



# JWMSG Report

## August 2019

## Highlights

- **Hibatullah Akhundzada**, the leader of **Afghani Taliban and the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan** is calling the mujahidin to continue their fight against the enemy even during Id al-Fitr to bring about their withdrawal and the installation of an Islamic regime. Per him, jihadists managed to achieve military and political gains that are being manifested, for example, in conquering wide regions in Afghanistan and by solidifying their control of highways and strategic points. Further, both jihad battles and negotiating with the enemy are considered as legitimate tools to achieve the goal of ending the occupation and installing an Islamic regime.
- **Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri**, the leader of **al-Qaeda**, is fiercely criticizing the campaign conducted by the west against the Muslim identity of Muslim women around the world. Per him, the west is plagued with double standards: on the one hand it preaches for women's liberation yet at the same time it prohibits wearing veils out of intention to turn the Muslim woman into a secular one who is disconnected from its Muslim roots. As he sees it, the Muslim woman has a central role in Islamic society which is manifested by education and maintain the stability of the core family. That said, he warned Muslim women of the enemies' ploys intended to have them stray from Islam and the belief in Allah. In another speech, al-Zawahiri focused on the importance of obeying Allah and Muhammad. Per him, following this principle is a guarantee for jihadists' victory over their enemies and stressed the value of being patient while performing jihad against the enemies of Islam.
- The **al-Qaeda** leadership calls upon jihadists in Syria to maintain the unity of the ranks, especially in light of the enemy's wide offensive on jihadists and the civilian population. Per the leadership, the fighters who immigrated to Syria must assist with jihad against the Assad regime and its allies.
- The **al-Qaeda** leadership condemns the Pakistanis for arresting three Muslim women who were married to jihadists and accused them of following American orders. That said, the leadership waned the Pakistani government and the U.S. not to hurt them.
- The **al-Qaeda** leadership eulogizes **Sheikh Sufi Muhammad al-Sawati** (1933-2019), a prominent Pakistani cleric and founder of **Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi**, a militant Pakistani organization attempting to install sharia in Pakistan. Per the eulogy, al-Sawati and his activity to promote jihad (such as his call to start a jihad against the Pakistani government because of its support of the U.S. and the oppression policy against the northern tribes) left a deep mark on Afghani jihadists.
- The **al-Qaeda** leadership eulogizes **Abu Khaad al-Muhandis**, a veteran al-Qaeda member killed in Idlib.
- **Sheikh Sayf al-Adl**, a senior **al-Qaeda** leader, warns jihadi factions in Syria of cooperating with the Turkish regime and other states because such cooperation might hinder the efforts to defeat the enemy.
- The **al-Qaeda** leadership publishes a second volume of its publication **al-Umma al-Wahida**. The issue dedicated space to a special discussion about the importance of developing hacking and cyber-attack

abilities, especially against critical infrastructure to paralyze life in the west and weaken its economy.

- **Al-Shabab al-Mujahidin**, the **al-Qaeda** extension in Somalia, fiercely criticizes the Somali government for installing a secular regime rather than a religious one, and for forging ties with the west who persecutes the Muslims and wants to weaken their religious identity. In light of the above the organization justifies attacks on Somali hotels because they host military, intelligence and political elements of the Somali government and foreign regimes. Further, the organization called its members and supporters to keep perpetrating suicide attacks against the enemy and stressed that it enjoys wide popular support.
- **Ali Mahmoud Raji**, the formal spokesman of **Al-Shabab al-Mujahidin**, claims that his organization succeeds in striking blows on the governments and that the government failed in its campaign against the organization. Per him, the mujahidin keep hurting the enemy in central locations, Mogadishu included, to convey the message that the mujahidin don't forget the U.S. attacks on Somalia and their bombing of innocents. He also threatened that his organization will hurt all who meddle in internal Somali affairs, such as Turkey (that erected military bases in the state) and the U.S.
- **ISIS activists** in various provinces such as al-Sham and Bangladesh renewed their pledge of allegiance to al-Baghdadi within the framework of the Best Result is Reserved for Those Who Trust Allah. Together with their pledge they stressed they are committed for a continued jihad.
- **ISIS** is calling its supporters to cleanse the Arabian Peninsula of Hindu presence, following a visit by **PM Modi** in KSA. The organization warned that the visit laid the groundwork for erecting new military bases and Hindu temples in KSA and for the immigration of Hindu masses to KSA. The organization clarified that this was unacceptable due to the fierce animosity between Hindu and Muslims and therefore jihad must be launched against the Hindu in the Arabian Peninsula and against the Saudi regime who allow such presence in the Arabian Peninsula.
- **Abu Muhammad al-Julani** the leader of Hayat **Tahrir al-Sham** denies all connection between the last round of talks in Astana and the cease fire agreement in Idlib. Per him, the cease fire may collapse at any moment and stressed that he did not intend to withdraw from the frontlines to create a demilitarized zone in north west Syria and will not meet the terms set by Assad to continue the cease fire. Per him, the Alawi military attack only managed to unite all jihadi factions.

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## Publications

### Ideology

#### Publications by Al-Qaeda

- **Al-Sahab** media outlet (an **al-Qaeda** unit):
  - A banner containing a eulogy for the **Sheikh Sufi Muhammad al-Sawati** (1933-2019) a prominent Pakistani cleric and founder of **Tehreek-e-Nafaz-eShariat-e-Mohammadi**, a militant Pakistani organization that wished to implement Sharia law in Pakistan and suspected of ties with Pakistani Taliban. In 2009 al-Sawati was arrested by the Pakistani security forces for involvement in terrorism and was incarcerated in a Peshawar jail until his death (July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019). The banner described al-Sawati as a person who dedicated his life for jihad and implementing sharia law and his faith in Allah was unshakable. He kept his cool temper even when his son, **Maulana Fazlullah**, the leader of the **Pakistani Taliban**, was eliminated by the Pakistani regime. The banner said that thousands of Pakistanis attended his funeral. Further in the banner there was a brief overview of Mohammadi's biography: him and his friends fought for the implementation of sharia in Pakistan when he founded **Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi**, until its operations were banned by the government; he encouraged Muslims in Pakistan to embark on jihad against the U.S. pursuant to its invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and supported jihad against the Pakistani regime for its support of the U.S. and the oppression policy it led vs. the tribes in the northern part of the country; at the end of the banner the writer said that al-Sawati left a deep impression on Jihadists and jihad in Afghanistan. Further, the writer claimed that the deaths of prominent clerics like al-Sawati is devastating news and their legacy should be carried on<sup>1</sup>.
  - A speech titled "The Campaign for the Veil", by **Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri**, **al-Qaeda leader**. At the outset of his speech, al-Zawahiri clarified that his speech was aimed at Muslim women around the world. He said that to date, the Islamic nation is under attack on multiple levels, military, political, theological, cultural, economic, educational and more. Per him, the reason behind these attacks is the fear of the Superpowers and the global system of the power of the Islamic nation as manifested in its belief in the singularity of Allah, the sharia and the ability to destabilize the former. Al-Zawahiri explained that within the above large campaign, Islam's enemies conduct a campaign on Muslims' mind and thought and are being assisted to that end by the media in an attempt to cause Muslims to lose their faith and become secular and materialistic. Further, al-Zawahiri described the west as having been infected by double standards. For example, the west speaks about human rights but at the same time kills millions of innocents as it did in Japan and Vietnam, conquers and loots Muslim land, destroys earth by changing its features, supports tyrannical regimes in the middle east, supports Israel and so forth. He said that the west preaches women's liberation yet simultaneously bans

<sup>1</sup> 6.8.19. <https://emaad.net/>

wearing Burkas. “My Muslim sister, they want you to renounce your religion [...], your veil and your morals [...]”. And added that the west wants to secularize Muslim women and convert them to atheists. He stressed that the Muslim woman has an important role in Muslim society which is manifested in education and preservation of the close family unit, especially in times of crisis when her husband or child are killed as shahids or captured by the enemy. He emphasized that women are considered the most noble symbol of faith, patience, willingness to assist jihad and more. For that, he clarified, the west sees Muslim women as a high value target in its war against the Islamic nation. Towards the end of his speech al-Zawahiri called Muslim women to beware of the enemy’s ploys to distance them from their religion and faith and stick with Allah<sup>2</sup>.



