



Bimonthly Report

Summary of Information on Jihadist Web Sites The Second Half of May 2013



International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT)

Additional resources are available on the ICT Web site: www.ict.org.il

Highlights

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

- Sheikh Ibrahim al-Rubaysh, the mufti of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), calls on Yemen's religious scholars to promote AQAP and forbid Yemeni soldiers from attacking the group.
- Sheikh Mokhtar Belmokhtar of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and leader of the Signers in Blood Brigades takes responsibility for a double suicide attack in Niger.
- Abu Yahya al-Shanqiti, a member of AQIM's Shari'a [Islamic Law] Council, calls on Mauritania's religious scholars to inveigh against France and its allies.
- Abu al-Ila al-Jalili al-Jazaari, the director of AQIM media center Al-Andalus, calls on the Ennahda Party, the interim government and the minister of the interior in Tunisia to immediately cease the oppressing Ansar Al-Sharia.
- Bloody clashes rage between security forces and Ansar Al-Sharia in Tunisia, inciting a wave of denigration by contributors to jihadist Web forums.
- A member of Somalia's Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen advises Muslims in the US and mujahideen in Somalia to kidnap US citizens and use them to bargain for the release of Muslims from US prisons.
- AQIM's blog launches a series of biographies of martyrs.
- Issue No. 11 of *Inspire*, an influential English-language jihadist magazine, is published.

Table of Contents

New Publications	1
Ideology.....	1
Strategy	1
Guidebooks and Instruction Pamphlets.....	2
Promoting the Myth of the Martyr.....	4
Magazines	6
Reports from the Field	8
Afghanistan-Pakistan	8
The Arabian Peninsula	9
Al-Sham [The Levant].....	10
The Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip.....	11
The Maghreb [North Africa].....	13
Mali	16
Egypt	17
Niger.....	18
Somalia.....	18
China	19
The Caucasus.....	20
The West	21
Miscellaneous	23
A Propaganda Campaign to Liberate Sunni Prisoners	23
Facebook and Twitter	24

New Publications

Ideology

- The jihadist media institute Al-Masada published an article by Sheikh Abu al-Zubeir al-Qahtani article, "Clarifying the Picture So All Can See the Sect That Always Wins, Across the Globe". Using material from sacred Islamic sources, the article proves that jihad is the proper interpretation of the Muslim faith and that the only sect in Islam that is victorious is that which implements Islamic law [shari'a]. The article decries the Muslims' confusion about the true path, and blame it on the various schools of Islam that interpret the religion as they see fit, despite their being based on the same sources, such as the 14th-century Sheikh Ibn Taymiyya, and Sheikh Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab, founder of Wahhabism. Al-Qahtani notes that he learned that jihad was the proper path by entering an arena of jihad and conversing with the mujahideen.¹
- Al-Farouq, an Egyptian Salafi-jihadist media institution, published an article by Sheikh Abu al-Tayyeb Ibrahim titled, "The Pearl of 'There Is No God But God' Monotheism: Al-Wala wal-Bara". The article discusses al wara wal-bara, one of the fundamentals of the Muslim faith in one God [tawhid], which indicates that a Muslim must avoid non-Muslims or Muslims who are not fit to be considered Muslims according to certain criteria, and remain loyal to Muslims.²

Strategy

- During the latter half of May 2013, the jihadist analyst Abdullah ibn Muhammed discussed the strategic importance of Qusayr, a Syrian city that saw intense fighting between the Syrian Army and its allies against the rebel forces. Ibn Muhammed compared the battle in Qusayr to the battle in Stalingrad in 1942-1943, both of which he saw as exemplars of staunch resistance. In addition, he saw both Qusayr and Stalingrad as strategic cities, and the battles there are capable of seriously affecting or even determining the outcome of the war. Ibn Muhammed claimed that the Syrian regime wants to forge a path through Qusayr to create a strategic continuum between the Alawite areas of Syria and the Shi'ite areas of Lebanon. According to Ibn Muhammed, the fall of Qusayr presages the fall of Homs, so Qusayr is perceived as a safety valve – much as was Stalingrad for the Russians in World War II.³

¹ <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

² <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

³ <https://twitter.com/Strategyaffairs>,
<http://twitmail.com/email/1073730258/97/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%87%D9%85%D9%8A>

Guidebooks and Instruction Pamphlets

- The Somali group Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen published an instructional video on using an AK-47 rifle.⁴



A video guide to firing an AK-47

- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum Shumukh Al-Islam recommended clicking on the following link to a site that explains how to build aestus hybrid rockets: <http://www.thefintels.com/aer/aestus.htm>.⁵



An illustrated guide to building an aestus hybrid rocket

- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum Ansar Al-Mujahiden explained, in Farsi, how to make an improvised explosive device (IED).⁶

[%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B5%D9%8A%D8%B1](#) (Arabic).

⁴ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

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

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



The components for constructing an IED

- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum Ansar Al-Mujahideen asked for help finding a guidebook, "even one in English", on setting up and running a military camp and developing an officers' training program. Another site visitor responded to his request, stating that he had such books but would prefer that they continue their exchange through private channels.⁷ This is indicative of the caution exercised by visitors to jihadist Web forums.
- In arenas of jihad such as Afghanistan and Yemen, mujahideen, including Al-Qaeda members, confront the risk of being attacked by US drones (unmanned planes). For this reason, a visitor to the Ansar Al-Mujahideen Web forum published an explanation of how to hack into and take control of a drone. His post was apparently inspired by an article that appeared in the first issue of *AZAN*, a new English-language jihadist magazine published in early May by the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan.⁸
- A visitor to the Ansar Al-Mujahideen Web forum uploaded a post about the various light weapons being used by mujahideen who are active in Falujah, Iraq.⁹



Among the light weapons being used by mujahideen in Iraq. Note that a Qur'an is in the bottom right-hand corner of the weapons kit.

