



Jihadi Update

May 2019

Highlights

- During May 2019 three speeches of Al-Qaeda leader, Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri have been published: (i) the First was a memoir of sorts where he shared memories from the time he fought the U.S next to Osama Bin Laden in the Tora Bora caves in Eastern Afghanistan in 2001. Per him the Tora Bora campaign should serve as a model for present day Jihadi activists, because of Bin Laden and his cronies' success to escape a superior enemy, the closed ranks of the Mujahidin, the support of the Islamic nation in the Mujahidin etc. He sees the Tora Bora campaign as inspiring and demonstrated that Muslims can successfully confront the crusaders and their allies; (ii) in the second speech Al-Zawahiri blessed the Islamic nation for the beginning of Ramadan and clarified that this is a month when Muslims gain many victories over their enemies. With that said, he blamed the local secular regimes for ongoing offenses against Islam and for being too westernized. In light of the above, he called upon the Islamic nation to show piety go back to their religious roots and fiercely fight the enemy; (iii) in the third speech Al-Zawahiri eulogized Sheikh Jalal al-Din al-Haqqani (1939-2018), a senior leader who fought the Soviets during the 1980s and wished his son, Siraj al-Din, patience and peace.
- Sheikh Abd Al Rauf, Al-Qaeda spokesperson, publishes three chapters out of a new edition of the book "Modern Schools of Thought", written by the Egyptian Sheikh Muhammad bin Qutb in 1983. One chapter emphasized the importance of maintaining the unity of the Islamic nation required to defeat western hegemony and another criticized the idea of democracy for being foreign to Islam.
- Sheikh Abu Obeida Youssef Al-Annabi, a senior Al-Qaeda leader in the Islamic Maghreb, gave a TV interview to France24. During the interview he expressed his support for the Algerian popular uprising and clarified that non violent protest combined with Jihad are the way to topple the Algerian regime. He also addressed the targets his organization wishes to eliminate, the relationship between his organization and Al-Qaeda leadership and between his organization and Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam and al-Muslimin, a jihadi Mali organization and his position vis a vis ISIS as well as the French prisoners of war he held captive.
- Sheikh Abu Abd al-Rahman Mahad Warsami, a senior member of al-Shabab al-Mujahidin, an Al-Qaeda extension in Somalia praised the attacks carried out by the organization's members in Kenya in recent months and called for the continued attacks against the Somali government and its western supporters.
- ISIS published in its official publication, al-Naba, a series of articles containing advice on smart management of guerilla warfare. The articles dealt with target selection, exfiltration strategy etc. additionally, ISIS called his supporter to burn agricultural land and crops belonging to the enemy.
- Reports on the military activity of ISIS in May 2019 exposed the formation of two new provinces,

Pakistan and Al-Hand.

- Abu Muhamad al-Julani, the leader of Tahrir al-Sham in Syria, addresses the latest developments in the liberated areas in northern Syria. He Threatened Russia that as long as the Russians attack civilians and support the Assad regime his organization will continue to attack Khmeimim air force base (south east Latakia) that services Russian airplanes.

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New Publications

Ideology

Al-Qaeda

- **Al-Sahab**, a media outlet affiliated with **Al-Qaeda** published the following:

- A clip titled “Days with the Imam – Part 8”, by Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Qaeda’s leader. In this clip al-Zawahiri reminisced on his time with Osama Bin Laden in the Tora Bora (eastern Afghanistan) campaign in December 2001. During this campaign coalition forces managed to eliminate most of the Taliban forces but could not catch Bin Laden and other senior ranking members of Al-Qaeda . In addition to his memories al-Zawahiri pointed out a few lessons learned from the Tora Bora campaign:
1. The purity of the Tora Bora fighters’ virtues and religious belief earned them the solidarity and support of the Islamic nation. Per him, this is a trend that goes back to the 1980s when the Mujahidin fought Russian forces in Afghanistan and were considered heroes because of that. however, the popular support dwindled later on because of internal fighting among the jihadists and due to some of those’ collaboration with the Americans. In light of the above, al-Zawahiri recommended to jihadists to maintain their virtues, focus on fighting the enemy, close the ranks, avoid internal conflicts and spilling innocents’ blood. Later, in the clip, al-Zawahiri clarified that in the Tora Bora campaign the jihadists knew who their enemy was, i.e. the U.S., its allies and the Muslim regimes that collaborated with it such as the Egyptians, Saudis, Pakistani and even the Turks. As far as the latter is concerned, al-Zawahiri said that this was not a legitimate regime because Turkey was a member of NATO, partook in fighting against Muslims in Afghanistan and Syria, its recognition of Israel and its right to exist, promoting secularism and its support of the U.S. al-Zawahiri mentioned that only recently Turkey declared that its forces will stay in Afghanistan for two more years and supported Ashraf Ghani (the current Afghani president)’s government, “while the U.S. negotiates its withdrawal”. Additionally, al-Zawahiri mentioned that the Arab regimes also collaborate with the U.S. and so is Iran. He explained that the media war waged by Iran against the U.S. is false and the tension between the two countries is nothing more than a political game. Per him, Iran acted more than once against al-Qaeda by providing the U.S. with maps showing the location of al-Qaeda forces, waging a false media war against al-Qaeda and more.
 2. Keeping close ranks among jihadi activists is a guarantee for victory.
 3. The lord wishes to save his followers and lead them to victory over their enemy despite being outnumbered and the enemy’s military superiority, exactly as happened in Tora Bora when the lord saved Osama Bin Laden and a small group of jihadists. Per al-Zawahiri the Tora Bora campaign is a prime example to that gives hope to the oppressed that they can prevail against a superior enemy. Thus, the Islamic nation must prepare for a campaign that will take place on the battleground, in



people's minds and in the political arena. Per his view, the notion that the victory over the enemies of Islam is within reach must be cultivated. The popular uprisings of the Arab Spring are a sign that the masses understood that they could bring change however these protests failed because they handled in incorrect manner. For example, the protesters chose to protest peacefully while the regimes cracked down on them violently. Per him, all protests against oppressing forces should be conducted according to the Quran and Sunna. To win a victory it is better distance one's self from failing leaderships who avoid confronting the enemy, ignore whomever is supporting a national state over Islam, strive for closed ranks, trust in god and conduct jihad.

4. The ability of the leadership to demonstrate flexibility and change course when needed is a guarantee of victory. He said that Osama Bin Laden was not prepared for the fight on Tora Bora, but he used the cease fire to withdraw and "that was the reason that allowed him and his brothers to remotely continue their opposition to the aggression of the biggest criminals". al-Zawahiri clarifies that the mujahidin must prepare for a prolonged fighting with the crusading enemy.
5. The importance of monitoring the enemy's communications and movements.
6. The importance of weapons' supply, inter alia, via donations.
7. Building tunnels is an important means to preserve jihadists' lives from bombardments. The same applies to deploying IEDs.
8. The importance of raising funds to raise supporters. These funds will come from charitable donations.
9. The importance of financially assisting anyone who wishes to assist jihad.
10. Striving to expand the circle of supporters and getting them into the battlefield or at the very least get them to provide resources even if they are not on the battlefield. Per al-Zawahiri, the jihad supporters have an important logistical role in storing, purchasing and transporting supply that will be enough for a prolonged fighting as this will ensure resilience.
11. The importance of debating with adversaries.
12. The importance of camouflaging information which is as important as camouflaging compounds, firing positions, number of troops and commander etc.
13. Being cautious from enemy trickery that might lead jihadists to turn themselves into the enemy's hands.
14. The importance of leadership among the mujahidin and the duty to support them financially. The leadership is supposed to serve as role models for the mujahidin.
15. The importance being assisted by local tribes.

