



# JWMSG Report

## January 2019

## Highlights

The **Al-Qaeda** leadership praises jihad fighters on the various jihad fronts, especially its official branch in Somalia, Al-Shabab al-Mujahideen, for the attack carried out by its members in Nairobi, Kenya. At the same time, the leadership calls for continued terrorist attacks against anyone seeking to promote normalization with Israel, as the president of Chad had "sinned" in Israel in this regard, and threatens to continue to carry out attacks against Christian targets as long as they continue to occupy Islamic land and support the Jews.

**Al-Shabab al-Mujahideen, Al-Qaeda's branch in Somalia**, claims responsibility for an attack that was carried out by its members in the Riverside Drive business district, which contains dozens of western companies, in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. According to **Al-Shabab**, the attack was carried out in response to the intention to turn Jerusalem into the capital of Israel (hence, earning the name "Jerusalem will never be Jewish") in light of the US president's statement, in response to the Zionist persecution of Muslims in Palestine and in response to the call by **Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri**, the leader of **Al-Qaeda**, to attack Jewish and Western targets around the world. The organization claims that the attack in Nairobi was carried out to show solidarity with the Palestinians, and it promises to launch additional attacks in the future against American and Zionist targets in Africa.

**Sheikh Abu Ubayda You suf al-Annabi, head of the Council of Dignitaries of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb**, accuses the Algerian regime of being responsible for the social problems and identity crisis among the Muslim residents of Algeria. In light of this, al-Annabi calls on his followers not to pay taxes to the state coffers and not to enlist in the ranks of the security forces in order to weaken the Algerian regime, stressing that jihad is the only guarantee for its overthrow.

**Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula** publishes a video reviewing the circumstances and causes behind Muslims becoming spies for local governments. According to the organization, intimidation, threats, extortion, financial temptations and emotional distress are among the factors behind this phenomenon. At the same time, the organization recommends to Muslims who are under pressure to become spies to stay away from these agents and appeal to jihad operatives for assistance.

**Abu Dujana Al-Qasimi**, a senior leader in **Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen**, a Salafi-jihadist umbrella organization in Mali that operates in cooperation with **Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb**,

declares that all attempts by the "Crusader enemy" to achieve a military victory in Mali have failed. According to him, his organization has the support of the tribes in Mali and he asks Malian residents to remember that the latter is not a legitimate regime, but rather a ransom regime for murdering Muslims, establishing an alliance with Franc, etc., and therefore it must be fought against.

**Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen**, a Salafi-jihadist umbrella organization in Mali that operates in cooperation with **Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb**, criticizes Muslim rulers who are willing to promote normalization with the State of Israel, such as the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, the leader of the Emirates and the leader of Chad, who met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. According to the organization, it carried out a protest attack against Chad army forces in response to Chad's trend of normalization with Israel. It calls on the residents of Chad to oppose this trend, emphasizing that it constitutes an act of treachery against the Muslim Nation, including the Palestinians.

**Jund Khilafa Kashmir**, which belongs to the **Islamic State in Kashmir**, launches a new English-language journal called *Al-Risalah*, which he says is intended to promote jihad against the infidels, especially Hindus living in the region.

**Abu Muhammad al-Julani**, the leader of **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham**, expresses support for Turkey's attack on areas east of the Euphrates, and stresses that the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) is considered an enemy of the Syrian revolution and must be removed from areas where Sunni Arabs reside. In addition, al-Julani called for a military merger between all fighters in the Idlib area in order to safeguard the liberated areas.

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## Publications

### Ideology

#### Publications by Al-Qaeda

- **Al-Sahab** jihadist media institution, which belongs to the **Al-Qaeda** leadership, published the following:
  - An expression of support for the struggle of jihadi operatives on the various jihad fronts, such as in Afghanistan, North Africa and Somalia, against the enemies of Islam and Muslims. Following the announcement, the leadership congratulated Al-Shabab al-Mujahideen, the organization's branch in Somalia, for a military operation called "Jerusalem will never be Jewish" that it launched against a hotel and an office complex in Nairobi that the leadership claimed served as a "den for security companies and strategies of the Crusader Zionists" that cooperate with the Somali government. The leadership also praised the members of its branch operating in the Sahara Desert who attacked Chad army soldiers because their government seeks to promote normalization with Israel. The leadership praised the willingness of jihad fighters to carry out suicide attacks as a sacrifice for God and as revenge for disrespecting the Muslim Nation until all Muslim lands are liberated from tyrannical regimes. The leadership also called for the continuation of terrorist attacks to curb the trend of normalization with Israel and stressed that Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine.  
  
Later, the Al-Qaeda leadership addressed the "Zionists and Crusaders who seek to harm our religion, our homeland and our holy places, you are not welcome in the lands of Islam and will serve as cemeteries for tyrants [...]." The organization threatened that jihad fighters would continue to attack Christian bases and interests as long as they continued to occupy Islamic lands and support the Jews. According to the organization, the killing of Muslims, the elderly, babies and women, and the continued aggression against Muslim lands, will also warrant a response.  
  
Towards the end of the announcement, the organization's leadership expressed its support for Muslims, especially the Palestinians, and stressed that the issue of Jerusalem is the most important issue at the depths of Islamic existence, "and therefore we will never allow it to become Jewish."<sup>1</sup>
- The **Fuhud al-Raf'** (Leopard Upload) media group, which is involved in media for **Al-Qaeda** on

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<sup>1</sup> Telegram

the Internet and social networks, published a monthly report containing a list of official publications published by Al-Qaeda and its affiliates in January 2019. The report included links to videos, audio clips, articles, and other media materials of Al-Qaeda.<sup>2</sup>



The logo of the Fuhud al-Raf' media group

### Publications by the Islamic State

- An **Islamic State**-supporting Telegram channel published a post in which it claimed that **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham** in Syria, led by **Abu Mohammad al-Julani**, does not execute people who promote reconciliation initiatives in Syria or cells of the Syrian regime. The post claimed that this is proof that al-Julani does not apply shari'a to the areas under his control and that he failed to establish Islamic provinces in the liberated territories. The post concluded with a threat that Hayat Tahrir al-Sham will pay dearly for every drop of Muslim blood that is shed.<sup>3</sup>



Criticism of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, which avoids executing its captives

- An **Islamic State**-supporting Telegram channel published a short article in response to the 'redirect method' under RAND supervision in the fight against radicalization. The writer clarified that this is a method of fighting against IS messages after the West failed in its battle against the organization in the open. In order to avoid its influence, the writer called on IS supporters to use information and content only from the organization's official and recognized media institutions.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://pastethis.to/Tkrrer1>

<sup>3</sup> Telegram

<sup>4</sup> Telegram

- The **Islamic State**-supporting Tafakkar jihadist media institution published several posters on various subjects, such as: a review of the al-'Udid base in Qatar, which serves as "the largest Crusader military base in Arab countries," as well as a reference to the University of Mosul, which was destroyed by coalition bombings.<sup>5</sup>
- The **Islamic State**-supporting Al-'Azm jihadist media institution published an article titled, "The UAE Project in Yemen". In the framework of the article, the author presented the United Arab Emirates as a proxy for the United States in the region and claimed that it covets Yemen politically and economically (the writer explained that despite Yemen's image as a poor country, it holds oil and natural gas reserves, gold, an abundance of fish, a strategic location threat, extensive agricultural areas and the Bab al-Mandeb Strait). Politically, the writer noted that there are seven main players operating in the Yemenite arena: Shi'ites, the Muslim Brotherhood, loyalists to the late Yemeni President Ali Salih, the separatist movement in the south, the Murjiah (an early Islamic school of theology), Al-Qaeda, and the soldiers of the Caliphate (the Islamic State). The writer claimed that there was an attempt by the UAE to conquer parts of Yemen, and added that Al-Qaeda in Yemen had signed deals with the UAE and received money in exchange for giving up territory. The UAE was also accused of establishing detention centers in Aden and in areas in the south where individuals opposed to UAE policy are tortured, and accused of eliminating enemies, carrying out raids and arrests and stealing Yemen's natural resources. The writer called on Sunni Muslims in Yemen to support the mujahideen in their struggle against the people of the UAE in order to restore their honor.<sup>6</sup>

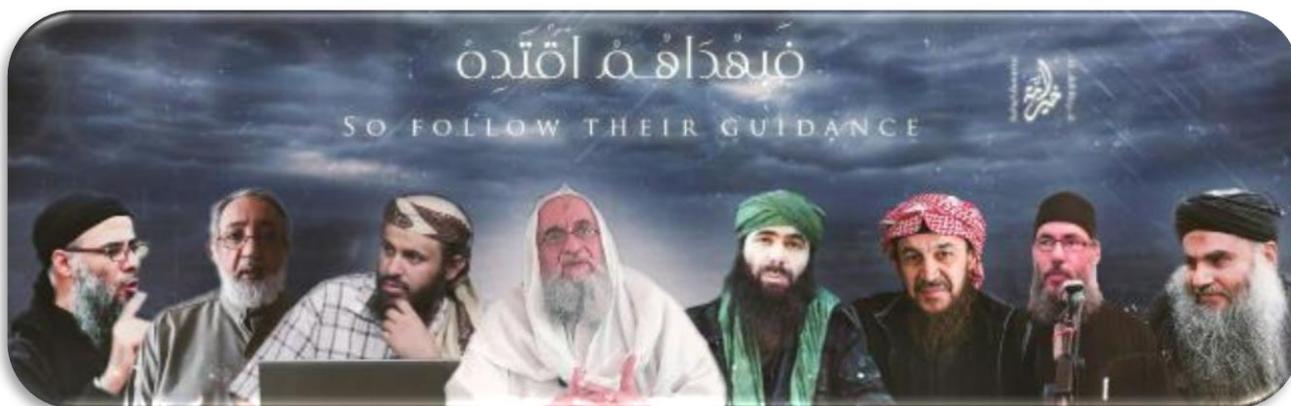
### Opinion Leaders in the Jihadist Discourse