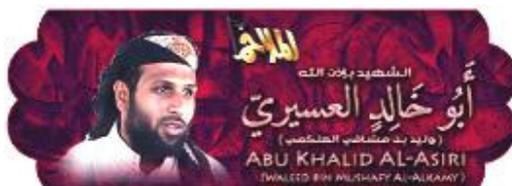
⁷ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁸ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁹ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

Promoting the Myth of the Martyr

- On May 31, 2013, the Al-Malahem Media Center, which functions under the auspices of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), published a video clip commemorating one of its martyred members, Abu Khalid al-Asiri (real name, Walid bin Mashafi al-'Ilqami). The video clip is the sixth in a series titled, "And He Will Take Martyrs From Among You".¹⁰



In memory of AQAP member Abu Khalid al-Asiri

- The media center of the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), a Salafi-jihadist movement affiliated with Al-Qaeda and active in China and in central and southeast Asia, published a video clip in Russian titled, "Martyrdom for Allah", which lauds those who fall while fulfilling the commandment of jihad.¹¹



An advertisement for a video clip published by the TIP

- Two additional biographies were published in the series "Biographies of Martyrs from East Africa". The first of the two is of the martyr [shahid] Uqba al-Sudani,¹² and the second is of the martyr Umar al-Muhajir Abu al-Abbas.¹³
- The blog Muslim Africa, which is sponsored by Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), launched a new series of biographies of martyrs titled, "What Gladdens Them Is That

¹⁰ <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

¹¹ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb/>; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RISIQ75IGQ> (Arabic and Russian).

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

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

They Are with Us". The first biography is dedicated to the Mauritanian martyr Abu Ishaq Idris bin Muhammad.¹⁴



The life and martyrdom of a mujahid from Mauritania

- During the latter half of May 2013, visitors to the jihadist Web forum Ansar Al-Mujahidee paid tribute to the martyr Maher Muhammad Suker, a member of Syrian Al-Qaeda affiliate the Al-Nusra Front, who was killed in the battle for Qusayr. Ansar Al-Mujahideen featured Suker’s original last will and testament, scribbled on a piece of paper, in which he asked that “the word of Allah be elevated”. The forum also published Suker’s alleged last smartphone chat with friends, direct from the battlefield, in which he asked their forgiveness because he “might die at any minute”.¹⁵



The last will (l.) and the last text message (r.) of the martyr Maher Muhammad Suker

¹⁴ http://africamuslima.blogspot.co.il/2013/05/blog-post_5569.htm.

¹⁵ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

Magazines

- The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan published Issue No. 85 of its jihadist periodical *Al-Somood*.¹⁶ This issue covered the following:
 - A criticism of Afghani President Karzai's alleged pandering to the US.
 - An analysis of the US attitude toward the Taliban during the past ten years.
 - An interview with a prominent mujahid in Farah Province, in which he discussed the situation there and the war against NATO.
 - A survey of US aggression against various nations.
 - An article about the West's encroachment on the philosophy and culture of Muslim lands.
 - An article on the impending withdrawal of the US from Afghanistan.
 - A tribute to Taliban mujahideen.
 - A geopolitical review of the situation in Afghanistan as of February 2013.



The cover of Issue 85 of *Al-Somood*

- Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP published Issue No. 11 (20 pp.) of its influential English-language jihadist magazine, *Inspire*. The issue initially appeared on Facebook and Twitter, and was only disseminated on jihadist Web forums such as Al-Fida as of June 2nd.¹⁷

¹⁶ http://alsomod-iea.info/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14010:-----85&catid=45:85alsomod&Itemid=14; http://alsomod-iea.info/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=45:85alsomod&Itemid=2 (Arabic).

¹⁷ <http://al-fidaa.com/vb/>; <https://twitter.com/lzr9/status/340257333861040128> (both in Arabic).



The cover of Issue No. 11 of *Inspire*

It is worth noting that Issue No. 11 appeared soon after Issue No. 10, which was published in March 2013. The atypical and relatively rapid publication of these two issues may have been due to the Marathon bombings in Boston and the murder of Drummer Lee Rigby in London. As the editor's comments clearly indicate (see illustration), Issue No. 11 is dedicated to an iteration of the vulnerability of the West, especially the US, to attack by adherents of global jihad the message of Al-Qaeda.

■ LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

In the Name of Allah the Most Gracious the Most Merciful.

All praise is due to Allah the Lord of the Universe and may His peace and blessings be upon His Messenger Muhammad and whoever follows in his footsteps. To proceed:

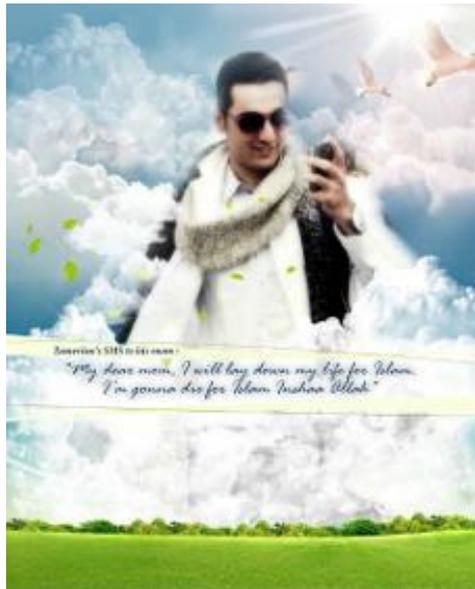
Americans, you should understand this simple equation: as you kill you will be killed. The war is yet to cease, it has barely started. Yesterday it was Baghdad, today it is Boston. The question of 'who and why' should be kept aside. You should be asking, "Where is next?"