At the end of his speech al-Zawahiri says that the Tora Bora campaign proved that the U.S. led coalition forces did not manage to break the three hundred jihadists led by Osama Bin Laden and therefore the

campaign should be seen as a story of hope for the Islamic nation that can successfully confront the crusaders and their allies.¹

- A clip titled “Ramadan the Month of Patience and Victory”, by Ayman al-Zawahiri. In this clip al-Zawahiri mentions that the month of Ramadan has many qualities. For example, this is a month when Muslims gain many victories same as the victory Muhammad gained in the Battle of Badr (March 13th, 624, day 17 of Ramadan) against the Quraish tribe. He also said that during Ramadan one should generously give charity to the poor and jihadi activists, assist prisoners and check on their well-being. He stressed that during Ramadan Muslims are required to be extra pious and strictly follow Sharia law. Alongside his well wishes for Ramadan, al-Zawahiri blamed the local secular regimes of hurting Islam to purposely secularize the local population and get it to follow the west as is happening in Egypt, Tunisia the Arabian Peninsula and other places. In light of that he clarified that Muslims need to use Ramadan to strictly follow the Sharia. He added that Ramadan is considered a month of repentance and therefore one might fight even harder and perform jihad. At the end of his speech he commended the Islamic emirate in Afghanistan on its success to break the U.S. military might, in light of the latter’s willingness to negotiate with the former.²

- A clip containing eulogy by al-Zawahiri in favor of Sheikh Jalal al-Din al-Haqqani (1939-2018 – see picture above), a prominent mujahidin commander from the 1980s fight against the Soviets. In 1996, with the occupation of Kabul, al-Haqqani joined the ranks of the Taliban. al-Haqqani was also known for his ties with al-Qaeda which were manifested by building training camps for al-Qaeda’s operatives and financial assistance.

Most of the clip includes portions of speeches given by Hakani gave in various periods of his life, including his reference to the strategy he prepared for the occupation of Khost in the 1990s. at the end of the clip al-Zawahiri eulogizes Al Hakani and stressed that he was a role model for jihadists, his death was a major loss to the mujahidin, especially those who emigrated to Afghanistan and Pakistan to partake in jihad. Simultaneously with the eulogy al-Zawahiri wished Siraj al-din, al-Haqqani’s son patience and peace³.

- Launching of a new edition of a 1983 Sheikh Muhammad Bin Qutb book named “Modern Schools of Thought”. Qutb was an Egyptian Islamist who fled from Egypt to KSA in the 1950s and received political asylum. His brother was Sayed Qutb the leader of the radical faction of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt who was executed in 1956. In May 2019 three chapters, edited by Sheikh Abd al-Rauf, the al-Qaeda spokesperson, have been



¹ 5.5.19. <https://alsahabmedia.info/?p=2011>

² 9.5.19. <https://alsahabmedia.info/?p=2081>

³ 22.5.19. <https://alsahabmedia.info/?p=2032>

published along with a preface he has written. The chapter titled “Humanity and Heresy” discussed the need to strengthen Islamic unity to defeat western hegemony. The rulers of the Arab countries have been accused of marginalizing and weakening Islam and over preference of secularism of the Muslim society. In other chapter titled “Democracy” the writer clarifies that this is a western-born idea that is foreign to Islam and even contradicts it. Therefore, Muslims who wish to promote democracy in the countries of Islam are responsible for the Muslims defeat on every level. Another chapter titled “Religion and the Church and the Scientific Theories” discusses the relationship between the above and blamed the Jews for corrupting Europe⁴.

- Hedaya Media who assist al-Qaeda’s propoganda in the Arabian Peninsula published the following:
 - An article titled “God, I renounce the mistakes” and written by Sheikh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, a senior Jordanian Salafi cleric, close to Al-Qaeda . The article was published on the backdrop of a rare Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (ISIS leader) interview given on April 29th, 2019. In the article the writer accused Al Baghdadi of stupidity and of dividing the jihadi activists. Per al-Maqdisi, al-Baghdadi boasted that his followers are active in various provinces, Yemen included, while at the same time he bears the responsibility for the suffering of many women and children that currently stay in refugee camps in the Kurdish region of Syria. On the other hand, al-Maqdisi praised Ansar al-Sharia, a Yemenite organization affiliated with al-Qaeda and opposed the Houthi and the Yemenite army. Per him, as long as ISIS is making a mistake of opposing Ansar Al Sharia they are to be considered as collaborators of the local tyrannical regime⁵.
 - An op-ed written by Abu Nur al-San’ani, regarding the above al-Baghdadi April 29th, 2019 interview. Per the writer, al-Baghdadi’s appearance broadcasted his weakness and his wishes to garner more popular support only to serve his own narrow self-serving interests and not the fake khalifate he pretends to lead. Per the writer, ISIS activists are not acting in the service of Islam or assist Muslims. On the contrary, they hurt Muslims, inter alia, by killing innocent Muslims indiscriminately. Further, al-Baghdadi’s appearance didn’t bring anything new to the table and just represented his wished to recruit more fools into his ranks. Per him, the pledge of allegiance to al-Baghdadi just ignite Muslim civil war and deepen any rifts among Muslims. He also added that every region that supposedly supports ISIS has only a handful of supporters. The writer added, that the interview represented a declaration of war on al-Qaeda as well as intent to harm the jihadi infrastructure the latter formed in Somalia and Yemen however the above is destined to fail due to the wide popular support al-Qaeda enjoys in these regions. Moreover, al-Qaeda managed to thwart ISIS’ attempts to classify Muslims as infidels, prove that Al Baghdadi was ignorant as far as Islam, exposed his web of

⁴ 16.5.19; 20.5.19; 23.5.19. Telegram.

⁵ 13.5.19. Telegram.

lies etc. The writer further added that al-Baghdadi referenced the Sri Lanka attacks but ignored the Christchurch massacre and the need to avenge those slain there and the ones who raised the cries for revenge were his followers. Per the writer, this omission shows that al-Baghdadi is neither on top of his organization's propaganda nor his followers. Moreover, the writer dismissed the announcement of the ISIS' Turkey province. Per him, this showed ignorance of the Turkish arena that doesn't allow jihadi groups to flourish in it [...]. Therefore, al-Baghdadi's appearance is merely a charade and invokes contempt and he went on and mocked the manner in which al-Baghdadi saw fit to get updates on the day to day of his territory through pamphlets. Further, he criticized al-Baghdadi for not wearing the Khalif ring and said this was proof he was not a real khalif. The writer further accused Al Baghdadi of wishing to destroy the jihadi infrastructure formed by al-Qaeda in Yemen and Somalia and said ISIS should have focused on France, other European countries and even Israel . the writer commented that in the past ISIS operated a province titled Arabian Peninsula Province yet in the April 29th interview al Baghdadi didn't mention it and therefore this points to the weakness of ISIS and the dropping numbers of its supporters in the Arabian Peninsula, whether by desertion or death. Last but not least, at the end of his op-ed the writer clarified that because of all of the above ISIS is to be considered an enemy wishing to destroy jihadi infrastructure in the Muslim countries in the name of a false Caliphate⁶.

- An article titled "Breaking the Khawarij's Century" by an author named Jabl. In the article the writer named a series of crimes perpetrated by ISIS against Muslims such as killing innocents and more. He equated them to the Khawarij, a seventh century Muslim cult that glorified violence against any Muslims that saw Islam their way. Aside from the berating ISIS the writer claimed that Al-Qaeda and its various annexes and the Islamic emirate in Afghanistan managed to stop ISIS and curb its power⁷.

ISIS

- ISIS supporters have posted several banners in a series titled "The Shaheed Caravan" in memoriam for fallen ISIS members. For example, a banner in honor of Abu Khalid al Ansari a former member of ISIS extension in west Africa⁸.

