



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

ICT Jihadi Monitoring Group **PERIODIC REVIEW**

Bimonthly Report

Summary of Information on Jihadist Websites

The First Half of April 2016

Highlights

This report summarizes notable events discussed on jihadist Web forums during the first half of April 2016. Following are the main points covered in the report:

- The **Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan** announces the launch of “Operation Omari”, named after Mullah Omar, which is meant to include widespread attacks against enemy posts throughout Afghanistan as well as strikes against enemy commanders in the cities in an effort to liberate Afghanistan from the foreign occupation. According to the organization, its members will establish government systems in the areas under its control, and Afghans serving in enemy ranks will be integrated into the establishment of an Islamic government following negotiations and after they join the ranks of the Emirate.
- **Al-Qaeda**, its branches and Salafi-jihadist individuals who support them, eulogize Sheikh **Abu Firas al-Suri**, a senior **Al-Nusra Front** leader in Syria who was killed in an American drone strike. Members of the organization vow to continue jihad operations against their enemies until they achieve victory.
- **Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen**, Al-Qaeda’s branch in Somalia, publishes a video documenting an attack by its fighters against a Kenyan army base belonging to the African Union Force in El-Adde in Somalia. According to the organization, over 100 Kenyan soldiers were killed in the attack.
- The **Islamic State** publishes documents that it claims prove that it is expanding its operations in the Somali arena. For example, Islamic State fighters are shown training at a military camp, the establishment of the **East Africa Front** is declared as is the new organization’s oath of allegiance to the leader of the Islamic State, **Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi**. In an announcement, the new organization calls on all mujahideen in East Africa to leave Al-Shabab and its other branches, and join the Islamic State. According to the announcement, the new organization is composed of fighters from Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.
- The **Islamic State** publishes a new issue of its magazine, *Dabiq*. Among the topics discussed in the issue are: a call on Muslims to assassinate Muslim clerics in the US, especially Sufis such as Sheikh Hamza Yusuf, due to their cooperation with the American government.
- **Al-Wa’d jihadist media institution**, which is involved in publicity for the **Islamic State**, threatens

to continue its wave of attacks in Europe following the terrorist attacks in Brussels. According to the media institution, London, Berlin and Rome are targets for the organization.

- **Ansar al-Islam in Bangladesh**, which is affiliated with **Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent**, claims responsibility for the assassination of a blogger named Nazimuddin Samad, claiming that he insulted the Prophet Muhammad. According to the organization, the assassination was intended as a message to the atheists not to dishonor the Prophet Muhammad or Islam.

Table of Contents

Highlights	2
New Publications	6
Ideology.....	6
The Rift between Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State	10
Strategy.....	11
Promoting the Myth of the Martyr.....	11
Magazines	14
Reports from the Field.....	16
Afghanistan-Pakistan.....	17
The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.....	17
The Islamic State in Khorasan Province.....	19
The Arabian Peninsula.....	19
Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.....	20
The Islamic State in Najd Province	21
Iraq.....	21
The Islamic State.....	22
Al-Sham [The Levant]	25
Syria	25
Rabitat Ahl al-‘Ilm fi al-Sham (The Association of Scholars in Al-Sham)	28
The Islamic Turkestan Party in Syria.....	29
Al-Muhajirun.....	29
Ahrar al-Sham.....	30
The Islamic State.....	32
The Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula	35
Africa.....	36
The Maghreb	36
Libya.....	37
Ansar al-Sharia in Libya.....	37
The Shura Council of the Mujahideen in Derna	37

The Islamic State.....	37
Tunisia	38
The ‘Uqba Ibn Nafi Battalion	38
The Islamic State.....	39
Mali.....	39
Ansar al-Din	39
Egypt.....	39
Somalia	39
Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen.....	40
Jund al-Khilafa.....	41
East Africa Front	42
The Indian Subcontinent	42
Ansar al-Islam in Bangladesh.....	42
The West.....	43

New Publications

Ideology

- Al-Tahaya jihadist media institution, which is involved in publicity for Al-Qaeda, published the following:
 - The transcript of a speech by Sheikh Abu Qatada al-Filastini, a senior Salafi-jihadist philosopher in Jordan, regarding an essay titled, “A Letter about the Path to Our Culture” by Mahmud Shakir (1909-1997), a famous Egyptian author. The essay dealt with the “conceptual cultural invasion” of Islamic lands by Europe with Napoleon’s military invasion of Egypt in 1798. According to both men, Arabic and Islamic culture are in constant danger in light of the West’s ideological assault, which is manifested in the distortion of the Islamic faith, the defacement of Arabic identity and attacks on Muslim culture. Hence, immediate action must be taken against this phenomenon.¹
- The Bushriyyat jihadist media group, which is involved in publicity for Al-Qaeda, published the following:
 - The transcript of a speech titled, “Days in Guantanamo” by Abdallah al-‘Ajami, a former prisoner at the Guantanamo detention camp.²
- The Nukhbat al-Fitr jihadist media group, which is involved in publicity for Al-Qaeda, published a link to all of the works and writings of Sheikh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, a senior Salafi-jihadist philosopher in Jordan.³

¹ <https://justpaste.it/t2dz>

² <https://justpaste.it/t9xc>

³ https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B3gf_Q-Jq83IMHdDYkVJeDE3SjQ&usp=sharing



The banner of al-Maqqdisi's collection of writings

- Sheikh Abu Muhammad al-Maqqdisi, a senior Salafi-jihadist philosopher in Jordan, tweeted the following on his Twitter account:
 - Jihadists in Syria can exploit the United States' intention to train Syrian opposition factions that side with the US, as it provides the opportunity to plunder American-made modern weapons from those factions.⁴
 - Media outlets, satellite channels and even sages recruited for the sake of their rulers have remained silent on the phenomenon of trafficking refugee girls from Lebanon, in stark contrast to the extensive media coverage that was given to the trafficking of Yazidi girls.⁵
- Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent published a video titled, "A Training Course by Those Responsible (Part 7): The Obligation to Perform" by Mawlana Assam.⁶
- Ansar al-Sharia in Libya published a video titled, "Wage War, With Either Light or Heavy Weapons". The video encouraged the fulfilment of jihad and included an interview on the topic with Abu Muhammad al-Libi, a member of Ansar al-Sharia's military council.⁷

⁴ <https://twitter.com/Imaqqdese/status/716017826855854080>

⁵ <https://twitter.com/Imaqqdese/status/716381064671936512>

⁶ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

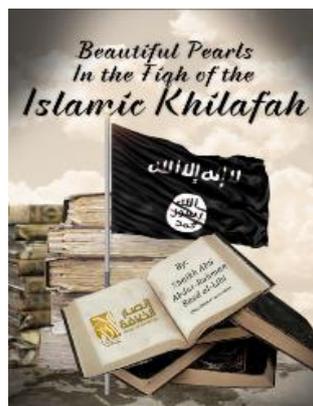
⁷ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

- Al-Himma publishing house, which belongs to the Islamic State, published pamphlets titled, “Mujahid, You are the Media Personality!” regarding the importance of the PR war in the media,⁸ as well as “Taken into Captivity: Laws and Questions”.⁹



The banners of the pamphlets (from left to right):
 “Taken into Captivity: Laws and Questions”; “Mujahid, You are the Media Personality!”

- An essay by Sheikh Abu Abd al-Rahman al-Libi was published in English, titled, “Beautiful Pearls in The Fight of The Islamic Khilafah”. Among other things, the essay reviewed the relevant terms on the subject, detailed the conditions for appointing a caliph, and explained the obligation to swear allegiance to the leader of the Islamic Nation (as well as the obligation to fight those who refuse to swear allegiance).¹⁰



The religious legal justification for the Islamic Caliphate according to the Islamic State’s explanation

⁸ <https://shamikh1.biz/vb> (Arabic).

⁹ <https://shamikh1.biz/vb> (Arabic).