The act of the two great brothers, Tamerlan and Dzhokhar, is but the true image reflected by the bloody deeds of your hands, reflected by the oppressive policies of your downtrodding regimes.

The peace you enjoyed before September 11 is merely just part of history. In other words, you will never enjoy peace until we live it practically in Palestine and all the infidel forces leave the Peninsula of Muhammad ﷺ and all other Muslim lands.

The following were featured in Issue No. 11 of *Inspire*:

- A message to Americans from AQAP leader Sheikh Qassem al-Rimi, indicating that the assassination of Osama bin Laden had not quelled the war against the US.
- An appeal to American Muslims to conduct terrorist attacks in America.
- An opinion piece on the murder in London of a British soldier by two Muslims.
- An opinion piece on the Boston Marathon bombings.



An inside page of *Inspire* lauding Tamerlan Tsarnaev, who was killed during the manhunt for the Boston Marathon attackers

Reports from the Field

Afghanistan-Pakistan

- The Al-Emara Jihadi Studio published a video clip titled, "Let's Prepare Ourselves". It stated, "The film starts with pointing towards the reasons behind the rise and fall of Muslims and the Islamic world and how to emancipate ourselves from these problems which thoroughly explains the whole situation to the viewers." (English in original)¹⁸
- During the latter half of May 2013, Umar Media, which functions under the auspices of the Pakistan-Taliban, published the following:
 - Announcement No. 10 taking responsibility for an attack on the election campaign of Munir Orakzai, a senior tribal politician and member of the national assembly from Kurram Province in northwestern Pakistan. According to the announcement, Orakzai was attacked not because of his political affiliation but

¹⁸ <http://shahamat-english.com/index.php/news/31874> (English).

because he had handed over tens of Arab mujahideen to the US, which incarcerated them in Guantanamo Prison, where they remain to this day. Even if he were to express remorse, the announcement indicated, he would not be absolved.

The announcement also indicated that the Shura Council of the Pakistan-Taliban had appointed Hafiz Dawlat Khan, aka Hafez Ahmad, as the emir of Kurram.¹⁹

- A video clip titled, "Focusing on the Targets: Threat to Musharraf".²⁰

The Arabian Peninsula

- During the latter half of May 2013, the Al-Malahem Media Center, which functions under the auspices of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), published the following:
 - Announcement No. 66 warning the Yemeni regime lest it torture prisoners. According to the announcement, the regime kidnaps and incarcerates Muslims on the pretext that they are members of AQAP. The journalist Abd al-Ilah is an example of this practice. Consequently, [AQAP] "calls on the people to help their brothers and sons and pressure the tyrants to release the prisoners".²¹
 - An audio statement titled, "The Qur'an Shows the True Path and the Sword of Victory" by AQAP Mufti Sheikh Ibrahim al-Rubaysh. Al-Rubaysh claims there is a Gordian knot tying military proficiency to knowledge of the Qur'an.²²
 - An article by AQAP Mufti Sheikh Ibrahim al-Rubaysh titled, "The Ulama [Religious Scholars] of Yemen and the Demands of the Path??" . Al-Rubays urges Yemen's religious scholars to explain that AQAP has repeatedly expressed its willingness to enter into a cease-fire with the Yemeni regime, and has even signed a binding agreement to this effect. However, the regime has scorned AQAP. The ulama must clarify that AQAP continues to struggle against the regime because it yearns to implement shari'a [Islamic law]. The ulama must use every pulpit to inform Yemen's soldiers that they must support, and not attack, AQAP.²³
- During the latter half of May 2013, a news article was posted on the Ansar Al-Mujahideen Web forum, which discussed AQAP's retreat from Abyan Governorate and parts of Shabwah Governorate in 2011-2012. According to the article, the withdrawal was beneficial to AQAP, affording it some protection against espionage and lightning

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

²⁰ <http://www.aljahad.com/vb> (Arabic).

²¹ <https://whamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

²² <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

²³ <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

the burden of civil administration and military protection of these provinces. These were but some of the alleged benefits of withdrawal cited in the article. The article also discussed the quality of the intelligence obtained by AQAP's opponents, chiefly the US. It claimed that the enemy was erroneously analyzing open-source data, such that its intelligence on AQAP was worthless.

In response to this article, a visitor to Ansar Al-Mujahideen noted that AQAP was maintaining a presence in Abyan, Hadramout and Al-Bayda Governorates, which it commanded geographically even if it no longer administered them or held them by force. One of the greatest challenges facing the enemies of AQAP is Yemen's geography, including vast swaths of no-man's-land that are used for terrorist activity. Another site visitor urged AQAP to re-take the areas from which it had withdrawn, and expand the battle to the US.²⁴

Al-Sham [The Levant]

- The Al-Nusra Front published a clarification announcement, in which it stressed the following points:
 - The Al-Nusra Front disassociates itself from comments and analyses made in its name outside Syria, whose aim is to sow confusion. Whoever publishes such items does so without the Front's consent.
 - The Al-Nusra Front has been informed that Jordanians are purportedly collecting money to support the Front. However, the Front "...has not received any funds collected on our behalf or in support of jihad".
 - The Al-Nusra Front asks the brothers in Jordan to send only young, god-fearing men dedicated to jihad to Syria – and not just anyone who wants to fight. Some young men leave the frontlines almost as soon as they have arrived, which is damaging to the mujahideen.²⁵
- During the second half of May 2013, Lua'a Al-Mujahideen in the Levant, a media institution affiliated with the Muhajiroun [Emigrants] Brigades, published an interview with mujahideen from many countries, who called on their brothers in Muslim lands to fulfill the commandment of jihad in Syria and elsewhere. One of those interviewed, a mujahid from Turkey, said that he had joined jihad in Syria in the hope that Allah would forgive his sins. In response to the video clip, a visitor to the Ansar Al-Mujahideen Web forum praised the Muhajiroun Brigades, who are called "emigrants" because they are