Al-Zawahiri’s speech

- A speech titled “the Reasons for Victory” by **Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri**. In his speech al-Zawahiri focused on the importance obeying Allah and Muhammad. Per him, following this principle guarantees the jihadists’ victory in battle. He also stressed the importance of patience while performing jihad against the enemies of Islam<sup>3</sup>.



Al-Zawahiri’s speech banner

- A banner by **al-Qaeda’s** leadership to jihadists in Syria to maintain the unity of their ranks and avoid rifts. Per the leadership, the Syrians are being bombed, killed and expelled by the enemies of Islam and therefore the jihadists must unite to block these attacks and fight until they win. Additionally, the leadership wished to encourage the foreign fighters who emigrated to Syria to assist the jihad against the Assad regime and its allies. Their arrival on the scene is not to build another mosque or madrasa but to protect the Syrians and lift their spirits<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> 7.8.19. <https://emaad.net/>

<sup>3</sup> 23.8.19. <https://alsahabmedia.info/?p=2664>; <https://mediagram.io/AsSahabDawaSeries5>

<sup>4</sup> 15.8.19. <https://emaad.net/>

- A banner by **al-Qaeda** leadership condemning the Pakistani regime for the incarceration of three Muslim women who were married to jihadists. Per the leadership, these women were arrested with their children at the instructions of U.S. intelligence. At the end of the banner, the writer warned the Pakistani government and the U.S. military that they were responsible for their safety and well-being<sup>5</sup>.
- A banner by al-Qaeda leadership containing a eulogy for **Abu Khlaad al-Muhandis**, a veteran jihadist killed in Idlib. It said that al-Muhandis dedicated his life to fighting for god and protecting the Islamic nation and fought in various jihadi theatres, in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. The banner also revealed that al-Muhandis was **Sheikh Sayf al-Adl**, a senior **al-Qaeda** leader's son in law<sup>6</sup>.
- Sheikh **Sayf al-Adl**, a senior **al-Qaeda** leader published a correspondence in mid-August 2019 regarding the war in Syria as follows: "the campaign in Syria is clear to everyone who is in the mix of things. We will keep losing whether there is a plan to merge all factions or not. The goal is clear – eliminating every organization wishing to restore the original Islam. Turkey [and other countries] will not accept [any other option]. There is no chance but to re-examine the military theory in a that will fit the situation and succeed against the enemy's plots and the Turkish plan accepted by [some] factions. We will never be a number in any campaign unless we prepare our military decision and execute it in the right way". This correspondence teaches about concerns and resistance within al-Qaeda's leadership to the connections some jihadi factions in Idlib have with Turkey, out of concern that foreign interests will affect the organizations agenda in Idlib and hurt their war efforts. The conflict in Kashmir, in which there is heavy interference by both India and Pakistan, is good example for al-Qaeda's concerns that a similar situation might pop up in Idlib.



Sayf al- Adl's correspondence

<sup>5</sup> August 2019, Telegram. <https://alsahabmedia.info/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/283981931.jpg>  
<sup>6</sup> 28.8.19. <https://emaad.net/>

- **Khayr al-Ummah**, assisting with **al-Qaeda's** propaganda issued an article titled "Principles and Rules in Military Strategy" by **Abu Ahmad al-Shalan**. In the preface it was written that the article is based on a book by **Bassam al-Asali** titled "The Commanders of Conquering the Levant and Iraq Lands" published a few years back and contained military advice for jihadists in various theatres. It said that the advice is based on the military experience of Muhammad and prominent Muslim leaders that followed him. For example, one of the pieces of advice dealt with the importance of deceiving the enemy when the fights hang in the balance or upon retreat<sup>7</sup>.

### [Publications by the Islamic State](#)

- **ISIS** continued the campaign "The Best Outcome is Reserved for Those Who Trust Allah", launched in June 2019 and within the framework of which several extensions renewed their pledge of allegiance to al-Baghdadi as well as jihadists in various theatres as follows:
  - **Bangladesh** – at the beginning of their pledge clip the jihadists said that Bangladesh is ruled by an infidel regime and an infidel set of rules that violates sharia. They added that the Bengal regime is akin to the Americans, the Hindu, Buddhist and the heretic Shiite. Therefore, a jihad should be waged against the Bengali regime, its institutions and supporters. Later in the clip they mentioned that the Muslims are being persecuted in various regions of the globe such as Iraq, Myanmar, Western China (home of the Uyghurs) and more and the only solution for such persecution is jihad and killings. The jihadists threatened that ISIS is determined to carry out its activities against the enemy, hurt anyone that will hurt Muslims and the war has just begun. Additionally, they threatened to hit police stations, road blocks, democratic political parties' HQs, election centers, government offices and Hindu congregations. They called upon Muslims in India and Bangladesh to assist jihadists and mentioned that if they cannot assist, they'd better stay at home, so they won't get hurt by mistake. At the end of the clip the activists pledged their allegiance to al-Baghdadi<sup>8</sup>.
  - **Al-Sham Province** – the jihadists in this province clarified that they were determined to continue their fighting against the Alawi, Shiite, crusaders and Russians<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> 29.8.19. Telegram.

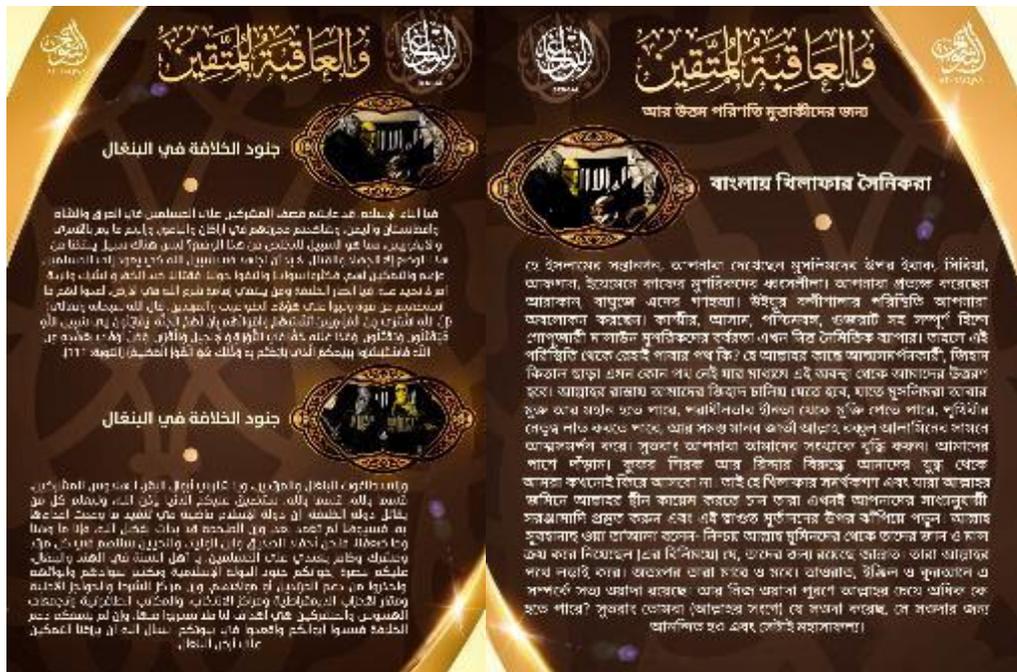
<sup>8</sup> 9.8.19. Telegram.

<sup>9</sup> 20.8.19. Telegram.



Right to left: Bengali jihadists and al-Sham jihadists swear allegiance to al-Baghdadi

- It should be noted, several media outlets that assist ISIS with its propaganda posted multiple banners and photographs depicting pledges of allegiance to al-Baghdadi. For example, **al-Taqwa** posted banners in Bengali and English with a transcript of Bengali jihadists taking the pledge<sup>10</sup>.



Bengali and English banners with the transcript of the pledge of allegiance to al-Baghdadi

- ISIS extensions in West Africa and al-Sham provinces posted banners documenting Id al-Fitr<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> 13.8.19. Telegram.

<sup>11</sup> August 2019, Telegram.