¹⁰ http://d.top4top.net/f_925vsj1.pdf?key=8fdb4beb256a1bcf2c5aec0fcd849f5b9cffa70c

- A writer known as Sultan Sanjar published an article titled, “Jihadist Communication – a Developmental Perspective”. In the framework of the article, the author reviewed the issue of Islamic PR since the days of the Prophet Muhammad and divided it into internal PR (appealing to the target Muslim audience in order to preserve Islamic values) and external PR (spreading Islam to other target audiences and presenting “the truth about the infidels”). The author emphasized the importance of the visual message in PR, which far exceeds the verbal message, and praised the high production level, diversity and innovation that characterize the Islamic State’s publications and explain the success of its propaganda.¹¹
- The Asawirti Media jihadist media institution published a video regarding the occupation of the town of Al Ra’i in northern Syria by IS forces. In the framework of the video, Syrian opposition forces were referred to with the derogatory name, “Sahawat”, and accused of military cooperation with the US. Other criticisms were directed at Al-Qaeda for claiming that Ahrar al-Sham and the Islamic Front were mujahideen even once it became clear that they cooperate with the “Crusader coalition”.¹²
- Al-Battar jihadist media institution published the following:
 - An article by the writer, Gharib al-Saruriya, criticizing Saudi Arabia. The writer claimed that Saudi Arabia was, first and foremost, loyal to national values and unity as it affords the Shi’ite, Ishmaelite and liberal citizens in its territory the same standing as its Sunni Muslims, which goes against all Islamic values and not does allow for the existence of jihad.¹³
 - Another article by the writer, Gharib al-Saruriya, in which he compares the hisbah system of the Islamic State to the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (the “religious police”) in Saudi Arabia. In the framework of the article, the writer claimed that the “religious police” in Saudi Arabia does not perform its true role since it only takes action against the weak and allows those with status and money to evade punishment, as opposed to the Islamic State’s hisbah office, which does not act based on a double standard and actually enforces religious moral imperatives

¹¹ <https://shamikh1.biz/vb> (Arabic).

¹² <https://goo.gl/Vh3hTR>

¹³ <https://shamikh1.biz/vb> (Arabic).

(smashing statues and prominent tombs, burning cigarettes, destroying musical instruments, etc.).¹⁴



Criticism over the enforcement of shari'a by the religious authorities in Saudi Arabia

The Rift between Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State

- Al-Tahaya jihadist media institution, which is involved in publicity for Al-Qaeda, published an article titled, “Lights on the Cave of the Islamic State” by Sheikh Abu al-Mundhir al-Shinqiti, a senior Salafi-jihadist philosopher. In the article, the writer attacked the IS for exploiting the principle of jihad and the application of shari’a. According to him, the organization waves two important principles in favor of its narrow interests while spilling the blood of innocent Muslims. He emphasized that, because of these actions, IS fighters are thought of as gangs of bandits and thieves that hide out in caves.¹⁵
- During the first half of April 2016, Al-Hedaya jihadist media group published several articles criticizing the IS and praising Al-Qaeda and its allies, including: an article praising the Taliban in Afghanistan and criticizing detractors from the IS titled, “Highlight: About the Response to Those who declare Takfir on the Taliban” by Muhammad bin Salih al-Muhajir;¹⁶ a video titled, “The Truth About the Conflict with Al-Baghdadi’s Group” by Abu al-‘Abbas al-Hadhrami;¹⁷ “Who Will Argue for Al-Qaeda” by Abu al-Rabi’ al-Ansari;¹⁸ and an article criticizing the Islamic State’s branch in Yemen by Yaqub al-Somali.¹⁹

¹⁴ <http://www.almlf.com/e58r24a270ev.html>

¹⁵ <https://justpaste.it/t4pq>

¹⁶ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

¹⁷ <https://justpaste.it/t378>

¹⁸ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

¹⁹ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

Strategy

- A writer calling himself ‘Abu Ayman al-Nurwiji the Psychoanalyst’, published a post titled, “The Electronic Method of Spreading Fear among the Enemies of the Islamic State”. In the framework of the post, the writer emphasized the importance of psychological warfare on the Internet and advised IS supporters to open fake accounts on social networks that claim to support enemies of the organization (such as Alawites who support the Syrian regime, Shi’ites in Iraq, or the Kurds). Then, after they recruit enough followers and views, the account holders should begin spreading rumors and disinformation in order to sow conflict between the various camps that oppose the IS (for instance, to incite supporters of Bashar al-Assad against the Kurds, and vice versa). The writer ended the post by expressing his hope that the IS will establish an electronic unit designed to spy on the organization’s enemies on the Internet and to spread rumors among its opponents.²⁰
- Visitors to the Shumukh al-Islam jihadist Web forum held a discussion regarding ways in which to support the IS through Twitter. The prominent writer, Al-Jumuh al-Maqdisiyya, wrote that the IS should recruit “visitors” to tweet on the organization’s behalf and spread its news. Other participants in the discussion emphasized that, despite the importance of Twitter activity, jihadist Web forums should be maintained as an archive and stable basis for action, and they noted that the importance of giving supporters simple and defined tasks in order to focus their activity.²¹

Promoting the Myth of the Martyr

- Sheikh Dr. Hani al-Siba’i, a senior Salafi-jihadist philosopher in Jordan, eulogized Sheikh Abu Firas al-Suri, a senior Al-Nusra Front leader who was killed in a US drone strike in the suburbs of Idlib. Al-Siba’i criticized the act of publishing the death of jihad commanders and emphasized that it is better to keep this type of information secret. According to him, IS fighters are doing their best to keep quiet about the death of their commanders, “so why aren’t you acting like

²⁰ <https://justpaste.it/szcl>

²¹ <https://shamikh1.biz/vb> (Arabic).

them!!”²² Other organizations and individuals from the Salafi-jihadist movement also published eulogies in his memory, including AQAP,²³ AQIM,²⁴ the Association of Scholars in Al-Sham,²⁵ the Ansar al-Din Front,²⁶ Ansar al-Islam,²⁷ Jund al-Aqsa,²⁸ and more. The organizations vowed to continue jihad and emphasized that every death of a jihad fighter nourished the spirit of jihad even more.



Abu Firas al-Suri

- Sheikh Dr. Hani al-Siba’i, a senior Salafi-jihadist philosopher in Jordan, also eulogized Sheikh Abu-Yasir Rifa’l Ahmad Taha, the head of the Shura Council of the Egyptian Al-Gamaa al-Islamiyya, who had joined Al-Nusra Front and was killed in an American bombing in Idlib.²⁹



Sheikh Abu-Yasir Rifa'l Ahmad Taha

²² <https://twitter.com/hanisibu/status/716716180476706817>

²³ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

²⁴ <https://twitter.com/aronfeller94/status/717475226578194433>

²⁵ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

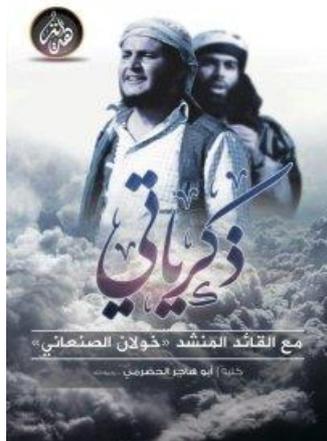
²⁶ https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CfOMVWZUEAATuN_.jpg

²⁷ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

²⁸ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

²⁹ <https://twitter.com/hanisibu/status/718066085304643584>

- Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) published words of praise in memory of the martyrs who were killed in Wadi Sawf in Libya. At the end of the statement, the organization emphasized that the blood of martyrs is the fuel that drives the battle against the enemies of Islam and that jihad fighters will continue their battle against the enemies.³⁰
- Al-Hedaya jihadist media institution published an article titled, “My Memories with the Bard Commander, Khawlan al-Sanani”, a senior AQAP field commander, by Abu Hajir al-Hadhrami.³¹