²⁴ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

²⁵ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

fighting jihad outside their country of origin. The visitor, who may have known some of the emigrant fighters personally, noted that he missed them and the sound of gun- and mortar fire.²⁶



The banner advertising the videotaped interviews

- During the second half of May 2013, the jihadist Web forum Ansar Al-Mujahideen published a post explaining the attitude of the Syrian Islamic Front, a Salafi-jihadist umbrella organization, toward Hamas and the Salafi-jihadists in the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula. The Syrian Islamic Front thanked the Salafi-jihadists in the Gaza Strip for their support, clarified that the liberation of Palestine was a shared goal, and denounced Hamas for its ties to Iran, which is responsible for the killing of Muslims in Syria.²⁷
- A letter from the leadership of the Salafi-jihadist group Ansar Al-Islam, which is active in Iraq and has ties to Al-Qaeda, to jihadist leaders in Syria, stated that the jihad in Syria takes precedence, because it is a step toward the liberation of Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The letter claimed that the Americans, Iranians, Turks, French and British were all trying to exploit the fighting in Syria to their own political and national ends. The writers therefore reiterated that nationalism is apostasy and has no role to play in the Syrian jihad. The Syrian area, they wrote, is a place to honor the commandments of Allah, not an arena for the settling of political scores.²⁸

The Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip

Islamist militants in the Sinai Peninsula released seven Egyptian security personnel whom they had kidnapped earlier in May. The kidnapping highlights the threat posed by jihadists who have taken advantage of the power vacuum in the Sinai Peninsula since the ouster of Hosni Mubarak.²⁹ The security situation in the Sinai Peninsula continues to

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

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

²⁸ <http://snamalislam.com/vb> (Arabic).

²⁹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/22/us-egypt-soldiers-idUSBRE94L05O20130522> (English).

deteriorate, in part due to the smuggling of weapons from Libya.³⁰ In the Gaza Strip, Egypt and Hamas are reportedly coordinating their efforts to crack down on Al-Qaeda-linked Salafists.³¹ Since its break with Iran, one of its key weapons suppliers, Hamas has obtained arms through the Libya-Sinai corridor.³² Israeli military officials claim that although the quantity of arms entering the Gaza Strip has decreased, their quality has improved.³³

- Salafi-jihadists in the Sinai Peninsula announced the kidnapping of seven Egyptian security personnel (soldiers and police).³⁴ They blamed the Egyptian government and military for the kidnapping, which they claimed was a response to delays in the release of Salafists from Egyptian prisons. They further claimed that the Egyptians wished to rile the prisoners' supporters and cause an escalation of hostility that would justify assassination of the prisoners. At the same time, they insisted that they had no interest in attacking the Egyptian Army, because their focus was on liberating the prisoners and fighting Israel. They concluded their letter by warning Egyptian political and military leaders not to let the "Zionist entity" pressure them into acting [against the Salafists] in the Sinai, whom it had targeted in an attempt to remove all threats against Israel. Web surfers were asked to disseminate this letter and other official declarations of the Salafi-jihadists in the *Sinai Peninsula* among Salafi-jihadists *in Egypt* by posting them on jihadist Web forums and social media, in defense of the mujahideen in the Sinai.³⁵
- Sheikh Abu Bilal al-Shami, a member of the Mujahideen Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem, published an interpretation of a verse from Chapter 61 [Al-Saff] of the Qur'an.³⁶
- In an audio statement published by Al-Raya, the media arm of Palestinian Salafi-jihadist Army of the Muslim Nation, Sheikh Abu Abd Allah al-Ghazi, the group's spokesman, expressed support for the struggle of Iraq's Sunnis against the Shi'ite government headed by Nuri al-Maliki.³⁷
- During the latter half of May 2013, the jihadist Web forum Hanein featured a video clip titled, "Qusayr – The Battle for Monotheism". In it, Gazan Salafi-jihadist Sheikh Na'el

³⁰ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/22/us-egypt-soldiers-idUSBRE94L05O20130522> (English).

³¹ <http://www.worldtribune.com/2013/05/29/egypt-hamas-crack-down-on-salafist-rocket-squads-in-sinai/> (English).

³² <http://www.timesofisrael.com/with-ties-to-iran-in-shambles-hamas-finds-new-ways-to-rearm/> (English).

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ <http://hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

³⁵ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb>;

<http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&article=728859&issueno=12589#.UbCUx9JkMXE> (both in Arabic).

³⁶ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

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

Masran is seen giving a Friday sermon praising Salafi-jihadists, and especially the mujahideen in Syria. Masran also denounced Hezbollah’s involvement in the civil war in Syria, and called the group “Satanic”.³⁸



Gazan Salafi-jihadist Sheikh Na’el Masran denigrates Hezbollah in a Friday sermon

- The jihadist Ibn Taymiyya Media Center published a video clip of Sheikh Abu Talha al-Libi, who heads the Shari’a Council of the Muhajiroun Brigades in the Levant. Al-Libi excoriates Hamas for persecuting Salafi-jihadists in the Gaza Strip.³⁹



Sheikh Abu Talha al-Libi

The Maghreb [North Africa]

Tensions have increased between Tunisia’s ruling Islamists and radical Salafist activists from Ansar Al-Sharia, leading to deadly clashes in the capital, Tunis, and in Kairouan,⁴⁰ which left at least one person dead and dozens wounded. The clashes underscore the rise of fundamentalist Salafism in Tunisia, which threatens to spread across the Maghreb. According to analysts,⁴¹ Ansar Al-Sharia has been gaining support among young Tunisians disillusioned with the lack of economic opportunity and the ruling Ennahda Party’s failure to include shari’a [Islamic law] in the constitution. Tunisian authorities accuse Ansar Al-Sharia

³⁸ <http://hanein.info/vb;>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=uhbGZ920aUc;
<http://arabic.peopledaily.com.cn/31662/8232899.html> (all in Arabic).

