



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 Second Half of January 2015

Highlights

This report summarizes notable events discussed on jihadist Web forums during the second half of January 2015. Following are the main points covered in the report:

- The wave of sympathy continues on the part of jihadist organizations and activists towards the attacks on the French magazine, *Charlie Hebdo*, as well as encouragement for a continuation of this trend. Nasser bin Ali al-Ansi, a senior member of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), calls on Muslims in the West, and especially those in France, to adopt “lone wolf” style attacks and to continue the line of attacks carried out by the Kouachi brothers in Paris. **Sheikh Ibrahim al-Rubaysh**, a member of AQAP’s Shura Council, declares that France must pay a price in its security and economy for insulting the Prophet Muhammad. According to him, France is now considered the primary target for terrorist attacks.

Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, Al-Qaeda’s branch in Somalia, also encourages Muslims living in Europe to emulate the attack and carry out similar attacks in Europe. In addition, the movement threatens France that its citizens will not enjoy personal security and that similar attacks will be carried out on its soil if it continues to act against Islam and insult the Prophet Muhammad.

- The **Islamic State (IS)** makes several threats to execute two Japanese hostages in response to the Japanese government’s promise to transfer 200 million dollars to the coalition forces fighting against the organization. However, it expresses a willingness to spare the lives of the hostages if the Japanese government sends the organization a similar amount. After executing one of the hostages, the IS makes another demand to release the female terrorist, Sajida al-Rishawi, from prison or else the second hostage will be executed. In the end, the IS follows through on its threat and executes the hostage. In addition, the IS publishes a video documenting the execution of the Jordanian pilot who fell into IS captivity at the end of December 2014 and was set on fire inside a cage.
- **Abu Muhammad al-Adnani**, spokesman for the IS, announces the organization’s expansion to Khorasan Province (in the region of Afghanistan-Pakistan). In addition, he calls on Muslims to attack targets belonging to Western countries.
- The **Islamic State (IS)** appeals to the Berber population in Libya, Algeria and Northern Mali to join the ranks of the IS and swear allegiance to its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. In the video,

which it distributes in the Amazigh language (the language of the Berbers), the IS emphasizes that the obligation to wage jihad applies to each and every Muslim.

- **Ajnad Misr**, a Salafi-jihadist organization operating in Egypt, calls on Muslims to concentrate their efforts on attacking Egyptian security forces and justifies adopting this militant line. According to him, significant effort should also be concentrated on PR activity against the Egyptian regime.
- **Boko Haram** claims responsibility for the massacre of residents of Baga and explains its motives for the conquest, including the town's strategic importance to the Nigerian government and the battle waged by its residents against the organization. In addition, the organization threatens to carry out further incursions into towns and villages.
- A Salafi-jihadist sheikh affiliated with the IS points out Libya's strategic importance as a southern base for penetrating the European continent using boats and pretending to be refugees. Such penetration will enable terrorist cells to be set up on within Europe and to sow fear among its people.

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New Publications

Ideology

- During the second half of January 2015, Al-Malahem jihadist media institution, which serves a platform for the official announcements of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), published the following:
 - Two audio clips (parts nine and ten) in the framework of a series of publications titled, “Thoughts on Purity and the Path” by Harith bin Ghazi al-Nadhari, a member of the organization’s Shura Council. Both clips concerned the soul of the believer and the fear of God.¹
 - A recorded lecture titled, “Democratic Elections: Are They Islamic?” by Sheikh Hamdi al-Tha’lab (aka Abu Muhammad al-Lahji), a member of Ansar al-Sharia who was killed in Yemen in July 2012. In the lecture, al-Lahji emphasized that democracy is not Islamic and should be renounced.²

The Rift between Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State

- Abu al-Mundhir al-Shanqiti, a Mauritanian sheikh affiliated with global jihad elements, and Sheikh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi published an article on the Minbar al-Tawhid wal-Jihad Web site titled, “Hush...Oh Inflamers of the Fitna!” In the framework of the article, al-Shanqiti addressed the issue of “fitna”, an Islamic term describing conflicts and civil wars that divert believers from the correct path and weaken them. Al-Shanqiti described the rivalry that prevails today between various jihadist organizations as a “fitna” that can be settled by taking several steps: maintaining “hilm” (forbearance), turning a blind eye and forgiving mistakes by avoiding reprimanding one’s opponent (since reprimands and admonishments only serve to increase the intensity of the “fitna”), and avoiding elements that fan the flames of the conflict. In the article, al-Shanqiti included quotes and excerpts from the Quran and the Hadith as a basis for his claims. At the end of the article, al-Shanqiti directly addressed the agitators who insult the mujahideen and seek out their errors in order to slander them. Instead of instigating “fitna”, al-

¹ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

² <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

Shanqiti advised the agitators to channel their anger and activity towards fighting the “enemies of Allah”.