The article banner

- The Islamic Turkestan Party in Syria published a video titled, “Lovers of Paradise – Part 17” in memory of its members who were martyred in the arena of jihad in Syria.³²



The video banner

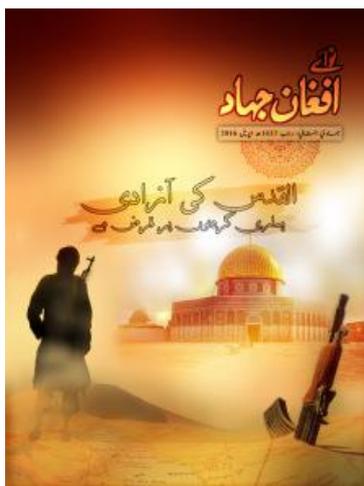
³⁰ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

³¹ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

³² <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

Magazines

- The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan published the April 2016 issue of its Urdu-language magazine, *Nawai*.³³



The banner of *Nawai*

- The Islamic State published issue no. 14 of its magazine, *Dabiq* (66 pp.). Among the topics discussed in this issue were: an article praising the terrorist attacks in Brussels and additional information about the terrorists; a call to kill American Muslim clerics who cooperate with the US government, such as the Sufi Sheikh Hamza Yusuf; an article criticizing the Muslim Brotherhood; an article praising a Muslim from Bangladesh named Abu Jandal al-Bangali who emigrated to Syria in order to join the ranks of the organization thanks to forged documents; an interview with the leader of a group of jihad fighters in Bangladesh that supports the IS; and more.³⁴

³³ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

³⁴ <https://shamikh1.biz/vb> (Arabic).



The issue banner

- Issue no. 9 of the magazine, *Al-Masra*, was published by AQAP. Among the topics included in this issue were: the military achievements of Al-Qaeda and its branches over its enemies; a review of Abu Firas al-Suri, a senior Al-Nusra Front leader, and eulogies in his memory; an article criticizing the political agreement to bring peace to Syria; an interview with Sa'ad bin 'Atif al-'Awlaqi, a senior AQAP leader, regarding the strengthening of the organization in Yemen despite American drone strikes against the organization; and more.³⁵

³⁵ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).



The first page of the new issue of *Al-Masra*

- Issues no. 25-26 of the periodical, *Al-Naba*, were published by the Islamic State. Among the topics covered in these issues were: a review of the various arenas of jihad where the organization operates; interviews with IS fighters; and more.³⁶



The banners of the issues

Reports from the Field

³⁶ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

Afghanistan-Pakistan

During the first half of April, the Taliban in Afghanistan continued to attack security and government forces. In this framework, a suicide terrorist blew himself up next to a bus carrying Afghan security forces near the city of Jalalabad in eastern Afghanistan, killing at least 12 soldiers.³⁷ In addition, Taliban fighters attacked a police car in Jowzjan, in northern Afghanistan, and killed six police officers.³⁸ Taliban fighters also seized control of government sites north of Kabul.³⁹ In this context, it should be noted that towards the middle of the month the organization announced its “Spring Offensive” during which it vowed to increase its attacks against Afghan government and security forces.⁴⁰ In this framework, the organization launched a widespread attack on the city of Kunduz and nearby towns in northeast Afghanistan but Afghan security forces managed to repel its fighters.⁴¹

Meanwhile, splits within the Taliban in Afghanistan continued to be revealed. In this framework, a letter written by senior Taliban commander, Mullah Abdul Qayyum Zakir, to other senior members was published. In the letter, he claimed that the organization needed to adopt new internal and foreign policies. In addition, he added that it had to conduct negotiations with the government in Kabul and with foreign forces.⁴² Also concerning internal organizational matters, Mullah Omar’s son, Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob, was selected to head the organization’s military committee and his uncle, Mullah Abdul Manan, was selected to be the Shura Council’s decision maker. Members of the organization hoped that the appointment of two relatives of its former leader, Mullah Omar, would strengthen the position of its new leader, Mullah Akhtar Mansoor.⁴³

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan

³⁷<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/04/suicide-bombing-kills-dozen-afghan-army-recruits-160411132553231.html> (English).

³⁸<http://goo.gl/xd9q2w>

³⁹<http://goo.gl/VDvhTl>

⁴⁰<http://goo.gl/hWul6o>

⁴¹<http://goo.gl/IEV2hS>

⁴²<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/04/senior-afghan-taliban-proposes-talks-160407210057659.html> (English).

⁴³<http://goo.gl/p7h0xX>

- The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan published the following:
 - An announcement from the Leadership Council of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan regarding the launch of the “Spring Offensive” on April 12 under the name “Operation Omari”, named for Mullah Omar. The announcement stated that the above-mentioned date was selected because, according to the hijri calendar, Muslim armies led by Omar al-Faruq destroyed the Western infidel armies near Yarmuk. Similarly, the “Islamic Emirate” hopes that “Operation Omari” will lead to the defeat and withdrawal of foreign invaders. The announcement also stated that the operation would include widespread attacks on enemy posts throughout Afghanistan and the killing of enemy commanders within the cities. The announcement added that government mechanisms would be established in the areas under the control of the mujahideen so that residents could enjoy security, and that during the operation the mujahideen are obligated to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure. According to the announcement, Islamic Emirate clerics would start a dialogue with Afghans serving in enemy ranks in order to reach an agreement to establish an Islamic government and join the ranks of the mujahideen. At the end of the announcement, the Islamic Emirate called on all of the people and the mujahideen in Afghanistan to take part in “Operation Omari” in order to liberate Afghanistan from the foreign invaders.⁴⁴
- The Deputy Leader of the Taliban in Afghanistan, Sirajuddin Haqqani, gave a speech in honor of the oath of allegiance made by Mullah Abdul Qayyum Zakir to the leader of the Taliban in Afghanistan, Mullah Akhtar Mansoor. In his speech, Haqqani claimed that Zakir’s oath of allegiance to Mullah Akhtar Mansoor ended the recent controversy created by the enemy between Muslims and mujahideen. He added that, despite the fact that the enemy wants to create a rift in the Taliban in Afghanistan, it will not succeed and he emphasized the importance of unity among the ranks and obedience to a leader. He also claimed that the goal of the Taliban in Afghanistan is to implement shari’a and that the reason for the conglomeration around the organization is based on its ideology and not for other material purposes. At the end of his

⁴⁴ <http://shahamat-english.com/statement-by-leadership-council-of-islamic-emirate-regarding-inauguration-of-spring-offensive-entitled-operation-omari/> (English).

speech, he expressed his wish for mutual respect to prevail between the mujahideen and their commanders, and urged them not to listen to rumors that are intended to create a rift between them.⁴⁵

The Islamic State in Khorasan Province

- The Islamic State in Khorasan Province published photos of an attack that its members carried out against a military post shared by the Taliban and the Afghan Police in Nangarhar, and of an American drone that it claimed to have downed.⁴⁶



A photo of the American drone that was downed by IS fighters

The Arabian Peninsula

In Yemen, a temporary truce was declared at the peak of the civil war ahead of renewed peace talks thanks to the UN initiative. Over 6,000 people have been killed since the beginning of the campaign launched by the Arab coalition, led by Saudi Arabia, in Yemen.⁴⁷ It seems that the war in Yemen contributed to the strengthening of AQAP due to, among other reasons, the organization's efforts to brand itself as a protector of the Sunni population from the aggression of the Houthi militias, and a prover of widespread PR activities and humanitarian assistance for the civilian population.⁴⁸ This development served as the basis for increased military operations against the organization by

⁴⁵ <http://alemara.org/?p=19341>

⁴⁶ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/40223>

⁴⁷ http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2016/04/160410_yemen-ceasfire (Arabic).