ISIS' Western Africa Province activists celebrating Id al-Fitr

- **Al-Saqri** media outlet posted the following:
  - Republication of articles previously published in **al-Naba**, ISIS' formal publication. For example, an article about the importance of electronic warfare. Per the writer, one of the main reasons for the enemy's might is in its technological tools, i.e. electronic warfare capabilities. In light of that, jihadists are required to learn how wage war using this tool because electronic warfare merges with the modern traditional war. The writer, added that through electronic warfare the enemy strives to obtain information on jihadists and spy on them, disrupt their communication, locate them, find their weaknesses, conduct psyops against jihadists etc. Therefore, jihadists must get professional in that field and switch from defense to offense in the technological arena. He added as examples, developing encrypted communications methods, screening tolls for suspicious applications and spyware and so forth<sup>12</sup>.
  - Launching an online first aid course for jihadists.
- **Al-Battar** media outlet, assisting **ISIS** with its propaganda<sup>13</sup>:
  - A banner calling Muslims around the world to assist with ISIS propaganda. Also, they attempted to install such propaganda in enemy's media outlets.
  - An article condemning the **Afghani Taliban** for a series of accusation it made against ISIS such as bearing the responsibility for the weakening of the jihad in Afghanistan and giving excuses to the west to attack there. Per the writer, the Taliban spreads the above lies to ingratiate himself with the west while at the same time hurts jihad when it conducts peace talks with the U.S and others.
  - An article condemning the Astana conference held with the participation of Turkey, Iran, Russia, Syria and Syrian rebel factions to settle the Syrian conflict.

<sup>12</sup> 3.8.19. Telegram.

<sup>13</sup> August 2019, Telegram.

- **Al-Murhafat** media outlet, assisting **ISIS** with its propaganda:
  - An infographic on “The Law of Pledging an Allegiance to the Khalifa” which said that every Muslim is required to take such a pledge.
  - A banner with a series of arguments on why the Turkish regime is considered as an infidel and a legitimate target for attacks. For example, the Turkish regime cooperates with infidel regimes and NATO against jihadists, follows democracy, refrains from implementing sharia and more.
- **Bunat al-Amjad** media outlet, assisting **ISIS** with its propaganda posted an op-ed on why the Kurds today are considered infidels that a war must be waged on. For example, in the past the Kurds were renowned in their adherence to Islam, as was Saladin who drove the Christians from the Muslim lands. However, at the turn of the twentieth century and the raise of nationalism, the Kurds unfortunately started to renounce Islam and adhere to infidel, modern and secular schools of thought such as communism. The Kurds were even accused of collaborating with the enemies of Islam among them Israel and the Jews, Iran, Turkey and the western superpowers.

### Strategy

- Several media outlets assisting **ISIS** with its propaganda continued the campaign started by al-Baghdadi, in his speech from April 2019 on the importance of guerrilla warfare, to encourage jihadists to switch to guerrilla warfare. For example, **Rabbat** media outlet posted several banners on the subject<sup>14</sup>.

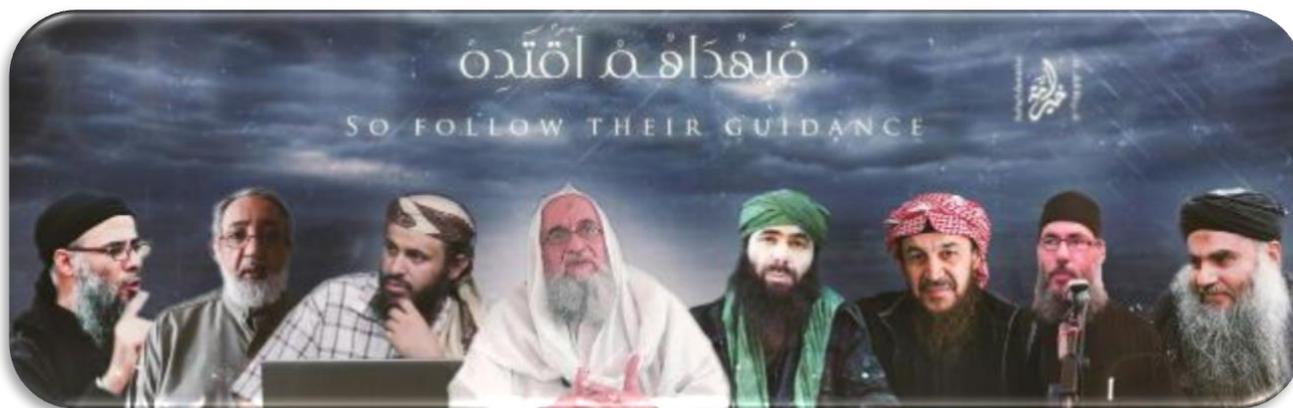


A Rabbat banner on the importance of guerilla warfare

### 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.

<sup>14</sup> August 2019, 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 Muhammad al-Maqdisi**, a senior jihadi Salafi cleric in Jordan, close with al-Qaeda published the following:

- A ruling on the question “which group is considered more infidel – polytheists or secular”? per al-Maqdisi the secular is considered a worse infidel for a number of reasons. For example, the secular doesn’t accept Allah’s laws and doesn’t recognize the sovereignty of Allah over this world<sup>15</sup>.
- A banner where he stated that the solution in Idlib is not by disarming or accepting Turkish assistance or assistance from dubious power groups but by forging relationship with righteous powers, fighting on all jihad fronts and sticking with jihad.



- **Sheikh Abu Qatada al-Filastini**, close with al-Qaeda<sup>16</sup>:

- A response to **Kassab al-Qatibi**, a Saudi opposition member who resided in London and returned to KSA in 2015. Al-Qatibi claimed that al-Aqsa mosque is not holier than his neighborhood mosque. Abu Qatada claimed he was surprised from this “horrible” statement because he knows him personally. He went on and described al-Qatibi as an impulsive person that speaks before he thinks.
- Greetings for Id al-Fitr and quotes from the speech given by the Sheikh who led the ceremony in al-Aqsa mosque. The speaker said that al-Aqsa belongs solely to Muslims and called upon Muslims worldwide to protect al-Aqsa
- A call to the mujahidin in Idlib to hold on and eulogizing fallen jihadists.
- Criticizing an article claiming that **Hizb al-Tahrir** is an Islamic organization only on paper, as it is active politically to replace regimes in a non-violent manner and not outlawed in most of Europe and even



<sup>15</sup> 23.8.19 Telegram.

<sup>16</sup> August 2019, Telegram.

active in the U.K. Per him, the article erroneously addressed specific activity of the organization’s members in Idlib. He added that part pf the people mentioned in the article are not connected to the organization and contrary to what was written they didn’t assist British intelligence.

- **Sheikh Hani al-Sibai**, a prominent salafi jihadist identified with al-Qaeda<sup>17</sup>:

- Friday sermons on issues connected to current Islamic world affairs. For example, al-Sabai cautioned from Muslim persecution in Kashmir and Idlib. Per him, members of the Islamic nation must assist those persecuted Muslims facing annihilation by their enemies. In another sermon he eulogized **Abu Khaad al-Muhandis** a veteran jihadist and **al-Qaeda** member killed in Idlib at the beginning of August 2019.



- **Tarik Abd al-Haleem**, close with al-Qaeda<sup>18</sup>:

- Criticizing the UAE for lies it spread about him in the press. Per him, contrary to what was published he objects to suicide attacks. Further, he denied that he had ties with ISIS.
- Criticizing the jihadi factions for agreeing to a cease fire in Idlib, due to the Alawi-Russian siege. Per him, the enemy asked for a cease fire after taking over strategic points in order to arrive to the negotiations from a position of strength and to prepare for the next round of hostilities. He added that the mujahidin in Syria need to learn from the Afghani Taliban that doesn’t stop fighting even while negotiating with the enemy.



- **Sheikh Abd al-Razzaq al-Mahdi**, close with Hayat **Tahrir al-Sham**<sup>19</sup>:

- Clips and photographs documenting his visits to outposts on the Idlib frontline. His visits were made with the intention to boost the fighters’ morale and he stressed that they defended the residents of Idlib and were fulfilling their jihad duty.
- Calling the rebel factions in Syria to liberate prisoners in Assad’s prisons. Per him, a few factions were able to break into some jails and liberate prisoners, but this was done on a small scale and all jihadi factions should strive to liberate the prisoners.
- Addressing the issue of a Syrian pilot held captive after his plane was shot down by **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham** in August 2019. Per him, the pilot shouldn’t be executed but if there are prisoners in Assad’s prisons he is not to be returned either.
- Calling on residents of Damascus, Aleppo Hama and Idlib to keep enlisting to the ranks of the rebels.