⁶ 16.5.19. <https://emaad.net>

⁷ 16.5.19. <https://emaad.net>

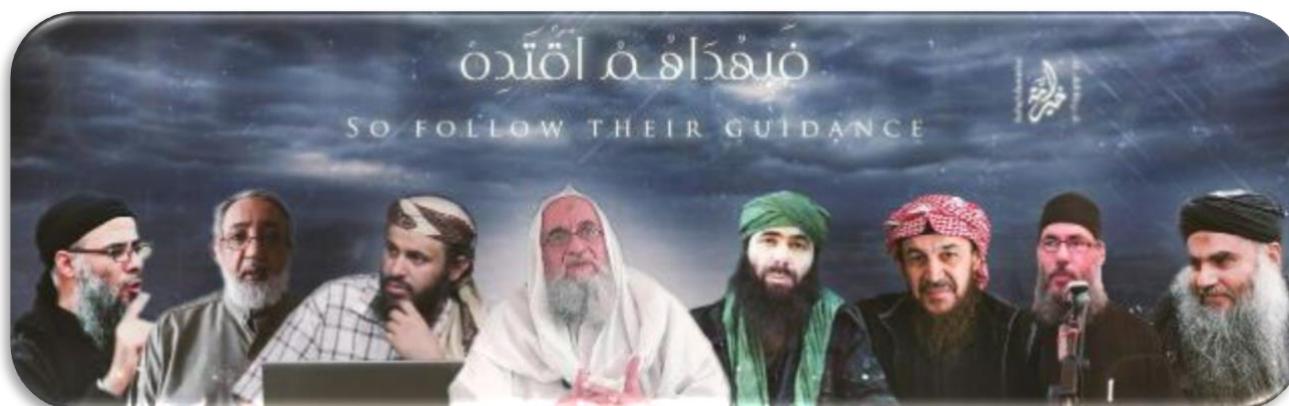
⁸ May 2019. Telegram.



- **Al-Fatihin media group**, assisting ISIS’ propaganda posted a wanted ad calling ISIS members to pitch in with propaganda design materials.
- **Taqwa media group**, assisting ISIS’ propaganda, posted to social networks a clip titled “Revenge Attack” (see photo). It documented ISIS activity against various enemies and combines clips from the organization’s leaders’ speeches in praise of jihad, Al Baghdadi and AL Adnani included. The clip was posted on the backdrop of the loss of Baghuz, the last ISIS stronghold in Syria, in March 2019 and called ISIS supporters to perpetrate terror attacks to avenge said loss⁹.



Opinion Leaders in the Jihadist Discourse



The photograph shows prominent Al-Qaeda ideologists and above them the caption “Follow Their Lead”. The banner was posted to social media by Khayr al-Ummah , a media group assisting Al-Qaeda’s propaganda.

The part of the report deals with op-eds of clerics, military leaders and writers identified with Salafi terror organizations who wish to shape the jihadi dialogue and effect change within jihadi thought and the facts on the ground. These op-eds get high ratings among global jihadi activists, hence their importance.

⁹ 22.5.19. <https://bit.ly/2UsGlxF>

- **Sheikh Abu Qatada al-Filastini**, who has close ties with Al-Qaeda ¹⁰.

 - A message to the Islamic nation wherein Abu Qatada stresses the role of the senior clerics (Ulema) who serve as a safety valve that protects the nation. Abu Qatada added that over the span of Islamic history there was a titanic struggle between the rulers and the clerics and that for centuries the latter refused to be part of the establishment and opted for independence. When the clerics in the Ottoman Empire became part of the government and started to enact laws, the power of the Islamic nation weakened, and it slipped downhill. Therefore, clerics should avoid any person that can affect their independence, be it a rich person, emir, sultan or a chieftain.
 - Reposting of one of Abu Qatada’s sayings per it in order to win the soldiers and commanders must love death and hate this world. Per Abu Qatada, reading the Quran is the best way to strengthen the desire for death and the hatred for this world.
- **Sheikh Hani al-Sibai**, who has close ties with al-Qaeda ¹¹.

 - Friday sermons on various political issues such as criticizing the U.S. government’s intent to designate the Muslim Brotherhood as a terror organization; blaming the Saudi government for persecuting Muslim clerics, jailing and torturing them, abandoning al-Aqsa mosque to the Jews (as he termed it – “abandoning the first prayer direction in Islam”).
 - A book on the Armenian holocaust titled “The Armenian Holocaust by the Hands of the Ottomans: The Big Historical Lie”. The book was published by Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi in Turkey (KurselKitab) and came out in Arabic, Turkish, English and French.
- **Tarik Abd al-Haleem**, a jihadi Salafi cleric who has close ties with Al-Qaeda ¹².

 - A reference to clip showing Al Baghdadi, ISIS leader, together with his troops. Per al-Haleem this clip meant to encourage ISIS operatives and refute rumors of Al Baghdadi’s demise. He added that the above attests to al-Baghdadi’s weakness and that after losing all his territories, all he can do right now is to fight Sunnis in the regions he has presence in or in Europe.
 - Condemning the U.S. government intention to designate the Muslim Brotherhood as a terror organization. Per him, such designation is a gift for the Muslim Brotherhood because the organization doesn’t fight against the west but rather accept Jews and Christians and is ready for every peace negotiations.



¹⁰ May 2019. Telegram.

¹¹ May 2019, Telegram.

¹² May 2019, Facebook.

- **Sheikh Abdullah Bin Muhammad al-Muheisini**, a leading jihadi Salafi cleric in Syria¹³.
 - Launching a show named **“Al-Ahd”** to commemorate Ramadan, hosted by himself and Sheikh Muslih al-Ulyiani. Per the latter, the show meant to encourage the boys on Idlib to join jihadi ranks. Among the episodes aired were interviews with jihadi activists about their battlefield experience.
- **Sheikh Abd al-Razaqqk al-Mahdi**, who has close ties to **Hayat Tahrir al--Sham**¹⁴.
 - A call to the commanders of the rebels and the Free Syrian Army to focus their efforts on Khmeimim Air Base, that services Russian airplanes in South East Latakiya. Per him, the destruction of Khmeimim will assist on winning the campaign, will put an end to aerial strikes on the rebels and will to the loss of hundreds of airplanes as well as weapons and ammunition depots. Further, this will lead to a Russian withdrawal from Syria. He said that the launch of thousands of Grad missiles at Khmeimim will get the job done. Additionally, he wanted to calm the rebel commanders by saying that “don’t fear the Russian wrath because bombing Kmeimim will totally paralyze the Russians. We have nothing to lose.... There are more than a million dead, MIAs and injured, half a million are in jail and another million emigrated. Our cities have been ruined [...] what’s left...”. In another correspondence he called upon Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, The National Front and Huras al-Muminin (Al-Qaeda’s Syrian extension) to form a join op center to contend with the enemy in a more efficient manner and open up more fronts in the Sahl and Aleppo regions and called upon young men in Syria to not sit idly by and join the ranks of mujahidin. In another clip he called the residents of Dara’a to renew their jihadi activity against the Syrian forces. Per him, opening more jihadi fronts may help the besieged jihadists in Idlib. Further he called upon the residents in Dara’a and Houran to join forces and fight the enemy together.



Al-Mahdi (Center) during a visit to the “Free Idlib Army”, close to al-Sharia in Sahel al-Ghab

¹³ Apr 2019, Telegram.

¹⁴May, 2019. Telegram.

- Calling Muslims to take caution while watching movies and series during Ramadan as they are a distraction from worshipping and also because some of the materials have been produced in Iran and Syria.
- A correspondence on the rift between the U.S. and Iran. Per Al Mahdi, the war between the countries is false and agreed upon political ploy and in fact both countries collaborate in the oppression of the Sunni population in the region and that Iran wishes to convert them to Shiite.
- Sheikh **Abu al-Fath al-Farghali**, the head of the Sharia Council in Hayat Tahrir al-Sham in Syria¹⁵.
 - Posting clips that continue the historical description of the way to the khalifate as of the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood through the jihad in Syria. This time two new clips have been posted and addressed the second generation of mujahidin.
 - Addressing fatwas per which mujahidin may break a fast in order to get stronger and go to battle.
 - An obituary regarding the son of Sheikh Abu Muadh al--Masri who was killed in battle in Syria and an obituary for the death of a Hayat Tahrir al-Sham Shura council member, Abu Muhammad Al-Mu'tasim Billah al-Madani.
 - Encouraging messages to boost the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham troops fighting in the Idlib region.
 - Congratulations to Hayat Tahrir al-Sham troops on the victory over the Alawi enemy and the Russians in Northern Latakia.
 - Criticism that social media and the internet falsely present as if the mujahidin have no morale when the contrary is true.
- **Abu Basir Al Tartusi**, a Syrian jihadi Salafi cleric¹⁶.
 - Sharing a message from the Syrian Islamic Council that condemns the aerial strikes of the Alawi regime in the rural areas of Hama and Idlib. The message also condemns the international community for its silence in the face of the above and warns from waves of immigration from the bombarded areas. 
 - Addressing **Abu Muhammad al-Julani** and requesting to remove all blockades put by his organization on free movement to allow all factions to fight the enemy.
 - A comparison between the revolution on Sudan and the one in Syria. Per him, in Sudan the revolution took only a few weeks, had few casualties but at the end the liberation forces seized the reins of government. In Syria the revolution is eight years old, has many casualties and still many Syrians do not have plans for the day after the Alawi regime will fall, which may enable undesirable elements to interfere with Syrian affairs in the future.