⁴⁸ <http://www.ibtimes.com/al-qaeda-winning-hearts-minds-over-isis-yemen-social-services-2346835> (English).

coalition forces. For example, pro-Saudi Yemeni forces captured the city of Al-Houtha, the capital of Lahj Province, from AQAP fighters.⁴⁹ On the other hand, Al-Qaeda also had successes in its battle against Yemeni army forces. For instance, on April 9 it killed approximately 20 soldiers in an ambush that it set up for them in Shabwa Province in southern Yemen.⁵⁰

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

- Al-Malahem jihadist media institution, which belongs to Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), published a video titled, “Harvest of the Spies”, which documented interviews with several spies of Yemeni origin who were caught by the organization. The spies testified that they gave information to US intelligence agencies designed to help them assassinate members of the organization in drone strikes. According to the organization, the drone war being waged against it is doomed to fail and does not affect the organization’s capabilities.⁵¹
- Al-Athir news agency, which reviews the activities of Ansar al-Sharia in Yemen, an affiliate of AQAP, published the following:
 - A video that reviewed a rally held by members of the organization to show solidarity with those killed as a result of American bombings. The opening to the video stated that American planes slaughtered young Sunnis in Al-Mukala while they were in a training camp to prepare for battle against Houthi militias. The rally included sermons by senior members of the organization criticizing the American attack and interviews with residents of the area.⁵²

⁴⁹http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2016/04/160415_government_forces_capture_houta_yemen (Arabic).

⁵⁰<http://www.france24.com/ar/20160409/-القاعدة-قتلت-عشرين-جنديا-مواليا-في-جنوب-اليمن-> (Arabic).

⁵¹<https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁵²<https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).



Residents looking at a poster in memory of those killed in a US strike

- A filmed review of street cleaning in the city of Waqar, in Abyan Province, by members of the organization.⁵³
- A video that included interviews with Yemeni residents who were injured in a US air strike while at an Ansar al-Sharia training camp.⁵⁴

The Islamic State in Najd Province

- The Islamic State in Najd Province published a video documenting the killing of Majid al-'Utaybi, the manager of the Department of Investigations, by IS fighters in the province who shot him from a passing vehicle.⁵⁵

Iraq

The first half of April opened with the Iraqi army's takeover of the city of Heet, which is located on the banks of the Euphrates River in Al-Anbar Province. The capture of the city was accomplished in the framework of the Iraqi army's efforts to push the IS out of Al-Anbar Province.⁵⁶ According to the Daily Mail, the IS has lost 20% of its territory in Iraq since the beginning of the year.⁵⁷ In addition,

⁵³ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁵⁴ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁵⁵ https://archive.org/download/grygjjh_mail_Najd

⁵⁶ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/04/iraqi-forces-oust-isil-key-anbar-town-160408144126609.html> (English).

⁵⁷ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3542367/Iraqi-forces-retake-town-Heet-ISIS-weeks-fighting-fresh-defeat-jihadists.html> (English).

three months after the Iraqi army's liberation of the city of Al-Ramadi, the capital of Al-Anbar Province, residents began to return this month as a result of the improved security situation.⁵⁸

Meanwhile, the Iraqi army continued to prepare for the operation to capture Nineveh Province and the city of Mosul. In this framework, the Iraqi army managed to bomb the IS supply line to the city of Mosul⁵⁹ and to kill 60 IS fighters.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, it was clear that the Iraqi army encountered difficulties in its capture of Mosul.⁶¹ On April 7, the Iraqi army reported that it was halting the operation until the arrival of additional backup forces.⁶² As a result, Kurdish forces⁶³ and some Shi'ite forces⁶⁴ published their intention to take part in the operation to liberate the city.

Meanwhile, the IS – which was unable to stop its sequence of failures – continued to carry out suicide attacks against security forces and Shi'ite targets, especially near the area of Baghdad. During the month, IS fighters blew up two vehicles next to security forces in different parts of northern Baghdad. In addition, a suicide terrorist blew himself up at a restaurant in Dhi Qar Province, south of Baghdad, which Shi'ite militia fighters often frequented.⁶⁵

The Islamic State

- The media departments of the various provinces of the Islamic State in Iraq published a wide range of videos and filmed reviews, which dealt with the following issues:
 - A. Battles, Military Deployments and Executions:
 - Saladdin Province: A video titled, “Clash of the Swords”, which documented IS attacks against Iraqi army posts and Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) west of the city of Baiji. The end of the video showed the

⁵⁸ <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/04/10/ISIS-driven-out-thousands-return-to-Iraq-s-Ramadi.html> (English).

⁵⁹ <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/isis-controlled-supply-bridge-mosul-7710310> (English).

⁶⁰ <http://en.alalam.ir/news/1804838> (English).

⁶¹ <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2016/04/07/mosul-siege-stalled-as-iraqi-army-once-again-flees-when-bullets-fly-say-sources.html> (English).

⁶² <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/04/iraq-halts-isis-offensive-ground-troops-needed-160406163810756.html> (English).

⁶³ <http://aranews.net/2016/04/peshmerga-participate-battle-iraqs-mosul-kurdish-official/>

⁶⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul-idUSKCN0X415T> (English).

⁶⁵ <http://www.telegram.com/news/20160404/latest-suicide-bomb-kills-at-least-14-south-of-baghdad> (English).

last will and testament of the suicide terrorist who carried out an attack against one of the army posts.⁶⁶

- *Kirkuk Province*: A video regarding the Cessna 208 aircraft that was downed over the city of Hawija by what was presented as the Islamic State' "air defense" system. The downing of the airplane was described as revenge for bombings by coalition forces and for the harm brought to innocent Muslims.⁶⁷
- *Al-Anbar Province*: A video regarding a raid on Iraqi army posts in Al-Baghdadi. In the framework of the attack, suicide terrorists were deployed, including a Jordanian terrorist who made threats against King Abdullah and the Jordanian Kingdom.⁶⁸
- *Al-Jizra Province*: A video regarding an attack that was carried out by the organization in the village of Shandukha against Kurdish Peshmerga forces, which included the dispatching of suicide terrorists in explosives-laden vehicles.⁶⁹
- *Al-Janub Province*: A video including a monthly statistical review of operations carried out by the organization in the province, divided into bombings, assassinations, ambushes, suicide attacks, etc. The end of the video detailed the results of the attacks, which culminated in 486 injuries and deaths among the Iraqi army and militias, as well as the destruction of 24 vehicles and 30 posts.⁷⁰
- *Fallujah Province*: Filmed review of the battles in the province against army forces and PMF, which included the takeover of posts in Al-Lahib, the repelled advancement of the Iraqi army north of Fallujah, and a suicide attack at the gate of the Tareq military camp.⁷¹

⁶⁶ <https://goo.gl/AmDCwx>

⁶⁷ <https://se589fsip.ga/35606>

⁶⁸ <https://se589fsip.ga/35800>

⁶⁹ <https://se589fsip.ga/35816>

⁷⁰ http://penyebarberita.net/video/Statistik_bulanan_operasi_militer_bulan_Jumadal_Akhiroh_1437_H/

⁷¹ <https://shamikh1.biz/vb> (Arabic).

- Dijla Province: Filmed reviews of battles in the province against army forces and PMF, which included the launch of Grad and Katyusha rockets near Al-Nasr village, and an attack in which 20 people were killed in Al-Azawi village, which is located south of the city of Shaddadi.⁷² Another filmed review was published regarding the execution of three people in the city of Qiyara who were accused of spying for coalition forces,⁷³ and regarding shooting at Iraqi army planes in Al-Asmida.⁷⁴

B. Civilian Matters

- Nineveh Province: A video titled, “Water in Abundance”, which attempted to show an idyllic picture of life in the city of Mosul, including the leisure life of residents during their free time at picnics and public parks. In the video, an effort was made to emphasize the difference between a life of grace and welfare under the IS and the life of the refugees who migrated from their lands only to live a life of poverty in camps or to drown on their way to “infidel countries”.⁷⁵ Filmed reviews were also published about the industrial area, and cleaning and maintenance activities carried out by the Ministry of Services in the city of Mosul.⁷⁶



Children having fun in the city of Mosul – idyllic life under the IS

⁷² <https://shamikh1.biz/vb> (Arabic).

