



**ICT**  
International Institute  
for Counter-Terrorism  
With the Support of Keren Daniel

# ICT Jihadi Monitoring Group **PERIODIC REVIEW**

## **Monthly Report**

### **Summary of Information on Jihadist Websites**

**October 2017**

## Highlights

- **Zabihullah Mujahid**, the official spokesman for the **Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan**, condemns the strategy of US President, Donald Trump, vis-à-vis Afghanistan and threatens that the US will suffer should it continue its battle in Afghanistan. According to him, the US suffered a severe defeat in Afghanistan, and lost a great deal of money and soldiers, and still continues to suffer heavy losses while Emirate fighters are enjoying many victories in the battle. He adds that Trump's strategy is not receiving support within the US and is expected to cost the country a lot of money. He emphasizes that the return of sovereignty to Afghanistan and the establishment of an Islamic system in the country are more important to the mujahideen than their own lives and, therefore, the mujahideen's battle cannot be undermined by the Americans. He even threatens that the President of Afghanistan, Ashraf Ghani, will be prosecuted for all of the offenses that he committed against religious institutions in the country.
- Sheikh **Ayman al-Zawahiri**, the leader of **Al-Qaeda**, praises the achievements of jihad fighters since the September 11 attacks in the US against the West and its allies, such as Russia, China, Iran and rulers of Arab countries. For example, they were able to spread to other areas and create new arenas of jihad, to open the eyes of the Muslim Nation regarding the identity of their enemies and the need to respond to them through jihad. At the same time, al-Zawahiri criticizes the disregard shown by Islamic groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafists in Egypt, for the injustices committed by Muslim regimes. He also calls for unity among the ranks of the mujahideen in Syria so as not to facilitate the failure of the Syrian revolution, as happened in Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen, and not to enable the Muslim Nation's enemies to return to the arena and join the US. In addition, he calls for the liberation of Al-Aqsa Mosque through jihad.
- Sheikh **Khalid bin 'Umar Batarfi**, a senior member of **Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula**, accuses the Saudi Kingdom of conducting policies that violate shari'a, such as permitting women to drive, and of striving for normalization with Israel. He criticizes the arrests of clerics by the Saudi regime for condemning these policies. According to him, Muslims must wake up from their apathy and act against the tyrant regimes harming shari'a using any means possible, including jihad.
- Three sheikhs, including **Abu Qatada al-Filastini** and **Muhammad al-Maqdisi** publish an initiative for reconciliation between the jihadist factions, including Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, Ahrar al-Sham,

supporters of Al-Qaeda in Syria and those who interested in shari'a rule. In the announcement, the sheikhs call on the mujahideen to re-unite and abandon their differences of opinion since their main objective is to defeat the enemy. The initiative gains support among jihad factions in Syria and abroad.

- A new Salafi-jihadist organization called **Ansar al-Furqan fi Bilad al-Sham**, which is seemingly affiliated with Al-Qaeda, declares its establishment. In its doctrine, the organization explains that its goal is to apply shari'a and renew the institution of the caliphate through jihad, and it emphasizes that it sees itself fighting, first and foremost, against the Alawites, Shi'ites and Russians on Syrian soil. In addition, it calls on Muslims around the world to migrate to the arena of jihad in Syria, and defines jihad against the Syrian regime as an individual duty imposed on every Muslim.
- **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham**, publishes an announcement regarding the change of roles in the organization's leadership. The announcement states that the Shura Council of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham accepts the resignation of the organization's leader, Abu Jaber, and appoints his deputy, Abu Mohammad al-Julani, to manage the organization's affairs. The announcement also states that Abu Jaber will be appointed Chairman of the organization's Shura Council.
- **Jamā'at Nuṣrat al-Islām Wa-l-Muslimīn**, a Salafi-jihadist umbrella organization in Mali, which is affiliated with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, accuses the Mauritanian regime of providing assistance to the French in their attacks on northern Mali. At the same time, the organization claims that the organization successfully caught two Mauritanian spies.
- **The Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF)**, which serves as a platform for the publications of **Al-Qaeda**, publishes an article by Sheikh Anwar al-Awlaqi, a former senior member of Al-Qaeda who was killed in a US drone strike in 2011. In the article, al-Awlaqi ruled that one must help jihad fighters and their families in every way, including financially, and therefore it is permissible to loot the property of non-Muslims, whether by force, fraud or theft. According to him, one should focus on looting government property, banks, international associations and property belonging to non-believers known for their hatred of Muslims, and with regard to the United States one should focus on government property and private property.
- The **Hasm** movement, a Salafi-jihadist organization in Egypt, claims responsibility for a terrorist attack at the embassy in Myanmar in revenge for the slaughter being carried out by the regime

in Myanmar against the Muslim minority in the country.

- Militants associated with the **Islamic State** publish several statements in Arabic, Russian and English that include threats against the World Cup set to take place in Russia. In one of the statements, a masked gunman appears against the backdrop of a sports stadium, and in another an armed militant is shown watching a stadium with an explosive charge at his feet. Other announcements show famous soccer players, such as Lionel Messi, imprisoned and bleeding.
- **Islamic State** supporters praise the shooting attack in Las Vegas that was carried out by Stephen Paddock, and refer to him an IS fighter after he was identified as such and call him Abu Abd al-Birr al-Amriki in a claim of responsibility published by the organization. One Web surfer claims that the attack should be exploited for media purposes while placing emphasis on the fact that Las Vegas is considered "Sin City" even in the eyes of the Americans themselves.

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## New Publications

### Ideology

- Al-Sahab jihadist media institution, which belongs to Al-Qaeda leadership, published a speech titled, “We Shall Fight You Until There Is No More Persecution” by Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of Al-Qaeda. In the introduction, al-Zawahiri noted that for 16 years, since the 9/11 attacks in the US, the Crusader West, led by the US and its allies, such as Russia, China, Iran and rulers of Arab countries, have invested great efforts to stop the spread of jihad but they were all doomed to fail. Moreover, despite US bombardments in Muslim population centers, jihad was able to spread to other areas. According to al-Zawahiri, Sheikh Osama bin Laden, the former leader of the organization, sought to achieve three main goals with the 9/11 attacks: unite jihad groups for one purpose; open the Muslim Nation’s eyes to the identity of its real enemy and the need to wage jihad against it; and unite all jihad groups under one banner of the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan. After extensive reference to bin Laden’s life path, including his expulsion from Sudan, al-Zawahiri emphasized that Al-Qaeda is, in fact, continuing the path of Osama bin Laden in resisting the leader of global heresy, the US, through jihad against local players acting on behalf of the US since “in the end, this is one war [...]”.

Al-Zawahiri went on to condemn the legitimization given by “certain groups of people” who avoid dealing with the enemy that threatens them, referring to the local police. For example, he mentioned the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, which played the role of friendly opposition during Hosni Mubarak’s rule until the overthrow of Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood’s representative, and the jailing of many of its members in Egyptian prisons during al-Sisi’s rule; and the Salafists in Egypt as allies of al-Sisi. He also criticized the cooperation between the Salafists in Egypt and al-Sisi’s regime, and between the Salafists in Saudi Arabia and the Saudi Kingdom. In al-Zawahiri’s opinion, the continued blindness and unwillingness to cope with the reality allows the one in power to continue to act as he pleases. Al-Zawahiri expressed regret that in today’s reality, many Muslims prefer not to deal with reality and allow Western powers, such as the US, to do as they please in Muslim lands.

Al-Zawahiri then addressed the Syrian people and praised them for their steadfastness in the face of their tribulations and the heavy sacrifices that they were forced to bear in light of their

determination to fight tyrannical rulers and international coalition forces. At the same time, al-Zawahiri expressed concern that the tendency of leaders to sink into political preoccupation is likely to cause the sacrifice of the Syrians to be forgotten. According to him, the focus on politics has, unfortunately, put an end to the revolutions in Yemen, Egypt and Tunisia. Against the backdrop of these statements, al-Zawahiri emphasized that the way to achieve victory lies in unity among the ranks of Muslims and in mutual assistance between all Muslims.

Al-Zawahiri also addressed the importance of the close ties between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and Al-Qaeda. According to him, the firm partnership between Mullah Omar, the leader of the former, and Osama bin Laden, the leader of the latter, should serve as a model for Muslims and jihad fighters because they were not deterred by the criminal acts of aggression by the United States.

Al-Zawahiri again called on Muslims and the mujahideen to unite the ranks against the campaign of aggression waged by the Crusaders, the Russians, the Chinese, the Shi'ites, the secular movement, and the traitorous rulers. He praised the mujahideen in Mali for their efforts to unite the ranks. According to him, the US is constantly investing efforts in dividing the ranks of the mujahideen, and therefore this plot must be stopped. According to him, the Arab Spring revolutions must not be allowed to fail, and the enemies of the Muslim Nation must not be allowed to return to the arena and join the US.