³⁹ <http://www.alplatformmedia.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁴⁰ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/23/us-tunisia-salafists-analysis-idUSBRE94M05R20130523> (English).

⁴¹ Ibid.

of having ties to al Qaeda. The group's fugitive leader, Abu Iyadh, formerly fought with Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan.

Tunisia also continues to serve as a corridor for the arms being smuggled from Libya and Mali; analysts have expressed the fear that, with the return of mujahideen from the fighting in Mali and Syria, Tunisia could become more than just a transit point for arms.⁴² Tunisian security forces continue their intensive efforts to capture jihadists near Jebel Chaambi on the Algerian border, where they have discovered heavy weapons and training camps.⁴³

Concurrently, jihadists appear to have extended their actions into Niger, where two suicide attacks left least 25 people dead.⁴⁴ Mokhtar Belmokhtar (previously claimed dead) and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), which is affiliated with Al-Qaeda, took responsibility for attacks on a French-owned uranium mine, purportedly in retaliation for France's military intervention in Mali. Authorities in Niger said the terrorists had crossed into the country from Libya.⁴⁵ Western security officials report that Libya's lawless southern region has become a haven for the Al-Qaeda militants who were driven out of their strongholds in Mali by the French.⁴⁶

- During the latter half of May 2013, the Al-Andalus media institution, which functions under the auspices of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), published the following:
 - An announcement titled, "Tunisians of Kairouan Come to the Aid of the Law [Shari'a] of Allah the Merciful" by Sheikh Abu Yahya al-Shinqiti, a member of AQIM's Shari'a Council.⁴⁷
 - An audio-visual segment titled, "A Message of Counsel and Clarification to the Ennahda Party of Tunisia" by Sheikh Ahmed Abu Abdul Elah al-Jigli, director of the jihadist media institution Al-Andalus.⁴⁸ According to Al-Jazaari, Al-Andalus follows the dictates of Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri, and supports rather than denigrating the governments that have come to power since the Arab revolutions, in an effort to promote the implementation of Islamic Law [shari'a] and free Muslim lands, chiefly Palestine. He also stated that members of AQIM

⁴² <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/right-turn/wp/2013/05/28/north-africa-breeding-grounds-for-terror/> (English).

⁴³ http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/05/16/confronting_tunisian_jihadists (English).

⁴⁴ http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2013/05/24/North-African-jihadists-widen-their-war/UPI-12051369420234/ (English).

⁴⁵ <http://www.independent.co.ug/ugandatalks/2013/05/africa-news-round-up-may-wednesday-29-2013/> (English).

⁴⁶ <http://news.yahoo.com/insight-libya-becomes-mali-islamists-shift-sahara-105910263.html> (English).

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

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

were renewing their vow of allegiance to the group's leader, Sheikh Abu Mus'ab Abd al-Wudud, who also advised against attacking Tunisian government and security forces, except in self-defense. At the same time, al-Jazaari advised the Ennahda Party (the political wing of the Tunisian Muslim Brotherhood), the interim government and the Tunisian minister of the interior to immediately cease their persecution of Ansar Al-Sharia in Tunisia, lest they bear the consequences for continued collaboration with Algeria in its war on terrorism.



A letter to Tunisia's Ennahda Party

- A video clip titled, "To the Ulama [Religious Scholars] in Mauritania: Your Day Has Come", by Sheikh Abu Yahya al-Shinqiti, a member of AQIM's Shari'a Council. In it, al-Shinqiti calls on Mauritania's religious scholars to promote the people of Mali and fight their enemies – that is, France and its allies. He praised Mauritanian religious scholars who publicly took a staunch stand against France's military involvement in Mali.⁴⁹
- An article by Ahmed Abu Abdul Elah al-Jigli, the director of the jihadist media institution Al-Andalus, denouncing the Algerian Army's attacks on AQIM activists in Bouïra, east of the capital Algiers. The article was written in light of increased clashes between the Algerian Army and terrorists in May 2013.⁵⁰
- On May 19, 2013, a third conference of Salafi-jihadists was meant to take place in Kairouan, Tunisia. On the occasion of the conference, Ansar Al-Sharia leader Saif Allah bin Hussein, aka Abu Ayyad al-Tunisi, who is wanted by Tunisian security forces, issued an audio statement in praise of Islamic law, jihadists, and tawhid [monotheism]. To the dismay of the conference organizers, the conference was canceled by Tunisian security forces, who reportedly arrested more than 200 Islamist supporters of Ansar Al-Sharia. Visitors to the jihadist Web forum Ansar Al-Mujahideen followed the conflagration between Islamists and Tunisian security forces online, minute by minute. According to one visitor, the police were using tear gas against the Islamists. Another visitor posted a

⁴⁹ https://twitter.com/as_ansar/status/338736307478077440 (Arabic).

⁵⁰ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb/>; <http://magharebia.com/ar> (both in Arabic).

link to a video clip that originally appeared on Facebook, which showed tens of people demonstrating against the police. Yet another forum visitor stated that photographs of the demonstration reminded him of the Palestinian intifada [uprising] against the Zionist occupation forces.⁵¹

Many jihadists, such as prominent Jordanian Salafi-jihadist Iyad al-Qunaibi⁵² and prominent Web forum contributor Sheikh Abu Sa'ad al-Amili⁵³ denounced the Ennahda Party for arresting members of Ansar Al-Sharia and accused it of collaborating with infidel forces. They expressed solidarity with Ansar Al-Sharia in Tunisia.