**This section deals with the statements of opinion of several clerics, military commanders and publicists affiliated with Salafi-jihadist terrorist organizations seeking to shape the jihadist discourse and influence thoughts and actions in the field. The statements and their publication received a large number of views among global jihad activists, hence their importance.**

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<sup>5</sup> Telegram

<sup>6</sup> Telegram



The photo shows prominent ideologues affiliated with Al-Qaeda, below the words: “Follow Their Guidance”. The poster was published on social networks by the Khayr al-Umma media group, which is involved in media for Al-Qaeda

- Sheikh **Abu Qatada al-Filastini** published the following on his Telegram channel:<sup>7</sup>

- In response to a question posed to him by one of his followers, Abu Qatada detailed to the concepts of ‘**jihād of the people**’ (general jihād in which every Muslim can take part) versus ‘**jihād of the elite**’ (jihād waged by a limited group of Muslim fighters). Abu Qatada stressed that it is important to view jihād as a general situation beyond the organizational and local level, and that disputes appear on the tactical level and not on the fundamental principles of jihād. In order for such comprehensive jihād to be successful, he stressed that rushed interpretations should be avoided, and that discourse should be calm, calculated and devoid of insults or anger.



Later, Abu Qatada referred to the move of jihād groups towards extremism (Ghulu) to the point of aiming their arrows at Muslims and clerics (implying the Islamic State). In this context, Abu Qatada explained the importance of the role of the Muslim people in preventing these groups from flourishing, and emphasized that real Sunni jihād must come from the people because it is them – and not the elite - that create revolutions and bring about changes in government. Hinting at the Islamic State, Abu-Qatada added that despite its achievements and successes, the organization collapsed as a result of too much self-confidence and a lack of gratitude to God for its achievements.

In response to a question regarding the **jihadist movement**, Abu Qatada explained that it is a praiseworthy movement, despite mistaken decisions that were made over the

<sup>7</sup> Telegram

years. He added that in order to promote the jihadist movement, it is necessary to maintain a comprehensive view without abandoning the details. With regard to victory, Abu-Qatada explained that victory takes different forms in different situations and, therefore, one cannot aim for one ideal victory. Toward the end of his speech, he criticized the IS, stressing that the organization is far from achieving success and describing it as a "bubble" that will eventually explode.

In response to a question regarding the **Syrian arena** and the stagnation of the revolutionary momentum and jihad there, Abu Qatada replied that the Western world will not allow the establishment of a genuine Islamic state north of Israel since Israel is not only a colonial project of the West but also a tool for westernization in the region. Abu Qatada emphasized that the Syrian issue will only be resolved by achieving an inclusive and comprehensive Islamic solution since all regional issues are intertwined. Abu-Qatada also referred to the IS, describing it as a "knife in the stomach" that nearly thwarted the jihad project in Syria.

In response to a question regarding **Hamas-Iran relations**, Abu Qatada replied that Hamas has contributed greatly to jihad and has a glorious history of martyrdom and struggle. However, he clarified that Hamas made a mistake in focusing on the local conflict while trampling on and ignoring the suffering of Muslims at the hands of Iran, which is killing Sunni Muslims in various parts of the world. In this context, Abu-Qatada described Yahya Sinwar, the leader of Hamas in the Gaza Strip, as someone who became Shi'ite politically, if not in faith, due to rapprochement with Iran. Abu Qatada warned that if Hamas leaders continue to promote the concept that Iran represents and protects Muslims, they will be replaced.

- A post objecting to the sins and "revolt against God" in the Arabian Peninsula. Without explicitly mentioning Muhammad bin Salman's reforms in Saudi Arabia, Abu-Qatada criticized the recent changes in Saudi Arabia and emphasized that they heralded "destruction and devastation".
- A 400-page book containing all of Abu-Qatada's tweets between 2013-2017.
- Sheikh **Abdul Razzaq-Mahdi**, a Salafi-jihadist cleric affiliated with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, published the following:<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Telegram

- A call on leaders of jihad factions and Salafi-jihadist clerics in the Idlib region in Syria to maintain unity among the ranks, and avoid friction and clashes. According to him, dialogue is the best way to clarify and resolve conflicts, especially in light of the fact that the Shi'ite militias and Assad's army forces are knocking on Idlib's gates. According to him, jihad factions currently control only about 7% of Syrian territory, and therefore it is a supreme interest to maintain this achievement and not to squander it due to internal friction.
- Videos and correspondence regarding the crimes committed by Alawite Syrian security forces against the Sunni population in Syria. According to al-Mahdi, video clips documenting the harassment and cruelty directed towards the residents of Idlib and beyond by Syrian security forces should be distributed so that they will be seen as a hateful enemy of the Sunnis.
- A ruling calling on subjects of Islamic countries not to obey the tyrannical rulers in light of their failure to observe Islamic law. In addition, he called on them not to heed the words of the clerics who serve those rulers since they serve as propagandists of the regimes.
- An apology to Sunni prisoners in Syrian prisons. Al-Mahdi noted that he was aware of the harsh torture experienced by prisoners in Syria and that he hoped for their release.
- Sheikh **Abu al-Fatah al-Farghali**, a member of the Shari'a Council of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham in Syria, published the following:<sup>9</sup>
  - Reference to a visitor's question about whether jihad today is a personal religious obligation imposed on every Muslim or a general obligation that only requires some Muslims to keep it. According to al-Farghali, since there are not enough Muslims in Muslim countries to repel the enemy, or there are enough Muslims but they are unable to do it, jihad is currently a personal obligation imposed on every Muslim who can carry it out.
  - Reference to a visitor's question regarding the dangers of declaring a certain group Khawarij, as opposed to the risk of delaying the Day of Judgment (the principle according to which Allah will only sentence every Muslim on the Day of Judgment - whether he is a believer or an infidel). According to al-Farghali, delaying of the Day of Judgment



<sup>9</sup> Telegram

according to which a Muslim who commits serious offenses should not be accused of heresy, is the most dangerous innovation in Islam. He added that Hayat Tahrir al-Sham's military camps also warn against the Khawarij and against delaying the Day of Judgment, but mainly against the Khawarij because they are more prevalent in Syria.

- Reference to a visitor's question about the law regarding the wearing of an explosive belt - can every mujahid wear an explosive belt? If the mujahid is caught during the battle, is he allowed to blow himself up? Is he allowed to blow himself up if he is in possession of important information and he is caught? During the battle - when is it right to detonate the explosive belt and commit suicide? According to al-Farghali, most clerics permit suicide attacks to harm the enemy and raise the morale of Muslims based on the idea that defending one's religion precedes defending one's life. He added that most of the attacks are carried out using car bombs, which bring the mujahid to enemy lines, and explosive belts are only sometimes used. Regarding the wearing of an explosive belt to carry out a suicide bombing, al-Farghali again stressed that an explosive belt should only be used when it will benefit Muslims and harm the enemy, and when there is no alternative. He added that it is forbidden for a Muslim to commit suicide if he is detained by the enemy because suicide is forbidden in Islam. However, if the mujahid is detained and there are many enemy forces or senior commanders around him, he is permitted to commit suicide in order to harm them. Regarding those who want to commit suicide in prison because they have important information that could endanger jihad if they are discovered during torture in prison, al-Farghali claimed that opinions are divided on this issue and that some clerics have permitted this in the past.

- **Abu Basir al-Tartusi**, a jihad fighter in Syria, published the following:<sup>10</sup>

- A proposal to appoint 'Abd al-Mun'im Zayn al-Din, the leader of the group of clerics in Idlib, as spokesman for the Syrian revolution.
- Criticism of those who claim that the Syrian revolution is over and hope that the US and the international community will achieve a political solution in Syria.
- Criticism of Abu Muhammad al-Julani, who led several factions to disarm and persuaded many young people to leave them, and who is now completing his mission by handing over the liberated areas in the Idlib suburbs to the Alawite regime without a fight.




