



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

February 2017

Highlights

- **Al-Qaeda** and several of its branches share eulogies in memory of **Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman**, who died in prison in the United States. The same organizations threaten to avenge his death and call on Muslims around the world to fulfill his last will and testament; namely, to fulfill the commandment of jihad against enemies of Islam. In this context, **Sheikh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi**, a senior Salafi-jihadist ideologue in Jordan, criticizes the fact that maximum efforts were not made to free Sheikh Abdel-Rahman from prison, and he wondered why Muslims forget about their clerics who are serving prison terms and underestimate their abilities.
- **Ayman al-Zawahiri**, the leader of **Al-Qaeda**, eulogizes **Sheikh Rifa'i Tah**, a former member of Al-Jamaa al-Islamiyya, member of Al-Nusra Front (Al-Qaeda's branch in Syria) and a close friend of al-Zawahiri.
- **Sheikh Qasim al-Rimi**, the leader of **Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)**, condemns the US attack on Qifa, in central Yemen. According to him, AQAP fighters succeeded in causing serious losses to American soldiers and thwarting the attack. According to him, the Americans sanctified war against the Yemeni people but, nevertheless, continue to demonstrate incompetence and an inability to break the power of the Sunnis. In addition, he threatens to take revenge against the US for the killing of Muslims in the current war and he calls on Sunni tribal members in Yemen to fight with devotion and determination against the Americans.
- **Abu Jabir Hashim al-Shaykh**, the leader of **Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham** (Assembly for the Liberation of the Levant), makes a statement for the first time since the organization was established according to which the organization has begun a new chapter in the Syrian revolution and vows to increase military activities against Assad's forces. According to him, the new umbrella organization assists in the political and military arenas in order to topple the Assad regime and liberate Syrian territories.
- **Abu Mohammad al-Julani**, the former leader of Jabhat Fateh al-Sham and the leader of the military wing of **Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham**, claims responsibility for the bombing of Assad's security forces in Homs. According to him, the Alawite regime only understands force and blood, and rejects outright political negotiations between rebel factions and the Syrian regime.
- **Abu Abdullah al-Shami**, a member of the Shari'a Council of **Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham**, accuses Liwa

al-Aqsa of cooperating with the Islamic State in areas of the northern suburbs of Hamat. According to him, there is an obligation to kill factions that have ties to the IS, including Liwa al-Aqsa, after an attempt to get them to retract their ideas failed. Al-Shami also emphasizes the need to kill members of factions with ties to external parties, while referring to several factions with ties to the Free Syrian Army.

- The **Islamic State** in Egypt threatens to attack the Coptic Christian population in Egypt. According to the organization, the Coptics receive support and assistance from al-Sisi's regime and the US and are, therefore, considered a sect fighting against Islam and not its patrons. The IS further criticizes the Salafist Al-Nur Party and the Muslim Brotherhood against the backdrop of their ties to Christians.
- The **Islamic State** launches a comprehensive campaign against clerics who identify with the rulers of Arab countries in general, and of Saudi Arabia in particular. In several videos and articles that were published, the organization called for the assassination of these clerics against the backdrop of their support for "tyrants" and the propaganda that they disseminate against the mujahideen.
- The **Islamic State** uses its official media institutions and supporters to publish a large number of filmed reviews and videos regarding attack drones. The publications review attacks that were carried out mainly against Iraqi army forces.

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New Publications

Ideology

- Al-Sahab jihadist media institution, which belongs to Al-Qaeda, published the following:
 - Part 2 of a eulogy delivered by Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri in memory of three senior jihad leaders who were martyred, Abu al-Hasan al-Bulaydi, Abu Firas al-Suri and Rifa'i Tah (1954-2016). The second part of the eulogy focused on Rifau Tah, a former member of Al-Jamaa al-Islamiyya and a close friend of al-Zawahiri. In recent years, he was a member of Al-Nusra Front, Al-Qaeda's branch in Syria, but was killed in an air strike in April 2016. Al-Zawahiri spoke of his personal acquaintance with Rifau Tah and of the friendship between them. The eulogy was published in the framework of a series of publications titled, "Bear the Weapon of the Martyr".¹
 - A video by Abu Yahya al-Libi, a former senior member of the organization who was killed in 2012 by a US drone strike, titled, "A Message to Migrant Sisters in Arenas of Jihad". In the video, al-Libi offered advice to women who migrated or wish to migrate to arenas of jihad. For example, he noted that they need to have patience, support their fighter husbands, educate children and other women on the blessings of Islam, and increase their acts of kindness.²
 - A senior member of the Salafi-jihadist movement, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, published an announcement in the framework of which he criticized the clerics of factions who make excuses for them in order to cooperate with the Christian infidels in their battle against the people of the Syrian revolution. In the announcement, al-Maqdisi claimed that the people's trust in these clerics has been eroded and that they brought it on themselves by making up excuses to help the factions deviate from the correct path instead of doing their jobs. He also claimed that heresy itself is a more serious crime than the accusation of heresy, especially when the accusation of heresy is subject to interpretation. In addition, al-Maqdisi accused clerics who consider the Kharawij to be a greater threat than heretics, and claimed that there are even those among them who prefer a Shi'ite and

¹ <https://justpaste.it/13n9l>

² <https://fotooh.net>

Alawite victory over the Khawarij and, therefore, they provide excuses for seeking help from secular infidels.³

- The Nukhbat al-Fikr jihadist media institution, which is involved in publicity for Al-Qaeda, published the following:
 - An article titled, “Al-Qaeda that Changed the History of the United States: How Al-Qaeda Helped Dictate the Countdown for US Hegemony”, by Hussam al-Umawi. In the article, the writer discussed Al-Qaeda’s strategy vis-à-vis the US, its degree of success, and why the US continues to be considered the head of the axis of evil.⁴
 - An article titled, “A Response to the [Islamic] State’s Misgivings” by ‘Abdallah al-‘Utaybi. The writer listed 16 clauses that undermine the worldview of the IS. For example, he criticized the organization’s attempts to justify its use of labelling Muslims as heretics.⁵
- Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, Al-Qaeda’s branch in Somalia, published the second edition of a book titled, “The Lamp of the Mujahid” By Abu Shayma al-Soumali. The book provided jihad fighters with information about how to conduct themselves while fighting, such as the law regarding enemy plunder, food that can be eaten during war, holding prayers during war, etc.⁶
- In the framework of the IS campaign against Muslim clerics who oppose the organization, Al-Wafa jihadist media institution published about a dozen article by IS supporters regarding the “Ulamaa of the wicked”. The articles permitted the killing of these clerics due to their support for “tyrants” and their propaganda against the mujahideen.

The following are examples of the articles that were published:

- A writer calling herself “a sister to whoever swears allegiance to the Islamic State” published an article in which she called for attacks against “the wicked scholars”, a nickname mocking Muslim clerics who are associated with rulers. The writer explained that these clerics are a barrier separating the Muslim masses from the IS, since they are aware of the fact that these rulers are infidels yet they turn a blind eye to it and support

³ <https://justpaste.it/13r46>

⁴ <https://fotooh.net>

⁵ <https://fotooh.net>

⁶ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/66558>

them. The writer called on “lone lions or groups” to assassinate these clerics at universities and conferences by, among other things, planting bombs in their cars.⁷

- An article by Abu al-Hareth Sami, calling for the assassination of the Saudi cleric, Abd al-Rahman Al-Sudais, since the latter attacked the mujahideen and described them as Khawarij while serving as a cleric of the “tyrants” in Saudi Arabia.⁸
- An article by Abdullah bin Mu'in titled, “Abu Qatada al-Filastini – from Last Night to Today” regarding the change that al-Filastini underwent in his attitude towards the IS. In addition to comparing his statements from various periods, the writer claimed that al-Filastini used to view IS members as Khawarij, in contrast to his statements today. He also criticized Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi for denying his previous statements - for example, he mentioned the deletion of an article that had appeared on the Minbar al-Tawhid wal-Jihad Web site in which al-Maqdisi had expressed support for the “slaughter of infidels”.⁹
- An article by Abu al-Walid al-Gharib in which he declared the clerics of the rulers “apostates” and called for their assassination, specifically the Ulamaa of Saudi Arabia, including: Sa'd al-Breik, Saleh al-Fawzan, Saleh al-Maghamsi, Sa'd al-Shathri and others.¹⁰
- An article by Abu Sahl al-Mawsili against Ibrahim al-Sakran, a leader of the “moderate Salafist movement” in Saudi Arabia. The writer objected to al-Sakran’s statements against the IS and its leaders, which he claimed were intended to dissuade young people from joining the ranks of the organization. He also criticized al-Sakran’s brother, Muhammad, who he accused of flattering the tyrants and showing contempt for “those who follow the straight path”.¹¹
- Articles by Abu Muhammad Zakariyya and Abu Zafer al-Hanbali against a cleric named Tareq al-Hammudi as a result of an article that was published on February 13, 2017 in which the latter claimed that the Islamic State’s ideology belongs to the Khawarij way of thinking. In their articles, the two writers tried to contest al-Hammudi’s claims using