⁷³ <https://shamikh1.biz/vb> (Arabic).

⁷⁴ <https://shamikh1.biz/vb> (Arabic).

⁷⁵ <https://goo.gl/9giMvC>

⁷⁶ <https://twitter.com/oottoolll/status/718492191811706881>;

https://twitter.com/g_0Enh_/status/718063944661934080

- Al-Furat Province: A filmed review regarding activities of the criminal investigations department in the “Islamic Police”, which deals with forensics (crime scene investigation, fingerprint collection, etc.).⁷⁷
- Al-Furat Province: A filmed review regarding a tour by the Ministry of Auditing and Supervision of the markets in the city of Ana in order to locate expired merchandise and to destroy it.⁷⁸

C. Oaths of Allegiance:

- Nineveh Province: A video regarding the province’s tribes and their relationship with the IS. In the framework of the video, Iraqi army forces were presented in a negative light and accused of harming and humiliating Sunni tribes in the province. The video explained that the tribes in Iraq today – as opposed to the old days – understand that the Islamic State is the source of their salvation and, therefore, choose to swear allegiance to the organization and shirk parties affiliated with the Iraqi government.⁷⁹



Support for the IS from tribes in Nineveh Province

Al-Sham [The Levant]

Syria

Attacks by coalition forces and the Syrian regime against terrorist organization targets continued throughout the country. In one of the attacks that was carried out in northern Syria, the spokesman

⁷⁷ <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/40221>

⁷⁸ https://twitter.com/non_greasy/status/717755413605781504

⁷⁹ <https://se589fsip.ga/35811>

for Al-Nusra Front – known as Abu Firas – was killed.⁸⁰ In addition, it was reported that Turkish forces used artillery fire and shelled sites in Syria near the Turkish border.⁸¹ Another report concerned the downing of a Russian helicopter in Aleppo Province that, according to an announcement by the Russian Ministry of Defense, was not caused by hostile fire.⁸²

The battles themselves worsened the situation of the civilian population in the country. The battles in Aleppo Province – in which over 200 fighters were killed – caused the displacement of 30,000 people, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.⁸³ Hama and Latakia were other arenas in which battles between police forces and rebels intensified.⁸⁴

In the political arena, the UN envoy to Syria, Staffan de Mistura, demanded that the Syrian regime honor the ceasefire⁸⁵ against the backdrop of talks in Geneva and preparations for parliamentary elections.⁸⁶

Al-Nusra Front

- Al-Manara al-Baydha jihadist media institution, which belongs to Al-Nusra Front, published the following:
 - An announcement regarding the battle that began on April 1 to liberate Al-Eis village and the adjacent area, which are located south of Aleppo. According to the announcement, Al-Nusra Front fighters managed to liberate the village of Al-Eis and its surrounding areas from the Alawite regime and Shi'ite militias. The announcement detailed the military operations taken by the organization to liberate the southern suburb of Aleppo.⁸⁷
 - An announcement regarding recent events with the Islamic Muthanna Movement, which is affiliated with the IS. The announcement stated that during the organization's

⁸⁰http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2016/04/160403_syria_strike_alnusra_spokesman_killed (Arabic).

⁸¹<http://goo.gl/pn7PMk>

⁸²http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2016/04/160412_syria_russian_helicopter_crash (Arabic).

⁸³<http://goo.gl/36qHSo>

⁸⁴<http://goo.gl/Uw2z85>

⁸⁵<http://goo.gl/SIQg44>

⁸⁶http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2016/04/160412_syria_geneva_talks (Arabic).

⁸⁷<https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CfBS0zdWsAAMHHa.jpg>

battle against the al-Assad regime and its supporters in Daraa and the Golan, the Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade and the Islamic Muthanna Movement claimed that they would be neutral but they exploited the opportunity to act against the mujahideen. The announcement also stated that after Al-Nusra Front succeeded in uniting all of the factions in Daraa under one leadership for military operations, the Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade and the Islamic Muthanna Movement intended to close the western area of the city and cut off important supply lines to the mujahideen between the suburbs of Daraa and Quneitra. In addition, these organizations attacked towns in southern Syria, cut off the mujahideen's supply line, and took part in the bombardment and siege on the city of Heet. The end of the announcement stated that Al-Nusra Front would continue to fight against these infidel organizations.⁸⁸

- An announcement regarding an attack carried out by members of the organization against the Alawite town of Khanifis, in Homs, Syria. The announcement detailed the military actions that were carried out during the attack. At the end of the announcement, the organization vowed to continue to fight against those who stand alongside the Alawite regime in imposing a siege on the Sunni residents.⁸⁹
- An announcement regarding the killing of several Al-Nusra Front fighters, including Sheikh Abu Firas al-Suri, in an attack by coalition forces on April 3. The announcement stated that the organization lays the blame for this crime on the US and vowed to continue to wage jihad until it achieves victory. The announcement also stated that the deaths of its members only strengthens their persistence on the path of jihad.⁹⁰
- An announcement regarding the killing of Abu Saqar, a member of the organization, by a group affiliated with Ahrar al-Sham at a checkpoint in a suburb of Aleppo. The announcement also stated that, after the killing, Al-Nusra Front fighters surrounded the Ahrar al-Sham post and demanded that the killers be brought to court. In addition, the announcement stated that it was decided that the Jaysh al-Fatah court would judge the killers and there would be a representative of each organization present, as well as Abd

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

⁸⁹ <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CfN6uHnWIAAYtvJ.jpg>

⁹⁰ <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CfXCrF1WEAAWMX9.jpg>

al-Razaq al-Mahdi. It also stated that in recent months, several Al-Nusra Front fighters had been killed by Ahrar al-Sham fighters and that there are those in Ahrar al-Sham who are inciting against Al-Nusra Front in light of the joining of two factions – Jamal Maarouf and Hazzm – to the organization. As a result, the organization asked that Ahrar al-Sham stop recruiting fighters from these factions and put an end to the incitement between the mujahideen. In addition, the organization asked that the ruling be made quickly in order to resolve the conflict between the sides.⁹¹

- An Al-Nusra Front PR activist named Murasil Homs published an announcement regarding four explosives that the organization detonated against Alawite regime soldiers in several neighborhoods in the city of Homs. The announcement stated that, despite the security mechanisms and precautions taken by Alawite regime soldiers, such as dividing the city into sections and using barriers and surveillance cameras, the organization managed to attack them. The end of the announcement stated that the attacks would continue as long as the Alawite regime attacks the Syrian people.⁹²

Rabitat Ahl al-‘Ilm fi al-Sham (The Association of Scholars in Al-Sham)

- Rabitat Ahl al-‘Ilm fi al-Sham (the Association of Scholars in Al-Sham), which is composed of Salafi-jihadist sages, published the following:
 - An announcement regarding the “kidnapping of [Al-Nusra] Front leaders in the Hermon. According to the organization, after an intensive investigation, its members found clear proof that Barakat Hamza, the brother of Bilal Hamza, and their friend, Abu ‘Alaa Bakr, were involved in kidnapping senior Al-Nusra Front leaders and attempting to assassinate them, with clear and obvious coordination with the Syrian regime and its intelligence agencies, as well as leaders of the IS and Lebanese Hezbollah. In light of these findings, it is permissible to kill the above-mentioned individuals who were involved in the kidnappings and they should be assassinated immediately. In addition, their weapons,

⁹¹ <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CfXDj7zWQAA89ZV.jpg>

⁹² https://pbs.twimg.com/media/Ce_Gmi_XEAA7i9R.jpg

private cell phones, and any other means of financing should be confiscated from them and from their groups.⁹³