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<sup>10</sup> Telegram

- Reference to the question of whether it is permissible to commit suicide. According to al-Tartusi, is forbidden because the obligation to defend one’s life is greater than the rest of the prohibitions and it is even permissible to violate minor prohibitions, such as drinking wine and eating pork if necessary, but not committing suicide.
- A call for cooperation between the mujahideen of the Syrian revolution and the Kurds.
- **Tarik Abd al-Haleem**, who is affiliated with **Al-Qaeda**, published the following:<sup>11</sup>
  - Criticism over the internal fighting in Syria between Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and the National Front for the Liberation of Syria. In this context, al-Haleem referred to Hayat Tahrir al-Sham's attack on the Nour al-Din al-Zenki movement in Tel Ada after the latter did not hand over wanted persons to Hayat Tahrir al-Sham.
  - Reference to Turkey’s request to faction leaders to form a single faction to cooperate with it, which he claimed led to internal fighting between the factions. He added that Turkey's goal in this request was to weaken the factions so that it would be easy to force the Astana agreement on those that would remain after the internal fighting.
  - Proof that it is forbidden to return Muslims who emigrated to Islamic countries to the infidel states.
  - Reference to Sheikh Abu Jabir’s call for Hayat Tahrir al-Sham to include the National Front for the Liberation of Syria in the salvation government and control over the liberated areas. According to al-Haleem, this cannot happen because al-Julani does not allow anyone to participate in the organization's decision-making.
  - Criticism over al-Julani’s cooperation with Turkey in the war against the Kurds East of the Euphrates.
  - Reference to the fact that Hayat Tahrir al-Sham is unable to decide on the fate of Idlib, since the problem concerning Idlib is international and the conflict in northern Syria is taking place between Turkey and the Alawite regime and Russia.
- Sheikh **Abu Hafs al-Maqdisi**, the leader of **Jaysh al-Ummah al-Salafi in Jerusalem** (a Salafi-jihadist organization in the Gaza Strip), published the following:<sup>12</sup>
  - Criticism of the leadership of Palestinian factions that are concerned with their narrow interests instead of representing and acting for the Palestinian people, "None of you speaks for the Palestinian people.



<sup>11</sup> Facebook

<sup>12</sup> [https://twitter.com/kahled\\_nas](https://twitter.com/kahled_nas); Telegram

Your discourse is focused on your parties and your business. None of the leaders represent me. Stop trading in the suffering of the Palestinian people”.

- Criticism of the West for losing values, such as honoring one’s parents and expressing love for mankind. According to al-Maqdisi, the West compensates for this deprivation by establishing holidays, such as Valentine's Day and Family Day.
- **Sheikh Nail bin Ghazi**, a Salafi-jihadist affiliated with Al-Qaeda in the Gaza Strip, published the following:<sup>13</sup>
  - A series of questions that bin Ghazi posed to Abu 'Ubaydah Yusuf al-'Anabi, the head of AQIM’s Council of Notables, on the subject of the jihad movement today (an in-depth article on the topic will be published on the ICT website).<sup>14</sup>

## Strategy

- A visitor to an **IS**-supporting Telegram channel published a post in which he advised ‘lone wolves’ to poison alcoholic drinks where they are sold, at festivals or events, or to put poison into self-service drinks or juices. The visitor also recommended adding poison to cigarette packs and dumping them in public places so that the "infidels" would pick them up and be poisoned.<sup>15</sup>
- Visitors to the Shumukh al-Islam jihadist Web forum, which serves a platform for **IS** messages, held a discussion on the topic of coping with investigations and methods for avoiding the extradition of other fighters in the group. One visitor recommended coming up with a cover story in advance because investigators tend to repeat their questions on several occasions. It was also recommended to refrain from leaving suspicious materials on a computer and mobile phone (since they are confiscated upon arrest), and to limit communication to closed jihadist forums on social networks. Another visitor added that an operative must maintain high secrecy and refrain from sharing information, even with his wife.<sup>16</sup>
- Visitors to the Shumukh al-Islam jihadist Web forum, which serves a platform for **IS** messages, published several posts dealing with the production of various materials that can be used to prepare explosive devices and bombs. The posts included: an explanation on preparing a copper head that can penetrate iron, reference to a link on preparing TATP, an explanation on preparing nitro-glycerin, and instructions on preparing picric acid (trinitrophenol).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Telegram

<sup>14</sup> Telegram

<sup>15</sup> Telegram

<sup>16</sup> <https://shamukh.net/vb/> (Arabic).

<sup>17</sup> <https://shamukh.net/vb/> (Arabic).

- Videos no. 23-25 in a series titled, “Harvest of the Soldiers”, which documents the **Islamic State’s** weekly military activities in various provinces, were published. The data that appeared in the videos were summarized in posters published in issues of *Al-Naba* magazine in January 2019. According to the posters, between January 5-31, 2019, 282 operations were carried out in which over 985 people were killed or injured. In each weekly report, the affiliations of the dead and injured (‘apostates’, Shi’ites, commanders, Crusaders, etc.) were noted, as well as the provinces in which the activities were carried out.<sup>18</sup>



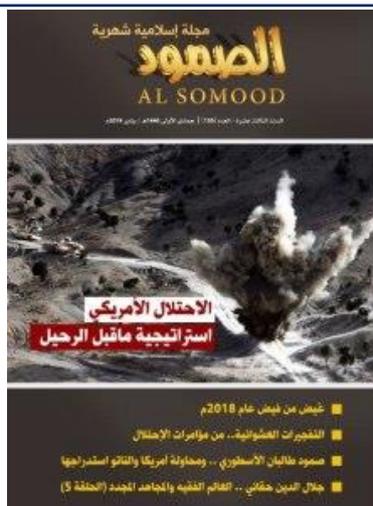
A poster published on social networks containing advice on how to wage war in closed places, such as using hand grenades, knives, etc.

## Magazines

- The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan published issue no. 155 of *Al-Somood* magazine for January 2019. Among the topics covered in the magazine’s articles were: a summary of the Taliban’s activities in 2018, reference to random explosions in Afghanistan that were attributed to plots by the occupiers, and reference to the steadfastness of the Taliban against the American occupiers and NATO.<sup>19</sup>

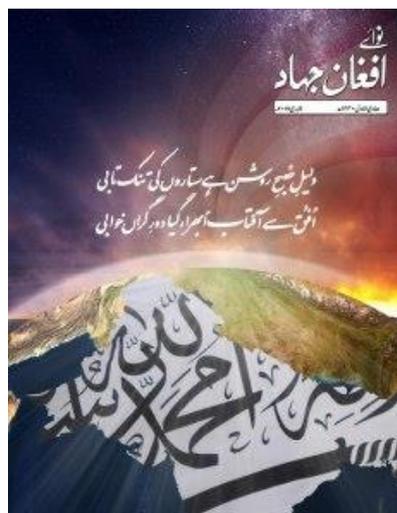
<sup>18</sup> <https://shamukh.net/vb/> (Arabic).

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.up-00.com/downloadf-154786802489461-pdf.html>



The banner page of *Al-Somood*

- Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent published the January 2019 issue of its magazine, *Afghan Nawai*.<sup>20</sup>



The banner page of *Afghan Nawai*

- Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula published issue no. 58 of its periodical, *Al-Masra*.
- Issue no. 13 of the magazine, *Baytuki* (“Your Home”), a women’s magazine affiliated with Al-Qaeda, was published. Among the topics covered in the magazine’s articles were: the importance of educating children on Islam; advice on mediating marital disputes; tips for managing relationships well; Islamic religious law regarding women leaving their homes, and more.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Telegram

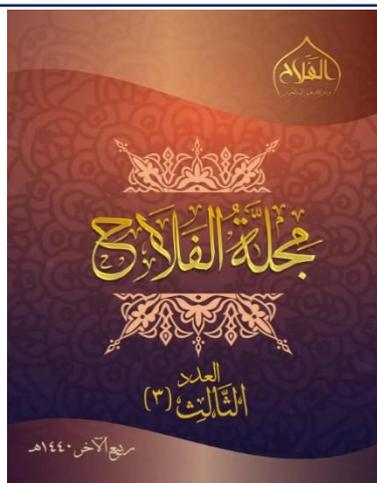
<sup>21</sup> Telegram



The banner page of *Baytuki*

- Huras al-Din, Al-Qaeda's** branch in Syria, published the second issue of the magazine, *Al-Falah*. Among the topics of the articles published in the issue were: an article by Sheikh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, a senior Salafi-jihadist cleric affiliated with Al-Qaeda, regarding the evil traits that characterize despotic and tyrannical rulers who do not follow the path of shari'a; an article by Sheikh Abu Qatada al-Filistini, a prominent Salafi-jihadist cleric affiliated with Al-Qaeda, in which he examined the mental and military characteristics of jihad; an article by Dr. Hani al-Sibai in which he examined the reasons why Al-Qaeda does not carry out attacks on Iranian soil; answers to questions on various geopolitical issues, such as why the Wahhabi clerics in Saudi Arabia remained silent about the Pope's visit to Saudi Arabia; an article on the importance of accepting the organization's guiding ideology by all its members; an analysis of the fragile alliance between Western coalition members; advice to jihad fighters on maintaining their personal safety, such as the importance of keeping mobile phones away from an area where important and sensitive conversations are held.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Telegram



The banner page of *Al-Falah*

- Issues no. 163-167 of the periodical, *Al-Naba*, were published by the **Islamic State**. The periodical mainly reviews the operational activities of its members in various arenas of jihad (many reports dealt with attacks in Nigeria). Among the topics covered in the current issues were an interview with one of the organization’s fighters in Manbij, an article explaining to the mujahideen how to avoid surveillance cameras in urban areas, and articles on religion. In addition, the issues included infographic posters on various subjects, including: the advantages and disadvantages of digital data storage; a summary of the organization’s achievements against the Kurdish PKK over a period of four months; details regarding an attack in Manbij in which several American officials were killed; a review of the most prominent attacks in the West Africa Province; and Islamic advice on overcoming cowardice.<sup>23</sup>

The opening article of issue no. 164 was a criticism of Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham's conduct in Idlib. In the article, Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham was portrayed as hypocritical and lacking principles because it sought to fight against factions that had, until recently, been its allies in the fight against the IS. The writer wondered how it is possible that when the IS fought against those factions it was considered a sin and a mistake, but when Hayat Tahrir al-Sham fought them, it was presented as jihad and a justified act.<sup>24</sup>

The opening article of issue no. 166 criticized the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The article emphasized that the heresy of the 'tyrants' in Saudi Arabia did not only begin with recent reforms in the kingdom that are causing the spread of immorality and anarchy. On the contrary, their heresy was evident to all reasonable people from the very early days of the kingdom when it maintained ties with the 'Crusader' Britain, was involved in delineating the Sykes-Picot

<sup>23</sup> [https://shamukh.net/vb/\(Arabic\)](https://shamukh.net/vb/(Arabic)).