⁷ <http://up.top4top.net/downloadf-406zvzx91-pdf.html>

⁸ <http://up.top4top.net/downloadf-405yxs371-pdf.html>

⁹ <http://up.top4top.net/downloadf-413hpg691-pdf.html>

¹⁰ <http://up.top4top.net/downloadf-407j2lkz1-pdf.html>

¹¹ <http://up.top4top.net/downloadf-411xqfv41-pdf.html>

references and quotations from religious sources, and they claimed that he was making false accusations against the IS.¹²

- Additional articles by IS-supporting writers on issues that mainly included: emphasis on the danger posed to the Muslim Nation by “stray clerics”, criticism of clerics for condemning attacks in the West and calls on Muslims not to heed these clerics. Other clerics from various countries who were designated as targets for assassination included: Yusuf Qaradawi (Qatar), Mahmud Radwani, Muhammad Hassan, Muhammad Said Raslan (Egypt), Ahmad Badr al-Din Hassun (Syria), Ali Hassan al-Halabi (Jordan), Muhammad Al-Fazzazi (Morocco), Shams al-Din Burubi (Algeria), Sadeq Gharyani (Libya), and Muhammad al-Hassan Ould Dadou (Mauritania).¹³
- Al-Wafa jihadist media institution published the following on other topics:
 - An article by Al-Muzaffir Umar against Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, in which he criticized Erdoğan for fighting against the IS despite the fact that the IS previously turned a blind eye to his support for Bashar al-Assad and avoided carrying out terrorist attacks in Turkey. The writer accused Erdoğan of not only leading a country where licentiousness exists and alcohol is sold, but also of flattering the Americans and normalizing relations with Israel. The writer urged readers not to make the mistake of viewing Turkey as a country compassionate towards Muslims, he discussed the weaknesses in Turkish society (for example, the failed coup attempt against Erdoğan), and he encouraged attacks using explosives in Istanbul and the setting alight of the Iskenderun forests in order to damage to Turkish economy, as did the attack at a nightclub in Istanbul on New Year’s Eve 2017.¹⁴

¹²<http://up.top4top.net/downloadf-413ireqw1-pdf.html>;<http://up.top4top.net/downloadf-412rqd4p1-pdf.html>

¹³ <https://shamukh.net/vb> (Arabic).

¹⁴ <https://shamukh.net/vb> (Arabic).



Encouragement to carry out bombings and ignite forests in Turkey

- An article by Abd al-Mu'izz al-Qurashi titled, “The Brotherhood and the Alliance with the Devil”, in which he criticized the Muslim Brotherhood and other organizations considered by him to espouse “moderate Islam”. In the framework of the article, the writer criticized the interpretation that was given to Islam during the Ottoman Empire by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, a pioneer of the modernist movement in Islam, and Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood. The writer claimed that the fundamentals of Sufi thought permeated these movements, and he even claimed that they were penetrated by Shi'ite ideas and the Freemasonry movement.¹⁵
- An article by a writer calling himself, “A Syrian proud of his Islam” in response to the latest speech by Al-Qaeda leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, titled, “For Other Than Allah We Will Not Bow”. The writer noted that the goal of his article was to respond to the “dozens of lies against the Islamic State” that appeared in al-Zawahiri’s speech. Among other things, the writer criticized al-Zawahiri for previously claiming that if President Mohamed Morsi would apply shari’a he would be considered a hero of the Muslim Nation, and he wondered why al-Zawahiri does not consider al-Baghdadi to be a hero since he did bring about the application of shari’a. Another criticism in the context of the speech focused on al-Zawahiri’s reference to Christians (in which, according to the writer, he said that Muslims should live alongside them without mentioning their obligation to pay *jizya*) and on his avoidance to officially declare Shi’ites infidels. Regarding al-Zawahiri’s criticism over the fact that there are former officers from the Ba’ath Party among the ranks of the IS command, the writer claimed that those fighters had renounced the Ba’ath Party and

¹⁵ <http://www.almlf.com/ic9f86gvg4mr.html>

added that even among the ranks of Al-Qaeda there are officers and soldiers who previously belonged to the Egyptian, Afghan or Yemeni armies.¹⁶

- Al-Battar jihadist media institution, which is involved in publicity for the IS, published the following:
 - An article by Gharib al-Sururiyya titled, “This is the Dawah of the Islamic State”. In the framework of the article, the writer emphasized the principle of the Oneness of God to which the IS adheres and that is expressed in the breaking of prominent graves and the removal of any sign of polytheism, as well as the labelling of anyone who does not fight idolatry as an infidels. The writer explained that this devotion and piety are what cause the organization’s enemies of to fight against it, and he specifically criticized the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, whose members he mockingly called “the Jews of jihad”. In addition to combining excerpts from Islamic religious scholars from different periods, the writer ended the article with a call on Muslims to familiarize themselves with the Islamic State’s ideology and join jihad among its ranks.¹⁷
 - In the framework of the campaign against Muslim clerics who oppose the IS, Al-Battar published a video titled, “Road Pirates”. The video presented these clerics as robbing the religion from all Muslims and supporting polytheism, as tyrants and as “forces of lies fighting against the truth”. The video ended with a call to assassinate several clerics based on the writings of Sheikh Ibn Tamiyya and Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab.¹⁸
- Al-Ansari jihadist media institution published the following:
 - An article by Nur al-Din al-Jazairi against the Muslim Brotherhood movement and the way in which the Turkish president embodies the movement’s ideology. The writer explained that the Muslim Brotherhood does call for the application of shari’a as a final goal but it does not condone the use of improper means, such as taking part in democratic elections, in order to reach it. The writer criticized Erdoğan himself in the context of the “prohibited

¹⁶ <http://up.top4top.net/downloadf-402n69wt1-pdf.html>

¹⁷ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/66558>

¹⁸ http://khilafatweet.blogspot.com/2017/03/blog-post_88.html

things” that flourish in Turkey under his rule and his country’s participation in the NATO alliance in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.¹⁹

- Another article by al-Jazairi against clerics who speak out against the IS, whom he accused of being responsible for the bloodshed of Muslims in order to please the rulers.²⁰
- A writer named Abdullah Shaker al-Dulaymi published an article criticizing the Shi’ite ethnic group. In the framework of the article, the writer attacked the prevailing opinion among certain circles according to which Arabism distinguishes between Arab Shi’ites and non-Arab Shi’ites (mainly of Persian origin). The writer explained that the Shi’ite religion was intended to undermine Islam from within and those who believe in it are equally dangerous, whether they are of Arab origin or not. The writer emphasized that Arab Shi’ites present a greater threat since they comprise part of the social fabric of Arab states, in terms of a “Trojan horse” that threatens the Sunni public and helps the infidels invade Muslim lands.²¹
- The Dawa al-Haq news agency, which is associated with the IS, published several articles criticizing Hamas for, among other things: denying the detention of Salafist fighters in the Gaza Strip; attributing the case of a civilian who burned himself to death to “injustices by senior Hamas officials”; referring to the visit by a Hamas “security delegation” in Egypt (including a senior representative from the Qassam Brigades); raising taxes for citizens under the movement’s rule; and the high poverty rate in Gaza. Criticism was also directed at the battles between Hamas and Egypt against the backdrop of the struggle against the IS, and an article was published mocking Khaled Mashal for threatening Israel when he himself was in Qatar near a large US military base.²²

Strategy

- Al-Sahab jihadist media institution, which belongs to Al-Qaeda, published “A Lecture about Kidnappings” by Sheikh Sayf al-Adl, a senior Al-Qaeda strategist. The lecture was first published

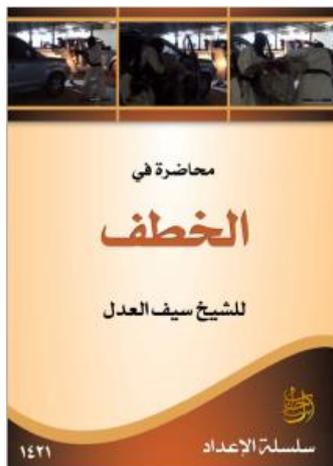
¹⁹ <https://shamukh.net/vb> (Arabic).