- A filmed discussion between Salafi-jihadist sages belonging to the organization regarding the legality of implementing a ceasefire in Syria based on shari'a. After examining the conditions of the ceasefire in the framework of Islamic law, the sages emphasized that the current ceasefire is a sham designed to strengthen the Syrian regime. In addition, it did not earn the consent of all jihadist factions in Syria and, therefore, it is not acceptable or legitimate.⁹⁴



A discussion between members of the Association of Scholars in Al-Sham regarding the legality of the ceasefire in Syria

The Islamic Turkestan Party in Syria

- The Islamic Turkestan Party in Syria published a video titled, “A Call from the Frontlines of Jihad – Part 14”. The video included an interview with one of the organization’s fighters regarding the importance of devotion to jihad in the Syria arena.⁹⁵

Al-Muhajirun

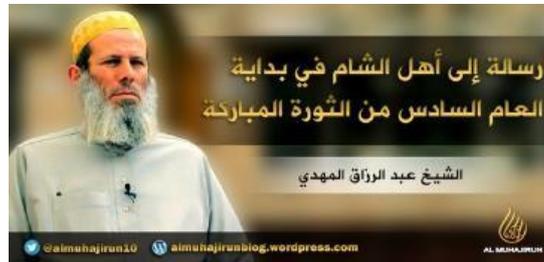
- Al-Muhajirun, an independent Salafi-jihadist faction in Syria, published the following:
 - A video titled, “A Message to the People of Al-Sham at the Start of the Sixth Year of the Blessed Revolution” by Sheikh ‘Abd al-Razzaq al-Mahdi, a senior Salafi-jihadist sage in

⁹³ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁹⁴ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁹⁵ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

Syria. Al-Mahdi emphasized that every Muslim must contribute to the effort to topple the oppressive Alawite regime by fulfilling the obligation of jihad. According to him, Sunnis in Syria are forced to cope not only with the Alawite regime but also with its allies - namely, Iran, Hezbollah, Shi'ite militias and Russia.⁹⁶



The video banner

- The republishing of a speech given by Mullah Mohammed Omar, the leader of the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan, to an audience of 1500 sages when he declared the establishment of the Emirate in 1996. After quoting the speech, the organization called on the Syrian people to draw strength and inspiration from the words of the speech concerning the need to fight against oppressive and corrupt regimes.⁹⁷

Ahrar al-Sham

- Ahrar al-Sham published the following:
 - An announcement in which the organization refused to partake in negotiations with the Syrian regime's delegation in the village of Hurr biNafsa, in a southern suburb of Hamat. The announcement also stated that the entrance of the Syrian regime's delegation into the village is a betrayal of the blood of the martyrs and that the Syrian regime does not keep its promises. According to the announcement, the Syrian regime offered to hold negotiations after the steadfastness of residents in the area prevented the regime from entering the city by force. The end of the announcement stated that the solution to the conflict with the Syrian regime is only battle and steadfastness.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtc1I4uUH-k&feature=youtu.be>

⁹⁷ <https://almuhajirunblog.wordpress.com/2016/04/07/أمانة-أوصى-بها-أمير-المؤمنين-الملا-محم/> (Arabic).

⁹⁸ https://pbs.twimg.com/media/Cf_1kBDWQAA5ziD.jpg

- A response to an announcement that was published by Al-Nusra Front regarding the power outage in northern Syria caused by Ahrar al-Sham. In the announcement, the organization blamed Al-Nusra Front, which took payment from residents for electricity even though, according to its agreement with Ahrar al-Sham and Jaysh al-Fatah, it had been decided that electricity would be supplied for free. In the announcement, Ahrar al-Sham also stated that the distribution of electricity, which was done in accordance with Al-Nusra Front's agreement with the Syrian regime's electric company, is unjust and inconsistent with the needs of the residents. In addition, the organization claimed that when Jaysh al-Fatah sent a representative to negotiate with the Syrian regime electric company, Al-Nusra Front fighters immediately arrested the representative and did not allow the meeting to take place. At the end of the announcement, the organization asked Jaysh al-Fatah to hold accountable the person who published lies about the power outage as well as whoever approved the initial agreement and tried to undermine the second agreement made by Jaysh al-Fatah.⁹⁹ Later that month, Ahrar al-Sham published another announcement regarding this matter in which it stated that the organization was willing to cooperate with Jaysh al-Fatah to restore electricity to northern Syria, and claimed that Jaysh al-Fatah must carry out the following steps: divide the electricity more fairly among the liberated areas, provide electricity for free, and judge the dispute that arose between Al-Nusra Front and Ahrar al-Sham.¹⁰⁰
- A message of condolences over the killing of Zahar al-Sharqat by the IS. The announcement stated that al-Sharqat had participated in various battles in the framework of the Syrian revolution from a military, media and conceptual perspective.¹⁰¹
- An announcement by the leader of Ahrar al-Sham, Mohannad al-Masri, regarding the appointment of Abu Issa al-Sheikh as Deputy Leader of Idlib Affairs. Al-Sheikh previously served as the organization's Deputy Leader of Political Affairs.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CfdNGBDWAAEZzkG.jpg>

¹⁰⁰ <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CfsHIVzWQAEXFOq.jpg>

¹⁰¹ <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/Cf3K-iPW8AAQY6C.jpg>

¹⁰² <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/Cf0khJQW4AAQden.jpg>

The Islamic State

- The media departments of the various provinces of the Islamic State in Iraq published a wide range of videos and filmed reviews, which dealt with the following issues:

A. Battles, Military Deployments and Executions:

- *Al-Khayr Province*: Filmed reviews regarding battles in the province, especially in the area of the military airport. The attacks included suicide attacks, opening a road through the village of Al-Jafra, and mortar bomb fire directed at army posts in the area of Dughaym, adjacent to the airport.¹⁰³
- *Homs Province*: Filmed reviews regarding battles in the city of Tadmor, including clashes with Syrian army on the outskirts of the city, the destruction of armored vehicles and the launch of mortar bombs at military posts.¹⁰⁴
- *Damascus Province*: Filmed reviews regarding battles in various areas of the province, including: an attack against Al-Nusra Front in southern Damascus, the takeover of sites belonging to the Syrian regime in northeast Damascus, an ambush against Syrian army soldiers east of the city of Al-Qaryatayn, the downing of a Russian camera-carrying aircraft in the same area, and a review of the vehicles and weapons that were plundered in east Qalamoun.¹⁰⁵
- *Al-Baraka Province*: A claim of responsibility for a suicide attack that was carried out using an explosives-laden car by an IS fighter against Kurdish forces in the village of Al-Hammadat. In addition, a filmed review was published regarding the launch of locally-produced rockets at Kurdish forces in the village of Al-Azawi.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ <https://shamikh1.biz/vb> (Arabic).

¹⁰⁴ <https://shamikh1.biz/vb> (Arabic).

¹⁰⁵ <https://shamikh1.biz/vb> (Arabic).

¹⁰⁶ <https://shamikh1.biz/vb> (Arabic).

- *Aleppo Province*: Updates regarding the battles being fought on various fronts in the province: an attack against Syrian army soldiers in the town of Khanaser, rocket fire directed at Kurdish forces in the village of Al-Qishla, and the launch of mortar bombs at the Sahawat in the village of Jazer. It was also reported that the organization took control of several villages in northern Rif of Aleppo.¹⁰⁷
- *Raqqaqah Province*: A filmed review of the execution of several people presented as highway robbers. They were shot to death and their crucified bodies were displayed in the city square to serve as an example to the public.¹⁰⁸ Another filmed review was published regarding the launch of mortar bombs at Kurdish forces in the village of Ayn Issa.¹⁰⁹

B. Civilian Issues:

- *Raqqaqah Province*: A video titled, “A Tour of Islamic State Offices”, which reviewed the activities of various civilian bodies in the organization.¹¹⁰ The video reviewed the activities and structure of the following departments:
 - *Hisbah Department*: The department responsible for maintaining public order and morality. The video explained that hisbah operates patrols in the field (in order to arrest criminals and give reminders about prayer), reviews the charges according to shari’a, and transports criminals to prison. The hisbah department also supervises businesses and merchandise, runs a “travel agency” that processes the requests of people who want to travel outside the borders of the Islamic State for visits or medical treatment, and arrests alcohol and drug smugglers.