Al-Zawahiri addressed other issues, including criticism of anyone who shuns shari'a. Thus, he accused Rachid Ghannouchi, the leader of the Islamic Al-Nadha party in Tunisia, of renouncing shari'a and of rapprochement with the West. Al-Zawahiri also called for the liberation of Al-Aqsa Mosque through jihad. Finally, al-Zawahiri praised jihad fighters around the world.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Telegram



**A clip from al-Zawahiri's speech**

- The Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF), which serves as a platform for the publications of Al-Qaeda, published an article titled, “A Ruling on Dispossessing the Disbelievers Wealth in Dar al-Harb [an area not under Islamic rule]” by Sheikh Anwar al-Awlaqi, a former senior member of Al-Qaeda who was killed in a US drone strike in 2011. In the introduction to the article, the media institution wrote that al-Awlaqi’s ruling on the above issue continues to be relevant. In the article itself, al-Awlaqi ruled that one must help jihad fighters and their families in every way, including financially, and therefore it is permissible to loot the property of non-Muslims, whether by force, fraud or theft. At the end of the article, al-Awlaqi wrote that in order to achieve this goal, it is best to focus on several targets, including government property, banks, international associations and property belonging to non-believers known for their hatred of Muslims. It also stated that with regard to the United States, one should focus on government property and the property of private civilians.<sup>2</sup>



**The banner of al-Awlaqi’s ruling permitting the looting and theft of the property of non-Muslims in the West in order to help jihad fighters and their families**

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.alfidaaforum.net/vb/> (Arabic).

- The Khayr al-Ummah jihadist media institution, which is involved in media for Al-Qaeda and its branches, published a pamphlet condemning democracy on its Telegram account.<sup>3</sup>
- An author known as Jihad Saleh published an article titled, “A Reading of US Moves – Is Trump Smart or Stupid?” In the framework of the article, the author claimed that Trump’s statements and the chaos in the American administration under his rule attest to his lack of suitability to the role of president, although there are Arab commentators who attribute to him ‘genius or strategic cleverness’. The author noted that, in his opinion, the US under Trump’s rule is weak and while this brought Russia to the brink of glory, it also enabled the mujahideen to benefit from this weakening (the author added that the mujahideen’s plan to act against the US first and then against the countries under its auspices is a ‘genius strategy’). Against the backdrop of the reasons listed by the author for the weakening of the US, the writer hoped for its defeat and noted that Muslims in general, and the jihad movement in particular, should stand united against the world order, which is about to change.<sup>4</sup>
- Al-Wafaa jihadist media institution, which is involved in media for the Islamic State, published the following:
  - A video titled, “He Will Surely Establish for Them Their Religion”. The video opened with a review of the Islamic State’s growth in Iraq and with a clip from a speech by Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, moved to the rise of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and the organization’s expansion to Syria, and concluded with the organization’s friction with Al-Nusra Front and Al-Qaeda. The video combined photographs from IS attacks and operations with clips from speeches by Abu Mohammad al-Adnani, the organization’s spokesman who was killed, and a presentation of martyrs from among the founders of global jihad over the years.<sup>5</sup>
  - An article titled, “He Lied, He Who Sat Idle and Said That He Has No Strength to Fend Off the Attacker”, in which the author referred to the obligation imposed on each and every Muslim to wage jihad against the infidels invading Muslim lands. Using quotes from statements made by ancient scholars of Islam, the author appealed to Muslims who have

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<sup>3</sup> Telegram

<sup>4</sup> <https://justpaste.it/1ca10>

<sup>5</sup> <https://goo.gl/eEv9kQ>

not waged jihad and encouraged them to do so, or at least to support the IS on social network sites.<sup>6</sup>

- An article by an author known as Abu al-Hamza al-Iraqi, in which he spoke out against several religious scholars. In the article, the author claimed that despite the fact that these scholars appeared as Muslims on the outside they were really apostates, and he criticized forbidden practices such as pilgrimage to the tombs of the righteous and the presentation of physical stunts (such as walking on coals or eating glass) as miraculous acts. The names of the scholars were not mentioned but in the photo that accompanied the author appeared Ali al-Jifri, an Islamic scholar who operates in the United Arab Emirates, among others.<sup>7</sup>

### ***Opinion Leaders in the Jihadist Discourse***

**This section deals with the stated opinions of several religious scholars, military commanders, and publicists affiliated with Salafi-jihadist terrorist organizations who seek to shape the jihadist discourse, and to influence thought and action on the ground. Their statements and publications are widely viewed by global jihad activists, hence their importance.**

- An announcement published by sheikh **Abu Qatada al-Filastini**, a senior Salafi-jihadist scholar affiliated with Al-Qaeda and currently residing in Jordan, included the following:<sup>8</sup>
  - The Khayr al-Ummah jihadist media institution, which is involved in media for Al-Qaeda, published an interview that was held with Abu Qatada al-Filastini in which he answered a series of eight questions posed by visitors about jihad activities in Syria. For example, he was asked if the jihad movement is permitted to cooperate with Muslim groups who do not believe that jihad is considered a legitimate path for the sake of applying the religion of God. According to Abu Qatada, the battle in Syria and the overall battle must be waged wisely. Thus, it must be examined on its merits whether the Islamic group views Assad's

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.up-9.com/downloadf-150790696978051-pdf.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://up.top4top.net/downloadf-6545je171-pdf.html>

<sup>8</sup> Telegram

regime as an enemy. In general, Abu Qatada permits such cooperation on the grounds that comradery should be shown to the rest of the Muslim brotherhood.<sup>9</sup>

- Reference to the question of whether there a need for a ruling by a religious scholar that defines a certain Muslim as a heretic based on a clear act of heresy. According to Abu Qatada, every Muslim is obligated from a young age to know the criteria for defining a Muslim as a heretic just like he knows that he is obligated to pray five times a day. According to Abu Qatada, there are clear acts for which a person is considered a heretic, such as abandoning the religion of Islam and adopting another religion, and insulting the Prophet Muhammad and the first four caliphs of Islam. Hence, prior knowledge of the actions considered to be heresy does not require the ruling of a religious scholar.
- An announcement published by sheikh **Hani al-Sibai**, a senior Salafi-jihadist scholar affiliated with Al-Qaeda and currently residing in London, included the following:
  - A statement expressing dissatisfaction with the silence of the religious scholars in Egypt in light of the continuing damage inflicted by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi on the religion of Islam. According to al-Sibai, al-Sisi was educated on the knees of Western culture and secularism, does not feel respect for Islam and violates its principles. According to him, religious scholars must renounce their silence and defend the religion of Islam.<sup>10</sup>
  - A collection containing questions by visitors to the former Al-Hisba jihadist Web forum and answers by Sheikh Hani al-Sibai from 2005 (106 pp.).
- An announcement published by sheikh **Abd al-Halim**, a prominent scholar close to Al-Qaeda circles, included the following:
  - An article condemning the IS, which it described as Khawarij, the first deviant sect in Islam, which has become synonymous with an intolerant sect that displays a very strict interpretation of holy Islamic sources and the use of violence against any Muslim who does not think the same.<sup>11</sup> In another statement, al-Halim noted that there is no

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<sup>9</sup> Telegram

<sup>10</sup> Telegram

<sup>11</sup> <https://twitter.com/DMTAH/status/917522925221302272>

forgiveness for IS fighters even if they repent. He noted that their relatives are prohibited from hiding them.<sup>12</sup>

- Statements criticizing the Saudi Kingdom and the Egyptian regime led by al-Sisi.
- A description of the reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah as an expression of the Arab-Islamic defeat in everything related to the promotion of the idea of Islamic resistance.
- A book about the events that took place in Syria in the shadow of the civil war between November 2013 and December 2015.
- An announcement about an exclusive meeting with al-Halim on the Telegram channel of the Khayr al-Ummah media group, which is involved in propaganda for Al-Qaeda.