¹⁵ May 2019, Facebook.

¹⁶ May 2019, Telegram.

- Criticizing the Saudi government’s intention to execute a few clerics, among them Salman al-Awda Aid al-Qarni and Ali al-Amari.
- **Nail Bin Ghazi**, a jihadi Salafi cleric who has close ties to Al-Qaeda in Gaza¹⁷.
 - Sharing a photograph sent by one of his followers on the backdrop of the Dome of the Rock mosque and the caption: “To the Sheikh Nail Bin Ghazi, Al Aqsa mosque yearns for you. May 4th, 2019” Bi Ghazi responded: “god, let us pray inside it or die martyrs at its threshold”.



- A correspondence about a criticism raised by Nadim Koteich, a Lebanese satirist over the rockets launched by Hamas towards Israel. Koteich protested that instead of missiles, hundreds of meals could have been provided to Gazans to break the Ramadan fast. Bin Ghazi could not contain his anger over the criticism and mentioned “You’re right, it may buy hundreds of meals to satisfy the lust of your stomach!! But it will definitely not buy you a drop of honor and dignity, simply because you are neither worthy of them nor are you from those who possess those qualities”.

Strategy

- During May 2019 **ISIS** published four articles in **al-Naba** (its official publication) over the patterns that need to be taken in a guerilla warfare. The backdrop for the publication of these articles was Al Baghdadi’s call to his supporters to switch to guerilla warfare at the end of April 2019. The first article saw light at the end of April 2019 in Vol. 179 and the others were published in May 2019 under the title “Temporarily Toppling the Cities as a Pattern for the Mujahidin”
The opening article (Vol. 179) said that ISIS fighters recently attacked a few towns and villages and have taken over them albeit for a limited amount of time in order to achieve certain goals. Then, they withdrew “before enemy forces managed to get to them to save their soldiers or supporters”. Later in the article, the writer emphasized the organization’s decision to adopt guerilla warfare against the infidels as a preparatory stage prior to taking territories permanently and fighting on several fronts to protect them. It was said a modus operandi that is based on surprising the enemy in areas where it is weaker than ISIS,

¹⁷ May 2019. Telegram.

where ISIS can move freely and attack multiple targets simultaneously, achieve their goals and then retreat within hours “while avoiding a deciding battle with the enemy and preserving mujahidin lives as much as possible”. Also, in areas that aren’t safe for ISIS operatives, they can take to the streets at certain hours, blend in with the local population (clothes, demeanor etc.), execute the attack and then retreat to their hiding places and so forth. In that context the writer says that “the mujahidin can execute this modus operandi as long as they have forces on that area and hide after the attack without the risk of being captured by enemy forces canvassing the area [...]”.

Furthermore, the writer says that ISIS operatives can learn from past experience, i.e. the initial stages of their campaigns prior to the declaration of the formation of the Islamic Khalifate in 2014, how to conduct guerilla warfare and made a few suggestions: infiltrating at nighttime to enemy occupied territories to capture weapons and then leave with no trace behind; disguise as enemy fighters and then attack; surprise attacks against police stations and enemy bases where their defenses are inferior or non-existent. In that sense the writer mentioned that in southern Libya, ISIS frequently attacked secluded towns and loot money with almost no resistance from security forces after which the looters hid in the Sahara until their next attack.

The second article (Vol. 180) discussed the goals of guerilla warfare. In the preamble the writer said that there are many goals and they should be classified to short, medium, and long-term goals. In the short-term guerilla warfare is meant to kill and capture the enemy, loot their property, money etc. to weaken the enemy and make it leave the battlefield and even repent. Another short-term goal is to free prisoners by “breaking into jails, demolishing its walls and locks or capturing enemy commanders, soldiers and supporters to assist with the release of the prisoners [...]” or to destroy evidence held by local law enforcement and thereby have any charges against the fighters dropped for lack of evidence.

Later in the article it was said that the attacks on enemy forces stationed in the towns and villages were meant to have them call for reinforcements which will be hurt upon arrival due to IEDs placed by the attacking guerillas. This will create confusion within the enemy ranks, and they will eventually have to retreat or surrender. This method of warfare will also force the enemy seeking revenge to come out of its fortified posts to chase the mujahidin which in turn can lure them into areas where they set up ambushes and cause the enemy many casualties either through, IEDs, sniper fire or mines. That said, the enemy may choose to fortify its positions and augment its supply chain. If that happens then this will assist the mujahidin because the enemy will not have enough troops to chase the mujahidin and in such a scenario the mujahidin be better off by attacking remote locations that the enemy will have a hard time to defend.

Per the writer, the guerilla warfare is meant to boost the Muslim’s morale and demoralize the enemy collaborators so that the latter will be discouraged from such collaboration. Surprise raids on collaborators’ areas, arresting their leaders and looting their money will prove that the regime cannot protect them and therefore they should refrain from collaborating with it. Additionally, the attacks may reduce the number of recruits into the enemy’s ranks and the number of collaborators for fear of reprisals and at the same time increase the number recruits into the mujahidin ranks “when they see they can defeat the enemy [...]”.

Towards the end of the second article the writer says this modus operandi is intended to empower the mujahidin “after multiple repeats in multiple areas. At the beginning the enemy will try to cover all territories” but as long as the number of attacks increase and the number of enemy casualties rise, the enemy will focus on territories that are the most important to it and neglect less important areas, its sovereignty over them will weaken and they will become ripe for the mujahidin’s taking.

The third article (Vol. 181) provided advice for the management of an effective guerilla warfare. At the outset it said that the nature of lightning attacks is dependent on topography, enemy capabilities as well as the mujahidin’s capabilities. As far as advice goes: Trust in Allah when you attack; gather intelligence, block access to the targets by placing mines and ambushes on the access routes; control ingress and egress to the target. This way the mujahidin will be able to conduct a relatively safe attacks, cause the enemy to lose many people in target area as well as within any reinforcements, prevent enemy forces from escaping and provide the mujahidin safe escape routes. Similarly, taking over or neutralizing the enemy’s command and control centers will disperse the enemy and make communication and coordination harder. The mujahidin leader should divide his forces into groups, each which its own targets – should any group reveal additional targets while achieving their original goal then they should go after it; once completing the attack, one should place IED and mines to wreak additional havoc on the returning enemy forces or reinforcements.

The fourth and last article (Vol. 182) dealt with the importance of retreat after the attack ended. It was written that the commander has to meticulously plan the exfil route and take the unforeseeable into account, e.g. additional weight to carried, injured fighters to be carried etc. Therefore, it is advisable to distract the enemy while the mujahidin evacuate from the area. At the end of the article the writer said that the content of the series draws from actual mujahidin battle experience and should be reviewed as food for thought for field commanders who plan and handle attacks as they deem fit however mujahidin’s obedience to their commanders is a guarantee for success.

It should be noted; many banners were posted to social media quoting the series as well as quotes from al-Baghdadi in favor of the switch to guerilla warfare and advice on how to conduct it.