²⁰ <https://justpaste.it/13f74>

²¹ <https://shamukh.net/vb> (Arabic).

²² <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/63319>; <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/63312>; <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/63220>; <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/63398>; <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/63527>; <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/63654>; <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/63704>; <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/63773>; <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/64542>

17 years ago but was only publicly published now. The timing of the decision to publish probably depended on the organization's desire in encouraging widespread acts of kidnapping in order to free Muslim prisoners from jails in the West and in order to line the pockets of the organization. The lecture discussed two types of kidnappings: A) covert kidnappings – keeping the kidnapped person in a hidden location known only to the kidnappers and holding negotiations for his release in exchange for meeting the conditions set forth by the kidnappers. B) overt kidnappings – kidnapping people in a known location, such as hijacking an airplane and holding negotiations for its release. In the framework of the lecture, al-Adl listed several examples, such as the covert kidnapping of that was carried out by the Abu Sayyaf organization in the Philippines (see the document on the matter).²³



The banner page of Sheikh Sayf al-Adl's article

- Many reports were published on the subject of IS attacks that were carried out using drones. According to the reports, IS fighters used this weapon in the framework of attacks in which dozens of soldiers from among the Iraqi army and militias were killed, and military vehicles were destroyed in Mosul, Tall Afar and Baiji (including one night attack).²⁴ A shelling using a drone was reported east of and south of Al-Khayr (Deir Ezzor) in Syria.²⁵ In response to these reports, IS supporting visitors suggested equipping the shell with poison to ensure the death of anyone

²³ <https://justpaste.it/136k7>

²⁴ https://dawaalhaq.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/2_small-1.jpg

²⁵ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/64461>

injured by shrapnel or, alternatively, equipping the drone with poisonous chemical powders to be dropped from above. Other visitors referred to a guidebook on how to self-produce a drone and a video that seemingly shows a drone equipped with a machine gun.²⁶ Another visitor showed more creativity and called for the use of jet skis as an attack tool against “enemy ships at sea”.²⁷ Visitors referred to publications by western research centers, such as the Combatting Terrorism Center, regarding the increasing efficiency of drone use as a means of attack by the IS.²⁸



A drone dropping a shell on PMF posts near the Tall Afar Airport

- A writer named Abu Mu'adh al-Maqdisi published an article regarding the importance of using the WhatsApp application as a tool for spreading dawah and supporting the IS. The writer recommended using this platform to disseminate the organization’s ideology and publications, but he was reluctant and said that it was preferable to use the application only in the territories of the Caliphate since the numbers are open to tracking by intelligence agencies. In this context, the writer recommended using fictitious numbers (American and Canadian, for example) that will be easier to disguise.²⁹
- Al-Wafa jihadist media institution published an article by Abu al-Walid al-Lubnani titled, “Tunnels Excavation” in which he discussed the civil and military importance of tunnels, and reviewed the different types of tunnels according to depth. The writer gave a general technical description of

²⁶<https://dawaalhaq.com/post/63463>;<https://dawaalhaq.com/post/63498>; <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/63652>;
<https://dawaalhaq.com/post/63727>

²⁷ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/63785>

²⁸ <https://shamukh.net/vb> (Arabic).

²⁹ <https://shamukh.net/vb> (Arabic).

the construction of tunnels (for example, which walls should be used and around which rocks to dig) and offered several tips for making the digging process more efficient.³⁰

- The Amaq news agency published an infographic summarizing the suicide attacks that were carried out by IS fighters in Syria and Iraq during the month of January 2017. The infographic listed the attacks divided into provinces (with the leading provinces being Nineveh and Raqqah), according to the modus operandi (car bomb, explosive belt, combined attack, etc.) and the targets of the attack (Iraqi, Syrian and Turkish armies, Peshmerga, PKK, Shi'ite pilgrims and Syrian opposition).³¹

The Death of Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman

- AQAQ and AQIM published a joint eulogy in memory of Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman who died in his prison cell in the US. According to the announcement, the sheikh's death proves that the US continues to carry out crimes against the Muslim Nation. The organizations described the sheikh as "the crown of clerics", "a leader of jihad", and more. At the end of the announcement, the organizations called on the Muslim youth to avenge the sheikh's blood and carry out his will by fulfilling the commandment to wage jihad against enemies of Islam.³² Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen in Somalia also published a eulogy in his memory and described him as "the crown of the Ulema". At the end of the eulogy, it emphasized that Muslims are under attack by the Crusaders and it praised AQAP for its success in repelling an American attack in Yemen. Al-Qaeda itself also published a eulogy in a similar spirit.

Sheikh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, a senior Salafi-jihadist ideologue in Jordan, criticized the fact that not enough effort was made to free Sheikh Rahman from jail, and he wondered why Muslims forget their clerics who are serving prison terms and underestimate their abilities.³³

³⁰ <http://up.top4top.net/downloadf-413kxasq1-pdf.html>

³¹ https://dawaalhaq.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/C4AMo_rXAAE2euf.jpg

³² <https://ia801503.us.archive.org/19/items/Taajalolama>

³³ Telegram channel



Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman

Magazines

- The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan published issue no. 131 (44 pp.) for February 2017 of its Arabic magazine, *Al-Somood*, which deals with the arena of jihad in Afghanistan.³⁴



The banner page of *Al-Somood*

- Issues no. 38-41 of the magazine, *Al-Masra*, which is associated with Al-Qaeda, were published. The magazine reviews the central developments in arenas of jihad in which Al-Qaeda and its branches operate, and includes opinion articles by senior members of jihadist organizations.³⁵

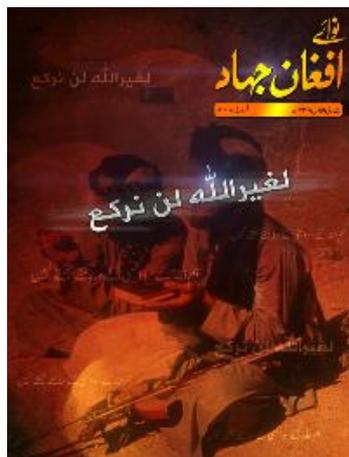
³⁴ <http://up.top4top.net/downloadf-4020i47w1-pdf.html>

³⁵ Telegram



The banner page of issue no. 38 of *Al-Masra* magazine

- Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent published the February issue of its magazine, *Nawai*.³⁶



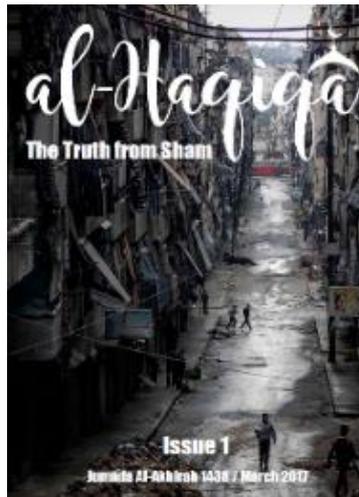
The banner page of the *Nawai* issue

- Al-Sahab jihadist media institution, which is associated with Al-Qaeda, published issues no. 7-10 of its periodical, *Al-Nafir*, in Arabic and English. Among the topics covered in these issues were: accusations against the Trump government of persecuting Muslims as expressed in its attack on

³⁶ <http://shbaneshariat.blogspot.ca/2017/02/feb.html>

Yemen; accusations against the Saudi royal family of cooperating with US intelligence agencies; eulogies in memory of Omar Abdel-Rahman and the publication of his last will and testament.³⁷

- The first issue of the magazine, *Al-Haqiqa*, which is associated with Al-Qaeda, was published in English. Among the topics covered in this issue were: the story of a martyr from Holland who fought in the arena of jihad in Syria; a review of the milestones of Jabhat Fateh al-Sham; quotes from Al-Qaeda leaders and more.³⁸