From left to right: an announcement of an exclusive meeting with al-Halim on the Khayr al-Ummah Telegram channel; the banner page of the book, “The Events of Syria–November 2013-December 2015”

- Statements by Sheikh Dr. **Sami al-Oraydi**, a scholar affiliated with Al-Qaeda in Syria and a former senior member of Al-Nusra Front, which were published by Al-Minhaj jihadist media institution, included the following:

<sup>12</sup> <https://twitter.com/DMTAH/status/920405813415628800>

- An article regarding the liberation of Jerusalem from Israel. According to al-Oraydi, as long as there are Islamist groups that deviate from the correct path of Islam, they will not succeed in liberating Al-Aqsa Mosque and Jerusalem.<sup>13</sup>
  - A response to statements by Abdullah al-Muhaysini regarding Turkish intervention in Syria. In the announcement, al-Oraydi claimed that al-Muhaysini was acting hypocritically because, on the one hand, he made a ruling according to which one must fight against anyone who comes to attack the jihad factions, even if he is a Muslim, thus permitting factions to attack the IS, but on the other hand, he rejected a ruling forbidding jihadist factions from cooperating with the secular Turkish army that is in alliance with the Russians. Later in the announcement, al-Oraydi re-emphasized that one must be more wary of the secular army that cooperates with Russia than of the IS.<sup>14</sup>
  - A series of five announcements in which he responded to accusations directed by Al-Nusra Front, the former branch of Al-Qaeda in Syria, against Al-Qaeda, and addressed the issue of the split between the two. In the first announcement, al-Oraydi claimed that after Al-Nusra Front's split from Al-Qaeda, the organization promised not to publicize the reasons that led to the split in order to advance the interest of jihad over internal fighting between the jihadist factions. Nevertheless, al-Oraydi noted that after a member of Al-Nusra Front's Shura Council, Abu Abdullah al-Shami, published lies regarding al-Zawahiri's statements, it decided to respond. According to al-Oraydi, Al-Nusra Front decided to split from Al-Qaeda without informing the leader of the organization, Ayman al-Zawahiri, or his deputy and without consulting with them, and that Al-Qaeda was only made aware of the split after the fact. He added that there is not a big difference between what Al-Nusra Front did and what the IS did, aside from the fact that the IS openly announced its disengagement from Al-Qaeda while Al-Nusra Front kept it a secret.<sup>15</sup>
- In the second announcement, al-Oraydi discussed the hesitations of Al-Nusra Front members following the split from Al-Qaeda about the method of jihad in Syria. Later in

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<sup>13</sup> Telegram

<sup>14</sup> Telegram

<sup>15</sup> <https://justpaste.it/1cftp>

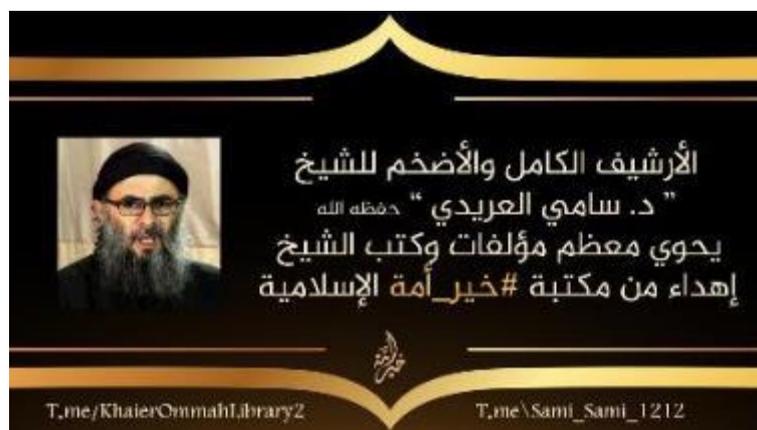
the announcement, he described how Al-Nusra Front provided its fighters with excuses to fight Al-Qaeda in the wake of the split.<sup>16</sup>

In the third announcement, al-Oraydi claimed that when he informed al-Zawahiri of the establishment of Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, he refused the plan and asked that the organization be reinstated as Al-Qaeda's branch in Syria, but the organization refused his request.<sup>17</sup>

In the fourth announcement, al-Oraydi added that al-Zawahiri was not interested in severing ties between Al-Qaeda and any jihadist organization because he wanted to maintain unity among the mujahideen, and he believed that Al-Nusra Front's disengagement was a declaration of rebellion.<sup>18</sup>

In the fifth announcement, al-Oraydi referred to al-Zawahiri's stance on the IS should all jihadist factions unite against the Alawite regime in Syria, and he called on all factions to unite under the banner of Al-Qaeda.<sup>19</sup>

- The Khayr al-Ummah jihadist media institution, which is involved in media for Al-Qaeda and its branches, published an online archive for download to a PC, which includes 40 statements written by al-Oraydi.<sup>20</sup>



The banner of the online archive of statements written by Sheikh Dr. Sami al-Oraydi

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<sup>16</sup> <https://justpaste.it/1cftp>

<sup>17</sup> <https://justpaste.it/1cftp>

<sup>18</sup> Telegram

<sup>19</sup> Telegram

<sup>20</sup> Telegram

- Statements by Sheikh **'Abd al-Razzaq al-Mahdi**, a senior Salafi-jihadist scholar affiliated with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, included the following:<sup>21</sup>
  - A negative reference to the ramming, stabbing and bombing attacks in the West. According to him, attacks in the West, such as those that took place in Spain, severely damage the image of Muslims and Islam. He emphasized that it serves to increase the sense of revulsion of Western Christians towards Muslims, spurs Western decision-makers to enact laws that would prevent the activities of Muslim preachers in the West, and more. In his words: "Believe me that these actions cause great damage and negatively affect Islam and Muslims in Western countries". According to him, young Muslims in the West who carry out these attacks are not examining whether they are useful or harmful to Muslims, but rather they are motivated by feelings of vengeance. According to him, the Prophet Muhammad would consider the benefit and loss before embarking on a battle against the infidels. Hence, this approach should be adopted. He added that he received criticism from colleagues because of his position, namely his condemnation of the attacks in Europe because of the damage inherent in them while his colleagues believe they are useful.
  - Criticism against several rebel factions in Syria that are willing to carry out negotiations with the Assad regime. According to him, participation in conferences on this subject in Geneva and Estonia reflects a kind of official recognition of the legality of the Syrian regime and ignores the issue of prisoner release. According to him, there is nothing to prevent negotiations with enemies, since the Prophet Muhammad acted in the same manner, but it is absolutely forbidden to turn the negotiations into a dictate. He added that Iran, Russia and the Syrian regime are considered enemies that must be fought against. According to him, if someone nonetheless finds himself negotiating with the Russians, he must demand the release of the prisoners.

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<sup>21</sup> Telegram

- A call on the organization, Hizb ut-Tahrir,<sup>22</sup> to re-examine its call to revive the institution of the Caliphate. According to al-Mahdi, in today's circumstances it would be a mistake to revive the institution of the Caliphate, as it would lead to a sharp reaction from the world powers, such as China and Russia. In this context, he mentioned the IS - in response to the organization's announcement of the renewal of the Caliphate, the world powers saw fit to send military forces to Iraqi-Syrian territory in order to destroy this enterprise. According to al-Mahdi, Muslims today have no deterrent weapons such as an atomic bomb or chemical weapons that could deter the countries of the world from interfering in what is happening in Muslim countries. Therefore, until such a weapon is achieved, it is preferable to refrain from announcing the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate. Al-Mahdi explained that his words should not be interpreted to mean that Hizb ut-Tahrir fighters should abandon the path of jihad, but rather they should be aware of benefit and loss considerations of the call for the establishment of a Caliphate.

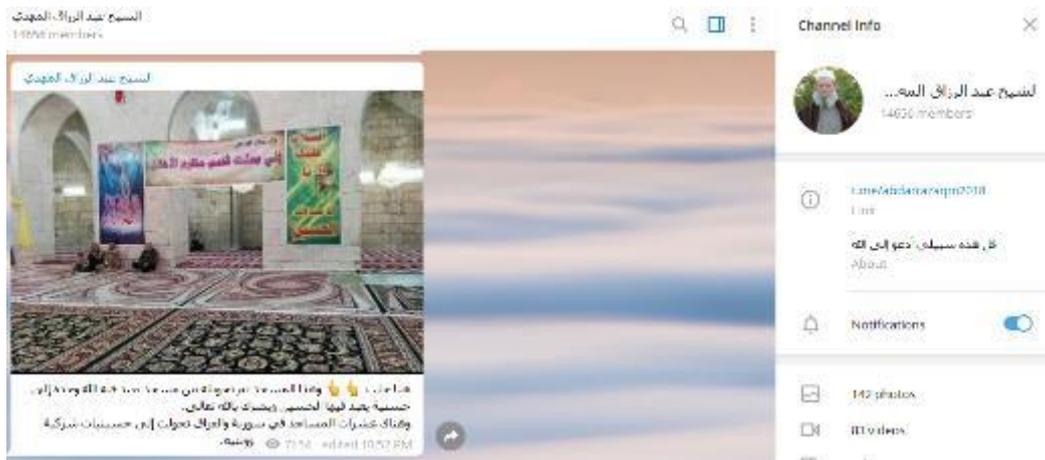
Al-Mahdi's call received criticism from a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir. According to the latter, al-Mahdi made a grave mistake by attributing significant importance to the weight of the superpowers on Muslims' decisions. According to him, the West has always waged an all-out war against Muslims on an ideological level even before it resorted to the use of military and political tools. However, Hizb ut-Tahrir manages to cope well with this ideological attack. He added that Muslims do not need to act out of fear of the enemy's military capabilities, but rather should cling to their faith and to the goals that they set. According to him, during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE), he was also forced to cope with two world powers – the Persian Empire and the Byzantine Empire – and he still worked to establish an Islamic State. Today, despite its advanced weaponry, Russia is failing to take over areas in Syria, and chooses to fight against rebel factions by holding negotiation, and to receive assistance from Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Thus, "if the [Muslim] Nation wants [to revive] the Caliphate, it does not need permission or an international decision by the US, Russia, or Europe." [As the Quranic verse says] They want