Left: Al-Rausi media group post “Attrition War”; Right: Abd al-Fakir media group “Toppling Cities as a Pattern for Mujahidin”

- Al-Naba's** Vol. 183 included an article praising ISIS for torching Shiite agricultural areas in Diyala, Kirkuk, Nineveh and Saladin in Iraq and some regions in Syria. Re Syria, the writer added that not only the fields were torched but the enemy has suffered injuries from smoke inhalation. At the end of the article the writer says: “we thank the soldiers of the Caliphate, in front of you are millions of dunams of areas where wheat and barley owned by infidel Muslims, their gardens are in front of you, their fields, homes and factories. Diligently go and commence your harvest¹⁸. In another article, published in al-Naba's vol. 184, ISIS called upon its operatives to keep torching enemy fields and included details about areas that were torched in Iraq and Syria¹⁹. Here too, ISIS supporters posted banners and correspondence in favor of such torching as part of a guerilla warfare.



An al-Iradh banner titled “Attrition War” in favor of torching enemy’s agricultural areas.

Magazines

- Al-Naba's** Vol. 159 of al-Somood of the **Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan** was published in the period covered by this report. It contained stories on the following: a synopsis from a senior leader in organization’s reference to the Qatar conference; a declaration by the organization’s spokesman regarding resolutions adopted in the government conference in Kabul. A third installment in the series “How Did the Taliban Mange to Defeat the U.S.”; and article titled “Do They Really Want Peace?”²⁰.

¹⁸ Al-Naba, Vol. 183, P. 9

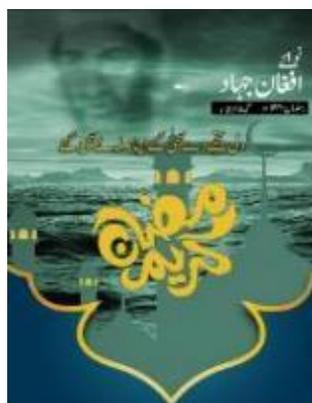
¹⁹ Al-Naba, Vol. 184, P. 9

²⁰ May 2019. <http://www.alsomood.com/?tag=159العدد>; <https://files.fm/f/7gt9x388>



Alsmood cover page

- May issue of **Nawai Afghan** of al-Qaeda in the Indian Sub-Continent Organization was published²¹.



Nawai Afghan cover page

- Khayr al-Ummah media group, assisting with al-Qaeda propaganda, issued vol. 17 of the women's magazine Baytuki. Among the stories: the wife's role in Islamic education and instilling Islam's tenets, the wife's role in instilling the love of Quran among children, prohibition on wives to search through their husbands' cell phones, marriage advice etc.²²



Baytuki cover page

²¹ 16.5.19. Telegram.

²² 2.5.19. Telegram.

- **Vols. 180-184 of al-Naba** (ISIS publication) saw light. The issues contained descriptions of ISIS battles in the various fronts. The opening article of vol. 180 was about the war conducted by ISIS since the declaration of the Islamic Caliphate in 2014 under **al-Baghdadi**. The writer said that this war was one of the largest campaigns in history between the Islamic nation and the crusader nation and its allies. Eighty countries participated and over 35,000 aerial attacks were carried out against the organization. Despite this colossal campaign al-Baghdadi managed to give a speech to his supporters on April 29th, 2019, where encouraged and rallied them to keep fighting the infidels and enemies. The opening article of vol. 181 criticized the local regimes and their armed forces, especially Libya. The writer accused them of giving in to the terms of the crusading west and stressed that they are considered as if they have sold their world and blatantly ignored Sharia law. Further, the writer said that a person who trusts in god and follows his laws will win victory and those who trust the U.S. and the local tyrannical regimes will suffer a bitter end. The opening article of vol. 182 accused Taliban leadership and al-Qaeda leadership of attacking ISIS operatives. Per the writer, both organizations choose to attack Muslims and collaborate with the enemies of Islam, Shite included. The writer stressed that the Islamic State operatives are true representatives of Islam, the ones who promote its laws and the ones who must fight all its challengers. The opening article of vol. 183 dealt with the tension between Iran and the U.S. on the backdrop of the U.S. sanctions and the positioning of U.S. Navy vessels in the Gulf. Per the writer Iran is benefitting from the conflict between al-Qaeda and the U.S. and uses it to promote its own interests, the expansion of its hegemony in Iraq and Afghanistan included. The writer said that while the Sunnis take part in the fighting against the U.S., Iran leverages the conflict to take control over lands the U.S. withdrew from. Per the writer, the rise of ISIS in the Iraqi space unraveled Iran's ploy, assisted in foiling it, in light of ISIS' efforts to hit Iranian targets in Iraq. At the same time, he said, al-Qaeda instructed his operatives to stop fighting the Shiite claiming they'd rather focus on fighting the crusaders. However, the truth is that they stopped fighting in light of the Iranian and Taliban pressure to do so and the presence of senior al-Qaeda members as POWs in Irani prisons. As to the tension between Iran and the U.S. the writer that it was hard to see a scenario that will lead to an all-out war between Iran and the U.S. but commented that there are obscure elements that may change things in favor of mujahidin as things happened in Bosnia and Afghanistan. At the end of the article the writer clarified that ISIS operatives will continue their attacks against the U.S. and its allies as well as against the Shiite and Iran. The opening article of vol. 184 described ISIS fighters as a rather small group but fiercely loyal to spread god's word. Per the writer, even in Muhammad's time he had only a handful of fighters in a campaign that lasted several years but at the end they prevailed and therefore Allah will grant them victory as long as they continue the jihad against the infidels and enemies of Islam.
- Vol. 8 of **Shabab al-Khilafa** magazine, published by a group of organizations assisting with ISIS propaganda including **Muassasat al-Dar, al-'Abd al-Faqir, al-Battar, Muassasat al-Saqri** and **Muassasat**

Sarh al-Khilafa. The issue included a review of propaganda materials in Arabic, English and Spanish published by the above groups in April and May 2019²³.



Shabab al-Khilafa cover page

- The periodical **Ibaa**, published by **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham**, issued vols. 47-50. The issues included reports, banners and interviews with the organization’s operatives about the fighting in Syria and references to current event in other jihadi theatres²⁴.



Ibaa’s cover page

Field Reports

Afghanistan-Pakistan

The Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan (Taliban)

- Notable publications:
 - A notification regarding the meeting between the U.S. special envoy and the leader of the negotiation, Zalmay Khalilzad, and the Emirate’s Deputy for Political Affairs, Mullah Beradar Akhund. Per the notification the two discussed a peaceful solution in Afghanistan. The notification added that the Taliban has set two conditions that had to be met before additional discussion will

²³ 11.5.19. Telegram.

²⁴ May 2019, Telegram.

take place: the withdrawal of U.S. forces and the prevention of using Afghani territory to inflict harm on other countries. Further, the negotiation will resume immediately, and the above topics will be discussed in order to arrive at an agreement that will include the withdrawal of all foreign forces.²⁵

- Condemnation of the killing of prisoners in Pul-e-Charkhi prison. Per the notification, government troops in Kabul opened fire on prisoners, which led to dozens of casualties. The notification said that the Taliban condemns this violence which constitutes a violation of all humanitarian and international laws. The Taliban went on and called upon human rights organizations and the international community to condemn this occurrence and investigate it to prevent it from happening again. Further the Taliban promised to revenge the dead in due time²⁶.
- A meeting between the German special envoy to Afghanistan, Markus Potzel, and the Emirate's Deputy for Political Affairs, Mullah Brother Akhund. The meeting took place in Doha, Qatar. Per the notice the parties discussed current affairs in Afghanistan, various aspects of peaceful solution for Afghanistan and the German efforts to assist with bringing such an outcome about. The German envoy stressed the need to maintain constant contact with the Emirate regarding the peace process²⁷.
- A notice regarding a meeting the EU special envoy, Rolan Kobia, and the Emirate's Deputy for Political Affairs, Mullah Brother Akhund, in Doha Qatar. Per the notice the parties discussed current affairs in Afghanistan, the negotiations with the U.S. and humanitarian issues. Further, the EU envoy clarified the EU position vis a vis Afghanistan and pledged the EU's support for the peace process. The envoy also expressed hope for a future relationship with the Emirate²⁸.
- Refuting reports about an ISIS presence in northern Afghanistan. Per the notice, a few days prior to the publication allegations by senior Russians were made about a presence of a 5,000 strong ISIS element or other foreign fighters in northern Afghanistan. The Taliban denied these claims and said that the U.S. and the government in Kabul are leveraging the ISIS phenomenon to feed the region's countries fears. The Taliban said that they have launched a large attack against ISIS in the north and have eliminated it after a few days. Per the Taliban, save for two-hundred who were rescued by the U.S and moved to other regions in Afghanistan, all other ISIS elements were either killed or captured. Further, the Taliban claimed that the U.S. and the government in Kabul assist ISIS in other parts of Afghanistan such as east Nangarhar and the Kunar province, to keep additional fronts where the Taliban must engage. The Taliban stressed that they didn't allow any ISIS presence in areas under its control and launches operations to eradicate them²⁹.