<sup>17</sup> August 2019, Telegram.

<sup>18</sup> August 2019, Facebook.

<sup>19</sup> August, 2019. Telegram; Facebook; Twitter.

Further, he called upon all jihadi factions to concentrate their efforts in carrying out attacks against rallying points and bases of Syrian and Russian forces because the latter slaughter the civilian population.

- A correspondence condemning the persecution of Muslims by Hindu in Kashmir and India. Per him, he used to think that Shiite were the worst of the Sunni enemies', but Hindu are as bad and even worse. He posted this correspondence following a clip documenting the torching of a Muslim by Hindu soldiers in Kashmir.

- **Sheikh Abdallah al-Muhaysini**, a senior Salafi jihadist cleric in Idlib, close with **al-Qaeda and Hayat Tahrir al-Sham**:

- A newspaper interview regarding the cease fire agreement dated July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019 between the rebel factions in Idlib and the Assad regime at the Astana conference. Per him, the cease fire agreement is a victory for the rebel factions who managed to thwart the enemy's offensive. He said the fighting in the Hama area have become a war of attrition for the parties involved even though the rebel factions managed to stop the Russians from achieving their goals set three months ago when they started their offensive.
- A call to jihadi factions to hit the Libyan military led by Gen. Khaftar. Per him, Khaftar assists the western forces in clearing jihadists out of Libya and therefore jihadists should attack his forces.
- A call to the leaders of the rebel factions in Idlib to pick up the speed of the tunnel excavations within The Trench operation that launched in July 2019<sup>20</sup>. Per him, an effective campaign against the Russians will have to be conducted underground and there for an elaborate network of tunnels needs to be excavated as soon as possible. In that sense he praised the network of tunnels excavated by **Izz al-Din al-Qassam, the military wing of Hamas**, inter alia, for their capabilities to store food, build a set of bathrooms and bedrooms, install blast doors and more.



- **Sheikh Abu Fatah al-Farali**, the supervisor of the shura council of Hayat Tahrir al-sham<sup>21</sup>:

- A statement regarding the will of the mujahidin to hold the line and eagerness to start fighting in any event of violation of the cease fire.
- A ruling allowing mujahidin to stop fasting in case they need to go into battle.
- A response to a question regarding his certainty of the mujahidin's victory. Per him, as long as jihad continues, the mujahidin will not be defeated. He claimed that the losses in



<sup>20</sup> The Trench operation was launched at the beginning of July 2019 by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and Haras al-Din, the al-Qaeda extension in Syria. It was launched “to defend the Syrian revolution and fight the evil Russian campaign [...]”. During this campaign funds were raised and civilian population in Idlib recruited to dig tunnels and trenches. For expansion see July 2019 jihadi update on ICT’s web site.

<sup>21</sup> August 2019, Telegram.

southern Syria happened because the mujahidin abandoned jihad. Further, the Khawarji<sup>22</sup> are sinners and Allah won't let them prevail.

- A warning from providing military advice to the mujahidin on open media during battle because such publication may either expose confidential battle plans or confuse the mujahidin.
- A call to assist the Jihad Bi-Malak campaign aiming to raise funds for the mujahidin.
- Sharing a photograph of a mosque bombarded by the Syrians and Russians. Per him, the photo is a testament that the enemy's war is with Islam.
- Addressing the differences between the Idlib theatre and the other Syrian theatres (Homs, Aleppo, Damascus and Daraa). Per him, in the other theatres the warring sides followed a political solution whereas in Idlib the majority are interested in a military solution. Per him, the percentage of immigrants in Idlib is tenfold higher than the other theatres in Syria and they are willing to fight to the end. He added that in the north there is also some weapons R&D and that Northern Syria is surrounded by jihad and Syrian revolution supporters.
- A series of clips where al-Farali reviews the development of jihad over time since the twentieth century. For example, he addressed the jihadists in the Hassan al-Bana (Founder of the Muslim Brotherhood) era and the Syrian jihadists today<sup>23</sup>.

- **Abu Basir al-Tartusi**, a Salafi jihadist cleric in Syria<sup>24</sup>:

- Sharing a banner posted by Syrian Islamic Council regarding the friendly relationship between the Syrian and the Turks.
- A call to refrain from believing false rumors about the fighting in Syria intended to lower mujahidin's morale.
- Addressing the fact that the campaign in Syria is mainly aerial and therefore the mujahidin needs to be equipped with aerial defense.
- A comparison between **Hizb al-Tahrir** in Syria and **ISIS**. Per him, both organizations divide the mujahidin and betray them.
- Condemning suicide attacks. Per him, today suicide attacks are not needed, and young people should not hurry to die that way to achieve the goals of jihad since advanced weaponry is in the hands of jihadists.



- **Abu Hafs al-Maqdisi**, the leader of **Jaysh al-Umma al-Salafi fi Bayt al-Maqdis**, a Salafi jihadist faction in Gaza close with **al-Qaeda**<sup>25</sup>:

<sup>22</sup> By Khawarji, al-Farali means ISIS. Originally, the Khawarji were an early Islamic cult that resorted to violence against any and all who didn't subscribe to its point of view. Today, the term Khawarji is meant to describe violent Islamic groups that do not hesitate to kill innocent Muslims.

<sup>23</sup> August 2019, Facebook; Telegram; YouTube.

<sup>24</sup> Telegram.

<sup>25</sup> August 2019, Telegram.

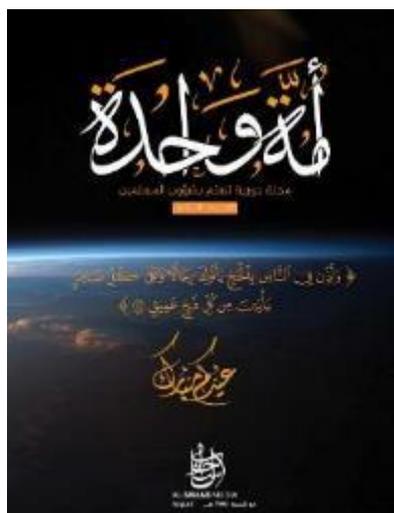
- Criticism of **Azmi Bishara**, a former Israeli member of parliament who fled to Qatar after the second Lebanon war (2006) for fear of being arrested for providing confidential information to **Hezbollah**. Per al-Maqqdisi Bishara found refuge in Qatar “the first state among the Gulf states that normalized its relationship with Israel” and runs on its territory research facilities aiming to increase the division in the Muslim world and sabotage the Arab revolutions in favor of the west and the crusading Zionists.
- A correspondence condemning the Indian regime and accusing it of persecuting Muslims in Kashmir. Per him, this is a worrying trend in other parts of the world such as Myanmar.
- Correspondence praising Palestinians for perpetrating terror attacks against Jews in the west bank and other regions. In the correspondence he compared between the various jihadi factions in Gaza to those in Idlib and said that there is strong similarity between them as both wish to defend the Islamic nation and drive the western conqueror from Muslim Territories.