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<sup>22</sup> The organization was founded in 1952 by Sheikh Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani from Jerusalem and invests efforts in reviving the institution of the Caliphate.

to extinguish the light of Allah in their mouths". The member emphasized that for now the goal is to topple Assad's regime in order to prepare the ground for the establishment of an Islamic state. He also addressed the military inferiority of Islamic countries to the military superiority of the West. According to him, western countries prevent Muslims from arming and strengthening themselves. However, once an Islamic state is established, it will invest considerable effort in military production. "The establishment of an [Islamic] caliphate is the only guarantee to encourage war production and the investment of all efforts in obtaining a deterrent weapon for the [Muslim] Nation [...]" In conclusion, he called on al-Mahdi to call on all rebel factions to unite around the agenda to establish a caliphate that will be based on the path of the Prophet Muhammad, "for this is the promise of Allah and the message of the Messenger of Allah".

- A call on Sunni Muslims to pay attention to the alliance between the United States and Russia, and world Zionism and the Shi'ites. According to him, the former see fit to support the Shi'ites in order to distort the words of the Quran, to help them in the dispute against the Sunnah, to sow discord and a rift between the Sunnis, to encourage rituals and beliefs that are foreign to Islam, and more.
- A statement in praise of the Kurds because they are believers who make sure to visit mosques and pray, while the PKK is considered an infidel minority. According to him, "The Kurds are 100 times better than the Shi'ites. The Shi'ites, Buddhists and Zionists are the ethnic groups that have a strong hatred for the Sunnis". Al-Mahdi further noted that there are many churches and synagogues in Shi'ite Iran, while it is forbidden to build Sunni mosques in Iran. He then called on Sunnis in Syria to wake up and pay attention to the Shi'ite takeover of territories in Syria, and to their efforts to convert Sunni children to Shi'a, to convert Sunni mosques to Shi'ite mosques, and to build new Shi'ite houses of prayer in Aleppo. He posted a photo of a Sunni mosque that was converted to a Shi'ite house of worship, stating: "There are dozens of mosques in Syria and Iraq that have been converted into polytheistic and pagan houses of prayer".



The photo posted by al-Mahdi on his Telegram account showing the conversion of a Sunni mosque to a Shi'ite house of prayer as part of a trend of trying to turn Iraq and Syria into Shi'ite countries

- Statements by Sheikh **Abdullah al-Muhaysini**, a senior, independent Salafi-jihadist scholar and former member of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and affiliated with Al-Qaeda, included the following:<sup>23</sup>
  - A filmed interview in which he denied the rumor according to which he abandoned the arena of jihad in Syria, fled to Saudi Arabia by plane and from there to Qatar. Al-Muhaysini claimed that this rumor was designed to serve the Syrian regime, which is trying to find ways to sow demoralization among jihad fighters in Syria. In addition, he called on the jihad factions in Syria to act to unite the ranks and focus on the overthrow of the main enemy - the Syrian regime.
  - A denial of any connection to the new jihadist faction that was established in October 2017 in Syria, called Ansar al-Furqan, which is seemingly affiliated with Al-Qaeda. This denial was published as a result of an article in the London daily, *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, about al-Muhaysini's involvement in establishing a new branch of Al-Qaeda on Syrian soil but in a phone call, al-Muhaysini asked the newspaper to publish a correction and he denied any connection to the organization.<sup>24</sup>
  - An anthology including dozens of psalms in praise of jihad and martyrdom, articles and publications by al-Muhaysini and other jihad leaders. The anthology was dedicated in

<sup>23</sup> Telegram

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=807626>

memory of two jihad fighters who were killed as martyrs in Syria. The anthology itself was uploaded to the American sharing site, Archive.



An anthology including dozens of jihad psalms, articles and publications by al-Muhaysini and other jihad leaders on the American sharing site, Archive

- Statements by Sheikh **Abu al-Fath al-Farghali**, a member of the Shari’a Council in Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, included the following:<sup>25</sup>
  - An article dated October 6 titled, “The Law of the Supporters of the Infidels”. Based on Quranic verses and well-known religious scholars such as Ibn Hazm, Ibn Taymiyya, and Abd Baz, al-Farghali claimed that Muslims who support infidels and help them fight against their Muslim brethren become infidels in their own right. As a result of the many responses that he received to his article, al-Farghali published another post the following day criticizing those who disagree with him and stressed that his writings are based on the greatest religious scholars and, therefore, should not be refuted. In addition, al-Farghali referred back to the article and emphasized that the entire Turkish army, as well as Egyptian President al-Sisi, should be considered infidels.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Telegram

<sup>26</sup> Telegram

## Strategy

- Al-Wafaa jihadist media institution published several posters in Arabic, Russian and English that contained threats against the World Cup 2018 set to take place in Russia. One of the posters showed a masked gunman against the backdrop of a sports stadium, and another showed a gunman watching a stadium with his legs resting on an explosive charge. Other posters showed famous soccer players, such as Lionel Messi, imprisoned and bleeding.<sup>27</sup>



Posters containing threats against the World Cup 2018 published by the IS (Al-Wafaa media institution)

- Al-Bushriyyat jihadist media institution, which is involved in media for Al-Qaeda, published an article by an author residing in Syria, known as Hazem al-Misri, in which he listed reasons and justifications for remaining in Syria and continuing jihad activities, and for setting up camp there. The author explained that the presence of the mujahideen is still needed in this arena and that they should be helped and encouraged, and he warned that the departure of fighters from Syria

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<sup>27</sup><http://www.m5zn.com/newuploads/2017/10/21/png//a91846b090a5f1a.png>;  
[https://b.top4top.net/p\\_649szkxk1.png](https://b.top4top.net/p_649szkxk1.png);  
<https://archive.fo/qo0oW/5170e240795a63b11a5ec3f16ead6c7c9d2e3177.png>;  
[https://c.top4top.net/p\\_658wsfg71.jpg](https://c.top4top.net/p_658wsfg71.jpg);  
<http://www.m5zn.com/newuploads/2017/10/24/png//2d97c1d6a7d7343.png>;  
<http://www.m5zn.com/newuploads/2017/10/24/png//44d23561e69e97a.png>

will lead to disastrous consequences (fighters who return to their countries will be thrown into prison, while those who leave to secular Western countries will slowly lose their connection to Islam). It seems that the article was published against the backdrop of a trend in which fighters from Syria are returning to their countries of origin or to other countries.<sup>28</sup>

- A visitor to the Shumukh al-Islam jihadist Web forum suggested several alternatives to the Justepaste.it Web site for text and photo sharing: <https://risala.site>, <http://addpost.it>, <https://pastethis.at>.<sup>29</sup>
- A visitor to the Shumukh al-Islam jihadist Web forum referred to the difficulty in obtaining news and reports about the mujahideen following the closure of jihadist forums, such as Ana al-Muslim, and the deletion of content on Twitter and Facebook. In response, members of the forum recommended using Telegram or, alternatively, disguising the contents of publications as much as possible in order to prevent their deletion.<sup>30</sup>
- Al-Wafaa jihadist media institution published the following:
  - An article titled, “To the Lone Lion” by Abu Maria al-Asyaf.<sup>31</sup> After opening with praise for lone attacks in the West, specifically the current attack in Las Vegas, the author addressed the “lone lions” and called on them to carry out attacks in infidel lands out of true and complete faith in order to achieve the Shahada, reach heaven and meet their Lord. In response to the article that was published on Shumukh al-Islam, one visitor suggested that European fighters use their ability to move around the world to carry out 'lone wolf' attacks, not necessarily in the country in which they live but in another areas of the world (for example, to travel from Europe to Myanmar in order to attack Buddhists there).<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> <https://jhadma.wordpress.com/2017/10/07/41/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://shamukh.net/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>30</sup> <https://shamukh.net/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.m5zn.com/d/?16736668>

<sup>32</sup> <https://shamukh.net/vb> (Arabic).