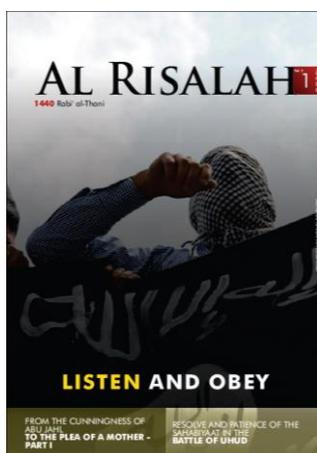
<sup>24</sup> [https://shamukh.net/vb/\(Arabic\)](https://shamukh.net/vb/(Arabic)).

borders, and did not protest the transfer of Palestine to the Jews. The statement called on the Saudi people to return to Islam through jihad for the Allah’s sake, even if it involves the risk of death, injury or imprisonment.<sup>25</sup>



The banner page of issue no. 167 of *Al-Naba*

- A new, English-language magazine named *Al-Risalah* was published by **Jund Khilafa Kashmir**, which belongs to the **Islamic State** in Kashmir. In the opening article, the editors of the new magazine said that it would serve as a platform to strengthen the connection between the residents of Kashmir and the organization. It was also emphasized that the organization in Kashmir intends to promote jihad and dawah against the infidels, especially against Hindus and Indian forces, in light of their oppression of Muslims in the Kashmir region. Among the articles included in the issue were: an article condemning the Pakistani regime and those clerics in Pakistan and Kashmir who support its policy; a threat to destroy the tombs of saints and mausoleums; a call to emigrate to arenas of jihad.<sup>26</sup>



The banner page of the new magazine, *Al-Risalah*

<sup>25</sup> <https://shamukh.net/vb/>

<sup>26</sup> Telegram

- Issue no. 4 of the periodical, *Shabab al-Khalifa*, was published by a union of several media institutions that support the **Islamic State**. The issue reviewed a series of publications that were published by the latter over the past month, including an ‘exclusive interview’ with a representative of al-'Abd al-Faqir, one of the unofficial media institutions involved in media for the IS, about the conduct and modus operandi of informal media institutions. In the interview, the representative referred to relations with the official parties managing the organization’s media and clarified: "The administration of the Caliphate State, may God protect it, should be praised for granting Muslims freedom of thought (within the limits of shari’a, of course). We are using this space to continue to create and promote the Islamic awakening of our time.”

Another question addressed to the representative of 'Abd al-Faqir dealt with the personal electronic support (by individuals) as opposed to joining existing media institutions. The representative replied that there has recently been an increase in the trend of support from individual supporters due to many Muslims joining social networks in order to support the IS. The representative clarified that even if it is difficult to determine precisely what is preferable, it is his impression that 'the group activity [that is, within the framework of existing media institutions] is more harmful to the enemy and more beneficial to Muslims'.

It should also be noted that the last pages of *Shabab al-Khalifa* are dedicated to contributions that are not in Arabic. On one of these pages was a form explaining how to publish in the magazine using the magazine's bot: @YOTCBOT1. This page emphasizes that the magazine accepts content in any language and that its readers are invited to share articles, opinions, graphic designs and videos.



The banner page of issue no. 4 of *Shabab al-Khalifa*

- Issues no. 30-33 of the periodical, *Ibaa*, were published by **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham**. The issues included reports, posters and interviews with the organization's operatives about the fighting in Syria, as well as reference to what is happening in other arenas of jihad.<sup>27</sup>



The banner page of issue no. 32 of the periodical, *Ibaa*

## Reports from the Field

### Afghanistan-Pakistan

#### The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan

- The **Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (the Taliban)** published the following:
  - Condolences over the death of Mawlana Hamdullah Jan (Dagai Mawlana Sahi), a Pakistani cleric, due to an illness. The announcement noted that he had educated many students and supported the Islamic Emirate.<sup>28</sup>
  - Reference to a raid that was carried out by American soldiers and their mercenaries on a prison in Badghis Province to release IS prisoners. According to the announcement, enemy soldiers murdered the two guards and released 40 Islamic State prisoners who had been captured by the mujahideen and were in a detention facility. The announcement added that in all confrontations between the Islamic Emirate and IS, the American occupiers assisted the latter and bombed the positions of the mujahideen. The announcement also stated that when the organization previously took control of an area in Jowzjan Province, the United States, together with the Kabul government, succeeded

<sup>27</sup> Telegram

<sup>28</sup> Telegram

in extricating IS fighters in helicopters.<sup>29</sup>

- A statement referring to the current political situation in Afghanistan. According to the announcement, any country that wants to help find a peaceful solution to the Afghan issue can contact the political wing of the Islamic Emirate, but the question of when and how to resolve the issue of the occupation in Afghanistan is the exclusive right of the Afghan nation. The announcement also stated that if the United States wants to accept the legitimate demands of the Afghan people, then a solution to the Afghan issue will be found. But if it continues to evade the demands of the Afghans by making various excuses in order to continue realizing its colonial and military objectives under the guise of peace or by exerting pressure through other countries, then there will be no peaceful solution. The organization added that the United States began to retract the agreement that it had made with the Islamic Emirate in Doha in November 2018 regarding the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan, and threatened that if this situation continues the Islamic Emirate will stop negotiations with the US.<sup>30</sup>
- An announcement referring to a suicide bombing carried out by the Islamic Emirate against a central intelligence site belonging to foreign forces in Kabul in the framework of Operation Al-Khandaq. The announcement stated that the attack was carried out by the Taliban in Afghanistan, involving a truck bomb and shooting, and resulting in dozens of dead and wounded among the enemy ranks. The announcement added that no civilians were in the area where the attack took place, but that as a result of the reverberations from the blast, some civilians living in the area were injured. However, the organization reiterated that civilians were not a target of the attack and that the organization had asked them to keep away from the homes, offices and bases of the foreign forces and the government in Kabul.<sup>31</sup>
- A statement regarding the beginning of talks in Doha, the capital of Qatar, between representatives of the Taliban in Afghanistan and representatives in the United States regarding the end of the occupation.<sup>32</sup> In another announcement, the organization updated that the meetings between representatives of the Taliban and US representatives in Doha continued for six days, and focused on the withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan and other issues. The announcement added that

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<sup>29</sup> Telegram

<sup>30</sup> Telegram

<sup>31</sup> Telegram

<sup>32</sup> Telegram

progress was made between the sides and that further discussions were held later to discuss unresolved issues. The announcement further stated that the Taliban set an ultimatum according to which progress on other issues will not be possible until an agreement is reached on the withdrawal of foreign forces. The organization also claimed that reports of a ceasefire or talks with the Kabul administration were incorrect.<sup>33</sup>

- Reference to claims made by an intelligence official in the Kabul government according to which one of the planners of attacks carried out by the Taliban Afghanistan was killed along with and other operatives. In the announcement, the organization denied the claims and referred to them as enemy propaganda intended to divert the public's attention from their losses.<sup>34</sup>
- An announcement regarding the appointment of Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar as the Islamic Emirate's deputy leader of political affairs and head of the organization's political wing. He was appointed to properly handle the ongoing process of negotiations with the United States. The announcement also stated that many changes have been made in the military and civilian departments of the Islamic Emirate, so that the jihad process and political efforts can continue.<sup>35</sup>

## The Arabian Peninsula

### Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

- **Al-Malahim** jihadist media institution, which belongs to **AQAP**, published the following:
  - A video titled, "The Industry of Espionage", which constitutes part two in a series titled, "The Elimination of Espionage". The video focused on the exposure of a spy network operated by Saudi Arabia in Yemen that spied on Al-Qaeda operatives in the Arabian Peninsula and whose members were captured by the organization. The video opened with the recitation of a Quranic verse describing the enemy's power as cobwebs, i.e. weak. Later, the video presented spies acting in the service of Saudi Arabia as weak and morally corrupt people. One of the spies was interviewed for the video and said that he decided to become a spy because of personal distress, worry and sadness that accompanied him in his daily life. Other spies said that they were gripped by fear during their espionage activities, which affected their mental state. One spy said that he hid a

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<sup>33</sup> Telegram

<sup>34</sup> Telegram

<sup>35</sup> Telegram

chocolate bar in his pocket, and when he approached the organization's operatives he began to sweat with fear that he would be exposed. Another spy said that fear constantly gripped him and the other spies, which almost completely paralyzed them and made it very hard for them to carry out their acts of espionage. Shaykh Qassem al-Rimi, the organization's leader, said that he had spoken with these spies and others, and found that fear was rooted deep within them. According to him, if they feared God and were aware that their espionage operations harmed children and women, they would not engage in espionage. Later in the video, some of the spies told of the damage caused to them by their espionage activities. Several of them said that they experienced nervous breakdowns and mental illnesses that manifested in nightmares, loss of joy in life, loss of self-esteem, humiliation, the need to take tranquilizers, and more.