## Magazines

- Vol. 162 of **al-Somood** of the **Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan**. Among other, the issue dealt with the following: an announcement of the leader of the Afghani Taliban for Id al-Adha; an interview with **Abdul Salam Hanafi**, member of the political arm of the Emirate, the response of the Emirate’s spokesman to President Trump’s latest statements and the upcoming elections in Afghanistan<sup>26</sup>.
- Vol. 2 of **al-Ummah al-Wahida** issued by **al-Sahab**, **al-Qaeda’s** official publication:
  - In the opening article the writer criticized the Kuwaiti regime claiming that it follows the regimes in Turkey and Malaysia for extraditing Muslims who were members of the Muslim Brotherhood to Egypt. Per the writer, these persons were raising funds for Egyptian orphans and widows of people killed during the military coup of 2013 in Egypt. The writer added that the tyrannical regimes in the Muslim countries want nothing but to disarm the jihadists and stop jihad. Per the writer, this is a blatant violation of Allah’s directives to emigrate to jihadi theatres to fight the infidels. Per him, the jihadists need (from members of the Islamic nation) any support that will help them carry on with the jihad against the above regimes.
  - The second opening article dealt with the tension and conflict between the U.S. and Iran in the Persian Gulf. Per the editors, it is clear that the tension escalates however one should keep in mind that both parties constitute a threat to jihadists in the region as both have an interest in eliminating the jihadists.
  - Other articles: (i) A call to the Algerian people to continue their popular protest until the fall of the regime and the installation of an Islamic rule in its stead; (ii) an old letter sent by **Abu Musab al-Zarqawi**, the former al-Qaeda leader in Iraq, to the leaders of the Afghani Taliban regarding his

activity in Iraq, the importance of allocating resources to liberate Muslim prisoners and more. Per the editors, the letter included multiple pleasantries and statements of camaraderie between al-Zarqawi and the Taliban and the rejection of automatically categorizing Muslims as infidels as this required careful consideration and reliance of Islamic authorities; (iii) an article reviewing the U.S. intelligence array; (iv) an article on young adults and the revolutions in the Islamic world; (v) an article claiming that the U.S. economy is on the decline due to the administration involvement in various jihadi theatres. Further, the writer encourages jihad supporters to perform cyber attacks against the global infidelity web site, especially the U.S. to weaken their economy. Moreover, the writer called for cyber attacks on critical infrastructure such as water and electricity to paralyze the enemy; (vi) a statement by **Hassam Abd al-Raouf, al-Qaeda** spokesman, condemning watching cartoons because they destroy the minds of Muslim children; (vii) a letter from the widow of **Sayyid Kutb**, a radical Muslim Brotherhood leader; (viii) an article examining the point of view of Sheikh Ibn Laden and Sheikh Abdallah Azam; (ix) a full page dedicated to **Nizar Rayan** (1951-2009), one of **Hamas'** leaders and a quote from him regarding the nature of the fighting between the jihadists and their enemies. He was quoted as having said that today the war is between Islam and heresy and the secular forces are to be counted among the latter and waging war is a major tool in eliminating the heretic threat<sup>27</sup>.



al-Ummah al-Wahida cover page

- **Khayr al-Umma**, assisting with al-Qaeda propaganda published vol. 19 of **Baytuki**, its women's affairs magazine. The issue dealt with relationship and child rearing issues. For example, a woman must be patient with her husband, advice on how to stir emotions of love in one's husband, a personal tale of a woman who emigrated to a jihadi theatre and learned to recognize the qualities of Jihadists<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> 10.8.19 Telegram.

<sup>28</sup> 1.8.19 Telegram.



Baytak cover page

- Vols. 193-197 of **al-Naba**, **ISIS**'s publication. They contained reports and reviews of ISIS' military activity in the various theatres as well as messages, announcements, op-eds and shahids stories<sup>29</sup>.
  - The opening article of vol. 193 titled "They Are Repeating Iraq's Mistakes in Khurasan" dealt with bashing jihadi factions who collaborate with the enemy, mainly in Afghanistan. The opening statement said the Syrian jihadists have announced more than once that they didn't intend to repeat the mistakes that were made in Iraq, chief among them, the willingness of some Iraqi rebel factions to collaborate with the U.S. in return for a share in government upon the U.S. withdrawal. De facto, the peace talks the U.S. held with those rebel factions in Iraq were only meant to strengthen U.S. interests in the region and it used local forces to eliminate jihadists, ISIS members included. Simultaneously, the Iranian influence in the region grew and all of the above forced ISIS to fight back with these rebel factions. The writer added that the Syrian rebels are repeating the same mistake in Syria and so does the Taliban by virtue of its willingness to speak with the U.S. which only makes the enemy stronger. Further, the U.S. wishes to preserve its interests in Afghanistan even after it withdraws its forces and therefore it operates to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a sanctuary for jihadists and to foil any ISIS attempt to take control of the country. Per the writer, the U.S. wishes to achieve this goal through convincing the Taliban to stop fighting the U.S. and its allies and allow Taliban fighters (assisted by the Afghani military and western aerial support) to operate in all the regions ISIS is active. Towards the end of the article the writer stressed that the Taliban is repeating the mistakes made by the rebel organizations in Iraq and can expect a similar fate, i.e. fighting ISIS in Afghanistan will only weaken the Taliban and assist the U.S. to eliminate it causing its leaders to seek positions within the Afghani regime.
  - The opening article of vol. 194 dealt with bashing the Astana conference attended by Turkey, Iran, Russia, the Assad regime and representatives of the Syrian rebel factions at the beginning of August in an attempt to find a solution to the Syrian conflict. The writer passed harsh criticism on the rebel

<sup>29</sup> August 2019, Telegram.

- factions, especially Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, who attended the conference and said that the above peace talks serve only the enemy and are akin to the Camp David accord (Israeli–Egyptian peace agreement) and the Oslo accord (Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement).
- The opening article of vol.195 dealt with status reports by western intelligence agencies warring from ISIS’ strengthening in Iraq and Syria and its expansion to other territories. Per the writer, these reports are an admission of failure by the international coalition to defeat and hurt ISIS. In light of the above the writer propose the enemy’s intelligence services to refrain from spreading noncredible rumours about the destruction of ISIS since the latter is determined to keep expanding to additional jihadi theatres.
  - The opening article of vol. 196 titled “Remove the Hindu Out of the Arabian Peninsula” the writer passed a harsh criticism over the Saudi regime for hosting the Indian prime minister for a visit, while the Hindu allegedly keep perpetrating crimes against Muslims in India, Pakistan and Afghanistan and the annexation of Kashmir to India and the deployment of Indian forces into the region. Per the writer, the warming Indian-Saudi relations stem from the rivalry between Iran and KSA and the Saudi concerns of the U.S. withdrawal from the Gulf. The writer added that the Saudis, being the fools that they are, that are trying to convince themselves that having close ties with India will help them vis a vis Iran, but the fact of the matter is that India is one of Iran’s best friends and trading partners and both bear hostility towards Sunnis. Further, the writer assessed that the such warming relations will lead to the erection of Indian military bases in the Arabian Peninsula and cautioned that it will flood the peninsula with Hindu requiring temples and conducting pagan rituals. In other words, the Hindu will replace the crusaders. Moreover, the Hindu have a centuries long animosity towards the Islam hence they will be interested to exact revenge and weaken the Muslims. In light of the above the writer stressed that in order to avert the danger to the Sunni identity of the peninsula the Muslims must embark on a jihad against the Saudi rulers and install an Islamic regime in their stead as this is one of the most important means to preserve Muslim land everywhere. Additionally, a special importance is to be attributed to a jihad against the Hindu currently in the Arabian Peninsula because of the prophet’s directive to prohibit the presence of non-Muslim and polytheists in the peninsula and should such people refuse to leave then one must kill them; second, the Hindu have been waging war on Muslims, as is evident from the situation in Kashmir and India and their assistance to the infidel regimes of Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Sri-Lanka. The writer repeated the warning that “being silent in the face of the growing number [of Hindu] in the Arabian Peninsula camouflages the danger [lurking] to Islam and Muslims on this land”. Therefore, the inhabitants of the of the peninsula must fight the Hindu, murder them, steal their money and put fear in their hearts in any way possible. That is how the Muslims will be able to force the Hindu out of the Arabian Peninsula defeated and humiliated, prevent them from settling in the peninsula and prevent their expansion and block their strengthening influence. Pursuant to the above the writer suggested jihadist in the peninsula to

concentrate their efforts and hit high ranking officials in politics and economy, purge the peninsula from temples and destroy their idols.

- The opening article of vol. 197 dealt with the importance of loyalty to Allah, preserving his rules and directives and fulfilling the duty of jihad. The writer said that the jihadist is being rewarded in this world for striving to enforce the laws of Allah, preserving the faith and conquering territories for the Muslims as well as in the after-life.



Right to left: al-Naba vol. 196 cover page; the article calling for purging the Arabian Peninsula from Hindu presence

- Vol 11 of **Shabab al-Khilafa**, published by an umbrella organization of media outlets that assist with ISIS propaganda including **Mussasat al-Dar, al-Abd al-Faqir, al-Battar, Mussasat al-Saqri and Mussasat Sarh al-Khilafa**. The issue included a review of propaganda materials in various languages such as Arabic, English and Spanish published by the member groups over the past month<sup>30</sup>.