Mali

Tuareg separatists who control the area of Kidal in northern Mali said extremists from the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) had attacked them, as French troops tried to quell the fighting.⁵⁴ Kidal is the last town in northern Mali not to have been brought under central government control. The French are urging the government in Bamako to address the Tuareg rebel's demands for autonomy in the region.⁵⁵ Despite French progress in driving jihadists out of Mali, concern remains over sleeper cells that are planning to stage attacks in regional cities.⁵⁶ Mali is scheduled to hold presidential elections on July 28, despite Tuareg control over Kidal.⁵⁷

- The jihadist media institution Al-Murabitun, which functions under the auspices of the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), published a report detailing military activities in the Maghreb and taking responsibility for the detonation of booby-

⁵¹ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb>; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BKfurqBDGNo>
<http://www.alarabiya.net/ar/north-africa/2013/05/20/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%AA%D9%82%D9%84-200-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A3%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B9%D8%A9-.html>
<http://www.alarabiya.net/ar/north-africa/2013/05/21/%D8%A5%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%81-%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D8%A3%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%86-.html> (all in Arabic).

⁵² <http://www.youtube.com/embed/sIWJEkbk6lg> (Arabic).

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

⁵⁴ <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/9/71703/World/International/Suspected-jihadists-attack-Tuareg-rebels-in-N-Mali.aspx> (English).

⁵⁵ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/19/us-mali-crisis-idUSBRE94I06420130519> (English).

⁵⁶ <http://allafrica.com/stories/201305301187.html> (English).

⁵⁷ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2013/05/201352814129579842.html> (English).

trapped cars near concentrations of Malian Army forces in the northern city of Gao, and in the vicinity of Niger Army forces in Menaka.⁵⁸

Egypt

- The Egyptian Salafi-jihadist media institution Al-Farouq published a letter by Muhammad al-Zawahiri, the most prominent of the Salafi-jihadists in Egypt and the brother of Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, in which he and others called on Sunnis to participate in the jihad raging in Qusayr, in western Syria. The letter reiterated that jihad is an obligation incumbent on all Muslims (Sunnis), and that anyone who cannot participate in the "jihad of the soul" [jihad al-nafs] must contribute money to jihad [jihad bil mal], to help meet the needs of the mujahideen who are fighting in Al-Sham [the Levant] in general and Qusayr, in particular. The letter expounded on the strategic importance of Qusayr, and warned that the Shi'ites and their Alawite allies aimed to establish a Shi'ite-Alawite state along the coast of Syria, thereby paving the way for the division of Syria into smaller Alawite, Druze and Jews "states". The letter stressed that once this had been accomplished, the Sunnis would be encircled. Then Shi'ite Iran and Hezbollah would finish the job, establishing a "Shi'ite Crescent" spanning the Gulf states, eastern Saudi Arabia, southern Iraq, Azerbaijan and southern Lebanon, which would control the majority of the world's oil and gas resources.

The letter also expressed concern at the portrayal of Qusayr's, and indeed all of Syria's Sunnis being slaughtered in the most horrific manner – both because the Shi'ites wanted to destroy whomever they could and because they wanted to frighten other Sunnis into fleeing from strategic areas. According to the letter, graphic photos and video clips of the slaughter of Sunnis at the hands of Shi'ites sowed terror and anxiety – yet another means of "eliminating" them by causing them to run away. However, the letter insisted that "the magic trick would have over the magician" – that is, the tricks being used by the Shi'ites to instill fear in the Sunnis were only making the mujahideen more hell-bent on battle.

The letter concluded by stressing the importance of imposing Islamic law in all Muslim lands. It asked Sunnis living in the shadow of Shi'ism everywhere, and especially the mujahideen, to fight the Shi'ites in their own lands, and make them realize that the Sunnis were united and would defend each other throughout the world.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ <http://www.almwurabten.org/cc> (Arabic).

⁵⁹ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

Niger

- May 23, 2013 saw a double suicide attack in Agadez, Niger, in which more than 20 people were killed. Subsequently, a declaration was issued by Mokhtar Belmokhtar, a prominent member of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), who was previously presumed to have been killed in Mali by the Chadian Army. In the declaration, Belmokhtar explained that the double suicide attack was planned and executed by the Signers in Blood Brigades as revenge for Niger's support of France's war on the mujahideen in northern Mali. Belmokhtar warned that the "resistance" would erupt on French soil if France if it did not withdraw its troops from Mali. He also warned the other countries involved in the "Crusader onslaught" on Muslim lands, which was being portrayed as an effort to "keep the peace". Belmokhtar concluded his declaration by calling on the Muslim Nation to fulfill its religious-legal obligation to implement Islamic law. It should be noted that open-source intelligence indicates that the double suicide attack was planned and executed by the Signers in Blood Brigades together with Salafi-jihadists affiliated with AQIM and with the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO).⁶⁰

Somalia

One of the two main suspects in the May 22 murder of a British soldier in London apparently had ties to Somalia's Al-Qaeda affiliate, Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen,⁶¹ as suggested by his 2010 arrest in Kenya as he was trying to cross the border into Somalia to join that group.

As African forces continued their fight against Al-Shabab insurgents in southern Somalia,⁶² reports were received that a US drone was shot down by the insurgents in Lower Shabelle region. Al-Shabab sources confirmed that a US drone had indeed crashed in an area under their control but did not state whether they had fired at it.⁶³ Although African Union troops have succeeded in reducing the presence of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen in

⁶⁰ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb>; <http://www.alakhbar.info/30558-0--F00B-FFFAB--FC-FCB-F-0-F0C0-F-.html>

<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/pages/a9b88cb7-07c1-4ecf-8448-4735ad1d40be> (all in Arabic).