### **Encouragement for lone attacks in infidel lands following the attack in Las Vegas**

- An article by an author known as Abu Umar al-Karaki against the backdrop of the latest speech by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. In the article, the author analyzed the actions of the IS and claimed that only the Islamic State – as opposed to other states – has created a new reality that serves it without fear of consequences. The writer presented the referendum in Kurdistan, the civil reforms in Saudi Arabia, Russian support for Bashar al-Assad, and American support for the Kurds as examples of the new realities created by the IS. The author explained that all of these changes ultimately serve the IS, although those looking in from the outside may accuse it of collaboration and betrayal.<sup>33</sup>
- Another article in response to al-Baghdadi’s speech was published by an author known as Mus’ab al-Shanqiti. The author emphasized that al-Baghdadi’s speech was further evidence of the Islamic State’s strong stance and called on the organization's supporters to take a number of steps, including: migrate to one of the various arenas of jihad, wage jihad against “tyrants, Crusaders and their assistants”, persuade other Muslims to join jihad, distribute IS propaganda and explain their position on various platforms, hold prayers for the mujahideen, financially support the mujahideen and the families of martyrs, and share the knowledge and experience of experts (for instance, for the purpose of neutralizing air attacks, developing weapons and chemical warfare agents, strategic advice, etc.).<sup>34</sup>
- An article by an author known as Abu Salma al-Ansari in which he praised the Abu Mohammad al-Adnani campaign of raids and attacks, named for the IS spokesman who died and who he noted “is still fighting the apostates even from his grave”.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> <http://www.m5zn.com/d/?3f9c008dc9b64&do=m5zn-Gt4w5q4NfZ>

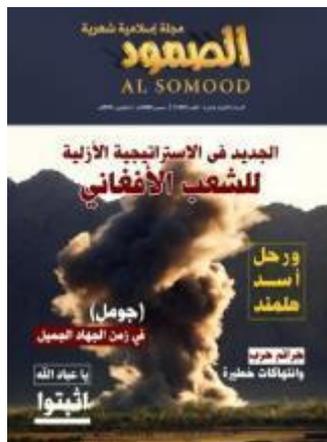
<sup>34</sup> <http://www.m5zn.com/d/?3cb1d079ecc2a62&do=m5zn-EDailkDeuK>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.up-9.com/downloadf-150705476703641-pdf.html>;

- Posters on various topics, including: encouragement for “lone lions” to carry out attacks in infidel lands, threats of attacks in the West, the raid of Abu Mohammad al-Adnani, proclamations including threats against the US, encouragement for IS fighters in Syria, a vow that Syria will be “a cemetery for the Russians and Americans”, a propaganda poster against Ahrar al-Sham and a poster regarding the death of Jalal Talabani, the Kurdish leader and former President of Iraq, at age 83.<sup>36</sup>
- Another poster in the series of posters titled, “Crusaders in Muslim Lands”. This poster contained information about the Incirlik base in Turkey, including its coordinates, its role today as a base from which Turkish and American planes attack the IS, the order of forces in it and the history of its establishment.<sup>37</sup>

## Magazines

- The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan published issue no. 139 for October 2017 (44 pp.) of *Al-Somood* magazine, which covers the arena of jihad in Afghanistan.<sup>38</sup>



<sup>36</sup><http://www.m5zn.com/newuploads/2017/10/06/jpg//c1bb67f03fbb4a3.jpg;>  
[https://e.top4top.net/p\\_643soqhc1.png;](https://e.top4top.net/p_643soqhc1.png) [https://c.top4top.net/p\\_653g2im41.jpg;](https://c.top4top.net/p_653g2im41.jpg)  
[https://shamukh.net/vb/showthread.php?t=279363;](https://shamukh.net/vb/showthread.php?t=279363) [https://c.top4top.net/p\\_64994hb11.png](https://c.top4top.net/p_64994hb11.png)  
<https://archive.fo/rBUGm/fcf1c6e39fe9c317c54b8c0007a96d34dc66aced.png>  
[http://www.m5zn.com/newuploads/2017/10/10/jpg//ae5ad9d0b956ba9.jpg;](http://www.m5zn.com/newuploads/2017/10/10/jpg//ae5ad9d0b956ba9.jpg)  
[http://www.up-9.com/imagef-150782378423311-jpg.html;](http://www.up-9.com/imagef-150782378423311-jpg.html)<http://www.up-9.com/imagef-150815839528991-png.html>

<sup>37</sup> [https://a.top4top.net/p\\_642q53de1.jpg](https://a.top4top.net/p_642q53de1.jpg)

<sup>38</sup> <https://files.fm/f/2wwmmuup>

### The banner page of *Al-Somood* magazine

- Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent published a new issue of its magazine, *Nawai Afghani Jihad* for the month of October.<sup>39</sup>



The banner page of *Nawai Afghani Jihad* magazine

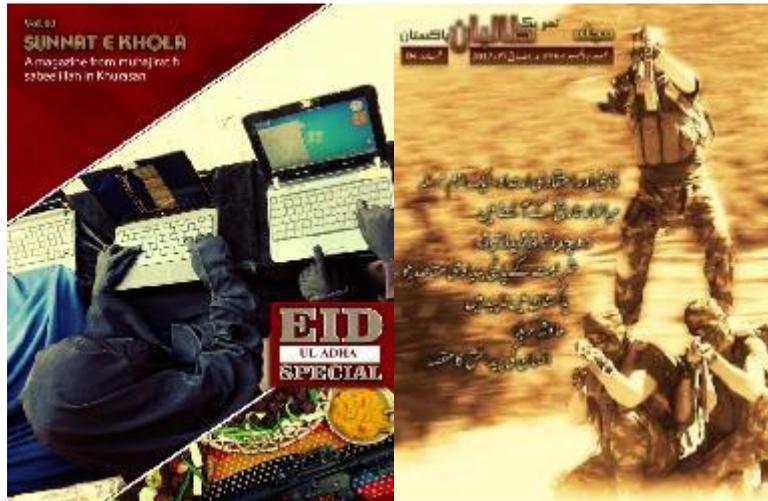
- Issues no. 100-103 of the periodical, *Al-Naba*, were published by the Islamic State. Among the topics covered in the articles were: the organization's military activities in various arenas, posters showing the results of the terrorist attack in Las Vegas and the battle in Marawi, an article regarding women's obligation to participate in jihad, Islamic traditions concerning the participation of women in jihad, and the importance of explosive devices and their use.<sup>40</sup>
- The Omar jihadist media institution, which belongs to the Taliban in Pakistan, published the fourth issue of the magazine, *Taliban Pakistan*, in Urdu; and the second issue of the magazine, *Sunnat Khawlah*, which addresses a female audience, in English.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Telegram

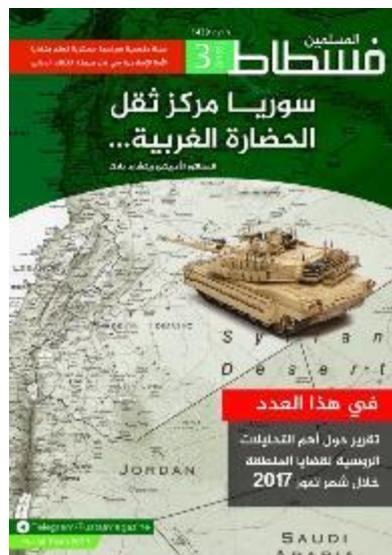
<sup>40</sup> <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/77485>; <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/77748>; <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/78118>

<sup>41</sup> Telegram



The banner pages of *Sunnat Khawlah*

- The third issue was published of the magazine *Fustat al-Muslimin*, which is associated with jihad fighters in Syria. Among the topics covered in the issue were: the West’s ideological attack on the minds of Muslims; relations between religion and state; Saudi Arabia’s struggle with Sunni movements; advice and guidance for preparing a terrorist attack against enemy forces; a review of the Russian press regarding Syria; and more.<sup>42</sup>



The banner page of *Fustat* magazine

<sup>42</sup> Telegram

- The Telegram account, Khayr al-Ummah, which is involved in media for Al-Qaeda, published the third issue of the magazine, *Al-Risala*. Among the topics covered in the current issue were: a condemnation of the Saudi Kingdom for its anti-Islamic policies, such as permitting women to drive; reference to the Russian shelling of jihad fighters in Syria; quotes from jihad leaders such as Ayman al-Zawahiri and Abu Qatada al-Filastini on various topics, such as the need to wage jihad against Israel and the Jews, and a condemnation of democracy; advice on polemic writing against the enemies of Islam; reference to holding negotiations with tyrant regimes.<sup>43</sup>