Shabab al-Khilafa cover page

<sup>30</sup> August 2019, Telegram.

- **Ibaa**, a Hayat Tahrir al-Sham publication published vols. 60-64. The issues included reports, banners and interviews with the organization’s operatives regarding the fighting in Syria as well as commentary on other jihadi theatres<sup>31</sup>.



Ibaa (vol. 64) cover page

- Vol. 2 of **Balagh**, a Hayat Tahrir al-Sham saw light. The issue included articles on fighting in Idlib, the importance of fulfilling jihad and qualities of the latter, advice on how to learn from mistakes on the battlefield<sup>32</sup>.



Balagh cover page

31 August 2019, Telegram.

32 1.8.2019 Telegram.

## Reports from the Field

### Afghanistan-Pakistan

#### The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan

- Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (Afghani Taliban) publications:
  - An announcement on the upcoming Afghani elections. Per the announcement, the elections are a plot intended to deceive the people because at the end of the day the decision is being made by foreign elements that control the country and not the Afghani citizens. The announcement said that the elections for the presidency were held twice in 2014 and on the second round it was only possible to elect one of two candidates that were backed by the U.S. in light of the above, the Emirate called upon the Afghani citizens to refrain from voting. They added that the regime in Kabul rules only a very limited territory and that voting will be limited to certain cities and even so most of the citizens will not vote. Further, simultaneous with the elections there are negotiations to end the U.S. occupation and an internal Afghani agreement between all parties so that the elections are a mere waste of time and money. Additionally, the announcement called upon the citizens to refrain from attending campaign rallies as those are targets for mujahidin attacks. They added that they were calling all foreign elements to allocate resources to end the occupation and creating a lasting peace in Afghanistan instead of sponsoring candidates who will do their bidding. At the end of the announcement the Taliban called upon the mujahidin to disrupt the elections and act to prevent them from taking place<sup>33</sup>.
  - An announcement by **Hibatullah Akhundzada**, the leader of the Taliban for Id al-Fitr. In his announcement Akhundzada called the mujahidin to keep fighting through the holiday to cause the conquerors to withdraw and install an Islamic regime. He claimed that the mujahidin are advancing militarily and politically and within the framework of their al-Fatah military campaign took control over vast Afghani territories. They solidified their control on highways and strategic points. He added that the mujahidin initiated the ground offensive whereas the enemy can only strike civilian populated areas indiscriminately from the air. Per him, the solidarity, coordination, discipline and obedience of his troops are at all times high and added that both jihad activity and conducting negotiations have a common goal of ending the occupation and the installation of an Islamic regime<sup>34</sup>.

### The Arabian Peninsula

#### Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)

- **Al-Malahem** media outlet, assisting with **AQAP** propaganda:

<sup>33</sup> 6.8.19 Telegram.

<sup>34</sup> 8.8.19 Telegram.

- A banner accusing KSA and UAE for deepening the division in southern Yemen out of wishes to promote their political agendas and help the U.S. plots in the region. Additionally, they were accused of corruption, persecuting and incarcerating Muslim clerics, subverting Islam and deserting the campaign against the Iranian influence in the region. In light of the above, AQAP called the Yemenite not to collaborate with either KSA or UAE, keep their faith in Allah, strive to install sharia as the law of the land and fulfil jihad. Additionally, AQAP called Muslim clerics to take a major role in the campaign against the enemies of Islam and defend the Muslim nation from plots and intrigue<sup>35</sup>.
- **Hedaya** media outlet, assisting with **AQAP** propaganda:
  - A clip titled “The Hollywood Reality of al-Baghdadi’s Group – Part Two”. The clip depicts ISIS’ Yemen Province’s propaganda apparatus as an unreliable media outlet that edits its messages and disseminates fake news. They presented an unedited ISIS clip, apparently captured by AQAP, that contained directorial instructions from the producer to the ISIS operatives featured in the clip<sup>36</sup>.

## ISIS in Yemen

- **ISIS in Yemen** select publications:
  - Claiming responsibility for assassinating **Nasir Abduh Qaid**, a senior officer in the Yemeni army, which per ISIS’ claim was responsible for hunting down and killing jihadists. Alongside that message photographs from the assassination itself were published (see photo below)<sup>37</sup>.



Qaid’s assassination

## Iraq

### The Islamic State

- **ISIS in Iraq** claimed responsibility for attacking a joint U.S.-Shiite patrol in the Kanus region in al-Shirqat in Salah al-Din province. Per the organization, the attack claimed the life of a senior U.S. officer and Shiite

<sup>35</sup> 26.8.19 Telegram.

<sup>36</sup> 11.8.19 Telegram.

<sup>37</sup> 14.8.19 Telegram.

troops, among them an officer, were injured<sup>38</sup>.

## Al-Sham [The Levant]

### Syria

#### Hayat Tahrir al-Sham

- **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham** (an umbrella organization for several jihadi organization in Idlib, Syria) select publications:
  - An announcement regarding an agreement for a cease fire in the Idlib region. The announcement said that the organization accepts the cease fire declared by the Alawi regime following a ninety day attack it conducted in the area. It added the declaration of a cease fire attests to the failure of the Syrian-Russian attack on Idlib. Further, the organization requests that accepting the cease fire doesn't mean that the organization abandons its main goals (Toppling the Alawi regime, liberating prisoners and assuring a safe return of refugees to their homes). It added that it was doing whatever it could to defend the Syrian people with all the legitimate (according to Islam) military and political means. The organization reiterated that any attack or bombardment of the liberated areas will lead to the annulment of the cease fire and will be retaliated accordingly. At the end of the announcement the organization asked its fighters to be careful and vigil for any violation of the cease fire<sup>39</sup>.
  - A press conference held by the organization's leader, **Abu Muhammad al-Julani**, regarding the current status in Idlib, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham's position on the Astana conference talks and the cease fire agreement in the Idlib region. In the press conference al-Julani claimed that there was no connection between the talks in Astana and the cease fire which may collapse at any moment. He added that the organization didn't intend to withdraw twenty kilometers from the frontlines to create a demilitarized zone in north western Syria and this term set by Assad and the Russians to extend the cease fire will not be met. Moreover, the whatever the Alawi and the Russian couldn't gain by force they wouldn't gain through negotiations. He said that the Alawi attacks only unified the rebel factions and that the fighting led to losses among the enemy<sup>40</sup>.
- During August 2019 **Sheikh al-Mutasim bi-Allah al-Madani Abu Muhammad** biography saw light within the series "The Syrian Revolution's Shahids Biographies". Al-Madani, a Saudi born jihadist, emigrated to Syria to fight Assad and soon become a member of the Sharia Council of the **Immigrants Army and al-Ansar**, an umbrella organization of foreign jihadists and later its leader. Down the road, al-Ansar merged with **al-Nasra Front**, the former al-Qaeda extension in Syria, and al-Madani become the Sharia Council member of **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham**. The biography said that al-Madani was in contact with high ranking **ISIS** officials but when he realized that he was dealing with people who have extreme interpretation to

<sup>38</sup> 14.8.19 Telegram.

<sup>39</sup> 2.8.19 Telegram.

<sup>40</sup> 5.8.19 Telegram.

Islam he distanced himself from them. Al-Madani was killed in battle in February 2019 in Idlib<sup>41</sup>.

### Saraya al-Muqawama al-Shabiyya (SMS)

- Select **SMS** (close with **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham**) publications:
  - Clips and photos depicting civilians in Idlib help fortifying the frontlines with sandbags and manning firing positions. Additionally, a clip documenting a meeting attended by several chieftains in Idlib at the conclusion of which they called the residents to contribute to the war effort against the enemy who wished to invade Idlib, saw light. Further, a fundraising campaign titled “Arm a Warrior for Allah” on social media. The campaign purported to raise funds to arm those civilians who wished to assist jihadist on the frontline. Within the campaign a banner was uploaded and contained menu-like information on the cost of weaponry (e.g. two bombs for \$2, uniforms for \$28 and so forth)<sup>42</sup>.



Right to left: Arm a Warrior for Allah campaign banner; A clip showing Idlib residents declare the formation of an armed company to help with the defense of the city.