The banner page of *Al-Haqiqa* magazine

- Issue no. 8 of the magazine, *Gaidi Mtaani*, which is affiliated with Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, Al-Qaeda's branch in Somalia, was published. Among the topics covered in this issue were: words of praise and encouragement for jihad activities against the Kenyan government; encouragement for lone wolf attacks, such as the killing of British soldier, Lee Rigby, in May 2013 by a Muslim of Nigerian origin; articles in praise of Sheikh Anwar al-'Awlaqi, a Muslim-American preacher of Yemeni origin who joined AQAP and was killed in 2011, and Sheikh Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, who served in Al-Qaeda in East Africa and was killed in 2011.³⁹

³⁷ Telegram

³⁸ Telegram

³⁹ Telegram



The banner page of the *Gaidi Mtaani* magazine

- Issues no. 66-69 of the periodical, *Al-Naba*, were published by the IS. Among the topics covered by the magazine's articles were: a review of the organization's attacks in various arenas; an article regarding the use of attack drones; an interview with the emir of the organization's health department; advice regarding family quarrels; prophetic medicine; and more.⁴⁰
- The first issue of the magazine, *Al-Malhama*, which is associated with IS, was published. Among the topics covered in the issue were: the importance of investing effort in freeing Muslim prisoners from their jails; an accusation against the Wahhabi religious establishment in Saudi Arabia of heresy and harm to Islam; call to bring to justice those Muslim clerics who criticize the organization.⁴¹

⁴⁰ <https://ia601602.us.archive.org/29/items/Naba66/Naba66.pdf>;
<https://ia601600.us.archive.org/21/items/HJGTCDDS1/Naba67.pdf>;
https://ia801600.us.archive.org/19/items/a_drom_bk_68/68.pdf ;
<https://ia601600.us.archive.org/14/items/Naba69/Naba69.pdf>

⁴¹ https://archive.org/details/en_374



The banner page of *Al-Malhama* magazine

- Issue no. 6 of the magazine, *Rumiyah*, which belongs to the IS, was published in ten languages. Among the topics covered in this issue were: the various arenas of jihad in which the organization operates; criticism over the Astana Conference for rebel factions in Syria in order to find a formula for peace and restore security; the importance of continued adherence to the war of jihad against the infidels; a condemnation of clerics who criticize the organization; the method of treating those who breathe in sarin gas; an interview with the military leader of Homs Province; fulfilling the commandment of jihad by adults and youth.⁴²



From left to right: the banner page of *Rumiyah* magazine; an article regarding sarin gas

⁴² https://archive.org/download/Issue6_201702

Reports from the Field

Afghanistan-Pakistan

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan

- The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan published the following:
 - An announcement regarding UNAMA reports on civilian casualties. In the announcement, the spokesman of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan rejected the UNAMA reports, according to which most civilian casualties were attributed to the Taliban in Afghanistan. The spokesman also noted that the organization has a department set up to prevent harm to civilians, and that the organization makes every effort to avoid harming civilians and instructs the mujahideen to maintain caution during their operations. The spokesman further claimed that foreign forces serve as the number one cause of civilian casualties.⁴³
 - An announcement regarding the International conference of the Red Cross in Jowzjan Province. In the announcement, the organization expressed regret over the deaths of six employees of the International Committee of the Red Cross who were killed in an attack by unidentified gunmen. Later in the announcement, the organization emphasized the importance of Red Cross activities for the Afghan people and promised to keep Red Cross employees safe in the areas under its control.⁴⁴
 - An announcement regarding the propaganda by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, according to which the governor of Helmand Province, Abdul Manan Akhund, declared his opposition to the Emir of the Faithful, the leader of the Taliban in Afghanistan. In the announcement, the organization rejected this propaganda and claimed that there are no disputes among the Islamic Emirate's mujahideen.⁴⁵
 - Blessings to the Afghan nation to mark 26 years since the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. The announcement also stated that the situation of the US in Afghanistan is similar to the situation of Soviet forces during their last days in Afghanistan. It added that the US is unable to achieve victory in Afghanistan, and can only continue the war of

⁴³ <http://alemarah-english.com/?p=10391> (English).

⁴⁴ <http://alemarah-english.com/?p=10481> (English).

⁴⁵ <http://alemarah-english.com/?p=10554> (English).

attrition and erode its reputation. The organization added that the Americans need to learn a lesson from the Soviets and withdraw from Afghanistan, and threatened that if the battle continues they will suffer more losses.⁴⁶

- An announcement of condolences over the death of the Islamic Emirate's Governor of Kunduz Province, Abdul Salam Akhund, who was killed in a US shelling on the area. The announcement added that Akhund's death does not weaken the ranks of the Islamic Emirate and that he trained many mujahideen who will follow in his footsteps.⁴⁷

The Islamic State

- The IS in Khorasan Province published the following:
 - A video titled, "Life under Shari'a", which reviewed the lives of residents in areas under IS control. The video presented life under the Caliphate as an ideal life in which shari'a is enforced, including the cutting off of thieves' hands, and the destruction of structures and objects prohibited by the *hisba* (such as the destruction of prominent graves, the burning of cigarettes and alcohol, and the dismantling of television sets and musical instruments). In addition, the video reviewed activities of the *zakat* center, and showed educational institutions for children and youth that are run by the organization. The video also included criticism against the Taliban and accused it of killing innocents, profiting from the trade of opium and deforestation. The video included interviews with residents who presented the IS as their savior and told of the good treatment that they received from the mujahideen.⁴⁸



An idyllic presentation of life under the IS in Afghanistan

⁴⁶ <http://alemarah-english.com/?p=10604> (English).

⁴⁷ <http://alemarah-english.com/?p=11123> (English).

⁴⁸ <http://s20.tordownload.xyz/34174/480.mp4>

- An announcement regarding the deaths of at least 100 people and hundreds more injured in a suicide attack in southern Pakistan that was carried out by a fighter named Uthman al-Ansari. According to the announcement, the attack was carried out during a ceremony at the Lal Shahbaz Qalandar Temple in Sehwan. Media sources indicated that the location was a Sufi shrine and that at least 75 people were killed in the attack.⁴⁹
- An announcement regarding the deaths of nine soldiers in an attack against an Afghan army post southeast of Jalalabad. According to the announcement, weapons were plundered and two hummer vehicles were destroyed, while the post itself was set alight.⁵⁰
- A claim of responsibility for a suicide attack that was carried out at a courthouse in the city of Kabul. In a filmed review that was published on the topic, a photo was shown of the perpetrator of the attack, Abu Bakr al-Tajiki.⁵¹
- A claim of responsibility for the explosion of three bombs next to Afghan police patrols in Jalalabad. Five police officers were killed in the three attacks and several others were injured.⁵²
- An announcement regarding the re-capture of two areas in Nangarhar and the repelled advancement of the Afghan army. The announcement also mentioned the detonation of several explosives against Pakistani government soldiers operating in the area of Quetta in Balochistan.⁵³ In other announcements, an attack was reported in Nangarhar Province against a gathering of Afghan army forces, which led to the deaths of 18 soldiers, and an ambush that led to the deaths of 15 others.⁵⁴
- An announcement regarding an attack by the IS against an Afghan army post in Kunar Province, in which five soldiers were killed and several others were injured, in addition to one soldier who was taken captive.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ <https://dawaalhaq.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/C4zZiWNWAAAMEv7.jpg>; <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/02/17/suicide-bombattack-kills-atleast-75-sufis-atpakistan-shrine> (English).

⁵⁰ <https://dawaalhaq.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/C3v7AdSWYAlfwEq.jpg>; <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/63846>

⁵¹ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/63839>

⁵² <https://dawaalhaq.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/C4tsw9IWMAEMvii1.jpg>

⁵³ <https://dawaalhaq.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/148706564369021.jpg>

⁵⁴ <https://dawaalhaq.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/148735245266011.jpg>;

<https://dawaalhaq.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/148811176279761.jpg>

⁵⁵ <https://dawaalhaq.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/148741621675571.jpg>

- A filmed review regarding Quran study classes in Nangarhar.⁵⁶

The Arabian Peninsula

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

- Al-Malahem jihadist media institution, which belongs to AQAP, published an audio clip by Qasim al-Raymi, the leader of the organization, titled, “This is what was promised to us by Allah and His messenger”. In the clip, al-Rimi referred to the US attack in Yakla, which is located in the Qifa region in central Yemen. He appealed to the Yemeni people, including residents of the Qifa village, and emphasized that the Americans sanctified war against the Yemeni people but are nevertheless unable to break the power of the Sunnis. He added that members of the Qifa tribe show courage and stamina that will be remembered later. He emphasized that the mujahideen are working fearlessly against American aggression and arrogance, and vowed to avenge the blood of Muslims in the current war. He addressed the Yemeni people and noted that the US has not learned its lesson from its bitter previous experience in Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia, and that its battle in Yemen is also doomed to fail.