²⁵ 1.5.19 Telegram

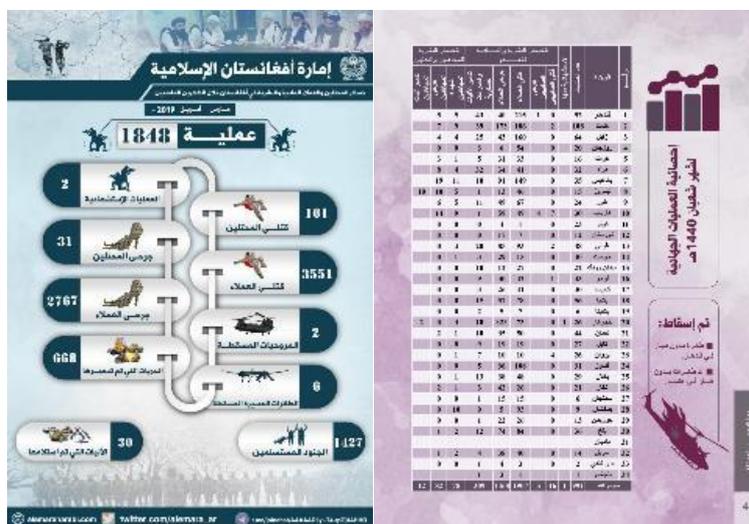
²⁶ 15.5.19 Telegram

²⁷ 19.5.19 Telegram

²⁸ 21.5.19 Telegram

²⁹ 24.5.19 Telegram

- A notice regarding the departure of the Emirate’s Deputy for Political Affairs, Mullah Brother Akhund and fourteen other delegates from Doha to Moscow. Per the notice, the delegation will take part in a conference commemorating 100 years of diplomatic relations between Russia and Afghanistan and conduct closed talks with senior Russian officials³⁰.
- An infographic detailing the number of casualties sustained by the enemy at the hands of Emirate’s fighters between March-April 2019. It was said that during that period the Emirate executed 1,848 attacks (including two suicide attacks) that caused the deaths of 161 foreign forces soldiers and 3,551 deaths among those forces who collaborate with the foreign forces. another infographic posted in Alsomood provided information about various Taliban military activity during April 2019 in Afghanistan’s provinces, the number of casualties in each province, enemy equipment lost etc. For example, it was claimed that in Helmand province (southern Afghanistan) the Taliban carried out ninety-two armed attacks in April 2019³¹.



Left: infographic describing enemy casualties during March-April 2019; Right: infographic detailing Taliban military activity during April 2019

ISIS in Pakistan

- For the first time, ISIS claimed responsibility for an attack that was perpetrated in a new province called “Pakistan Province”. The notice said that a member of the new annex shot a Taliban operative. Another pamphlet posted a few days later the new annex claimed responsibility for another shooting, this time against Pakistani police in Karachi³².

30 27.5.19 Telegram
 31 May 2019, Telegram.
 32 15.5.19; 20.5.19. Telegram.

Arabian Peninsula

AQAP

- **Hidaya Media** (assisting with AQAP propaganda) notable postings:
 - A clip titled “God Says They Are Liars”. In the clip AQAP blames ISIS for hurting children and interviewed a boy that described an ISIS shooting at his house³³. Further, the clip accused ISIS of holding their AQAP POWs under inhuman conditions. Towards the end of the clip AQAP showed footage of ISIS holding cells and their demolition by an Al-Qaeda operative³⁴.

Syria

Hiyat Tahrir Al Sham (HTAS)

- Notable Hiyat Tahrir Al Sham publications:
 - A notice by the military spokesman regarding recent military developments in the rural areas north and west of Hamat. The notice describes HTAS military success against the Alawi government in the above areas³⁵.
 - A notice from the head of the political office of **HTAS, Yousef Hajar**, regarding HTAS refusal to partake in certain political processes and conferences that intend to eliminate the Syrian revolution. Per him, the refusal to a political process with the Alawi regime and its allies was the right thing to do even though it led to conflicts between the parties. Per him, HTAS policy has to be based on Sharia. At the end of his notice Hajar called the Islamic nation to stand by the Syrian people and support it by any means because the campaign in Syria is of importance to the Islamic nation and the region in particular³⁶.
 - An interview with **Abu Muhammad al-Julani** regarding the recent developments in the liberated regions in northern Syria. In the interview al-Julani claimed that Russia uses the HTAS attack on Khmeimim Ari Base as an excuse to attack Syrian citizens. He added that Khmeimim is used to killing people and therefore HTAS is within its rights to attack it and if the Russians want the attacks to stop then it must withdraw its support from the Alawi regime and stop killing Syrians. Further, al-Julani said that HTAS didn't use most of its forces in the battles in Hamat and that large forces were deployed to other theatres and that they need to keep a watchful eye on all fronts. Further, he blessed whomever wanted to defend the region and claimed that HTAS will not interfere with other factions that protect Syria³⁷.
 - Another interview with **alJulani** regarding the liberated regions in northern Syria. In the interview al-Julani addressed a political solution and claimed that it was known fact that agreements made with

³³ 7.5.19. Telegram.

³⁴ 7.5.19. Telegram.

³⁵ 11-17.5.19 Telegram

³⁶ 11.5.19 Telegram

³⁷ 13.5.19 Telegram

the Alawi regime are mere formality and are only to stall for time. he added that the regime commenced a military operation in Hamat to cause the people to emigrate and take over the area close to Khmeimim to prevent attacks on Khmeimim. He added that HTAS will not prevent a single person from fighting and the factions in the “Euphrates Shield” region can act against the regime and hurt it³⁸.

- A notification regarding a POW exchange and the Alawi regime. The exchange took place on May 17th, 2019 and included twenty-seven HTAS members exchanged with nine Alawi regime soldiers³⁹.
- A clip showing a senior HTAS military leader, **Abu al-Zybayr al-Shami**, discussing the Alawis and Russians attack on the liberated regions north of Hama. Per him HTAS managed to block the attack and cause them damage⁴⁰.
- The obituary of a HTAS Shura council member, Abu Al-Mu'tasim Billah Al-Madani killed in the battle of Kafar Naboudeh⁴¹.

Huras al-Din

- Notable publications of Dawat al-Tawhid, a cleric organization affiliated with Huras al-Din, the Al-Qaeda extension in Syria.
 - A series of sermons praising the qualities of Ramadan as being the month when Allah assists Muslims to gain victories over their enemies; sermons to encourage the fighters’ morale⁴².

Haridh al-Muminin

- Notable publications of Haridh al-Muminin (Incite the Believers)’s operation center. Haras Al Mamnin is a joint operation center for several rebel factions in Syria, including Huras al-Din⁴³.
 - Several clips depicting military actions against the Syrian army.
 - A banner with Ramadan greetings alongside condemnation for the Russian aerial attacks on Idlib. Further, it was written that the operation center’s members are set on fighting the enemy until all the refugees return to their homes⁴⁴. Another banner said that the enemy cannot overcome the power of the jihadists in Idlib⁴⁵.

³⁸ 17.5.19 Telegram

³⁹ 17.5.19 Telegram

⁴⁰ 22.5.19 Telegram

⁴¹ 22.5.19 Telegram

⁴² May 2019, Telegram.