- Activists identified with **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham**, **SMS** and **The Trench campaign**<sup>43</sup> launched an online campaign titled “Fortify from Afar”. The campaign called upon Muslims, especially those who reside in Idlib to donate money in order to fortify the frontline and prepare for a fight to block Assad and the Shiite militias. It was written that 7,000 sandbags have been collected and there was need for able bodied people to assist with placing them on the frontlines. Further, banners that were posted within the campaign said that the campaign has been launched by volunteers in Idlib and it was decided to expand it to cyberspace. The campaign provided Telegram and WhatsApp accounts to connect with the organizers<sup>44</sup>.

<sup>41</sup> 28.8.19 Telegram.

<sup>42</sup> August 2019, Facebook.

<sup>43</sup> The Trench campaign launched in July 2019 by **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham** and **Huras al-Din** (al-Qaeda Syrian extension) “to protect the Syrian revolution and fight the evil Russian campaign [...]”. The campaign raised funds as well as the civilian population in Idlib to dig tunnels and trenches to protect the area from enemy invasion. For expansion see July 2019 jihadi update on ICT website.

<sup>44</sup> August 2019, Facebook.



Right to left: Fortify from Afar banner; Idlib residents assist with frontlines fortification

## Huras al-Din

- Select **Huras al-Din** (al-Qaeda Syrian extension) publications:
  - A banner eulogizing **Abu Khaad al-Muhandis**, a veteran jihadist and al-Qaeda member that was killed in Idlib. It said that al-Muhandis fought for Allah in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria and Allah will avenge his killers<sup>45</sup>.
- **Sham al-Ribat** media outlet, a platform for **Sheikh Sami al-Aridi**, a senior member of Huras al-Din’s Shura Council published an article by the latter that was meant to lift the Idlib fighters’ spirit. Al-Aridi said that despite the shortage of money and weapons the Idlib jihadists will overcome their enemies because they walk in Allah’s path as opposed to their enemies. He criticized elements that make it difficult to supply food and weapons to the jihadist or gauges prices on the above and that this demeanour is a sin. He clarified that jihad is an individual religious duty and every Muslim must fulfil it, as **Sheikh Abdallah Azam** (the Funding Ideologist of the global jihad movement<sup>46</sup>) clarified in the 1980s. In another speech al-Aridi emphasized the importance of performing jihad against local regimes claiming that they have strayed from Allah and Muhammad’s way and are responsible for the division among Muslims. In light of the above he stressed that the Islamic nation has a duty to topple local regimes<sup>47</sup>.
- Select **al-Bayyan** (identified with Huras al-Din) publications:
  - A banner by 19 foreign jihadists in Idlib eulogizing **Abu Khaad al-Muhandis**, a veteran jihadist killed in Idlib. Alongside the eulogy the jihadists stressed that the jihad against the “crusading alliance” will continue despite the death of al-Muhandis<sup>48</sup>.
- **Thabat** news agency, close with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and Huras al-Din, published weekly updates titled “The Harvest of the [Armed] Operations in the Muslim Lands” containing information about the number of military actions, number of enemy casualties, number of enemy vehicle damaged, loot taken in various

<sup>45</sup> 24.8.19 Telegram.

<sup>46</sup> 14.8.9 Telegram.

<sup>47</sup> 10.8.19. <https://emaad.net/الرقى-بالحموع-نحو-الربيع-الإسلام/>

<sup>48</sup> 23.8.19 Telegram.

jihadi theatres such as Syria, Afghanistan, Arabian Peninsula, Mali, Burkina Faso and so forth<sup>49</sup>.



Right to left: The Harvest of the [Armed] Operations in the Muslim Lands cover page; infographic of jihadi activity in Syria

### Haridh al-Muminin

- Select **Haridh al-Muminin** (A joint operations center for rebel factions in Syria including **Huras al-Din**)’s publications<sup>50</sup>:
  - A banner condemning the Syrian regime (and allies) efforts to obtain a cease fire status in Idlib pursuant to the Astana conference attended by Syria, Turkey, Iran, Russia and some rebel factions. The banner was titled “The Astana Plot and the Bitter Harvest” the organization cautioned from “the grievous outcome of the Astana conference regarding our revolution and jihad”. The organization clarified that Idlib was the “last stronghold of the revolution” and Syrian and Russian regimes wish to take control of its lands and stifle the revolution. In the latter part of the banner the organization clarified two main issues: (i) resistance to the Astana conference as well as any initiative intended to hurt the Syrian revolution; (ii) the cease fire in Idlib agreed upon in Astana is fraudulent therefore all jihadist must keep fighting the enemy<sup>51</sup>.
  - A clip documenting a joint attack with **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham** against Assad and militia forces in Idlib after the collapse of the cease fire declared by the Assad regime<sup>52</sup>.

### Jabhat Ansar al-Din

- Select **Al-Basair** media outlet, affiliated with **Jabhat Ansar al-Din** publications:
  - A clip containing a speech by **Ramiz Abu al-Majid**, the organization’s spokesperson intended to boost

<sup>49</sup> August 2019, Telegram.

<sup>50</sup> August 2019 Telegram.

<sup>51</sup> 5.8.19 Telegram.

<sup>52</sup> 18.8.19 Telegram.

fighters’ morale. In his speech al-Majid addressed the battle of Uhud between Muhammad’s army and the Quraysh army in 624 A.D. and ended with a stalemate. Per him, the Muslims didn’t defeat their enemy because of lack of determination and faith and the lesson for the jihadists in Syria is that only total devotion to the faith in Allah will lead to victory<sup>53</sup>.

## ISIS

- ISIS in al-Khyr** province published a clip titled “War of Attrition” where it criticized the Trump administration claims that ISIS suffered severe blows and is shrinking. Per ISIS, these are fake news because ISIS is on the rise, strengthening and expanding. Additionally, the clip incorporated parts from a speech given by **al-Baghdadi** in April 2019. Al-Baghdadi said that upon the fall of Ba’oz, ISIS’ last stronghold in Syria, the organization decided to focus on guerrilla warfare knowing that this would be a long war that would end with a Muslim victory over the infidels. Down the road, the clip documenting executions of Kurdish PKK members in Syria, planting explosive charges under PKK structures and various attacks against the PKK<sup>54</sup>. The clip therefore exemplifies a propaganda effort by ISIS to prove it is still active in Syria despite stories in western media to the contrary.

## Israel

### ISIS

- A Palestinian supporter of ISIS published on an ISIS identified Telegram account words of support to al-Baghdadi. In the correspondence, the writer said that he swore an allegiance to al-Baghdadi and awaited his commands. Additionally, he photographed himself with the dome of the Mosque of Omar in the background waving a sign with the caption: “Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, al-Aqsa awaits you”<sup>55</sup>.



Palestinian waving a sign “Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, al-Aqsa awaits you”

<sup>53</sup> 23.8.19 Telegram.

<sup>54</sup> 11.8.19 Telegram.

<sup>55</sup> 12.8.19 Telegram.

## Africa

### The Maghreb

#### Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

- Al-Andalus media outlet, an affiliate of AQIM, posted an audio clip containing a speech Sheikh Abu Ubaydha Yusuf al-Anabi, the chief of the organization's dignitary council titled "The Free Algerians, Don't Leave Your Places". At the outset al-Anabi said that on the eve of Id al-Fitr the Islamic nation is under a wide organized seeking to weaken Islam and preserve the western states interests. He added that the Islamic nation has been fighting for decades with the "conquering Jews" in Palestine and the culmination of this fight is the presentation of the U.S.' "deal of the century" to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Per him, the "deal of the century" is the greatest betrayal of the Palestinian issue. Further, the Islamic nation has been under attack since the turn of the twentieth century from invading crusaders led by the U.S., France, and Russia in countries such as Afghanistan, Somalia, Chechnya, Yemen, Mali and the Levant, and supported directly and indirectly by local governments and military forces. Al-Anabi further said that, sadly, the only ones resisting this invasion are the jihadists who wish to end the pillaging of the Muslim territories and the western brainwash, whereas the rest of the Muslims stay on the side lines. In light of the above, al-Anabi stressed that that it on the backdrop of the second wave of the popular revolutions the Algerians and other Muslim nations to re-enlist and topple the treacherous regimes who follow secularism and responsible for moral decay. Moreover, he called the attention of the Algerians to the battle their ancestors led against France a few decades ago that ended with the Algerian independence and said this should be a source of inspiration to them. Per him, the Algerian regime has had a crisis because of the popular protests, and it wishes to suppress them in conniving ways. For example, the regime offered to hold an election but de facto predetermined its outcome. Al-Anabi stressed that stopping the protests the generals in power would be a mistake and implored the Algerian to keep protesting until the fall of the regime. Per him, there a need to think about developing and extending the protests as demonstrations have been going on for six months and have not even made a dent in the regime. His final statement was that popular protest has no value if it doesn't wear an Islamic hue and attempts to install, at the end of the day, an Islamic regime<sup>56</sup>.