Al-Rimi added details regarding the recent US attack in which he claimed dozens of American soldiers were killed. According to him, AQAP fighters managed to shoot down two helicopters and attack American soldiers from all sides. He claimed that the Americans shamefully hid the bodies of their soldiers, retrieved their wounded and cleared the area. Al-Rimi further noted that, as a result of the attack, several AQAP fighters were also killed, as well as 14 men, 11 children and one woman. Al-Rimi noted that the latest attack was further evidence of the ugly face of the US and its efforts to purge the area of the Sunni population. He called the Houthis agents of the US and described them as the operative wing of the US in its war against the Sunnis in Yemen. Later, he called on clerics to raise the memory of the dead, he called on the mujahideen to fight with dedication and determination against the Americans, and he called on the Sunni tribes in Yemen in particular to join the fight against the US because it is slaughtering women and children in Yemen.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/64510>

⁵⁷ <https://fotooh.net>



The banner of Qasim al-Rimi's speech following the US attack in Yemen

- Ansar al-Sharia, which is affiliated with AQAP, published a video documenting preparations and attacks against Houthis and Yemeni security forces in Hadramawt Province.⁵⁸

The Islamic State

- The IS in Yemen published the following:
 - Several reports regarding the launch of mortar shells directed at Houthi sites in the Qifa-Baydaa area.⁵⁹
 - A claim of responsibility for a suicide attack using a car bomb against Houthis in central Radaa'.⁶⁰
 - Al-Baydaa Province reported that dozens of Houthis were killed and injured in a gun battle with IS forces in Hammet Laqqah and Qifa.⁶¹

Iraq

The Islamic State

- Al-Wafa jihadist media institution, which is involved in media for the IS, published another chapter in a series titled, "Martyrs from Bahrain", which told the story of Abu Mus'ab al-Bahraini, a fighter who expressed his support for Abu Musab al-Zarqawi while he was still a child and joined

⁵⁸ <https://fotooh.net>

⁵⁹ <https://dawaalhaq.com/>

⁶⁰ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/64452>

⁶¹ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/65310>

IS training camps as an adult. Al-Bahraini was killed in battles against Syrian army forces in Raqqah Province.⁶²

- 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:

- Saladdin Province: A video titled, “The Blaze of the Raids”, which reviewed – among other things – attacks and battles in northern Baiji against Iraqi army and PMF forces, including the bombing of military vehicles and forces using anti-tank missiles. The video also included confirmation of the death of Abu Maria al-Iraqi, the organization’s “military media emir in the eastern provinces”, who was responsible for documenting the Camp Speicher massacre of Iraqi cadets in June 2014.⁶³



A confirmation of the death of Abu Maria al-Iraqi, a senior IS media official

- Various provinces and Amaq news agency: Reviews and videos about various operational topics, including: two suicide attacks against the PMF west of Tall Afar; an attack against Iraqi military vehicles in the area of Nabi Yunus; *ribat* activities in Baiji and Jabal Makhul; an attack against PMF forces north of Al-Hadar; operations by the organization’s air defense units in the city of Anna; the destruction of a PMF bulldozer using a guided

⁶² <https://shamukh.net/vb> (Arabic).

⁶³ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/64987>

missile west of Tall Afar; an attack against army sites west of Tall Abta; the setting alight of dozens of PMF posts in the areas of Tikrit, Baiji and Tall Afar; the explosion of a house belonging to a PMF member east of Samaraa; the killing of soldiers and the destruction of vehicles west of Haditha; an offensive attack (*Inghimas*) in Al-Dur, in central Saladdin; an attack on a helicopter north of Baghdad; an announcement about six people killed and ten other wounded in an attack against Shi'ites in southwest Baghdad; and an announcement about more than 150 people killed and wounded in a suicide attack against the Shi'ite population in east Baghdad and south of the city.⁶⁴

B. Propaganda and PR:

- *Nineveh Province*: A video titled, "Collaborators, not Clerics", which attacked clerics from various countries who oppose the IS. Using narration and recorded clips by IS fighters, clerics were presented as agents who harm Islam and IS supporters were encouraged to assassinate them. Among the prominent clerics who appeared on the hit list: Yusuf al-Qaradawi (Qatar), Abd al-Aziz Al al-Sheikh, Salman al-Ouda, Abd al-Aziz al-Fawzan (Saudi Arabia), Mahdi al-Sumayda'i, Ahmad al-Kubaisi (Iraq) and Sadeq Ghariani (Libya). In contrast, the video also referred to Fares al-Mawsili, who was presented as a trustworthy cleric who spoke words of truth and justice until he was killed in a gun battle with PMF forces.⁶⁵
- *Nineveh Province*: A video titled, "So Follow their Guidance", which told the stories of six suicide bombers, ages 15-20, who carried out suicide attacks against Iraqi forces in Mosul. Among the terrorists were two Yezidi brothers, Amjad Abu Yusuf al-Sinjari and Asa'd Abu al-Khattab al-Sinjari, who sent a message in Kurdish to their people and told them that, after taking shari'a classes and joining an IS training camp in Syria, they

⁶⁴ <https://dawaalhaq.com>

⁶⁵ https://archive.org/details/hdlt_iOmlaa

understood that they had been “working for the devil and living in Jahiliyyah”. It should be noted that, despite the fact that the video included documentation taken by a skimmer drone of the suicide attacks themselves, it focused on telling the personal stories of the suicide terrorists and not on the operational aspects of the battle in Mosul, seemingly in an attempt to divert the discourse from defeats in battles in the city.⁶⁶



Yazidi youth among the suicide terrorists who attacked army forces in Mosul

- Al-Furat Province: A video titled, “Such are the Righteous”, which documented the lives of migrants from eastern Turkestan. The video showed fighters of Turkestani origin – adults and youth alike – who made threats against the Chinese government, and vowed to avenge the Muslims harmed there and to carry out unprecedented attacks in China. The video also documented the execution of two people accused of collaborating with the Iraqi army.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ <https://vimeo.com/204059203>

⁶⁷ <https://goo.gl/foj8O2>



Threats against China from Al-Furat Province in Iraq

C. Civilian Issues:

- Various provinces and Amaq news agency: Reviews and videos on various civilian topics, mainly regarding the city of Mosul. For example, the publications included reviews about market activities in the city and the distribution of food to the displaced.⁶⁸ A filmed review was also published regarding department offices (*Dawawin*) in the city of Al-Qaim.⁶⁹

Al-Sham [The Levant]

Syria

Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham

- Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (Assembly for the Liberation of the Levant) published the following:
 - An announcement regarding the organization's conflict with Liwa al-Aqsa, a faction of Jund al-Aqsa. In the announcement, the organization claimed that Liwa al-Aqsa, which was recently established in the area of the northern suburbs of Hamat, accuses all jihadist factions of heresy, refuses to turn to a shari'a court and collaborates with the IS. The announcement also stated that Liwa al-Aqsa's leadership recently dispatched its fighters to carry out a suicide attack among mujahideen followed by a car bombing . At the end of the announcement, the organization called for battle against Liwa al-Aqsa until the latter stops attacking Muslims and agrees to turn to a shari'a court.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ <https://dawaalhaq.com>

⁶⁹ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/65510>

⁷⁰ https://pbs.twimg.com/media/C4irPCuWIAA_gB2.jpg

- An announcement regarding the elimination of Liwa al-Aqsa from the northern suburbs of Hamat, according to which its fighters were forced to retreat from the areas under their control. The announcement also stated that the organization will continue to pursue cells belonging to Liwa al-Aqsa.⁷¹
- The first declaration by the leader of the organization, Abu Jabir Hashim al-Shaykh, in which he claimed that the establishment of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham opened a new chapter in the Syrian revolution and vowed to increase military operations against Assad's forces. Al-Shaykh further described Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham as an independent body that does not serve as a branch of previous organizations and factions. He added that this body helps to bring about unity in the Syrian arena under a unified leadership to act in the political and military sectors in order to topple the Assad regime and liberate all Syrian territories. Al-Shaykh then called on the remaining factions to support Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham and to forget the past.⁷²



