fosters criticism of the country's attitude toward Islam. In other words, Merah sent the French a message that their security depends on the security of the Muslim nation. (c) Mohammed Merah is a role model for Muslim youth of how to help Islam and avenge the infidels' persecution of the Muslim nation. (d) It is easy to intimidate the enemies of Islam: look at the deterrence generated by a lone attacker.⁴⁷
- Sheikh Saad Al-Amili, a Salafi-jihadist sheikh whose true identity is a mystery but who is very active in the Internet jihad, posted a thread titled, "Lessons and Pearls of Wisdom from the Onslaught in Toulouse". According to Al-Amili, the outcome of the attacks in Toulouse was very similar to that of the attacks perpetrated in Mumbai in 2008, although of lesser extent. According to Al-Amili, the attacks in Toulouse scored several achievements: (a) They scuttled the enemy's plan to destroy exiled Muslim communities. In other words, the West has now learned it cannot sever young Muslims, the third and even fourth generation in the West, from Islamic "extremism" or "terrorism", despite the trouble and expense it has gone to to educate them. (b) The enemy's morale was no less damaged than its life and property. (c) Muslim victims were avenged.

⁴⁵ <http://hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁴⁶ <http://hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁴⁷ <http://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

Throughout its history, France has been seen as the leader of the Crusade against Islamic lands. Today, too, France is trying to stifle Islam's fire, for example by outlawing the wearing of religious symbols in French territory, by sending forces (through NATO) to Afghanistan, and by stubbornly fighting the mujahideen. It is therefore necessary to avenge France's crimes against Islam and the Muslims. (d) The enemy's sense of security was upended, and its vulnerability revealed. The mujahideen must continue to attack France and expose its weakness to the masses, as Merah did. (e) The might and courage of the mujahideen were shown. (f) The enemy was hit on its own soil. (g) An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth: just as Muslims die at the hands of France, so the French must die at the hands of Muslims.⁴⁸

- A prominent contributor to jihadist Web forums calling himself Abu Hafs Al-Sunni Al-Sunni wrote an article praising Mohammed Merah. He expressed his desire that the article be translated into French for the followers of tawhid [the One God] in France. In the article, Al-Sunni offered practical advice on how to continue Merah's work: to use a gun silencer, to prefer a machine gun, to use a fast getaway car. He recommended attacking French embassies abroad. Al-Sunni also recommended sending death threats to the homes, email addresses and Twitter accounts of ministers and senior officials who persist in opposing Islam. He recommended threatening France via television broadcasts, if it did not recall its soldiers from Afghanistan and cease its war against the hijab. He also expressed his desire to block video clips showing the hatred of France and its President Sarkozy for Islam. Al-Sunni suggested bombarding French Internet sites and forums with photographs of Merah and his deeds. As for da'wa [missionary work], Al-Sunni recommended disseminating jihadist video clips, forming terrorist cells that would wage jihad against France and its leaders, and establishing a jihadist media institution that would promulgate jihad – in French. According to Al-Sunni, anyone who wishes to commit individual jihad should arm him- or herself with faith, and take the necessary security precautions on the Internet and in the media; he or she should train physically, gather the necessary

⁴⁸ <http://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

- information, strive not to attract undue attention, and strike at "the Zionist entity" by attacking rabbis and Jewish neighborhoods.⁴⁹
- On March 22, 2012, the Tareq bin Ziad Company of the Jund Al-Khilafa Brigade took responsibility for the attacks perpetrated by Mohammed Merah, aka Yousef Al-Faranci. The group promised that Israel's crimes against Palestine, and especially against Gaza, would not go unpunished. Mujahideen everywhere would avenge every drop of blood spilled in Palestine, Afghanistan and other Muslim lands. The Tariq bin Ziad Company vowed to avenge the humiliation of Muslim women prisoners in Israel and Europe. It urged the French government to reassess its policy toward Muslims and abandon its aggression against Islam. Lastly, it promised to continue hounding Jews. A brief summary of the Brigade's activities was also published, extracted from an interview with a Company commander conducted in November 2011. A Web surfer added that the US would not know security unless it ceased persecuting Muslims.⁵⁰
 - The jihadist Web forum Al-Fidaa produced a video clip praising Mohammed Merah for his acts of heroism.⁵¹



A video clip in praise of "lone lion" Mohammed Merah

⁴⁹ <http://hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁵⁰ <http://hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁵¹ <http://www.alfidaa.info/vb>; <http://alplatformmedia.com/vb/showthread.php?t=5682> (both in Arabic).