**The banner page of *Al-Risala* magazine**

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<sup>43</sup> Telegram

## Reports from the Field

### Afghanistan-Pakistan

#### *The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan*

- The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan published the following:
  - An announcement regarding the American invasion of Afghanistan that began 16 years ago. The announcement stated that the real reason for the American invasion of Afghanistan was America's desire to enslave other nations. The announcement also stated that the Americans were certain that they would easily enslave the Afghan people but they were not aware that the Afghan people succeed in causing any invader to withdraw from its land. Later in the announcement, the organization praised the success of Afghan jihad that was directed against the American invaders. At the end of the announcement, the organization called on the US to respect the freedom of the Afghan people and withdraw its forces from Afghanistan, and threatened that it would continue to fight the invaders until they do so.<sup>44</sup>
  - An announcement by the spokesman for the Islamic Emirate, Zabihullah Mujahid, regarding accusations by a Canadian captive against the mujahideen. In the announcement, the organization denied accusations by the Canadian captive according to which his child was murdered and his family honor was desecrated while he was in captivity. The organization added that if there had been a plan to harm the Canadian couple, then they would not have returned home with their three children. At the end of the announcement, the organization claimed that the Canadian captives were making these false claims because they are now in the hands of the enemy and the enemy is interested in creating propaganda against the mujahideen.<sup>45</sup>
  - An announcement by the spokesman for the Islamic Emirate, Zabihullah Mujahid, regarding the medical condition of one of the lecturers at the American University in Kabul after he was arrested by the organization. The announcement stated that the health of one of the American lecturers being held by the organization was deteriorating and it was

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<sup>44</sup> <http://alemarah-english.com/?p=20763>

<sup>45</sup> <http://alemarah-english.com/?p=21087>

not possible to provide him with appropriate medical treatment and, therefore, the organization called on the US to meet its demands so that they may release the two American hostages as soon as possible.<sup>46</sup>

- The Hidayyah jihadist media institution published an exclusive interview with the spokesman for the Islamic Emirate, Zabihullah Mujahid, regarding military and political issues in Afghanistan. In the interview, Zabihullah Mujahid claimed that the Islamic Emirate condemns the strategy of US President Donald Trump vis-à-vis Afghanistan, and threatened that the US will suffer should it implement this strategy, which includes the continued American battle in Afghanistan. He added that Trump's strategy is not receiving support within the US and is expected to cost the country a lot of money. Later in the interview, Zabihullah Mujahid claimed that reports by the US media regarding the victory of its soldiers in battles and increased fighting are lies, and that the mujahideen are actually the ones who are continuing to advance in the battlefield even after the announcement of Trump's strategy. Regarding the American shellings, he claimed that the main casualties from those shellings are Afghan civilians and not the mujahideen, and he threatened that the Americans will pay for this. He added that the US is intentionally slaughtering civilians in order to force them to stop supporting the mujahideen. Later in the interview, he emphasized that the return of sovereignty to Afghanistan and the establishment of an Islamic system in the country are more important to the mujahideen than their own lives and, therefore, the mujahideen's battle cannot be undermined by the Americans. Later, he referred to the President of Afghanistan, Ashraf Ghani, who is acting against the religious establishment in Afghanistan, and claimed that the day would come when his regime will end, and he will be prosecuted for all of the offenses that he committed against religious institutions in the country. Finally, he called on foreign readers to pressure their governments to withdraw their forces from Afghanistan in order to return its sovereignty.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> <http://alemarah-english.com/?p=21708>

<sup>47</sup> Telegram



**The banner of the interview with the official spokesman of the Islamic Emirate, Zabihullah Mujahid**

- A book titled, “The Shout of Glory” (289 pp.) by Sadda Allah al-Balushi. The book is a collection of articles that were published in *Al-Somood* magazine, which belongs to the Islamic Emirate. According to the author, the book discusses the mujahideen’s efforts to expel the invading Crusader forces from Afghanistan, and thwart their plot to weaken Islam and conquer Muslim lands. According to him, Afghanistan is a model for other jihad fighters to fight against the invaders of Muslim lands.<sup>48</sup>



**The banner of the book**

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<sup>48</sup> <https://alemara1.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/صراخ-المجد.pdf>

- Al-Hedaya jihadist media group, which is involved in media for Al-Qaeda and its various branches, published on its Telegram account an infographic detailing the total military operations of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan during the months of September-October 2017. For example, the infographic noted that the Emirate carried out a total of 669 terrorist attacks, including six suicide attacks; 262 vehicles were destroyed; 46 soldiers among Western forces were killed and 17 others were injured; 1,659 collaborators were killed and 885 others were injured; one cargo plane and one surveillance plane were shot down; 55 Emirate fighters were killed and 62 others were injured.<sup>49</sup>



An infographic detailing the total military operations of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan during September-October 2017

## The Arabian Peninsula

### *Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula*

- Al-Malahim jihadist media institution, which belongs to AQAP, published the following:
  - A speech by Sheikh Khalid bin ‘Umar Batarfi, a senior member of the organization, criticizing the Saudi regime. Batarfi accused the latter of committing crimes against the Sunni population in Yemen, normalizing relations with Israel along with a willingness to relinquish Al-Aqsa Mosque, cooperating with the enemy of Islam, and more. According to him, the Saudi regime is acting in complete contrast to shari’a, as it expressed in allowing women to drive. According to Batarfi, religious scholars, businessmen and other professionals who dared to criticize the gross violations of shari’a carried out by the

<sup>49</sup> Telegram

Kingdom found themselves in prison. Batarfi condemned this series of arrests that was aimed to silence the voices of criticism, and he called on Muslims to wake up from their apathy and act against the Saudi regime and other tyrant regimes whose policies undermine shari'a. According to him, the flag of jihad must be raised in order to protect the religion of Islam.<sup>50</sup>



**A clip from the speech by Sheikh Khalid bin 'Umar Batarfi**

- Two audio clips by Said Ali al-Shihri (1973-2013), the former deputy leader of the organization, about the methods of action to be taken for successful dawah for the sake of Islam. For example, al-Shihri emphasized the importance of cooperation with the civilian population and an informed reading of the situation on the ground in order to know what type of combat should be adopted against the enemy.<sup>51</sup>
- Al-Hedaya jihadist media group, which is involved in media for Al-Qaeda and its various branches, published a series of articles in praise of the mujahideen's activities against the enemies of Islam in Yemen. According to it, Muslims must help the mujahideen in every way and the fulfilment of the commandment of jihad is important in and of itself. Another article addressed the importance of providing a comprehensive Islamic education to the mujahid.<sup>52</sup>
- Al-Nur jihadist media institution published a video documenting the activities of members of Ansar al-Sharia, which is affiliated with AQAP, for the sake of the civilian population in Yemen,

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<sup>50</sup> <http://www.alfidaaforum.net/vb/> ; <http://risala.ga/6c9e/>

<sup>51</sup> Telegram

<sup>52</sup> Telegram

such as the distribution of food to the needy. Alongside this, the organization criticized the US air strikes in Yemen as well as the military involvement of the United Emirates in the country.<sup>53</sup>

### ***The Islamic State***

- The IS in Al-Baydaa Province in Yemen published a filmed review from the Sheikh Abu Mohammad al-Adnani training camp. The photos showed the organization’s masked fighters undergoing physical training and weapons instruction.<sup>54</sup>



**An IS training camp in Al-Baydaa Province in Yemen**

## **Iraq**

### ***The Islamic State***

- The media departments of the various provinces of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Amaq news agency published a range of videos and filmed reviews, which dealt with the following issues:
  - A. Battles and Military Deployments:
    - Dijla Province: A video titled, “Knights of the Frontiers”, which documented an attack by IS fighters against PMF posts south of Sharqat. The attack included grad rocket fire aimed at the posts, an attack on a Cougar vehicle using a guided missile, the dispatch of suicide terrorists in explosive-ridden vehicles and shooting directed at aircraft in the area. As is customary in the

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<sup>53</sup> Telegram

<sup>54</sup> <https://shamukh.net/vb> (Arabic).

organization's videos, the video ended with the display of corpses and the weapons that were taken as spoils.<sup>55</sup>

B. Propaganda and Media

- *Al-Furat Province*: A video in Arabic and Uzbek titled, "Profitable Deal" about IS fighters of Uzbek and other origins who were killed in battles and their children. The video – which was accompanied by many images from the battlefields – focused on the story of Abu Zubayr al-Uzbiki, an IS fighter who was killed in battle, and his two sons, Zubayr and 'Abd al-Rahman. The video emphasized that Abu Zubayr's sons – who used to join him in the battlefields when he was alive – are continuing on his path and integrating into the organization's battle system (one of the sons specialized in the operation of combat drones). In addition, testimonies by Abu al-Zubayr's brothers-in-arms were presented, in which they praised his virtues and courage, and his will was read aloud, in which he asked that his two sons carry out an act of Istishhad (martyrdom).<sup>56</sup>