Abu Jabir Hashim al-Shaykh, the leader of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham

- A speech by Abu Mohammad al-Julani, the former leader of Jabhat Fateh al-Sham who was appointed leader of the military wing of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham. In his speech, al-Julani claimed responsibility on behalf of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham for the explosion of Assad's security mechanisms in Homs. He added that the Alawite regime only understands the language of force and blood, while discussions in the political realm only provide the regime with an effortless victory. Al-Julani then criticized the willingness of opposition leaders to take part in negotiations with the Assad regime in Geneva.⁷³

⁷¹ Telegram

⁷² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KAPfjaNvTJ0>

⁷³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5bEDxNmivo>

- A video showing Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham's structure , including the bodies that joined the organization, its prominent clerics, the organization's leadership, the implications of the union under the organization and the organization's goals. Among the implications of the union that were noted: the establishment of shari'a rule and an Islamic regime; the rejection of political negotiations aimed at capitulation to the Assad regime; the creation of a balanced relationship between opposition factions; and a lack of reference to the issue of immigrants as a political bargaining chip. Among the goals of the organization that were noted: the creation of a unified political and military body; the return of the Syrian revolution to its primary goals; attacks against bases and posts belonging to the Alawite regime; and the completion of the liberation of Syrian lands.⁷⁴
- 31 additional rebel factions published statements in which they announced that they had joined Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, including: Al-Muhajirin Fi Sabil Allah Battalion,⁷⁵ Jabhat al-Sadiqin,⁷⁶ Liwa Ahl al-Sham, which belongs to Faylaq al-Sham⁷⁷ the Al-Şaiqah Battalion,⁷⁸ the Bayt al-Maqdis Battalion,⁷⁹ and the Al-Tawhid wa-l-Jihad Battalion.⁸⁰

Some of the factions that joined Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham had previously belonged to Ahrar al-Sham, including the Al-Sadiq,⁸¹ Al-Tibiyyah,⁸² Abu Talḥah al-Ansari⁸³ and Al-Tawhid⁸⁴ Battalions.

- A member of the Shari'a Council of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, Abu Abdullah al-Shami, referred to Liwa al-Aqsa as "Khawarij belonging to the Islamic State". Al-Shami went on to accuse Liwa al-Aqsa of cooperating with the IS in areas in the northern suburbs of Hamat. He added that factions with ties to the IS should be eliminated, including Liwa al-Aqsa, after an attempt to make them

⁷⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RjcYoz5XCYw>

⁷⁵ Telegram

⁷⁶ Telegram

⁷⁷ Telegram

⁷⁸ Telegram

⁷⁹ Telegram

⁸⁰ Telegram

⁸¹ Telegram

⁸² Telegram

⁸³ Telegram

⁸⁴ Telegram

retract their ideas had failed. Al-Shami further emphasized the need to eliminate factions with ties to external elements while referring to several factions tied to the Free Syrian Army.⁸⁵



Abu Abdullah al-Shami

The Shura Council of Ahl al Ilm in Al-Sham

- The Shura Council of Ahl al Ilm in Al-Sham (Majlis Shura Ahl al Ilm in Al-Sham) published the following:
 - An announcement in which the organization appealed to jihadist factions in Syria to turn over to the shari'a court the detainees in its possession who were arrested without an order from an independent court. In addition, the council called on factions to publish an announcement regarding the need to establish independent courts to examine the issue of detainees between the factions, hear their grievances and rule on their case.⁸⁶
 - An announcement regarding the fight against the IS in Hauran. In the announcement, the council referred to IS fighters as “Kharawij” and claimed that they are aiming their weapons at Syrian revolution factions, thereby helping the Alawite regime. Later in the announcement, the organization called on the people of Hauran to fight against the IS in the Daraa area and kill its fighters.⁸⁷

Ahrar al-Sham

⁸⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHn1tjmiBHU>

⁸⁶ Telegram

⁸⁷ https://pbs.twimg.com/media/C5SQs_qXUAlgQEQ.jpg

- Liwa Omar al-Farouq, which belongs to Ahrar al-Sham, published an announcement in which it explained that it evacuated its posts in order to keep the Syrian people safe from the Alawite regime, and that the Russians are not distinguishing between civilians and military fighters in their bombardments.⁸⁸
- 16 organizations announced that they joined Ahrar al-Sham, including: Liwa al-Sidiq,⁸⁹ Salwa Martyrs,⁹⁰ and nine battalions that united under Fajr al-Sham.⁹¹

The Turkestan Islamic Party in Al-Sham

- Sawt al-Islam jihadist media institution, which belongs to the Turkestan Islamic Party in Al-Sham, published a series of publications, including videos encouraging the fulfilment of commandment of jihad, as well as words of praise for fighters in the battlefield and for members of the organization who died as martyrs.⁹²

Liwa al-Aqsa

- Liwa al-Aqsa published an announcement regarding recent events involving Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham. In the announcement, the organization claimed that it had no intention of attacking any of the factions but it was forced to respond to their attacks. The organization also emphasized that its goal is to fight against the Alawite regime and Shi'ites. Later in the announcement, the organization accused Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham of prohibiting the opening of new fronts against the Alawite regime in Hamat and Idlib.⁹³
- Two senior shari'a officials in Liwa al-Aqsa, Abu Dhar Şurani and Abu Ahmad Has, published an announcement regarding a meeting that took place between them and representatives from Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, mediated by Jund al-Malahem, Turkestan and Khalid Khattab. In the announcement, the sheikhs claimed that representatives from Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham were late to the meeting, refused to hold the meeting until the leader of Liwa al-Aqsa arrived, and led its

⁸⁸ <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/C4qBI15WMAAmrjZ.jpg>

⁸⁹ <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/C5mMpFxWYAAvA1K.jpg>

⁹⁰ <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/C5gpFeYWYAA0W0u.jpg>

⁹¹ <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/C5R4-J2WMAA8cUb.jpg>

⁹² Telegram

⁹³ <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/C4jOgYQWYAAVrNA.jpg>

fighters into Kafr Zita, in northwest Hamat, during the meeting. Later in the announcement, the organization added that the meeting was intended to prevent bloodshed between the two organizations, agree to aim their weapons at the Assad regime alone and establish a shari'a court, but that Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham had insisted that Liwa al-Aqsa turn over some of its fighters to the former, claiming that they were collaborating with the IS, forbade them to shoot at the regime without informing Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, and refused to withdraw its forces from Kafr Zita.⁹⁴

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 issues:

A. Battles and Military Deployments:

- *Various provinces and Amaq news agency:* Reviews and videos on various operational topics, including: the deaths of eight Turkish soldiers in a suicide attack north of Aleppo; *ribat* activities against the Syrian army in Hamat; the capture of a village near Al-Bab; attacks in the area of eastern Qalmoun and the takeover of Battalion 559; attacks in the area of Al-Sin Airport; heavy weapons fire against a concentration of PKK forces north of Tabaqa; a gun battle against the Turkish army near the city of Al-Bab and damage to a Turkish tank using a guided missile; the deaths of 14 Syrian soldiers in an ambush in Deir Ezzor; the deaths of several PKK commanders in an attack on the village of Khaniz; the launch of Grad rockets in the city of Shaddadi against Kurdish militias; the destruction of a tank and a BMP, and the deaths of six Syrian soldiers in the area of Palmyra; and the downing of a reconnaissance drone belonging to Kurdish militias north of the city of Tabaqa.⁹⁵

B. Propaganda and PR:

⁹⁴ Telegram

⁹⁵ <https://dawaalhaq.com>

- Al-Khayr Province: A video titled, “Kill the Imams of Disbelief”, which contained incitement against clerics in various countries who oppose the IS, claiming that they are distorting Islam and adapting it to the wishes of the rulers while confusing and misleading the Muslim public. In the video, an IS fighter stated that it is a higher priority to fight against these clerics than against intelligence agencies, and he encouraged IS supporters who are unable to perform *hijra* (migration) to assassinate clerics wherever they find them since they are essentially “soldiers loyal to the Crusader coalition”. Among the names on the hit list were: Abd al-Aziz Al al-Sheikh, Muhammad al-Arifi, Ae'd al-Qarni, Sa'd al-Barik, Saleh al-Mughamesi, Sa'd al-Shathari, Naser al-Umar, Abd al-Aziz Fawzan, Ali al-Maleki, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, Nabil al-Oudi, Ahmad al-Tayyib, Al-Azhar Sheikh, Ali Jum'a, Muhammad Badi', Muhammad Hassan, Umar Abd al-Kafi, Muhammad Rateb al-Nablusi, Amjad Qursha, Adnan al-Aru'r, Ali al-Jifri and Muhammad al-Munjid.⁹⁶

The call to carry out lone wolf attacks in Arab-Muslim countries against local clerics can be seen as evidence of the organization’s need to make up for its defeats in battles against coalition and Iraqi forces, especially in the city of Mosul. It should be noted that the video presented bin Laden in a positive light – possibly indicating that the Islamic State is trying to hint that it is not hostile to Al-Qaeda in general but only to its current leadership, in an attempt to attract Al-Qaeda fighters to join the ranks of the IS.