¹⁰⁷ <https://shamikh1.biz>

¹⁰⁸ <https://shamikh1.biz>

¹⁰⁹ <https://shamikh1.biz>

¹¹⁰ <https://se589fsip.ga/35910>

- *Traffic Police*: The traffic police is composed of three separate departments (offenses, accidents and patrols), each of which acts according to its role in issuing reports, issuing licenses and managing a database of traffic offenders.
 - *Islamic Police*: The Islamic Police is composed of four main departments and is involved in arbitration, settling agreements and preventing smuggling.
 - *Islamic Court*: The Islamic Court deals with, among other things, returning land to its owners and collecting evidence for judgement at trial.
 - *Center for Dawah and Mosques*: The center is responsible for dawah activities in the villages, shari'a courses, dawah conferences for adults and children, Quran memorization courses, the establishment and renovations of mosques, and the training of imams and preachers.
 - *Learning Center*: The center is responsible for all four stages of study in the IS, including teacher training and the supervision of study content.
 - *Zakat Center*: The center is responsible for collecting zakat (money and goods) and distributing them among the needy.
 - *Services Center*: The center includes several departments that deal with electricity, water, communications, transportation and municipal services (ambulance, fire department, gardening, cleaning, etc.).
- *Raqqa Province*: A filmed review regarding life in the eastern countryside of the city of Tabqa. The photos showed villages on the banks of the Euphrates River, blossoming fields, animals grazing in the meadow, and more in order to compare an idyllic landscape to life in the province.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ <https://shamikh1.biz/vb> (Arabic).

Another filmed review showed photos of the Tabqa Dam from the inside and outside – evidence that this important site is under the organization’s control.¹¹²

- *Aleppo Province*: A filmed review regarding shari’a courses that were given by the organization in the city of Manbij. According to the review, these courses were organized by the Center for Dawah and Mosques, and were attended by over 50,000 people.¹¹³



A shari’a course in Manbij

Other Jihadist Organizations

- Al-Hedaya jihadist media institution, which is involved in publicity for Al-Qaeda, published an article titled, “Ceasefire or Fraud?” The article criticized the ceasefire that was made in Syria claiming that it was a plot by the Crusader West, which is working tirelessly to thwart revolutions in the Arab world, including Syria, in order to preserve its power and interests in the region. Therefore, any ceasefire in Syria should be resisted.¹¹⁴

The Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula

- The Islamic State in the Sinai Peninsula published the following:
 - A video documenting military training by members of the organization at the Abu Hajir al-Misri training camp. For example, the fighters were documented training how to shoot, and how to carry out kidnappings and home invasions, etc. In addition, the video

¹¹² <https://shamikh1.biz/vb> (Arabic).

¹¹³ <https://shamikh1.biz/vb> (Arabic).

¹¹⁴ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

documented some of their operations against Egyptian security forces in the Sinai Peninsula. The video contained three messages: a message to the Egyptian army that the organization is still strong, still retains its power and is capable of attacking Egyptian security forces despite the latter's military operations against it; a message to members of the organization that the organization continues to establish training camps and a call on Muslims to join its ranks; and a message to residents of the Sinai Peninsula that the organization has sacrificed many of its members but that it continues to train new manpower in training camps.¹¹⁵

- A claim of responsibility for the killing of more than 18 Egyptian soldiers in a series of explosions that were carried out in northern Sinai.¹¹⁶

Africa

The Maghreb

Battles continued in eastern Libya albeit at a lower intensity. Clashes were reported between Petroleum Facilities Guard forces and IS fighters near the city of Sirte, which led to the evacuation of three petroleum fields out of fear of attacks.¹¹⁷ In addition, it was reported that one soldier was killed and 16 others were injured by Libyan army forces in Benghazi.¹¹⁸

In the political arena, the Tripoli government – which did not earn international recognition – announced that it was relinquishing leadership in order to pave the way for a unity government, while the Prime Minister himself, Khalifa al-Ghwell, refused to transfer the reins of power.¹¹⁹

Other North African countries continued their counter-terrorism efforts. In Tunisia, Prime Minister Habib Essid announced the allocation of 272 million dollars to counter-terrorism. The announcement was made against the backdrop of strengthened counter-terrorism cooperation

¹¹⁵ <http://rassd.com/182707.htm>

¹¹⁶ <https://shamikh1.biz/vb/> (Arabic).

¹¹⁷ <http://goo.gl/iFr5GM>; <http://goo.gl/ts8JgQ>

¹¹⁸ <http://www.alwasat.ly/ar/news/libya/101688/>

¹¹⁹ <http://goo.gl/hqXYJz>; <http://goo.gl/e67l2O>

between Tunisia and Algeria.¹²⁰ Meanwhile, Morocco reported the dismantling of a terrorist cell in Marrakech and Smara that was associated with the IS in Libya.¹²¹

Libya

Ansar al-Sharia in Libya

- Ansar al-Sharia in Libya published the following:
 - A video the reviewed the graduation ceremony of a new class at the “Martyr Maylud Sadaqa” training camp.¹²²

The Shura Council of the Mujahideen in Derna

- The jihadist media institution of the Shura Council of the Mujahideen in Derna, Al-Sabeel, published the following:
 - A statement calling on residents of ‘Ayn Mara and Al-Qubba to cease their cooperation with IS fighters. According to the statement, Ansar al-Sharia expressed willingness to take a conciliatory position vis-à-vis the residents of these two towns that renounced their relationship with enemies of the organization. However, the residents exploited this and took action against members of the Shura Council of the Mujahideen in Derna. Hence, they must immediately cease their support for the IS.¹²³
 - Video footage of Hani ‘Adl bin Hawla, a jihad fighter from a competing action, in which he admitted to attempting to harm members of the organization by planting an explosive device on one of their vehicles.¹²⁴

The Islamic State

- The IS in Barqa Province published the following:

¹²⁰ <http://goo.gl/X50rdj>; <http://goo.gl/SbiVwV>

¹²¹ <http://goo.gl/VB4O6Q>

¹²² <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb/> (Arabic).

¹²³ <https://justpaste.it/suht>

¹²⁴ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb/> (Arabic).

- A claim of responsibility for a suicide attack in the city of Benghazi in which – according to the organization – approximately 50 members of General Khalifa Haftar’s forces were killed. The attack was carried out by a suicide terrorist known as Abu Asem al-Ansari who drove an explosives-laden vehicle in Al-Nawaqiya next to a large group of forces.¹²⁵
- A filmed review of the battles against General Khalifa Haftar’s forces in the city of Benghazi. Various weapons were used in these battles, including: 130 mm. mortars, 120 mm. mortar bombs, 14.5 mm. machine guns, and other small and medium arms.¹²⁶
- A filmed review of hisbah activities in the city of Harawa, including the closing of businesses in order to hold prayers, the supervision of food products and the destruction of cigarettes and other “forbidden items”.¹²⁷
- The writer, Abu Erhayyem al-Libi, who is affiliated with the IS in Libya, published an article in which he issued a warning against Al-Sarab media institution after it published a speech by Abu Muhammad al-Ferjani, who was presented as one of the organization’s commanders and made threats against the Misrata Brigades and Libya Dawn forces. Al-Libi explained that the publication was false, he denied that al-Ferjani was a member of the mujahideen, and he called on Muslims to trust only the official media institutions of the IS in Libya.¹²⁸

Tunisia

The ‘Uqba Ibn Nafi Battalion

- The ‘Uqba Ibn Nafi Battalion published a statement in which it strongly denied responsibility for, or involvement in, the killing of a Muslim woman named Hadda Rahimi in Kasserine Province. According to the organization, the Tunisian Ministry of Public Security was to blame for her death and spread rumors that the organization was involved. Towards the end of the statement, the organization emphasized the duty of Muslims to act against the Tunisian regime and called on them to support the organization.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ <https://s04.justpaste.it/pdf/taxy-justpaste-it-072836.pdf>

¹²⁶ <https://shamikh1.biz/vb> (Arabic).