⁶¹ <http://news.yahoo.com/kenya-uk-soldier-killing-suspect-arrested-2010-near-081009311.html> (English).

⁶² <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/28/us-somalia-conflict-idUSBRE94R0JP20130528> (English).

⁶³ Ibid.

*Somalia, the group continues its militant activities, and recently took responsibility for attacking two police posts on the Somalia-Kenya border.*⁶⁴

- During the latter half of May 2013, Al-Kataeb, the media outlet of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, published the following:
 - Thirteen reports of the group's attacks on enemy forces in Somalia.⁶⁵
 - A video clip titled, "Punish Them Severely to Disperse Those Who Are Behind Them, Part 2: Attack on Apostate Positions – Dhobley – Islamic State of Juba".⁶⁶
 - An article titled, "Alerting the Muslims to the Deception of the Plotters", which warns the Somali people against enemy plots to cause a rift among Somalia's mujahideen. The article stresses the importance of avoiding divisiveness.⁶⁷
- The Labeik Media Foundation, which functions under the auspices of the Web forum Al-Qimmah Islamic Network, published an article titled, "We Shall Get You Shalit". The article's author, Sheikh Abu Yaser al-Maqdishi, a member of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, complains that two American women of Somali extraction were arrested in May 2013 and falsely accused of collaboration. He insisted that the two women had no ties whatsoever to Al-Shabab, and urged the mujahideen to liberate them in any way possible. Al-Maqdishi suggested taking an example from Hamas, which abducted Israeli Defense Forces soldier Gilad Shalit and succeeded in exchanging him for a large number of Palestinian prisoners. "Why don't we find the American Gilad Shalit and exchange him for Muslims being held in American prisons?", he wrote. Al-Maqdishi concluded by insisting that every Somali mujahid should kidnap an American and use him to bargain for the release of tens of Somalis from American prisons. He appealed to Muslims in the US to aid this effort.⁶⁸

China

- Sawt Al-Islam, the jihadist media institution of the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), which is active in China, published a video clip of a sermon by TIP member Abu Muhammad al-Turki on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000084527&story_title=al-shabaab-responsible-for-border-attack (English).

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

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

⁶⁷ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁶⁸ <http://al-qimmah.net> (Somali and Arabic).

⁶⁹ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb> (Arabic).

The Caucasus

Violence is increasing in the northern Caucasus as Russia tries to establish order before the 2014 Winter Olympics, which it is slated to host in Sochi in February.

The widow of two Islamists killed in recent years committed a suicide attack in Dagestan, injuring at least 12 people, some of them children.⁷⁰ Like other women suicide attackers before her, she was referred to as a "black widow" – that is, a widow of militant Islamists from the Caucasus whose death at the hands of Russian security forces turns her into a militant. The widow's attack came just days after two car bombs exploded in Makhachkala, the provincial capital of Dagestan, killing four people and wounding 44.⁷¹

Russia also reported killing Dzhamaileil Mutaliyev, the right-hand man of the most wanted insurgent in the Caucasus.⁷² Mutaliyev was one of two militants killed in a small town near Moscow when Russian security forces foiled an alleged Islamist plot to attack Moscow.⁷³ Russia's National Anti-Terrorism Committee also warned that the suspects may have trained in Afghanistan or Pakistan, and might have been linked to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.⁷⁴

- The Web site Valiat Dagestan published a call Bavatkhan, the emir of Temir-Khan-Shur, to lawyers who are assisting the Russian authorities. Bavatkhan noted that, to date, lawyers had yet to be engaged in a discourse about the Muslim-Russian struggle, as the Muslims had hoped that they would understand the injustice of their acts; now the time had now come to appeal to [the lawyers] directly. Bavatkhan accused the lawyers of causing Muslims to bear punishments for crimes they had not committed, adding that confessions were extracted from them under duress and torture. He called the lawyers "red" and warned that they, too, might be killed, as the mujahideen would make them pay for their crimes. Bavatkhan warned that the time had come for revenge, adding that the mujahideen had the names, addresses, and license plate numbers of the collaborators they were preparing to attack.⁷⁵
- The revitalized Web site Kavkaz Center published a letter in which its administrators addressed the growing cruelty of the struggle in the Caucasus, which had recently

⁷⁰ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/may/26/suicide-bomb-dagestan-chechnya> (English).

⁷¹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/20/us-russia-blasts-dagestan-idUSBRE94J0CN20130520> (English).

⁷² <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/21/us-russia-caucasus-ingushetia-idUSBRE94K0AV20130521> (English).

⁷³ <http://in.reuters.com/article/2013/05/21/russia-plot-idINDEE94K0FK20130521> (English).

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ <http://vdagestan.com/obrashhenie-k-tak-nazyvaemym-krasnym-advokatam-ot-amira-temir-xan-shury.djihad> (Russian).

gained attention from Western media. The site's administrators accused the Western media of speculating and spreading lies to bias public opinion against the Muslims in the Caucasus. It was the Boston Marathon bombings that had brought the Caucasus struggle to the attention of the world, because the FBI had claimed that the Tsarnaev brothers, suspects in the bombings, were natives of Chechnya. Kavkaz Center insisted that the Tsarnaev brothers had grown up in the US; their only connection to the Caucasus was that their father was a Chechen. The site's administrators complained that the prosecution of, and injunctions to close down, [jihadist] Web sites were a result of the Boston incident – despite the lack of solid evidence. The administrators also discussed the jihad in Syria, which the international media covers in depth, including the alleged involvement of Caucasus and Chechen Muslims in the fighting. They claimed that this "Russian propaganda" had led to attempts on the lives of two Chechens in Turkey. The site's administrators called for a cessation of "this dangerous slander".⁷⁶