⁴³ May 2019, Telegram.

⁴⁴ 6.5.19. Telegram.

⁴⁵ 6.5.19. Telegram.

Gaza Strip – Sinai

The Salafi Nation Army in Jerusalem

- Notable publications of **al-Rayya**, a media outlet affiliated with **The Salafi Nation Army in Jerusalem**, a jihadi Salafi organization.
 - An online fundraising campaign titled “Arm a Warrior”. The campaign included a few banners asking Muslims to donate money during Ramadan to assist Jihadi fighters to fight the Jews. one banner said that if one cannot become a mujahid then one should donate to the organization. The campaign provided email and Bitcoin addresses for collection. Some banners stated that a \$2,000 donation will fully arm a mujahid and other quoted the cost of weapons and ammunition. One banner included the photo of Abu Hafez al-Maqdisi, the organization’s leader, where he called Muslim to assist in fighting the Jews and install Sharia law. Other banners included photos and quotes from AQAP leaders about the importance of donating to mujahidin. Moreover, the organization posted a clip in English with Arabic subtitles where the organization’s activists called Muslims to donate to the organization⁴⁶.



Arm a Warrior campaign banners

Africa

Maghreb Region

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

- **Al-Andalus** Foundation, affiliated with AQIM, published a fifty-one pages interview with **Sheikh Abu Obeida Youssef Al-Annabi**, a senior AQIM leader, conducted by Wassim Nasr for France24 TV a small part of which was aired by this channel. In the interview al-Annabi addressed twelve questions sent in advance by Nasr. At the beginning of the

At the beginning of the interview al-Annabi praised Nasr for his courage and willingness to let AQIM express their opinion directly on various subjects. Per al-Annabi the media is not objective when it comes to AQIM and refrains from providing platform to AQIM to express its opinions. Al-Annabi used the opportunity to call upon the media to examine its policy vis a vis jihadists and act according to journalistic standards, i.e. freedom of speech, respecting the opinions of others and giving them a platform to express themselves etc.

Most of the interview revolved around the popular uprising that started on February 22nd, 2019, against the Algerian government. Al-Annabi praised the demonstrators for the non-violent protest and expressed hope they would achieve their goals without spilling blood but at the same time clarified that the Algerian regime are conducting stall tactics to foil this uprising such as their willingness to effect only minor cosmetic changes. Per him, reality teaches that there is no other way than the way of jihad which is a legitimate way for Muslims to defend themselves, their rights, their sovereignty and stressed that it would be better to combine both ways to bring the tyrannical regime to an end. Al-Annabi mentioned that his organization decided to stop their actions against Algerian state institutions at this stage in order to not interfere with the above popular uprising and not give the regime any cause to exact revenge on the protesters.

Al-Annabi was asked to address the targets AQIM wished to hit however he skirted a direct answer and said that the regime and its law enforcement arms are legitimate targets. He also said that whoever joined the regime's military and law enforcement agencies "becomes an integral part of the corrupt system and bears responsibility for the crisis in the country". At the same breath al-Annabi called upon members of the Algerian military and law enforcement agencies to leave their positions, repent and join the ranks of the protesters. He said that AQIM fights whoever is fighting AQIM and clarified that AQIM does not necessarily want to hurt a designated group of people such as senior civil servants.

Another issue addressed by al-Annabi was the nature of the relationship between AQIM and the Al-Qaeda and the "**Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin**" a jihadi organization that affiliated jihadi activists in Mali in 2017 and is identified with al-Qaeda .

Al-Annabi mentioned al-Qaeda leadership is under a siege which makes it harder for it to communicate with its various extensions and thus adopted a "flexible leadership" structure, i.e. the leadership sets strategy and

main goals but leaves tactical leeway for its extensions to achieve the above goals. He added that AQIM adopted this structure and applies it vis a vis jihadi organizations active in Mali and Sahl regions. As far as “Jamaat Nasrat Al Islam Walmuslimin”, al-Annabi mentioned that they are part of AQIM.

Al-Annabi also addressed the tension between AQIM and ISIS in the Sahl region and its leader, Abu Walid al-Sahrawi, who left AQIM in 2015. In May 2019 Mali has been added to ISIS’ east Africa province, which now includes the Sahl (Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger) and Nigeria. Al-Annabi didn’t name al-Sahrawi but said that even though there no shame in making mistakes but one who insists to repeat one’s mistakes especially those who divide the ranks of the mujahidin should be ashamed. He expressed hope that jihadi activists who are aware of these trends will repent and refrain from dividing the ranks of the mujahidin.

In response to a question whether French civil and military targets will be hit by AQIM, al-Annabi said that any French target is legitimate and will be hit at the appropriate time and place. He blamed France for conducting a crusade in northern Africa and the Sahl that is meant to weaken Islam and pillage its natural resources. Further, he accused France for increasing the ethnic tension in west Africa that manifested in the Dogon attack in March 2019 on a Fulani Muslim village in Ogossagou, Mali and said that the same way France incited ethnic tensions in Ruanda in 1994 she is currently doing in Mali. Additionally, he addressed the talks AQIM has with France regarding a prisoners’ release, such as the French nun Sophie Petronin (abducted in 2016 by "Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin") and said that his organization was holding French prisoners who work for the French government among them, elderly and sick. Per him, AQIM has set the terms for their release but the delay in such release lies with the French⁴⁷.



The Banner for the al-Annabi Interview

Libya

ISIS in Libya Province

- Notable publications:

⁴⁷ 30.5.19. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0pO43xIQUM>

- Claiming responsibility for a break in into a military base of General Khaftar’s troops in Sabha. The banner said that the operatives managed to take over the base for a few hours, burned it and the vehicles down, looted weapons and ammunition and released some 200 prisoners and burned before returning to their own base⁴⁸.



A banner displaying the weapons and equipment taken from the Khaftar base

- An interview with the Military Emir in Fazan, Libya, published in vol. 182 of **al-Naba**. The Emir reported that ISIS operatives managed to penetrate the village of Ghadwa in southern Libya, kill a few relapsed Muslims and torch several houses and government and military buildings. Per the press release published by Amaq news agency the goal of the attack was to arrest and eliminate Khaftar militias collaborators and the same reason applied to the raid on the village of al-Fuqaha. The Emir clarified that some relapsed Muslims among the village’s dignitaries contacted Khaftar and asked that the latter provide them with a military element to defend them from ISIS attacks and not only that Khaftar agreed but they also armed the villagers. The above military element started patrolling and setting up road blocks as a show of force and therefore the mujahidin decided to come back to the village and eliminate them, especially those who were loyal to Khaftar. Regarding the raid on al-Fuqaha, that was prompted after four mujahidin were tuned in to the Khaftar forces. In light of the above, ISIS arrested and killed the perpetrators and detained several relapsed Muslims. That said, the village dignitaries didn’t learn their lesson and applied Khaftar for help which led to the raid and the burn down of their houses. Further, regarding the attack on Adwa, he said that it started with severing the phone lines (which made the communication between the Khaftar loyalists harder) and with burning down the military and administrative offices of the village. Thereafter the mujahidin managed to penetrate the village, demolish Khaftar loyalists’ homes, arrest and kill them, including a former high ranking Gathafi official.
At the end of his report the Emir threatened that ISIS will continue to attack towns and villages, as much as needed, to disrupt the lives of the infidels who have abandoned Islam. Further, he called

upon all the infidels to repent, renounce Khaftar and the government and surrender their weapons to the mujahidin⁴⁹.