¹²⁷ <https://shamikh1.biz/vb> (Arabic).

¹²⁸ <https://shamikh1.biz/vb>; <http://www.alwasat.ly/ar/news/libya/66466/> (both in Arabic).

¹²⁹ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

The Islamic State

- A group of jihadists from Tunisia, which is apparently affiliated with the IS, published an announcement denying reports according to which a woman was killed by mujahideen who fired shots at her vehicle. In the announcement, the group accused the Tunisian army for being responsible for the incident and called on Muslims to stay away from sites belonging to apostates and infidels, including police stations, army bases, headquarters of political parties, embassies, pubs, brothels, clubs, airports, foreign companies, restaurants for tourists, etc. In addition, the announcement included a criticism of foreigners stationed in Tunisia and a warning for those “spying for the tyrants”.¹³⁰

Mali

Ansar al-Din

- The jihadist media institution of Ansar al-Din (which is an ally of AQIM), Al-Ramah, published the following:
 - Announcement no. 7; a claim of responsibility for the launch of rockets 15 times at French army posts and MINUSMA forces on April 1, 2016 in northern Mali.¹³¹
 - Announcement no 8; a claim of responsibility for the explosion of a Chadian army forces vehicle on April 7 as well as for the explosion of another car belonging to MINUSMA forces in northern Mali.¹³²

Egypt

- Sheikh Hani al-Siba’I, a seniot Salafi-jihadist philosopher residing in London, criticized the visit by Saudi King Salman to Egypt and his close ties with the al-Sisi regime. He even accused the King of Saudi Arabia of responsibility for the killing of Muslims in Egypt.¹³³

Somalia

¹³⁰ <https://shamikh1.biz/vb> (Arabic).

¹³¹ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

¹³² <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

¹³³ <https://twitter.com/hanisibu/status/717351223880454148>

During the first half of April, clashes continued between Al-Shabab al-Mujahideen, and security forces and African Union forces operating in Somalia. On the one hand, Al-Shabab fighters continued to carry out attacks against government targets in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia. For instance, Al-Shabab fighters detonated a car bomb next to a restaurant in Mogadishu in which they claimed government forces were located.¹³⁴ Al-Shabab fighters detonated another car bomb next to a government building.¹³⁵ On the other hand, a senior Al-Shabab leader, Hassan Al-Dhoore, was killed in a US air strike in southern Somalia next to the Kenyan border.¹³⁶ In addition, 12 members of the organization were killed in American drone strikes on Al-Shabab bases in southern Somalia during the month.¹³⁷ African Union forces also managed to kill an Al-Shabab commander as well as other fighters in an attack against Al-Shabab bases in southern Somalia.¹³⁸ In addition, a court in Somalia sentenced a journalist to death for helping members of Al-Shabab kill other journalists in Mogadishu.¹³⁹

Meanwhile, a new Islamic organization called the East Africa Front published an announcement in which it swore allegiance to the IS and incited against Al-Shabab.¹⁴⁰

Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen

- Al-Kataib jihadist media institution, which is affiliated with Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, published a propaganda video by Al-Shabab, which described an attack carried out by Al-Shabab members against a Kenyan army base belonging to the African Union Force in El-Adde, in Somalia, on January 15, 2016. In the video, the organization claimed that over 100 Kenyan soldiers were killed in the attack. In addition, the video showed the plunder that was taken as a result of the attack and several Kenyan soldiers were captured alive.¹⁴¹

¹³⁴<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/04/deadly-car-bombing-targets-mogadishu-restaurant-160409130121398.html> (English).

¹³⁵ <http://goo.gl/hbNVlu>

¹³⁶ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/04/air-strike-kills-senior-al-shabab-leader-160401204013127.html>

¹³⁷ <http://goo.gl/7gq3VI>

¹³⁸ <http://goo.gl/OcKs8R>

¹³⁹ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/04/somalia-executes-al-shabab-journalist-160411054046709.html>

¹⁴⁰ <http://goo.gl/EfspvX>

¹⁴¹ <https://justpaste.it/ElAddeRaid02>



The video banner

- Al-Muhajiroun, which is affiliated with Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, denied that a Tanzanian spy who was caught by Al-Shabab belonged to Al-Muhajiroun. According to the announcement, Al-Muhajiroun fully supports the decisions made by Al-Shabab and believes that the punishment decreed for the spy was correct as it needs to serve as a warning to the mujahideen in East Africa who want to spy for the infidels.¹⁴²

Jund al-Khilafa

- The Islamic State’s jihadist media institution, Furat, published a video titled, “Sheikh Commander Abu Nu’man Military Camp” by Jund al-Khilafa, an IS-supporting organization in Somalia. The video reviewed military training underwent by members of the organization in the above-mentioned training camp.¹⁴³



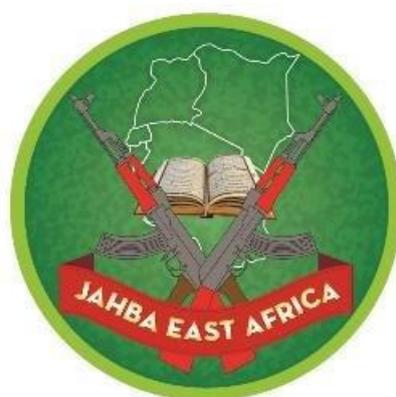
A clip from the video

¹⁴² <https://jumpshare.com/v/xsON9xAk2ziV5ETuj25P>

¹⁴³ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

East Africa Front

- The East Africa Front, a new organization in Somalia, published an announcement in which it swore allegiance to the leader of the IS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. In addition, the organization called on all of the mujahideen in East Africa to leave Al-Shabab and all of its branches, including Al-Muhajiroun, Al-Hijra and Ansar al-Islam, and join the IS. The announcement added that the new organization is composed of mujahideen fighting in Somalia, and included mujahideen from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The announcement also stated that Al-Shabab had become a physical and psychological prison for the mujahideen, and that only by joining the IS will they have the freedom and opportunity to wage jihad against their enemies.¹⁴⁴



The logo of the East Africa Front

The Indian Subcontinent

Ansar al-Islam in Bangladesh

- Mufti Abdullah Ashraf, the spokesman for Ansar al-Islam in Bangladesh, which is affiliated with Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent, claimed responsibility for the assassination of a blogger named Nazimuddin Samad, claiming that he insulted the Prophet Muhammad. According to the announcement, the assassination was intended as a message to the atheists not to dishonor the Prophet Muhammad or Islam.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CfxggwmVIAA73Pr.jpg>

¹⁴⁵ <https://www.alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

The West

- Al-Wa'd jihadist media institution, which is involved in publicity for the IS, published an English-language video in which one of its members threatened, in English, that the organization intends to continue its wave of terrorist attacks in Europe: "If Paris was [the target of an attack] yesterday, and Brussels today, behold Allah knows where tomorrow's [attack] will be carried out in London, in Brussels and maybe in Rome".¹⁴⁶



A clip from the video vowing to continue the wave of attacks in Europe

- Reports about the scandal involving the rape of Muslim women in Central Africa by French soldiers triggered discourse on the topic on social networks. The discourse was characterized by the demonization of France, threats to attack French targets in revenge for the desecration of Muslim women's dignity.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ <http://www.chouftv.ma/press/35650> [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUApYPw54Uk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUApYPw54Uk) ;

¹⁴⁷ https://twitter.com/2_50Shan/status/716597448119074816 ;
<https://www.facebook.com/sara.taiel/posts/10156652277230214>

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

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