In light of the destructive impact on spies, the organization examined the factors that motivate people to become spies. Thus, the organization listed several character traits of people who fit the profile of spies: anarchists and people prone to a moody disposition; weak people; people who cannot commit themselves to religion; greedy people; people who tend to provoke fighting and controversy; people who prioritize their feelings over Islamic religious law; and egocentric people. The organization then reviewed several methods of recruiting spies used by the regimes, including enticement - financial incentives, promotion of job status and social status; intimidation - threats to harm family members, or to rape one a female family member and distribute a video documenting it. Later in the video, some of the spies spoke at length about how they were recruited. One of them said his recruiters promised him and his family financial security. In light of this, the organization warned Muslims against this phenomenon. According to the organization, recruitment attempts are made through mobile phones, among other things. To this purpose, the organization's security department ostensibly exposed a recorded conversation between an American CIA recruiter and a potential recruit. Sheikh Ibrahim Abu Salih, the organization's security chief, noted that many respected Muslims demonstrated strength and steadfastness in the face of recruitment methods, which took the form of a financial bribe, out of loyalty to Islam. In this context, the video included statements by Hisham al-Balawi (aka Abu Dujanna al-Khurasani), who acted as a double agent for the Jordanian intelligence services and the CIA, but in fact was loyal to Al-Qaeda, condemning the recruitment of Muslims by the enemy for money. He asked how a man could sell out his religion and his brothers for money. According to

him, a Muslim loyal to his religion and to the Prophet Muhammad would never sell himself, not even for all the wealth in the world. Abu Dujanna, as the video referred to him, succeeded in fooling the Jordanian intelligence services and eventually blew himself up at a meeting with his alleged handlers. As a result, several senior CIA employees were killed as well as a senior Jordanian commander in the Jordanian intelligence services who was also the great-grandson of King Abdullah, the ruler of Jordan.

The video then examined the methods used by the Jordanian intelligence services to recruit spies. The organization referred to a letter written by a Jordanian spy named Ahmad Rushdi al-Silawi in which he noted that Jordan wanted to create a sense among potential recruits that they were acting for God and defending Islam from elements that promote violence and terrorism in the name of the religion. To that end, they use the sermons of the cleric, Sheikh 'Ali Halabi, who condemns terrorism. The video also included audio clips from a sermon by al-Halabi in in which he harshly criticized terrorist attacks by Palestinians against Jews in Israel. According to al-Halabi, the Palestinians receive electricity, water, merchandise and other basic goods from Israel; this is not a state of war and, therefore, there is no reason to harm the Jews. According to Al-Qaeda, al-Halabi's statements have no truth to them because in practice, IDF soldiers harm Palestinians and this does constitute a state of war. Moreover, al-Halabi serves the Jordanian regime. Al-Qaeda later expressed regret over the presence of Muslim clerics who serve as a mouthpiece for corrupt regimes and do not serve as loyal representatives of Islam. For example, the organization pointed out that at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the mufti of Tripoli in Libya welcomed Mussolini, the ruler of Italy, and even wrote a song in praise of him while Omar al-Mukhtar, the leader of a prominent jihad movement at the time, was fighting against Italian forces on Libyan soil. Moreover, Libyan clerics harshly criticized Omar al-Mukhtar's armed activities against the Italians in Libya.

In the video, the organization accused Muslim regimes of cooperating with the enemies of Islam, as expressed in their persecution of jihad fighters in the name of the war on terror. The video included a sermon by Sheikh Anwar al-'Awlaqi, a prominent Salafist jihadist cleric who survived a US drone strike in September 2011, in which he emphasized that the job of Muslim rulers is to ensure the safety and security of Muslims, and that Islam calls upon Muslim believers to obey the religion. However, what is the case with Muslim rulers who cooperate with the enemy against Muslims, and how should they be

treated? According to the organization, local regimes such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Yemen lost their legitimacy to rule due to their cooperation with the US, their persecution of Muslims, and their adoption of non-Muslim practices and lifestyles. According to the organization, it is better to keep a distance from clerics who serve corrupt regimes and cling to Muslim clerics who are loyal to the religion. At the same time, the organization accused the local regimes, especially the Saudi regime, of persecuting, imprisoning, and murdering Islamic clerics who defend Islam.

According to the organization, its fighters are operating against legitimate targets and not against innocent people. However, sometimes a relative of one of the targets of assassination seeks revenge and attacks the organization's operatives. He is willing to become an enemy spy, but this act is considered a betrayal of Muslims and of himself. According to Sheikh Batarfi, the spokesman of the organization, the Quran prohibits attacks on Muslims who condemn the words of Allah and the religion of Islam; even if one is the closest relative of the person killed, it is forbidden to avenge his blood.

Another part of the video dealt with the enemy's intimidation tactics used to recruit spies, such as extortion. Several spies reported that they were drugged and raped by enemy intelligence, and that the act of rape was filmed. According to them, they had to agree to be spies because the enemy had threatened to distribute the rape video on social networks. Other spies said they were seduced by women to have sexual relations with them that were documented on the camera for blackmail purposes. According to several senior members of the organization, including Abu Bishr, a qadi in the organization who revealed his name for the first time but kept his back to the camera, Muslims who committed immoral acts were shamefully exploited in order to recruit them for espionage. According to the senior members, here too there is no justification for serving as spies for the infidel enemy and one must be careful not to fall into such traps. Another method of recruiting spies is the threat of imprisonment. One of the spies said that the intelligence services use personal information of potential recruits that they obtain by bugging their personal mobile phones or monitoring their activities in order to obtain "incriminating" information that will cause the recruit to think that he has committed improper acts for which he is liable to be arrested. According to one of the spies, intelligence agents threatened to imprison him for 10 years simply because he went to listen to sermons by some radical sheikhs. Another recruitment method was to compel prisoners to serve as spies in return for ending their torture, releasing them from

prison and giving them money. Another spy said that while he was in prison in the United Arab Emirates, security forces threatened him that if he did not agree to serve as a spy in Al-Qaeda in Yemen, he would be raped in prison.

According to the organization, the main motive for enlisting as spies is are threats by the enemy's intelligence forces to release photos of them in intimate situations to the public. The organization added that in order to avoid scandal and shame, Muslims agreed to work as spies on behalf of Saudi Arabia among the ranks of Al-Qaeda in Yemen. However, their willingness to serve as spies itself demonstrated their betrayal of Muslims, which is more disgraceful.

According to the organization, the way to extricate oneself from the enemy's blackmail is to return to religion. In addition, those being blackmailed must tell jihad operatives about it and, in doing so, they will be given shelter, and the opportunity to atone for their actions and to live a safe life. Sheikh Qasim al-Rimi, the leader of the organization, also noted that this is the best way, and encouraged those Muslims subjected to blackmail and pressure to approach jihad operatives and confess their actions.

Another recruitment method mentioned in the video had to do with the recruitment of children after they were seduced or forced into having sex with adults or with children their age. The sexual acts were documented in order to put pressure on the children to cooperate with enemy security forces. According to Batarfi, the spokesman of the organization, these are despicable acts that demonstrate the enemy's lack of morals and its weakness for needing to turn to such methods in order to combat jihad fighters. Later in the video, a Yemenite boy was interviewed, and confessed that a Yemenite security officer had seduced him into drinking wine and having sex with a girl and then encouraged him to carry out a "national mission" for Yemen's security – to act as a spy among the ranks of Al-Qaeda in Yemen. The organization warned parents to pay attention to their children and protect them from harm.

The last part of the video dealt with Sheikh Adnan al-Qadhi, a senior commander in the organization who was involved in the terrorist attack on the US Embassy in Sana'a in Yemen in 2008 and was killed by a US drone in November 2012. According to the organization, Adnan previously served as a commander in the Yemen army and even then, he showed hostility and distaste towards the Saudi regime because of its close ties with the US, among other reasons. In the end, Adnan joined the ranks of Al-Qaeda in Yemen and assisted in planning attacks. However, because of the spies who were sent

to track and gather information about him, he was killed by US forces.<sup>36</sup>



**A photo taken from the video showing several spies who were caught by AQAP**

- The Hidayah jihadist media institution, which is involved in media for **Ansar al-Sharia**, which is affiliated with **AQAP**, published the following:
  - A letter signed by a member of Ansar al-Sharia held in one of the "tyrants'" prisons, apparently in Yemen or Saudi Arabia. In the letter, the prisoner praised the organization's jihad activities and emphasized that he remains loyal to the path of jihad even behind enemy bars.<sup>37</sup>

## Iraq

### The Islamic State

- The **Islamic State in Iraq** and the **Amaq news agency** published the following:
  - *Kirkuk Province*: A video titled, "Fulfilment of the Promise" in an attempt to refute allegations of the destruction of the Islamic State in Iraq. The video opened with media clips in an attempt to mock the former Prime Minister of Iraq, Haider al-Abadi, and his statements regarding the persecution of the mujahideen and the fight against them. The lion's share of the video included documentation of battles against various Iraqi militias (TMF, PMF and the 'Rapid Response' militia) and the execution of its members (for example, in Tuz Khurmatu and Riyadh), although it is not clear when they were taken. The video then showed attacks against the Peshmerga in Kirkuk, as well as an attack on a PMF post in the Allas oil field. It should be noted that one of the fighters in the video

<sup>36</sup> Telegram

<sup>37</sup> Telegram

emphasized that the goal of the attack was to avenge the ‘modest sisters in prison’.<sup>38</sup>