Nigeria

ISIS in Western Africa

- Notable publications:
 - A clip titled “And Kill Then Wherever You Find Them”. The clip documented ISIS activities against the Nigerian army, including an attack that ended with the occupation of one of the villages in Araghi. One of the operatives threatened that the organization wanted to perpetrate additional attacks in Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon.
 - Later on in the clip, another operative declared that members of the ISIS’ west Africa province pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Per him, ISIS doesn’t want to attack Muslims but rather strengthen Islam. At the same breath he said that ISIS is determined to fight the regime in Chad. The clip also documented weapons and ammunition captured from the Nigerian forces in the city of Bagha on the Nigerian border.
 - The last part of the clip showed an interview with eleven Nigerian forces POWs regarding their military roles, their units and their names which was then followed by their execution at gun point and one was executed using a Katusha. One of ISIS operatives warned that similar fate awaits other Nigerian military forces members and if they wanted to avoid it then they should repent before they are captured by ISIS. He clarified that a military force member who will repent after being captured will be executed as his repentance would be meaningless at this point⁵⁰.



The Banner for the clip

Jamaat Ahl al-Sunnah li Dawah Wal Jihad (Boko Haram)

- **Jamaat Ahl al-Sunnah li-Dawah Wal Jihad**, led by **Abu Bakr Shekau**, posted a clip documenting the punishment of Muslims that have sinned according to Sharia law⁵¹.

⁴⁹ Al-Nabaa, vol. 182, 11th day of Ramadan 1440 (XXX May 2019), P.7
⁵⁰ 22.5.19. <https://shamukh.net/forum/>

⁵¹ 1.5.19. Telegram.

Somalia

Shabab Al Mujahidin

- Notable postings by **Shahada** news agency identified with **Shabab Al Mujahidin**:
 - A clip titled The Sanctity of Muslim Blood, “starred” by a senior member of the organization, **Abu Abd Al-Rahman Mahad Warsami**. At the beginning of the clip Warsami addresses the importance of jihad. Later on, he praised the organization’s attack on the 14 Riverside compound in Nairobi, Kenya and the assassination in Galkayo. Further he called for the continued attacks against the Somali government and its western supporters but cautioned the fighters not to hurt citizens or spilling Muslim blood. Additionally, he called the citizens to avoid staying in enemy areas so that they wouldn’t get hurt by mujahidin activity⁵².



Al Warsami’s clip banner

- A fifth clip of the series And Be Harsh Against Them. This installment focused on the attacks conducted by the organization on the Bar Sanguni military base in the Lower Juba province during Ramadan of last year. During the clip, some of the fighters that were killed in the attack stress that jihad is a personal duty of every Muslim and explain the importance of suicide attacks against the enemy⁵³.
- A series of three clips showing the annual Quran reciting competition for kids. The clips show the participants ages 8-15 who came from various areas in Somalia under al-Shabab’s control⁵⁴.
- A notification by al-Shabab’s spokesman regarding the organization’s activity during the first week of Ramadan. Per the notification, the organization’s attacks focused on central and south Somalia, Mogadishu and Kenyan villages proximate to the Somalia border⁵⁵. Later in the month another notification was made regarding increased number of attacks in various regions in Somalia during Ramadan. Further, the notification said that the organization is aware of the government’s spies in

52 May 2019. <http://shahadanews.com/?p=3522>

53 May 2019. <http://shahadanews.com/?p=3578>

54 May 2019. <http://shahadanews.com/?p=3633>

55 May 2019. <http://shahadanews.com/?p=3514>

Mogadishu, knows their whereabouts calls upon them to repent. At the end of the notification the spokesman called the organization’s operatives to increase their attacks during Ramadan⁵⁶.

- A series of four clips in Swahili titled “Lessons in Islamic Law” by Sheikh Ahmad Ayman Ali, the leader of Al Shabab in Kenya. In the series the Ali stresses the importance of immigration to Somalia to partake in jihad against the enemy. Per him, Sheikh Abu Yahya al-Libi (1963-2012), a former Al-Qaeda senior member wrote a letter about the importance of joining the ranks of the mujahidin and fighting in jihad arenas against the enemies of Islam⁵⁷.



Sheikh Ahmad Ayman Ali

The Indian Sub-Continent

Al-Qaeda in the Indian Sub-Continent

- Notable postings by alSahab media outlet acting as al-Qaeda ’s formal media outlet in the Indian Sub-Continent:
 - A clip titled Under the "Shade of the Islamic Emirate" depicting an attack perpetrated the organization’s operatives against an Afghani security forces convoy in the Paktika province. The clip purports to demonstrate the strong ties between al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. The clip opens with a message saying that the U.S. has been defeated in Afghanistan whereas the Islamic Emirate managed to liberate most of the Afghani provinces from the American yolk. The bulk of the clip focuses on an ambush set by al-Qaeda to a convoy of Afghani security forces in the Paktika province which led to some thirty dead among the Afghani security forces. The clip adds that the Taliban have had major successes in the region and besieged the province HQ, which forced the enemy to provide supplies via helicopters. The clip stressed that the attack was conducted under the Islamic Emirate leadership and included fifteen local mujahidin and foreign fighters. The location selected for the attack was strategic and even though the attackers mostly used light weapons (rifles and pistols) and some RR-82 and RPG rockets the damage was severe. That said, the clip mentions

⁵⁶ May 2019. <http://shahadanews.com/?p=3514>

⁵⁷ 27.5.19; 29.5.19; 30.5.19; 31.5.19. <https://emaad.net>

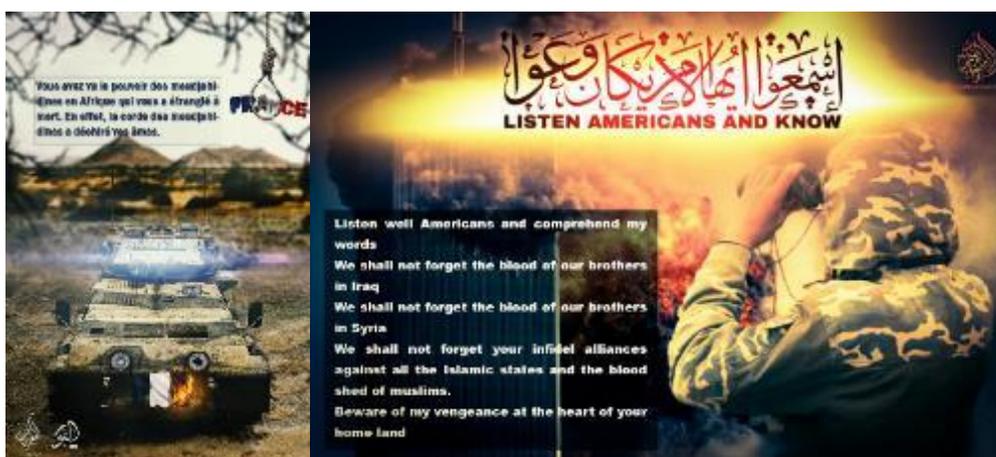
that due to shortage of ammunition the attackers were not able to eliminate all the vehicles in the convoy and therefore all the rich people have a duty to donate money for jihad. The clip ends with the pictures of senior members of Taliban and Al-Qaeda – Mullah Omar, Osama Bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri and Mullah Mansour and statements expressing the unity and cooperation between these organizations⁵⁸.

ISIS in Al Hand Province

- Al-Amak news agency, acting on behalf of ISIS claimed responsibility for the killing of a few Indian army soldiers in the town of Amshi Bora in the Shopian region of Kashmir following an armed skirmish between the members of the organization and the Indian military in the al-Hind province⁵⁹. The posting uncovered the formation of a new ISIS extension named ISIS in al-Hind Province, which includes Kashmir and parts of India. In the past this region reported to the ISIS extension in the Khorasan province however within ISIS’ reorganization following the defeats in Syria and Iraq it formed this new extension which was likely formed by members of Jundal-Khilafah in Kashmir who pledged their allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

The West

- During May 2019 ISIS supporters posted banners and notifications in Arabic and English wherein they have threatened to hurt the western countries. For example, one of the banners said that ISIS supporters promised to perpetrate terror attacks against the U.S. as a revenge for spilling Muslim blood. In other banners, posted in French, Arabic and English they have threatened to hit French targets across Africa.⁶⁰



Left: Banner calling to hit French Targets; Right: Banner calling for revenge against the U.S.

⁵⁸ 9.5.19. Telegram.

⁵⁹ May 2019. Telegram.

⁶⁰ May 2019. Telegram.

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.