<sup>56</sup> 13.8.19 Telegram.



Al-Anabi's speech banner

## Somalia

### Al-Shabab-Al-Mujahideen

- Select **Shahada** news agency, identified with **al-Shabab al-Mujahidin**:
  - A third clip in the series “Then Fight the Leaders of Disbelief”- Part 1. The clip attempted to justify the “al-Shabab” jihad against the Somali government and the resistance to illegitimate (per the organization) rulers in other territories. The clip incorporated clips from past and present **al-Qaeda** leaders, such as **UBL, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Omar Abdel Rahman, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Abu Zubeir al-Abab, Abu Yahya al-Libi**. The clip criticized the rulers of Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey, Syria, Pakistan, KSA and Jordan for having a secular regime rather than sharia based one, especially in light of the fact that that the majority of their population is Muslim. Based on that, al-Shabab called these leaders as “faithless leaders”. Per it, these rulers are allies of the enemy and fight the believers. The clip also contained statements from al-Zawahiri that all these corrupt regimes are part of the global war against Islam led by America. He said that the western states side with the locale rulers and ignore their crimes against their own people. Further, per al-Libi, the mujahidin must use force to depose these corrupt rulers. Down the road the organization stressed that the Somali regime is as illegitimate as other secular regimes and therefore it is the organization’s duty to fight and topple it to free Somalia. The organization also justified its attacks on hotels in Somalia because they host military, intelligence and political elements, either foreign and domestic. The clip also showed that the hotels a fortified which per the organization doesn’t reconcile with claims of civilian use. Additionally, the organization called upon civilian to stay away from hotels because they are legitimate targets for the organization. Moreover, the organization legitimized attacks that may involve civilian Muslims through a clip featuring al-Zarqawi that defended hurting Muslims as collateral damage if the goal of the attack is to harm infidels. That said, the organization stressed that it will be very cautious not to do that. At the end of the clip al-Shabab encouraged continuing with suicide attacks. On the latter, it said that on the hand it this method enjoys popular local support as volunteers come from within local tribes but at the same time the organization is part of the global al-Qaeda jihad movement as

- is evident from the fact it named one of its training camps in honor of a jihadi suicide bomber<sup>57</sup>.
- A third clip in the series “Then Fight the Leaders of Disbelief”- Part 2. This clip presented exclusive photos from the attacks the organization perpetrated on government hotels in Mogadishu and added additional details on the organization’s strategy vis a vis its war with the western backed Somali government. All along the clip al-Shabab stresses the importance of hitting the Mogadishu hotels as they are military bases and meeting places for senior officials and their western allies, however the organization will attempt to precisely select targets in an attempt to minimize spilling Muslim blood. At the end of the clip there is a call for the mujahidin to continue fulfilling their jihad duty<sup>58</sup>.
  - An announcement regarding a ceremony to congratulate the first group of sheikhs who answered the organization’s July call to renounce the western backed Somali government to secure their safety. Per the announcement, eighty-six sheiks attended the ceremony<sup>59</sup>.
  - A speech by **Ali Mahmoud Raji**, the organization’s spokesman, for Id al-Fitr. At the beginning Raji congratulated the Muslims for the holiday as well as the leaders of the Taliban and al-Qaeda. Raji emphasized that even through the holiday the jihad will go on and the mujahidin succeed in hitting the enemy. Further, he claimed that the Somali government is mired in trouble from its inception and it failed in its campaign against the mujahidin, despite the western support it receives. Per him, the mujahidin keep hitting major enemy locations, even in Mogadishu. In that sense he mentioned an attack on a U.S. diplomat and the U.N. special envoy to Somalia. He claimed that the above attacks carry several messages, the most important of which is that the mujahidin don’t forget the U.S. attacks in Somalia and threatened that the hand of the mujahidin will reach all who plan to subjugate the Islamic nation and attack them at their fortified hideouts. Further, he addressed the fact that various countries meddle in Somalia and are looking to take advantage of it and its resources. Per him, the Turkish among those who wish to exploit Somalia and they have erected a military base in Somalia and trains thousands of Somali security forces personnel to protect its economic interests. He added, that Turkey is trying to transfer its strategy from Syria to Somalia – arm and train government affiliated militias that its job is to protect Turkish interests in Somalia. Further, that the U.S. is active in Somalia to protect its interests the same way it is active in Iraq and Afghanistan. Per him, UAE, Qatar, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and the E.U. are active in Somalia to preserve their interests. In light of the above, he reiterated that the mujahidin will keep hitting all foreign element in the country. Moving on he congratulated the sheikh of the tribes who renounced the government and called upon the remaining sheikhs to follow in their footsteps and repent. Lastly, Raji praised the mujahidin for their latest attacks in east Africa and called upon them to continue with their jihad until they are all completely liberated<sup>60</sup>.

<sup>57</sup> 12.8.19. <http://shahadanews.com/?p=4237>

<sup>58</sup> August 2019. <http://shahadanews.com/?p=4311>

<sup>59</sup> <http://shahadanews.com/?p=4159>

<sup>60</sup> <http://shahadanews.com/?p=4232>

## Mozambique

### The Islamic State in Central Africa

- ISIS in Central Africa claimed responsibility for attacking a Christian village and torching houses in Cabo Delgado province (northern Mozambique, close to the Tanzanian border). Per the organization this attack took place within the guerrilla warfare declared by **al-Baghdadi**, in April 2019<sup>61</sup>.

## The Indian Subcontinent

### Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)

- Select **al-Sahab**, an official **al-Qaeda** official propaganda platform on the Indian Subcontinent:
  - A banner eulogizing **Abd al-Jabbar**, a senior leader of the organization killed by Pakistani security forces in Baluchistan<sup>62</sup>.
  - A banner eulogizing the editor of Nawa-i-Afghan Jihad, the al-Qaeda publication on the Indian subcontinent who was captured by Pakistani security forces. Further, the banner said that the organization has been examining the development of a new system that will allow for a better dissemination of the periodical<sup>63</sup>.

## The West

- Telegram channels of ISIS supporters keep disseminating threats to attack civilians and state institutions on western soil. For example, banners with threats to use explosive carrying drones against tourist attractions and crowded population centers in the west were posted<sup>64</sup>.



Banners threatening to hit U.S. cities with explosive carrying drones

<sup>61</sup> 12.8.19. Telegram.

<sup>62</sup> 4.8.19 Telegram.

<sup>63</sup> 17.8.19 Telegram.

<sup>64</sup> August 2019 Telegram.



Banners threatening to hit Washington D.C. and Paris



Right to left: A Banner with the caption "Allies Bring Hostility". The Shiites are the Americans' brothers; A threat to hit Russian targets.

## ABOUT THE ICT

Founded in 1996, the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) is one of the leading academic institutes for counter-terrorism in the world, facilitating international cooperation in the global struggle against terrorism.

ICT is an independent think tank providing expertise in terrorism, counter-terrorism, homeland security, threat vulnerability and risk assessment, intelligence analysis and national security and defense policy.

ICT is a non-profit organization located at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC), Herzliya, Israel which relies exclusively on private donations and revenue from events, projects and programs.

## ABOUT THE JIHADI MONITORING GROUP

The Jihadi Websites Monitoring Group (JWVG) is a specialized research and analysis team at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT). Composed of researchers fluent in Arabic, the JWVG monitors websites that support and serve the Global Jihad organizations. The unique characteristic of JWVG publications is the team's integration of diverse materials from a wide variety of Arabic sources. JWVG connects each source to larger trends, providing a complete understanding of events on both a local and a global scale.