General Reports

- The Al-Maqrizi Center for Historical Research in London published a recording of a sermon by its director, Hani Al-Sibai, an Egyptian exile who recently helped found a new Egyptian Salafist group known as Followers of the Sunna for the Salvation of Egypt. In the sermon itself, Al-Sibai discussed the massacre of Afghani Muslims by a US soldier. He called Americans "murderers of Muslim babies and their mothers". He accused the Pakistani Army of treason for its supposed involvement in the assassination of Osama bin Laden and for putting his widows and children on trial.⁵²

Miscellaneous

- The jihadist media institution Al-Masadah published a compendium of hymns by Abu Yasir praising the Islamic State of Iraq.⁵³
- Inform Foundation for Media Production published a translation into Tagalog of an article previously published in the English-language jihadist magazine *Inspire*, titled, "The Ruling on Dispossessing the Disbelievers Wealth in Dar Al-Harb [Infidel Lands]".⁵⁴ Founded in late February 2012, Inform has declared its intention to translate jihadist materials into languages other than English.
- A contributor to the jihadist Web forum Hanein decried groups that purport to promote Islam but that actually take a Western, secular approach. According to the contributor, such groups grant legitimacy to secular regimes and Crusader and Zionist elements. He accused them of disgracing Allah and his messenger. His post was apparently edited by Hanein's administration: according to the forum's "secretary", names cited by the contributor in connection with Egypt were removed, as they indicated the contributor's support for Hazem Salah Abu Isamil, the Salafist candidate for the Egyptian presidency. Additional visitors to Hanein sided with this first contributor, calling groups that take a secular stance under the guise of an Islamic one "murji'ah" or murjites – that is, unacceptable to orthodox Sunnis, who see them as being more dangerous than infidels.⁵⁵

⁵² <http://www.shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁵³ <http://www.shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁵⁴ <http://www.shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁵⁵ <http://hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

- In late March 2012, a number of jihadist Web forums were taken down. Three of these – Shumukh Al-Islam, Al-Fida, and Ansar Al-Mujahideen in Arabic (it has a companion site in English) – are considered among the leaders of the genre. Visitors to the jihadist Web forum Hanein surmised that the attacks in Toulouse had caused France to “pour its wrath” on jihadist Web forums. Others recommended constantly creating pages and sites that could serve as alternatives to these key forums.⁵⁶
- Sheikh Abu Saad Al-Amili, a prominent contributor to jihadist forums, wrote of jihadists’ obligation to respond to the “disappearance” of jihadist Web forums. He explained that the war between the mujahideen and their enemies was a comprehensive one fought no less in the media and on the Internet than on the battlefield. In this context, the removal of jihadist Web sites was to be expected. Al-Amili cited Shumukh Al-Islam, which was (temporarily) removed, as “an important platform, the spearhead of jihadist public relations today”. According to Al-Amili, Shumukh Al-Islam was an authoritative source of news and analyses, one that “chased sleep from the enemy’s eyes and exposed the painful fact of [enemy] losses on all fronts”. Shumukh Al-Islam offered jihadists unequivocal guidelines through announcements, articles, and research studies by religious and lay leaders. It was therefore no wonder that Shumukh Al-Islam and similar forums were under constant attack. Forum administrators and visitors must understand that this is the price to be paid for jihad and da’wa [proselytizing]. The enemy knows it cannot stop jihad or jihadist Internet forums. Forum administrators must refine their activities and find varied alternatives for pursuing cyber-jihad. [When one forum is taken down,] others must carry the torch, and divide responsibility among themselves. Al-Amili exhorted Web surfers to actively participate in jihadist forums and not merely read them, or respond with thanks or a few brief comments. Meaningful participation in jihadist forums is an obligation, just as is dissemination of their messages to as broad an audience as possible. Al-Amili noted that the Internet was not the only means of da’wa [missionary work]; after all, many people have no access to the Internet. Sometimes, the forums distract [jihadists and Muslims] from their many other commitments.

⁵⁶ <http://hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

The forums should serve as a fount of information, from which one can take what he needs.⁵⁷

- The administrator of the jihadist Web forum Ushaq Al-Hur Al-Islamiyyah expressed the hope that Shumukh Al-Islam and Ansar Al-Mujahideen, which “disappeared” in late March 2012, would resume their Internet activity.⁵⁸ The manager of Shumukh Al-Islam’s Facebook page also expressed the hope that it, and Al-Fida and Ansar Al-Mujahideen, would soon be up and running again.⁵⁹



The banner that appeared on Facebook announcing the takedown of three prominent jihadist Web forums

Facebook

- A page titled, “I’m Salafist and I’m proud”, which was created on January 7, 2012, contains jihadist video clips of Ayman Al-Zawahiri, Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, and Abu Musab Al-Suri. As of this writing it has received 328 “likes”.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ <http://hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁵⁸ <http://www.i7ur.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁵⁹ <http://www.facebook.com/pages/%D8%B4%D9%85%D9%88%D8%AE-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85/284870868234304>

⁶⁰ <http://www.facebook.com/pages/%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%88%D8%A3%D9%81%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%B1-salafiste-et-fier-de-letre/323775274311345#!/pages/%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%88%D8%A3%D9%81%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%B1-salafiste-et-fier-de-letre>.



"I'm Salafist and I'm proud"

- A page titled, "The Muslim Nation's Weapon", created in late January 2012, posts guidelines and instructions for assembling and using explosives, armaments, dirty bombs, and martial arts techniques (655 "likes").⁶¹



The banner of "The Muslim Nation's Weapon"

- A page called "Issues Concerning the Muslim Nation", created on March 26, 2012, is a repository for jihadist materials and other matters heading the agenda of the Muslim nation. As of this writing, it has received 1,411 "likes".⁶²



The banner of "Issues Concerning the Muslim Nation"

⁶¹ <https://www.facebook.com/selaheloma>.

⁶² <http://www.facebook.com/kadaaya.alumma>.