## Al-Sham [The Levant]

### Syria

#### Hayat Tahrir al-Sham

- The **Amjad** jihadist media institution, which operates on behalf of **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham**, published the following:
  - An announcement regarding crimes by the Nour al-Din al-Zenki movement against the organization. In the announcement, the organization explained that its activities in Darat ‘Izza, in Aleppo Province in Syria, were directed against the Nour al-Din al-Zenki movement alone, and not against any other faction belonging to the National Front for the Liberation of Syria. The organization added that the goal of the attack was to arrest those accused of killing four members of Hayat-Tahrir al-Sham and bring them to a shari’a court after the Nour al-Din al-Zenki movement did not meet the ultimatum given to it by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham to extradite the perpetrators to an independent shari'a court, thereby supporting their actions.<sup>39</sup>
  - An interview with **Abu Mohammad al-Julani**, the commander of **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham’s** military wing, regarding the internal battle inside Syria and the future of the Syrian arena. In the interview, al-Julani stated that he supported an attack by Turkey on areas east of the Euphrates. He added that the **PKK** is an enemy of the Syrian revolution and controls the areas in which most of the Sunni Arabs live, and therefore it is necessary to expel them from these areas. Regarding the recent developments in northern Syria, al-Julani said that the organization is part of the Syrian revolution and that it does not want to burden the residents, but rather to give them the chance for a decent life under shari'a. In this context, al-Julani claimed that the Russians and the Iranians do not need an excuse to enter the liberated areas, since they did so in Daraa, al-Ghouta and Homs, which were controlled by moderate factions and not by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. Later in the interview, al-Julani called for a military merger of all the fighters in the Idlib area in order to preserve the liberated areas. Al-Julani also referred to the conflict with the Nour al-Din al-Zenki movement, and claimed that his organization has no desire to control the area controlled by the al-Zenki movement, and that the local administrations will continue to manage

<sup>38</sup> <https://alansar.host/?video=9394>

<sup>39</sup> Telegram

the lives of the citizens in the area. He added that the organization released all detainees of the other factions captured in the recent clashes. He added that the main reason for the conflict between the factions is the multiplicity of different factions and different plans for control over the same geographical area, and that the solution is to hand over the liberated areas to a unified civil government that will include academics from various fields and lead to stability in the region.<sup>40</sup>

### Criticism of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham

- An article by Basir al-Shami, a jihad fighter in Syria and a former senior member of Al-Nusra Front (Al-Qaeda's branch in Syria) in which he criticized **Abu Muhammad al-Julani's** departure from **Al-Qaeda** and his establishment of **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham**. According to al-Shami, when Al-Nusra Front belonged to Al-Qaeda, it was part of global jihad and fought on behalf of the Muslim Nation. In contrast, under Tahrir al-Sham, al-Julani is now content with controlling the "liberated" areas in Syria, which constitute the Muslim Nation that he is fighting as far as he is concerned. Al-Shami also criticized al-Julani's cooperation with Turkey, which acts against Muslims in other places in the world. At the end of the announcement, al-Shami called on members of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham not to act according to al-Julani's policies and to resist his path.<sup>41</sup>
- An interview with Hashim al-Sheikh, the former leader of Ahrar al-Sham and Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, regarding the rift between factions in Syria and the future of the Syrian revolution. In the beginning of the interview, al-Sheikh claimed that there are two main factions in Syria: The National Front for the Liberation of Syria and Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, and they must make concessions in order to unite. According to him, the dispute between these factions has to do with the salvation government, which Hayat Tahrir al-Sham supports while the National Front for the Liberation of Syria seeks to dissolve it and establish a new body in its place. He added that the salvation government and the coalition government are limited in their role, and that the real government that will be established will rely on the Syrian people. He reiterated the importance of the unification of the factions in Syria.

Later in the interview, al-Sheikh referred to Hayat Tahrir al-Sham's lack of success, claiming that this union suffered from a lack of loyalty and genuine honesty among its factions, which eventually led to the dissolution of this union. He added that there was a chance of re-

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<sup>40</sup> Telegram

<sup>41</sup> <https://justpaste.it/2u9r6>

establishing Jaysh al-Fatah or another union that would make the Syrian arena a priority rather than the personal good of the factions. According to him, the factions should establish a committee to consolidate their security and economic issues, and then work towards full unification. He also claimed that the Syrian revolution needs a political body to manage issues in the Syrian arena.

Al-Sheikh also referred to the military tactics that must be employed against the Alawite regime, and he claimed that the factions must focus their military activities on fighting beyond enemy lines. He also noted that since the front with the Syrian regime extends over 200 kilometers, one faction cannot deal with it alone, and the factions must unite. According to him, one should follow the example of Jaysh al-Izza, and Haridh al-Muminin, which act against the Alawite regime and do not involve themselves in internal fighting.

Later in the interview, al-Sheikh thanked the Turkish government for absorbing over three million Syrian refugees, but on the other hand he claimed that its activities in the eastern Euphrates could pose a danger to Idlib in light of previous agreements between Turkey and Russia in Astana that led to regime control.<sup>42</sup>



An interview with Hashim al-Sheikh, the former leader of Ahrar al-Sham and Hayat Tahrir al-Sham

### Huras al-Din

- **Huras al-Din, Al-Qaeda's branch in Syria**, published the following:
  - An announcement containing eulogies by the leadership of **Huras al-Din** in memory of **Abu Julabayb al-Tubasi**, a senior field commander and a senior member of the organization who was killed along with his comrades in Daraa at the end of last year. It stated that al-Tubasi contributed greatly to paving the path of jihad in Syria. At the end of the announcement, the organization stressed that the blood of the martyrs demanded

<sup>42</sup> <https://eldorar.com/node/129990>

revenge and he promised to liberate Syrian soil.<sup>43</sup>

**Abu Julabayb**, born in 1974 in Jordan, joined Al-Qaeda in Iraq in the mid-2000s and was close to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the organization's leader. He was also al-Zarqawi's father-in-law and continued to serve as a member of the organization during the period of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi until the rift between the organization and Al-Qaeda in 2013. According to the US Department of Treasury, which classified him as a terrorist in February 2017, Abu Julabayb was sent by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi from Iraq to Syria in 2011 with the aim of establishing a new branch of the organization, later known as Al-Nusra Front. In 2016, Abu Julabayb became the third most important leader in the organization and was appointed by al-Julani, the leader of the organization, as commander of the Syrian coastal region. In 2016, he left Al-Nusra Front and swore allegiance to Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri. He later joined Hayat Tahrir al-Sham but later left and finally joined Huras al-Din, Al-Qaeda's branch in Syria, Al-Qaeda. Abu Julabayb was killed along with his men in Daraa by the Syrian army.



The announcement produced by the leadership of Huras al-Din, Al-Qaeda's branch in Syria, in memory of **Abu Julabayb al-Tubasi**

- The **Bayan** jihadist media institution, which is affiliated with **Huras al-Din**, Al-Qaeda's branch in Syria, published the following:
  - An article by **Abu Khadija al-Urduni**, a senior member of the organization, criticizing the Syrian rebel organization, **Nour al-Din al-Zenki**. Al-Urduni accused the organization of establishing alliances with enemy intelligence agencies and stressed that even if the organization flashes Islamic symbols, it should not be given legitimacy.<sup>44</sup>
  - An announcement signed by several foreign fighters belonging to the organization, most of them Jordanian, denouncing the disrespect shown to the Prophet by **Khitab al-Urduni**, a member of the **Shura Council** of **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham**. According to the latter, several members of the Prophet Muhammad's army were adulterers and thieves whom he had

<sup>43</sup> Telegram

<sup>44</sup> Telegram

to dismiss. According to the signatories of the announcement, this is a false statement that has no basis in truth and presents the Prophet Muhammad and his friends in a negative light. According to them, this is true heresy because this statement expresses scorn and contempt for the Prophet Muhammad. At the end of the announcement, the signatories emphasized that they are renouncing this statement and were determined to defend the dignity of the Prophet Muhammad. This position was also shared by Sheikh **Hani al-Sibai**, who referred to this issue on an audio clip that was disseminated on YouTube.<sup>45</sup>

- An article praising some Salafi jihadist clerics (see photo) for being reliable representatives of Islam and for their activities for the good of jihadists in the various arenas of battle, mainly in Syria. Therefore, Muslims must follow in their footsteps. Thus, the following Salafi jihadist clerics were praised: Ayman al-Zawahiri, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, Abu Qatada al-Filistini, Tariq Abdul Haleem, Hani al-Sibai, Sulayman al-'Alwān, Abdulaziz al-Tarefe and 'Abdallah al-Hashimi.<sup>46</sup>



Photos of Salafi-jihadist clerics who work for the good of jihad fighters

- An appeal to Muslims to donate money to the media efforts of jihad operatives in Syria under the hashtag, "Take part in jihad through your money", in order to help them purchase technological equipment that will enable the production, copying and distribution of jihadist informational materials.