**The two sons of a Uzbek martyr in the ranks of the IS are presented as his successors**

- *Al-Furat Province*: A video titled, "Dar al-Islam" (The Abode of Islam) about Turkic migrants living in the province under the Caliphate's rule. The video included images from the daily life of the migrants and their military activities, particularly within the framework of the organization's air

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<sup>55</sup> <https://dawaalhq.com/post/77974>

<sup>56</sup> [https://ia801500.us.archive.org/3/items/rabehalbay3\\_gadidlink1/rabeh.mp4](https://ia801500.us.archive.org/3/items/rabehalbay3_gadidlink1/rabeh.mp4)

defense units. The video combined statements by a Turkic fighter who addressed his countrymen in their language, called on them to join life in the Caliphate under the shadow of Islamic shari'a, and berated the Turkic migrants who joined the Sahawat and factions posing as Islamic, such as Ahrar al-Sham and Jaysh al-Islam.<sup>57</sup>



Photos from the life of Turkic migrants in Al-Furat Province

## Al-Sham [The Levant]

### Syria

#### *Hayat Tahrir al-Sham*

- The Amjad jihadist media institution, which belongs to Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, published the following:
  - An announcement regarding the change of roles in the organization's leadership. The announcement stated that the Shura Council of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham accepts the resignation of the leader of the organization, Abu Jaber, and appoints his deputy, Abu Mohammad al-Julani, to manage the organization's affairs. The announcement also stated that Abu Jaber will be appointed Chairman of the organization's Shura Council.<sup>58</sup>
  - An audio clip by Sheikh Bishr al-Shami, the head of the organization's Shura Council, in praise of the fighting and martyrdom of the organization's members in Syria.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> [https://archive.org/details/DarElIslam\\_furatwilayahlink1](https://archive.org/details/DarElIslam_furatwilayahlink1)

<sup>58</sup> Telegram

<sup>59</sup> Telegram

- An announcement regarding the Syrian factions that are aiding in Operation “Euphrates Shield” against the mujahideen in Idlib. In the announcement, the organization claimed that the factions taking part in Operation “Euphrates Shield” are expected to take part in the battle for Idlib against Hayat Tahrir al-Sham under air cover from Russia, thus legitimizing the implications of the Astana Conference. Later in the announcement, the organization threatened that the battle for Idlib will not be easy and that the mujahideen expect the attackers to reach Idlib.<sup>60</sup>
- An announcement in which the organization threatened the IS after the latter invaded the liberated villages in Hama. In the announcement, the organization claimed that the Syrian regime allowed the IS to invade the liberated villages in Hama so that the latter would help the regime in the battle, and that the IS coordinated its actions with the Syrian regime. At the end of the announcement, the organization emphasized that it would continue to defend the jihad of Ahl al-Sunna from the traitors and the Khawarij.<sup>61</sup>
- Eight senior Salafi-jihadist sheikhs, including Abu Qatada al-Filistini, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, Abu Abdullah al-Hashemi, Abu Hudhayfa al-Sudani, Abu al-Fadl al-Haddushi, Abu Abd al-Rahman al-Makki, Abu Maher Malahem and Abu Mahmud Nael Musran published an initiative for reconciliation between jihad factions in Syria titled, “Such Settlement in Better”. The factions include Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and Ahrar al-Sham, and supporters of Al-Qaeda in Syria and those interested in shari’a rule. In the announcement, the sheikhs called on the mujahideen to reunite and leave their differences of opinion aside since there are more similarities than differences between the Islamic factions and, therefore, they must unite against the common enemy while settling the conflicts by turning to the clerics.<sup>62</sup>

The above-mentioned initiative earned the support of jihad factions in Syria, including Ansar al-Furqan, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and Ahrar al-Sham, and an expressed willingness to implement it;<sup>63</sup> Jihad factions outside of Syria also expressed their support for the

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<sup>60</sup> Telegram

<sup>61</sup> Telegram

<sup>62</sup> Telegram

<sup>63</sup> <https://goo.gl/uRWML8>; <https://goo.gl/eGHYGb>; <https://goo.gl/QPDSkn>

initiative, such as AQIM and AQAP, which published a joint statement;<sup>64</sup> Jamā'at Nuṣrat al-Islām Wa-l-Muslimīn, a Salafi-jihadist organization in Mali;<sup>65</sup> Jund al-Islam in Sinai, a Salafi-jihadist organization affiliated with Al-Qaeda.<sup>66</sup>



**The logo produced as part of the reconciliation initiative between jihad factions in Syria**

An announcement of support from Jund al-Islam in Sinai;<sup>67</sup> Mufti Abu Dharra ‘Azzam, a senior Salafi-jihadist scholar operating in Afghanistan.<sup>68</sup>

### ***Turkestan Islamic Party***

- The Turkestan Islamic Party in Syria published a series of videos regarding the importance of fulfilling the obligation of jihad, including praise for its martyrs and documentation of its fighters’ battles. In addition, the organization published an announcement asking the jihad fighters operating against the Syrian regime from the organization’s territories to take responsibility and not attribute their activities to the organization, and to clarify that the organization played no part in harming the civilians who were injured by Syrian regime fire.<sup>69</sup> In another statement, the organization objected to the firing by one of the jihad factions against two members of the Turkestan Islamic Party. According to the statement, its fighters were on Syrian soil for five years and never interfered in existing conflicts between the various jihad factions so why did that jihad faction decide to harm two of its members?<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Telegram

<sup>65</sup> Telegram

<sup>66</sup> Telegram

<sup>67</sup> Telegram

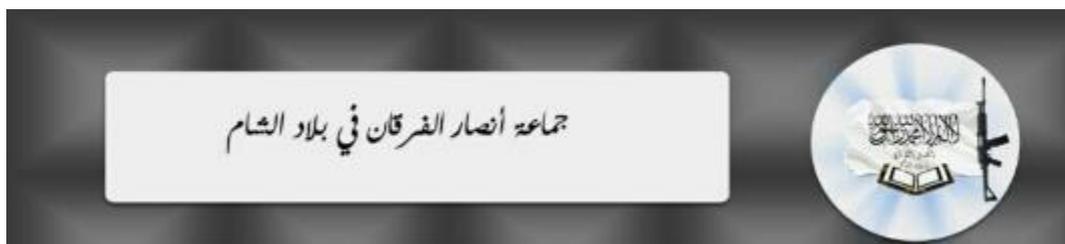
<sup>68</sup> Telegram

<sup>69</sup> Telegram

<sup>70</sup> Telegram

### ***Ansar al-Furqan fi Bilad al-Sham***

- On October 9, 2017 a new Salafi-jihadist organization named Ansar al-Furqan fi Bilad al-Sham, which is seemingly associated with Al-Qaeda, announced its establishment. The new organization published its doctrine, which stated, among other things, that the new organization is a Sunni jihadist organization composed of local fighters and foreign fighters that aspires to apply shari'a and renew the institution of the Caliphate through jihad. The organization added that jihad is a commandment imposed on every Muslim and that Muslims around the world must resist the aggression directed against them. It also stated that every Muslim must migrate to the lands that were liberated by the mujahideen. The new organization emphasized that its main goal is to fight against the Alawites, the Shi'ites and the Russians on Syrian soil. The organization also referred to the way in which to distribute the spoils captured from the enemy, the structure of the organization, and other matters.<sup>71</sup>
- According to the report, which was published in the London daily, *Al-Quds Al-'Arabi*, the organization was established on the instruction of Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of Al-Qaeda, who appointed Sheikh Hamza bin Laden to head the organization's branch in Syria. It also stated that Al-Qaeda's followers in Syria are putting pressure on Abu Mohammad al-Julani, the leader of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and former leader of Al-Nusra Front, to allow members who are faithful to Al-Qaeda to leave the organization and join the new organization, Ansar al-Furqan Bilad al-Sham.<sup>72</sup>



**The logo of the new organization, Ansar al-Furqan Bilad al-Sham**

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<sup>71</sup> Telegram

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=806025>

## ***The Islamic State***

- The media departments of the various provinces of the Islamic State in Syria and the Amaq news agency published a range of videos and filmed reviews, which dealt with the following operational issues:

### **A. Battles and Military Deployments:**

- *Al-Khayr Province*: A video titled, “The Descendants of Ibn Jubayr”, which documented the sniper activity of the organization in the province. The video explained the importance of the sniper in war, both throughout Muslim history and today, alongside images from sniper fire against Syrian army soldiers. The video combined interviews with snipers (including Russian and Kurdish speakers) who spoke about the sniper activities that they participated in and the number of sniper attacks in the province, which stood at approximately 2,500 targets in three years. The video ended with the execution by fire and beheading of three captives who were accused of spying.<sup>73</sup>
- *Damascus Province*: A video titled, “The Path to Glory”, which documented the organization’s sniper activities in the south of the province against the Sahawat who support the Assad regime. The video showed a masked sniper who praised the Islamic State’s activity in the province while emphasizing that marksmanship is one of the most effective weapons against the enemy.<sup>74</sup>

## **The Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula**

- Visitors to the Shumukh al-Islam jihadist Web forum published several articles criticizing Hamas, on various topics including: criticism over the increasing similarity between Fatah and Hamas; an accusation against Hamas for cooperating with Israel in the persecution of Salafists on the one hand, and in security coordination with Egyptian security services on the other hand.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/77720>

<sup>74</sup> <https://streamable.com/hu9up>

<sup>75</sup> <https://shamukh.net/vb> (Arabic).