⁹⁶ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/64218>

Encouragement by the IS to assassinate clerics in several Arab countries

- Hamat Province: A video titled, “Until they Change what is in Their Souls”. The video combined interviews with residents of the province who said that they had lived a life of Jahiliyyah under the rule of the tyrants, and under the Caliphate people had returned to praying in the mosque and women were being careful to maintain their modesty. Special emphasis was placed on activities by the *hisba*, which is responsible for – among other things – burning cigarettes, destroying satellite dishes, and even arresting criminals who carried out minor infractions.⁹⁷
- Raqqa Province: A video titled, "The Building's Bricks", regarding the administrative aspects of the organization's activities in areas under its control and in the “employment office”, which is responsible for recruiting clerks to the ranks of the organization. The video noted that those who join the administrative apparatus undergo a shari'a course, and approximately 10,000 people have been recruited so far to fill available positions. In addition, it was explained that the recruitment of civilians to the administrative apparatus allowed them to take part in building the IS and utilize their abilities while reducing the unemployment rate (the civilians who were recruited work in the following fields: overseeing prayers as imams, teaching, traffic police, zakat collection, health, fire and rescue, infrastructure, municipality, information kiosks, inspection and supervision, traffic, bakeries, etc.) The last part of the video showed clerks who worked in the organization's media and dawah departments, and then became mujahideen on the battlefield. This requirement to convert the administrative staff to fighter roles likely testifies to the manpower

⁹⁷ <https://archive.org/details/hama87ha8>

problem facing the organization as a result of a decrease in the number of foreign fighters entering its territory.⁹⁸

C. Civilian Issues:

- Various provinces and Amaq news agency: Reviews and videos on various civilian topics, including: the distribution of zakat payments to the needy in the city of Al-Tabaqa, a ceremony marking the completion of a Quran memorization course in Aleppo, school activities in Raqqah, and traffic police activities in Al-Bukamal.⁹⁹

The Khalid ibn al-Walid Army

- The Khalid ibn al-Walid Army published various publications regarding its activities in the area of Yarmouk Basin, such as: an announcement regarding the repelled advancement attempt by the Sahawat,¹⁰⁰ a filmed review regarding VSO faction forces killed and plunder taken,¹⁰¹ a filmed review regarding Islamic court activities,¹⁰² and videos regarding the group's capture of the towns of Tasil and Jalin, west of Dar'a.¹⁰³ According to a report by a source in the group, the group's fighters killed at least 104 soldiers from VSO factions.¹⁰⁴

Other Jihadist Organizations

- Fursan al-Sham jihadist media institution published two biographies of two fighters, one of Turkish origin¹⁰⁵ and the other of Somali origin,¹⁰⁶ who migrated from their birth countries to Syria in order to carry out the commandment of jihad and fight against the Bashar al-Assad regime.

⁹⁸ https://ia801604.us.archive.org/26/items/fff0110101_gmail_LBRQ_201702/LB-RQ.mp4

⁹⁹ <https://dawaalhaq.com>

¹⁰⁰ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/63358>

¹⁰¹ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/65025>

¹⁰² <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/63800>

¹⁰³ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/63800>; <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/65366>

¹⁰⁴ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/65075>

¹⁰⁵ <http://fursanshammedia.net/2017/02/02/story-of-a-mujahid-who-threatened-to-quit-his-unit-before-his-martyrdom/> (English).

¹⁰⁶ <http://fursanshammedia.net/2017/02/15/abu-zubayr-somali-as-a-stranger-he-lived-in-the-world-and-as-a-stranger-he-left> (English).

The Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula

The Islamic State in the Sinai Peninsula

- The IS in the Sinai Peninsula published the following:
 - A claim of responsibility for the launch of Grad rockets towards the city of Eilat. The announcement included a threat of additional attacks, and clarified to the “Jews and Crusaders” that the proxy war will not help them.¹⁰⁷



A claim of responsibility for the launch of Grad rockets towards the city of Eilat

- A filmed review regarding activities near the borders by the organization’s “air defense units” against the Israeli and Egyptian Air Forces.¹⁰⁸
- Additional reviews on various operational topics, including: the explosion of an APC, and the killing of several soldiers and police officers by sniper fire in Al-Arish; the assassination of a man presented as “agent” of the Egyptian army in the city of Rafah; the killing of three soldiers at a crossing in Rafah; the explosion of a tank south of Sheikh Zuweid; and the execution of five spies in central Sinai.¹⁰⁹
- The Ibn Tamiyyah jihadist media institution published an audio interview with a mujahid known as Nur Issa Abu Anas from the Descendants of the Companions of the Prophet in the Environs of Jerusalem (Ahfad al-Sahaba fi Aknaf Bayt al-Maqdis), who told of the harassment that his group suffers at the hands of Hamas. In the framework of the interview, Abu Anas emphasized that

¹⁰⁷ <https://dawaalhaq.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/C4N-86dWcAAItZX1.jpg>

¹⁰⁸ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/64208>

¹⁰⁹ <https://dawaalhaq.com/>

since the organization's number one enemy is the Jews, rockets continue and will continue to be launched into Israel, and he noted that the Salafists are the only ones who are protecting Muslims from the Jews. In addition, he praised the lone Palestinian terrorists, criticized Hamas security mechanisms that prevent the Salafists from fighting against the Jews, and warned against dragging the Salafists and Hamas into an unnecessary war. The video ended with messages of encouragement for the organization's prisoners sitting in jails and with threats of additional attacks against the Jews.¹¹⁰

- Sada al-Tawhid jihadist media institution published the first part of a video titled, "Smashing the Idol – Hamas, the Brothers of the Shi'ites". The video was composed of a collection of video clips that included statements by senior Hamas officials against members of the Salafist-jihadist movement in the Gaza Strip, alongside expressions of support for Iran or the Syrian regime, in an attempt by the producers of the video to present Hamas as loyal to the Shi'ites.¹¹¹



The banner of the publication, "Smashing the Idol – Hamas, the Brothers of the Shi'ites"

- Amaq news agency published a claim of responsibility by the IS for the launch of two Katyusha rockets towards the Eshkol Regional Council in Israel. It also published a filmed review of the launch itself.¹¹²

Africa

The Maghreb

¹¹⁰ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/64075>

¹¹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s4ZnRyUxAEs>

¹¹² <https://dawaalhaq.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/C5N7y4oXAAEueD1.jpg>;
<https://dawaalhaq.com/post/65045>

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

- Al-Andalus jihadist media institution, which belongs to AQIM, published the following:
 - A video in memory of Abu al-Nur al-Andalusi, a senior AQIM commander who was killed in 2016 in clashes with French army forces in Mali.¹¹³



The banner of a video in memory of Abu al-Nur al-Andalusi

- A video containing a collection of photos of AQIM fighters in Mali titled, “Photos from Azawad, Part 3”.¹¹⁴
- The Ifriqiya al-Muslima jihadist media institution, which is associated with jihad circles in North Africa, published a statement condemning an artistic ceremony performed by a Chinese band in Algeria in honor of Martyrs’ Day on February 18. The writer expressed surprise at Algeria’s arrogance in allocating space for a Chinese band to dance and sing in a style borrowed from the Mongolian Arabism, the birthplace of Genghis Khan (1162-1227), the Mongolian warlord. The writer wondered how it is possible that the Algerian government could play songs from its stages related to Genghis Khan, a notorious commander who shed the blood of millions of people, including Muslims. The writer concluded by emphasizing that the performance by the Chinese band on Martyrs’ Day in Algeria discredits the Algerian government and is another expression of its failure.¹¹⁵