<sup>45</sup> Telegram; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cy3nzEa4epc>

<sup>46</sup> Telegram



An announcement calling for donations to help the media efforts of jihad operatives

- Jihad fighters in Syria, including members of Huras al-Din, took part in a campaign launched on social networks towards the end of January 2019 titled, “Release the [Female] Prisoners” (#فكوا\_الأسيرات), regarding the importance of releasing Muslim female prisoners from the jails of the Syrian Democratic Forces, an umbrella organization of rebels in northern Syria. According to the campaign, women in the prisons live under poor sanitary conditions, suffer from malnutrition from which many of them die, and their dignity is violated in various ways. According to the campaign's creators, attempts are currently being made to smuggle the women out of refugee camps and prisons in northern Syria through a network of smugglers in exchange for money. It also stated that this important issue requires money to finance the smuggling of women from prisons and to bring the issue to the forefront of people’s minds, hence the current campaign.<sup>47</sup>



The logo produced as part of the campaign to free Muslim women from prisons, with the caption: "The cry of female prisoners in the prisons of the infidels"

<sup>47</sup> Telegram

## Haridh al-Muminin

- Haridh al-Muminin, a joint operations room shared by several jihad factions in Syria, including Huras al-Din, published the following:
  - An announcement calling on jihad factions to settle disputes between them and work to overcome their difficulties through religious courts, especially in the light of international conspiracies to attack Sunnis in Syria's liberated territories, and eliminate the revolution and jihad.<sup>48</sup>
  - A video documenting an attack carried out by members of the joint war room on December 26, 2018, against Syrian security forces in the area of Latakia, a port city in northwest Syria. The clip also showed the weapons and ammunition that were seized. According to the fighters, approximately 80 Syrian soldiers and one jihad fighter were killed in the attack.<sup>49</sup>

## Turkestan Islamic Party

- The **Turkestan Islamic Party** published the following:
  - A video about the importance of ribat, the establishment of a fortified structure on the border that serves as a base for defending Muslim territory and as an exit base for launching attacks against the enemy.<sup>50</sup>

## **The Gaza Strip-Sinai Peninsula**

### Jaysh al-Islam

- **Jaysh al-Islam**, a Salafi-jihadist organization in the Gaza Strip, published an interview that was conducted by the Qemam news agency, which is affiliated with the organization. In the beginning of the interview, the organization presented itself as a Salafist Sunni-Muslim organization established in 2006 to promote dawah (propaganda) and jihad. The organization added that it supports the establishment of an Islamic caliphate and Islamic rule. Regarding the question of whether most of the Salafi jihadist movement in Gaza is identified with Al-Qaeda or the Islamic State, the organization replied that it is a Muslim group that is part of the Islamic Nation, and that its relations with other jihadist organizations are based on mutual consultation and support for Allah's religion and actions against enemies of Islam, including Jews, Christians,

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<sup>48</sup> Telegram

<sup>49</sup> Telegram

<sup>50</sup> Telegram

Shi'ites and their allies. In this context, the organization noted that its connection with jihadist groups in Sinai is also a one of mutual consultation and support. The organization also stressed that since Jaysh al-Islam is part of the Islamic Nation, it is committed to supporting Muslims everywhere and in any way possible. Therefore, some members of the organization fought and died in Syria and some on other fronts.

Regarding whether the organization views Hamas as a Muslim or infidel group, and whether Hamas arrested members of Jaysh al-Islam and tried to stop rocket fire into Israel, the organization replied that one who rules by means of laws determined by people is a heretic, adding that Hamas arrested members of the organization several times. The organization also came out against the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, claiming that it makes changes to Islam and follows an incorrect path.

Regarding the question of how to carry out lone wolf attacks against Jews, the organization noted that it is possible to attack Jews by running them over, stabbing them or shooting them, and added that killing Jews brings one closer to Allah. In response to another question, the organization listed the organization's martyrs who were killed in Israeli or Hamas operations in the Gaza Strip.

At the end of the interview, the organization claimed that jihad in the present time is a personal obligation imposed on every Muslim according to his ability, and that jihad can be supported physically, materially and through the media.<sup>51</sup>

### The Islamic State in the Sinai Peninsula

- The **IS in Sinai Peninsula** published several posters on its Telegram account regarding its activities against Egyptian security forces in Sinai. One poster (see photo) stated that the organization managed to kill and injure approximately 40 people (including two spies and six snipers), detonate 18 roadside bombs, conduct two armed confrontations and plant one ambush. In another poster (see photo), the organization accused the Egyptian regime of collaborating with the Jews in the war against jihad fighters in Sinai.

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<sup>51</sup> <http://www.aymennjawad.org/22282/>



helped the Algerians remove the French from Algerian territory after an occupation of nearly 130 years, during which it committed a series of terrible crimes against the Muslims. He stressed that there is no place for despair and that Islam will once again lead the world.

Al-Annabi noted that Algeria today is experiencing a difficult reality, reflected not only in an economic and political crisis, but in a crisis of identity. The Algerian regime and France are trying to weaken the religious identity of Algerian citizens at a time when most of them still have a close connection to Islam. According to him, Algeria's elite, which constitutes a very small segment of the population, excludes the majority from running the country, relies on the dictates of France and suppresses any Islamic religious trait. This was demonstrated back in the 1990's when the Algerian regime forcibly suppressed Islamic movements in the country. In light of this, al-Annabi emphasized that jihad is the only means to topple a regime. Al-Annabi reiterated that a very narrow elite group has long dominated Algeria and imposed its anti-Islamic worldview on the country's residents so that its youth are not educated in Islam and the Arabic language. He claimed that this trend was the consequence of a conspiracy by Western countries to weaken Islamic identity, be it in the education system, religion, culture, etc. "The struggle in Algeria was and still is being waged between those who defend their Islamic religion, Arabic language and distinguished history, and call for the renewal of a respectable Islamic life under shari'a, and those who have become captivated by Western civilization, and call for uprooting Islam, prohibiting Arabic, violating morality, spreading corruption and bringing criminals to power". He added that the corrupt regime in Algeria will never agree relinquish power, not even through democratic elections. According to him, this situation is similar to what happened in Egypt when Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood representative, rose to power, but soon the forces loyal to the previous regime overthrew him. And the same thing happened in Algeria itself in the 1990s with the military coup against the Islamic forces [i.e., the FLN party] that rose to power.

After blaming the Algerian regime for Algeria's social problems and identity crisis, al-Annabi stressed that members of AQIM are a part of the Algerian people who want to stop this trend by fighting persistently against the tyrannical regime in Algeria. According to him, the solution lies in a comprehensive revolution from the ground up, enabling the Algerian people to choose their president, who will place emphasis on raising up the individual and the family in the spirit of Islam and solidarity, who will eradicate political

tyranny and economic corruption, who will distribute the money equally and justly, who will honor the clerics, who will appoint people to high positions based on their qualifications rather than nepotism and corruption, and who will restore shari'a. He added that these are the ideals for which jihad fighters had waged battle 25 years ago, but they were unsuccessful because of Algerian journalists, intellectuals, security agents and France. According to him, the power of the Algerian regime is based on two main pillars: manpower and economic power. He suggested that if the Algerian people would stop joining the ranks of the Algerian army and security forces, the latter's power would be eroded and they would not be able to oppress the citizens, so he suggested that the people, especially the businessmen and large suppliers, stop paying taxes and boycott the banks that charge interest. In doing so, state funds would be affected and the regime would no longer be able to take care of the welfare of its people. Al-Annabi called on the Algerian people to boycott the Algerian regime in any way possible, by refusing to enlist in the security forces and by not paying taxes.<sup>52</sup>

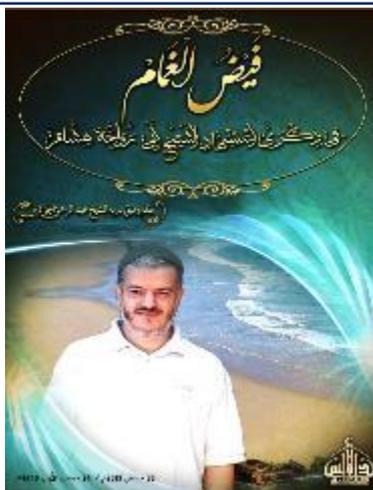


The banner of a speech by Sheikh Abu Ubayda Yousuf al-Annabi, the head of the Council of Dignitaries

- A eulogy for **Abu Rawaha Hisham**, one of the founders and supervisors of the organization's jihadist media institution, **Al-Andalus**, who was killed on January 30, 2018. The eulogy stated that Abu Rawaha contributed greatly to the organization's media system and invested efforts in coordinating media activities with jihadist groups affiliated with the organization.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>52</sup> <https://bayaan.info/archives/1121>

<sup>53</sup> Telegram



**Abu Rawaha Hisham, one of the founders of Al-Andalus jihadist media institution and a senior media activist for AQIM**

## Mali

### Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen

- Al-Zallaqa jihadist media institution, which belongs to Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen, published the following:
  - A video titled, “This is a Message to the Nation” by **Abu Dujana al-Qasimi**, a senior leader in the organization. In the video, al-Qasimi emphasized that jihad fighters in Mali remain steadfast in the face of attempts by the Crusader enemy to achieve a military victory in the region. According to him, the enemy attempted to achieve this goal by sowing division and a rift among the tribes in Mali. However, this malicious plan did not succeed since the organization worked to mediate and bridge the disputes. According to him, the organization succeeded in uniting the tribes and “the Muslims became brothers”. Al-Qasimi further noted that the force established by the UN in April 2013 to maintain order in Mali, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (Minusma), had failed. According to him, jihad fighters were engaged in publicity to warn the residents of Mali, as well as the tribes, against joining this organization on the grounds that it operates in the service of the enemy. He noted that after the publicity efforts, his organization carried out a suicide attack against Minusma forces in Gao, in which many were killed. Al-Qasami further noted that the enemy had now embarked on a new plan to persuade the tribes to surrender their weapons, accept the authority of Mali's regime and even serve in the Malian army. Towards the end of his remarks, he called on the tribes to be aware that Allah divided humanity into two groups, Muslims and heretics. Therefore, it is forbidden for a Muslim to associate with a non-Muslim, and

if he does so, he is considered a heretic himself. Al-Qasami stressed that it is best to remember that the Malian regime killed many Muslims, plundered the land and even invited the invader forces, meaning France, into Malian territory. Hence, the Malian regime is considered an illegitimate regime and an enemy that must be fought against. He stressed that it is better to rely on jihad fighters who are willing to sacrifice their lives for the sake of Allah and to apply his laws.<sup>54</sup>