## Africa

### The Maghreb

#### Libya

##### The Shura Council of the Mujahideen in Derna

- The Shura Council of the Mujahideen in Derna published the following:
  - A notice of mourning in which it expressed condolences to the families of the martyrs who were killed in an Egyptian shelling in Libya. The notice ended with a curse against Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, Libyan General Khalifa Haftar, the head of the unity government in Libya, Fayez al-Sarraj, and the President of the Libyan House of Representatives, Aguila Saleh.<sup>76</sup>
  - A statement referencing reports of the discovery of dozens of corpses in a mass grave in the town of Abyar, east of the city of Benghazi, in an area controlled by the Libyan National Army (LNA) under the command of Khalifa Haftar. The statement included condemnation of the 'Abyan massacre and a call on Muslims in Libya to renounce the 'dictators' who claim that they are fighting terrorism when their real battle is against Islam.<sup>77</sup>

#### Mali

##### Jamā'at Nuṣrat al-Islām Wa-l-Muslimīn

- Al-Zallaqa jihadist media institution, which belongs to Jamā'at Nuṣrat al-Islām Wa-l-Muslimīn, a Salafi-jihadist umbrella organization affiliated with AQIM, published a video titled, "He Who Warned, Apologized". In the video, two members of the organization of Mauritanian origin, Abu al-Darda al-Shinqiti and Ayman al-Shinqiti, accused the Mauritanian regime in Yemen of providing assistance to the French in their attacks on northern Mali. Alongside this, the organization claimed to have captured spies who were sent by the Mauritanian government. The video also combined documentation of fighters who the organization claimed were killed by French air strikes as a result of information that the spies provided to the Mauritians.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Telegram

<sup>77</sup> Telegram

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.alizaa.com/showthread.php?829-quot-1-أعذر-فقد-أعذر-1>



From left to right: Abu al-Darda al-Shinqiti and Ayman al-Shinqiti

## ***Egypt***

### **The Hasm Movement**

- The Hasm movement claimed responsibility for an attack against the Myanmar Embassy in Cairo by placing an explosive charge. In a statement that was published on the topic, the organization claimed that the attack was carried out in revenge for the slaughter of the Muslim minority in Myanmar by the regime.<sup>79</sup>



The banner produced by the organization with details of the attack against the Myanmar Embassy in Cairo

## ***Somalia***

### **Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen**

- Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen published the following:

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<sup>79</sup> <https://hasamegypt.com/?p=473>

- Al-Shahada jihadist media institution, which belongs to the organization, published an infographic that focused on Al-Shabab fighters' activities in Kenya since the entry of Kenyan forces into Somalia in 2011. For example, it stated that Al-Shabab fighters carried out 125 attacks against Kenyan forces, caused them 760 casualties and 234 injured, destroyed 79 vehicles, attacked 16 Kenyan government institutions, and more.<sup>80</sup>



**The infographic produced by Al-Shabab regarding its activities against Kenyan forces since 2011**

- Al-Hedaya jihadist media group, which is involved in media for Al-Qaeda and its branches, published an infographic on its Telegram account that detailed Al-Shabab's total military operations between October 7-13, 2017: 18 military operations directed against Ethiopian, Ugandan and Somali forces; 50 people killed and injured; three armored vehicles destroyed; nine raids; one bomb; six explosive charges; and more.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>80</sup> <http://www.alfidaaforum.net/vb> (Arabic); <http://shahadanews.com/?p=915>

<sup>81</sup> Telegram



An infographic detailing the organization’s activities between October 7-13, 2017

## The Indian Subcontinent

### *Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent*

- The Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF), which serves as a platform for messages by Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent, published a video documenting the slaughter of the Muslim minority in Myanmar by the regime. According to the narrator, Muslims in Myanmar are exposed to ongoing harassment by Buddhists and monks in the country. The video included interviews held by foreign media channels with locals who were saved from the massacre. Alongside this, the organization called on Muslims to help the Muslim minority in Myanmar through jihad against Myanmar’s security forces.<sup>82</sup>

## The Philippines

- Al-Hayat jihadist media institution published a new psalm titled, “To the Brothers in Marawi”. This religious psalm – which lasted two minutes and was performed in English – described “the

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<sup>82</sup> Telegram

diamonds, pearls, palaces, virgins and wine” that await for martyrs in Paradise, and praised the mujahideen in Marawi, which is located in the Philippines, who continue to spill blood for the sake of Allah.<sup>83</sup>

## Iran

### *Ansar Ul Furqan Iran*

- Ansar Ul Furqan Iran published a video documenting attacks carried out by its members against an Iranian army base in the city of Zabol, in Iran, next to the border with Afghanistan.<sup>84</sup>

## The West

- Al-Battar jihadist media institution published a video titled, “The Las Vegas Raid – Just Terror”. The two-minute video included images from the site of the shooting attack in Las Vegas as a “message from the Caliphate to the United States and its allies”, with audio clips heard in the background from threats by Jihadi John against the US.<sup>85</sup>



**Presentation of the shooting attack in Las Vegas as part of the Islamic State’s “Just Terror” campaign**

- Visitors to the Shumukh al-Islam jihadist Web forum discussed the shooting attack in Las Vegas that was carried out by Stephen Paddock. The visitors welcomed the attack and referred to Paddock as a member of the IS after he was identified as such and called by the name, Abu Abd al-Birr al-Amriki. One of the visitors claimed that the attack should be exploited for media

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<sup>83</sup> <https://ia801504.us.archive.org/28/items/BrothersInMarawi>

<sup>84</sup> <http://www.alfidaaforum.net/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>85</sup> [https://archive.org/details/yahiabaker20\\_gmail\\_201710](https://archive.org/details/yahiabaker20_gmail_201710)

purposes while placing emphasis on the fact that Las Vegas is considered “sin city” even in the eyes of the Americans themselves.<sup>86</sup> Other visitors referred to the economic implications and losses that were caused to the entertainment complex due to the attack.<sup>87</sup>

- A writer known as Abu Wiqar al-Gharib published an article about the attack in Las Vegas in which he praised Stephen Paddock, and noted that his being an adult white man who does not come from a Muslim background may increase the attraction of non-Muslims to work for the IS. The writer explained that this is one of the reasons that the authorities in the US and President Trump denied the attack’s attribution to the IS. In addition, the writer emphasized Paddock’s Muslim identity and added that looking at pictures of bombings in Mosul served as a catalyst that pushed Paddock to get up and do something.<sup>88</sup>
- An IS fighter in Syria known as Abu Adam al-Baritani published a 72-minute video on Telegram in which he complained about the situation in the city of Raqqah, which is subject to shelling by coalition forces. According to media reports, al-Baritani’s real name is Yaser Iqbal, a lawyer from Birmingham who joined the ranks of the IS several years ago.<sup>89</sup>
- The Amaq news agency, which belongs to the IS, published a claim of the responsibility by the IS for the stabbing attack in Marseille, France, and claimed that the terrorist heeded the organization's call to carry out terrorist attacks against the coalition countries.<sup>90</sup>

## Miscellaneous

- Al-Wafaa jihadist media institution announced that it was merging with Al-Wa’d jihadist media institution. In the announcement, the media institution explained that Al-Wa’d began its activities and support for the IS in May-June 2015 but in an effort to consolidate ranks and efforts, it was decided to merge it with Al-Wafaa, to continue to support the mujahideen, defend them and explain their positions.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> <https://shamukh.net/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>87</sup> <https://shamukh.net/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>88</sup> <https://justpaste.it/Vegas4>

<sup>89</sup> Telegram; <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4959066/ISIS-fighter-married-Porsche-driving-Birmingham-lawyer.html>

<sup>90</sup> Telegram

<sup>91</sup> [https://b.top4top.net/p\\_6501ex6b1.png](https://b.top4top.net/p_6501ex6b1.png)

## ABOUT THE ICT

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## ABOUT THE JIHADI MONITORING GROUP

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 unique characteristic of JWMG publications is the team's integration of diverse materials from a wide variety of Arabic sources. JWMG connects each source to larger trends, providing a complete understanding of events on both a local and a global scale.

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