Libya

The Shura Council of the Mujahideen in Derna

¹¹³ <https://fotooh.net/رثاء-الشهيد-أبي-النور-الأندلسي-رحمه-أ/>

¹¹⁴ <https://fotooh.net>

¹¹⁵ Telegram

- The Shura Council of the Mujahideen in Derna published the following:
 - Words of praise for the Benghazi Defense Brigades for its victory in the battle against Haftar’s forces and for downing a plane.¹¹⁶
 - An appeal to officers in Haftar’s army to defect and join the organization, claiming that the spirit of the revolution must be preserved and that Haftar’s forces are characterized by the slaughter of innocent Muslims.¹¹⁷
 - A video in which a senior member of the organization gave a speech marking the anniversary of the outbreak of the revolution in Libya. In his speech, the speaker emphasized the organization’s obligations to fight against Haftar’s forces and enemies of the revolution, and its dedication to rehabilitating Libya.¹¹⁸



Senior members of the Shura Council of Derna in a speech for the anniversary of the revolution in Libya

The Benghazi Defense Brigades

- The Benghazi Defense Brigades published the following:
 - An announcement in which it called on rebels, and former soldiers and officers in Gaddafi’s army to unite their ranks and fight against Haftar’s army. In addition, the organization emphasized that the actions taken by Haftar’s forces against civilians in Qanfuda, Derna and other places would not pass in silence.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Telegram

¹¹⁷ Telegram

¹¹⁸ Telegram

¹¹⁹ Telegram

Mali

Ansar al-Din

- The Rimmah jihadist media institution, which belongs to Ansar al-Din – an affiliate of AQIM - published an audio clip titled, “Message to the Roadside Bomb Lions” by Abu al-Baraa al-Sahrawi, a senior jihadist commander. In the audio clip, al-Sahrawi encouraged jihad fighters to continue their activities and simultaneously criticized the Malian government, as well as the local and international forces helping it, claiming that the government is supported by Crusader forces. Al-Sahrawi praised jihad fighters’ use of motorcycles, roadside bombs, mines and bombs against their enemies, but cautioned them not to harm innocent Muslims.¹²⁰

It should be noted that al-Sahrawi was appointed as a senior commander in AQIM and was responsible for the media system in Timbuktu at the time when his organization's fighters were in control of northern Mali. The publication of his audio clip by the Rimmah media institution raises questions regarding his position and role, and his organizational membership; namely, does it indicate that he left Ansar al-Din or that the Rimmah media institution has begun to serve as another media platform for AQIM?

Egypt

The Islamic State

- The IS in Egypt published a video titled, “Fight the Polytheists all Together”, which included a threat against the Coptic Christian population in the country. In the framework of the video, the Christians in Egypt were accused of supporting the “tyrant regime” and receiving support from the US, and are, therefore, considered a sect fighting against Islam and not its patrons. The video also included criticism against the Salafist Al-Nur Party and the Muslim Brotherhood movement against the backdrop of their ties to the Christians. The video showed Abu Abdullah al-Misri, the perpetrator of a terrorist attack that was carried out at a church in Cairo in December 2016, and presented the attack as a response to the actions of Christians in Egypt and their help to the

¹²⁰ <https://fotooh.net/رسالة-الى-أشبال-الألغام-و-أساد-العيرات/>

government fighting against the organization in Sinai. The video ended with a call on IS supporters to carry out attacks against Christians everywhere.¹²¹



Threats by the IS against the Christian population in Egypt

Nigeria

The Islamic State

- The IS in West Africa published a video regarding the strategic importance of the West Africa region. In addition, it focused on the intervention of western or “Crusader” countries and explained that they are working to tighten their grip on the region due to economic and military interests. For example, the video pointed to the army bases of the French invaders in the area. The video also focused on the “Hezbollah-Nigeria” Shi’ite militia, which it claimed is operating as a branch of Shi’ite Iran in the region. The video went on to emphasize the importance of IS operations in West Africa as a force restraining Shi’ite and Western heresy forces from expanding in the region.¹²²



A clip from a video focusing on a French military base in West Africa

¹²¹ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/64829>

¹²² Telegram

Somalia

The Islamic State

- The IS in Somalia Province published a filmed review regarding Quran courses for the warriors who are found near the borders in the mountainous regions of eastern Somalia.¹²³ In addition, it published a photo of one of its fighters who stormed Somali government forces and was killed.¹²⁴
- Amaq news agency published a claim of responsibility for the assassination of a Somali army officer in northern Mogadishu.¹²⁵

The Caucasus

- Badr al-Tayhid jihadist media institution, which belongs to the Islamic Jihad Union, published a video documenting a joint operation by its fighters and fighters from the Islamic Emirate of the Caucasus against Chechen security forces.¹²⁶

The Indian Subcontinent

Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent

- Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent published a collection of interviews with various AQIS commanders and leaders commemorating the life of the martyr, Commander Badr Mansoor (originally Fakhru Zaman). At the age of 18, when other boys his age were preoccupied with worldly concerns, Badr Mansoor dedicated his life to the cause of jihad in order to defend Islam. In an interview with Maulana Asim Umar, the leader of AQIS, he stated that at a time when injustices and atrocities are being committed against women and children in Kashmir, and at a time when the Jews have taken over Islamic holy sites, it is impossible for the youth to remain as mere bystanders. Badr Mansoor emerged from that class of youth who felt a deep disenfranchisement with the situation of Muslims in the world. He further stated that the invasion of Afghanistan was not a new invasion – it has been happening since the 19th century from the

¹²³ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/64409>

¹²⁴ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/63874>

¹²⁵ <https://dawaalhaq.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/C5cA76iWAAAsSQj1.jpg>

¹²⁶ Telegram

time of the British. He claimed that it has always been a war against Islam and that finding Sheikh Osama bin Laden was just an excuse to invade Afghanistan again. Badr Mansoor was one individual who sacrificed his life for the struggle to defend Islam.

Maulana Saif Ullah, a close companion of Badr Mansoor, stated that Badr Mansoor had committed his life to jihad. Saad Ullah Farooq, another close companion of Badr Mansoor, narrated that the war against enemies of Islam and Islamic law started long before 9/11, and that Pakistan is the perfect example of such an enemy today since all of the country's practices are based on British practises. Commander Farman Shenwaari, the successor of Badr Mansoor who himself was martyred in a Pakistani sanctioned American drone strike in 2012, also praised his qualities.

Another close companion of Badr, Saad ullah Faruqi said that Badr had promoted the idea that the world is divided into those who are for Islam and those who are against Islam, an idea that was later established by former US President Bush in his speech following 9/11. In Badr's words, the true face of Pakistan and its armed forces was exposed after 9/11. Pakistan stood with America against Islam, and it continues to fight against Islam in Kashmir and Afghanistan. He added that it is the obligation of every Muslim to fight in this war of jihad.¹²⁷



The banner of the video in memory of Badr Mansoor

- A song album in praise of its members who died as martyrs.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Telegram

¹²⁸ Telegram



The banner of the song album in memory of AQIS martyrs

The Philippines

- Amaq news agency published an announcement regarding the deaths of two Philippine army commanders, and the damage caused to the vehicle in which they were riding, in the framework of an attack by the Islamic State’s fighters in the city of Marawi in the south Philippines.¹²⁹

Myanmar

- The discourse continued in Islamic Web forums regarding the persecution of the Muslim Rohingya minority in Myanmar. Articles that were published on the issue referred to the murder, burning and torture of members of this minority by the authorities, and the rapes of women by the army’s soldiers. Those who responded to the articles wondered why the Islamic State is not carrying out attacks in this arena and called on Muslims, especially those from neighboring Bangladesh, to join and fight for the sake of their oppressed brothers in Myanmar.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ <https://dawaalhaq.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/C4zcTRmXUAEQCCz1.jpg>

¹³⁰ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/63447>; <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/63914>

ABOUT THE ICT

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