- An announcement titled, "Jerusalem Will Never Become Jewish: The Battle of Aguelhok... Resistance against the Process of Normalization". The beginning of the announcement quoted a Quran verse forbidding Muslims from befriending Jews and Christians lest they be considered one of them. Later in the announcement, the organization harshly criticized those Muslim rulers who are willing to promote normalization with Israel. According to the organization, these rulers - led by Mohammad bin Salman, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, and Mohammed bin Zayed, the leader of the Emirates - are not only acting against the sentiments of their own people but are promoting normalization. The organization also criticized Idriss Deby, the leader of Chad, following his visit to Israel and his meeting with Benjamin Netanyahu. According to the organization, the visit was intended to save his regime and strengthen Chad's economy through the support of Jews, thereby putting an end to the expressions of anger by the people of Chad towards his regime. The organization added that, in response to Deby's visit to Israel, its fighters attacked a military camp in the city of Aguelhok in Kidal Province in Chad. As a result of the attack, over 30 soldiers were killed and the rest were seriously injured. According to the organization, the attack was carried out at the same time that Benjamin Netanyahu was being welcomed by Idriss Deby in the capital city of N'Djamena, according to the guidelines of Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of Al-Qaeda, and in order to thwart the normalization plans of Arabs and non-Arabs with the Zionists.

Later in the announcement, the organization called on the residents of Chad who are loyal to Islam and Al-Aqsa Mosque to decidedly resist the normalization with the Jews being led by the leader of Chad, while accusing Deby of betraying Islam, the Muslim Nation and its people. The organization also addressed the Palestinians and emphasized that alongside its battle in the deserts and mountains of North Africa, it was praying for them, as noted by bin Laden, the former leader of Al-Qaeda, "The blood of your children

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<sup>54</sup> Telegram

is like the blood of our children, and your blood is like our blood [...]”. Finally, the organization ended the announcement with mention of the apocalyptic Muslim tradition about the fate of the Jews at the End of Days, when the trees and stones will open their mouths and call on Muslims to come and kill the Jews hiding behind them.<sup>55</sup>

## Somalia

### Al-Shabab-Al-Mujahideen

- **Al-Kataib** jihadist media institution, which belongs to **Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen**, Al-Qaeda’s branch in Somalia, published the following:
  - An announcement titled, “Jerusalem will Never be Judaized”. The announcement stated that on January 15, the mujahideen attacked the Riverside Drive business district, which includes dozens of western companies, in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, and killed over 50 infidels, including Americans and other westerners. This attack by the mujahideen earned the name, “Jerusalem will Never be Judaized”, according to the sayings of Ayman al-Zawahiri, according to which Jewish and western targets in the world should be attacked in order to support the families of Muslims in Palestine. The announcement also stated that the attack was in response to the announcement by US President Donald Trump that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and in response to the Zionist persecution of Muslims in Palestine. Later in the announcement, the organization addressed Muslim families in Palestine and claimed that the above-mentioned operation in Kenya was intended to console them and that it was one of a series of operations against American and Zionist targets in Africa. The organization then threatened that the Zionists and their western patrons will never find security anywhere until there is security for Muslims in Palestine and in all Muslim countries. The announcement added that the status of Jerusalem is non-negotiable and that any part of the Holy Land is part of a Muslim territory despite Zionist efforts to Judaize it. The organization stressed that even if the Zionists and the Christians would transfer all the embassies in the world to Jerusalem, it would always remain a holy place for Muslims. At the end of the announcement, the organization addressed the Jews and warned them that by oppressing Muslims in Palestine, they are waging war against the entire Muslim Nation and that no country can protect the Jews from Muslim attacks.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Telegram

<sup>56</sup> <https://justpaste.it/4pm0y>

- An announcement regarding an attack on Ethiopian soldiers from the African Union Force who were traveling on the Mogadishu-Baidoa road, which killed over 57 Ethiopian invaders, destroyed seven vehicles and led to the seizure of weapons. According to the announcement, the Ethiopians carried out the greatest atrocity against Muslims in the Horn of Africa, as they persecute Muslims both in Ethiopia and Somalia. The announcement stated that the attack was intended to strike a hard blow and serve as a warning to the infidel Ethiopian forces. The announcement added that one should not be fooled by the promises of the Somali president, who cooperates with the invaders and trades the honor of Muslims for money and political status. The organization reiterated that Muslims in Somalia, led by the mujahideen, will never surrender to the Christian coalition and will do whatever it takes to protect their land from attacks by infidels and to prevent Ethiopian aspirations to annex Somalia.<sup>57</sup>
- An announcement regarding an attack on a base of Somalian soldiers in Baar Sanguni, north of Kismayo, which led to the killing of 41 soldiers. The announcement stated that this attack was a message to the Somali soldiers that if they joined the African Christians, then Al-Shabab would hurt them. Later, the organization called on the Somali militias to repent, stop cooperating with the infidels and return to Islam in order to save their lives.<sup>58</sup>

### The Islamic State

- The IS in Somalia in **Somalia Province** published a video regarding the organization's fighters in the country. The video showed the fighters who were killed during jihad operations alongside documentation of Ishtahad (suicide) attacks and inghimas (self-immersion into enemy ranks) attacks in eastern Somalia, in which security forces were killed. One of the fighters who appeared in the video was an English-speaking doctor from Canada who presented the medical services provided by the fighters to the villagers in a region neglected by the government, and called on his comrades outside the IS to join jihad and contribute to the "nation" and their brethren under attack. In addition, the video called for drawing inspiration from Abu Musab al-Zarkawi, who started the resistance in Iraq with only a small group of 17 supporters. The video ended with a call on members of Al-Shabab (who were referred to with the derogatory term,

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<sup>57</sup> <https://justpaste.it/525fk>; <https://bayaan.info/archives/1077>

<sup>58</sup> <https://justpaste.it/3cso6>

Sahawat) to join the caliphate and cease their heresy.<sup>59</sup>

## Nigeria

### The Islamic State in West Africa

- The **IS in West Africa Province** published a video titled, “Hijra and Battle”. The video opened with a historical background on the importance of jihad and its aim to preserve the “five essential components” (religion, life, honor, intellect and money), to protect Islam and Muslims, and to implement the principle of Al-wala' wa-l-bara' (loyalty to Muslims and the disavowal of heretics). In the video, two fighters speaking in the local language emphasized the importance of jihad and hijra while explaining that avoidance of hijra is a serious transgression in Islam. The video also criticized local and international forces (especially French forces) that are operating against the IS in West Africa, while emphasizing that the only thing that unites them is their hatred of Muslims and their attempts to oust them and keep them from acting for the sake of Allah.
- Interspersed with the messages were photos documenting attacks by the organization on the Nigerian army in several towns in Borno State, while emphasizing the heroism of IS fighters and the cowardice of local army forces and the “Crusaders”. The video documented the taking of captives from among the enemy forces, and the burning of vehicles and posts. The video concluded with a message from one of the fighters who called on Nigerian army forces to repent and stop fighting against the IS, as well as an oath of allegiance by several fighters to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.<sup>60</sup>

## The Indian Subcontinent

### Pakistan

#### Jamaat-ul-Ahrar

- Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, a terrorist organization in Pakistan that split from the Taliban in Pakistan, published a video in English detailing the organization’s armed activities during 2018. For example, it reported having carried out 118 terrorist attacks in 2018.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Telegram

<sup>60</sup> Telegram

<sup>61</sup> Telegram

## Indonesia

- Visitors to the Shumukh al-Islam jihadist Web forum, which is involved in media for the IS, discussed Indonesia's plan to release Islamic leader, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, who was accused of involvement in planning attacks in Bali in 2002 that killed more than 200 people, including many tourists. The visitors expressed joy over the move and wished for the release of all Muslim prisoners.<sup>62</sup>

## The Philippines

- The **Amaq news agency** reported that two **IS** fighters carried out a double suicide attack at a church in the city of Jolo, in the province of Sulu, in the southern Philippines. According to the report, the first terrorist detonated his explosive belt at the entrance of the church while the second blew himself up in the church's parking lot. According to the report, close to 120 people were killed and injured in the attack.<sup>63</sup>

## The West

- The al-'Abd al-Faqir jihadist media institution, which is involved in media for the **IS**, published a video regarding an attack that the organization carried out at an apartment building in the city of Magnitogorsk in which nearly 40 people were killed. The video was composed mainly of media reports on the attack and ended with a threat of further attacks to 'Crusader Russia'. It should be noted that, according to the Russian authorities, the building's collapse was caused by a gas balloon explosion and not by a terrorist attack.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> <https://shamukh.net/vb/> (Arabic).

<sup>63</sup> Telegram

<sup>64</sup> Telegram; <https://apnews.com/0b17e67f67bd4ce4b609ffe02af95e74>

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The Jihadi Websites Monitoring Group (JWMG) is a specialized research and analysis team at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT). Composed of researchers fluent in Arabic, the JWMG monitors websites that support and serve the Global Jihad organizations. The

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