The West

- Visitors to the jihadist Web forum Shumukh Al-Islam denounced a Belgian decision to fire a Muslim clerk solely because he had refused to shake the hand of his boss, a woman, because Islam forbids him from doing so. Forum visitors claimed that Belgium's Muslims faced incessant persecution by the authorities, as reflected in a series of penal laws such as the law against wearing the veil in public – an infraction that carries €250 fine.⁷⁷
- During the latter half of May 2013, visitors to the jihadist Web forum Hanein discussed an op-ed article in the daily *Al-Shuruq*, which is available in multiple Arab countries. The op-ed denounced the murder of British Drummer Lee Rigby in the heart of London on May 22, 2013, claiming that incidents of this type harmed the 1.5 million Muslims living in the West, fueling "Islamophobia" despite years of strenuous efforts by Muslim clerics to convince the West that Islam is a merciful religion. The author of the article, a journalist named Hussein Lakra, expressed concern that radical right parties would exploit the incident to bash Islam and weaken the claims of those who defended it. He ridiculed the attackers of the British soldier and the Salafi-jihadists who saw their act as courageous: Unlike the Afghanistan-Taliban, the attackers had not attacked a British (or other) military target, but rather had brutally slaughtered a British soldier who was minding his own business. The writer exhorted religious scholars and propagandists to

⁷⁶ <http://kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2013/05/29/98207.shtml> (Russian).

⁷⁷ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

take responsibility for brainwashing young Muslims, and to exercise moderation and restraint to conquer their anger. Anyone who nevertheless wished to avenge Western crimes should do so on the battlefields of Afghanistan, he wrote, and not in the heart of a Western country.

In response to this op-ed article, a lively discussion developed among visitors to Hanein. The respondents will be numbered, for the reader's convenience.

Visitor 2, who joined the discussion after Visitor 1 had uploaded the op-ed article to the Web forum, stated that Christians, Jews and Buddhists all treated Muslims the way the attackers had treated the British soldier. Why, he asked, when such a thing was perpetrated by Muslims was it immediately seen as "defaming Islam"?

Visitor 1, who had uploaded the article, seconded the comments of Visitor 2, and added that it was difficult to convince "the apostates" that violence was not the province of Islam alone. This was evidenced by the attacks of Britons on mosques after Rigby's murder.

Visitor 3 asked what was to be done, the hypocritical world would remain unconvinced and continue to cite the "sins of the Muslims and Islam".

Visitor 2 responded that there was no need to convince the enemy, which needed no excuse to attack Muslims, as in any case they had always killed them, throughout history.

Visitor 1 commented on the response of Visitor 2, and explained that it was permissible for Muslims to fight their enemies as long as the latter were occupying Muslim lands. However, fighting blindly was "madness", and did jihad and the mujahideen no good. He added, "Had Muslims derived any benefit from the slaughter of this British soldier in his own country?".

Visitor 4 chimed in that the London attack had targeted not just any British citizen but a soldier in an army that is fighting the Muslims. The attack was meant to send a message, he said, that [British] soldiers would not be safe anywhere until the British Army withdrew from Muslim lands.

Visitor 1 asked rhetorically whether anyone had ever heard of the Taliban perpetrating an attack beyond the borders of Afghanistan. Had Mullah Omar, one of the Taliban's spiritual leaders, called for war outside Afghanistan?, he asked. Had Hamas attacked Jews outside of Palestine?

Miscellaneous

A Propaganda Campaign to Liberate Sunni Prisoners

- The Al-Shumukh Public Relations Group launched an online campaign to draw attention to the plight of Sunni Muslims imprisoned in Al-Taji Prison in Iraq, who are allegedly subject to brutal torture and humiliation by their Shi'ite jailers. The group asked that the campaign be disseminated to multiple Internet sites, including those of human rights groups, and that the mujahideen lend a hand in the matter.⁷⁸



The banner reads: "Save our Sunni brethren in Al-Taji Prison from the zealous brutality of the Shi'ites"

- The jihadist Web forum Shumukh Al-Islam commemorated six years since its establishment, and praised jihadist propaganda against the enemies of Islam.⁷⁹



A banner celebrating six years of Shumukh Al-Islam

- A prominent contributor to jihadist Web forums named Naser Al-Qaeda criticized the repeated attacks by the enemies of Islam on jihadist Web forums. He claimed that they are a mark of frustration and helplessness, because the enemies of Islam have not succeeded in vanquishing the mujahideen.⁸⁰
- On May 21, 2013, the jihadist strategist Abdullah ibn Muhammed, who maintains a popular Twitter feed, launched a new blog on strategy at

⁷⁸ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

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

⁸⁰ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

<http://strateagy.wordpress.com/>. His announcement was also disseminated throughout the Internet by other popular jihadist commentators, among them Assad al-Jihad2.⁸¹

Facebook and Twitter

- During the latter half of May 2013, a visitor to the jihadist Web forum Ansar Al-Mujahideen referred his comrades to a Twitter feed that covers jihad in the Sinai Peninsula. Since the Sinai had become a serious arena of Zionist-Crusader activity against jihad, this Twitter feed was a very important source of updates on the status of the mujahideen. He asked supporters of jihad in the environs of Jerusalem and Egypt to closely follow events through this Twitter account.⁸²



The announcement of a new Twitter feed covering jihad in the Sinai Peninsula

⁸¹ <http://strateagy.wordpress.com/>; <https://twitter.com/Strategyaffairs>;
<https://twitter.com/AsadAljehad2> (all in Arabic).

⁸² <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb>; <https://twitter.com/jihade79> (both in Arabic).