Even though the article itself did not mention the names of the organizations, it seemed to have been published as a result of the name-calling and threats against members of the IS. Previously published articles indicated that al-Shanqiti supported the IS for a period of time³ and, according to one source, even swore allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of the organization.⁴ However, it seems that he retracted his support and became a critic of the IS.

- The Dagestan Province of the Islamic Caucasus Emirate published a statement criticizing the existing rift among the ranks of the mujahideen as a result of the Islamic State’s arbitrary conduct. Dagestan Province expressed concern that further division and animosity could sabotage battle efforts against the enemy and serve the enemy’s interest.

It also stated that the Islamic State’s declaration of the establishment of the Caliphate was null and void because, among other things, it was established without broad consensus and without consulting with representatives of the Muslim Nation. The province emphasized that the mujahideen in the Caucasus had sworn allegiance to its Emir, Abu Muhammad al-Daghistani, and that any breach of this vow was forbidden according to shari’a. Therefore, any announcement of support from activists in the Caucasus for the Islamic State is fundamentally wrong. Finally, the province called on jihadists in the Caucasus to resolve the dispute in this matter by relying on the Quran and the Sunnah.

It is interesting to note that the announcement was signed by 11 ideologues belonging to Al-Qaeda or its supporters, including Sheikh Umar al-Hadushi, a Salafi-jihadist leader in Morocco; Sheikh Hani al-Siba’i, an Egyptian jihadist living in London; Sheikh Abu Mariyya al-Qahtani, a member of the Shura Council of Al-Nusra Front in Syria; and others.⁵

Women and Jihad

- Al-Khansaa Brigade published a guidebook titled, “The Woman in the Caliphate State” including rules of conduct for Muslim women living under IS rule. The guidebook was divided into three

³ <https://goo.gl/BIUiFJ>

⁴ <http://www.taquadoum.mr/index.php/news-reports/3024-2014-11-18-17-20-33.html>

⁵ <http://vdagestan.com/ar/archives/17138> (Arabic).

parts: the first part addressed the education and rights of a woman while highlighting the disadvantages that exist in Western culture. The second part described the lives of women in areas under the authority of jihadist groups in Syria and Iraq. The third and final part compared the lives of women living in territories ruled by jihadist groups to the lives of women living in Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia.

The guidebook also included rules on how one should act with non-Muslim women and fatwas regarding women who were born Muslim and later converted to a different religion. Another issue discussed was the permission to marry girls from the age of nine. According to the guidebook, women must avoid going to beauty salons and should emphasize religious education in their homes.⁶



The banner of a guidebook for women living under the rule of the Islamic Caliphate

- A visitor to Al-Fida jihadist Web forum quoted advice from Bilal al-Qahiri, responsible for the general contacts of Ajnad Misr, a Salafi-jihadist organization in Egypt, titled, “How [Can] Women Take Part in Jihad?”. According to al-Qahari, he received many inquiries from women concerning their desire to help and support jihad. As a result of these requests, he saw fit to advise women to help in four areas:
 - A. Publicity– the distribution of jihadist publications and various announcements from the organization while building a community of Web surfers to mobilize to action and clarify the path of the organization.
 - B. Finances– raising funds and transferring them to the mujahideen. According to the writer, money has a large influence on the quality of an attack and the ability to carry it out.
 - C. Prayers for the mujahideen.

⁶ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

D. Education and jihadist indoctrination among children and youth.⁷

Strategy

- Al-Malahem jihadist media institution, the media wing of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, published a video by Harith bin Ghazi al-Nadhari, a member of the organization’s Shura Council titled, “The Sanctity of Blood”. In the video clip, al-Nadhari explained the guidelines for carrying out a suicide attack:
 - A. Avoid explosions and killings in mosques and crowded places such as markets and playgrounds where there are Muslims.
 - B. Avoid using a fatwa that permits the killing of Muslim civilians under special circumstances, known in Islamic legal terminology as “tatarus”, unless absolutely necessary according to appropriate religious scholars.
 - C. Do not ask for a legal opinion and ruling on issues relating to suicide attacks from anyone other than religious scholars with deep expertise in shari’a who take into account the benefits and disadvantages of such attacks and are familiar with the circumstances of the attacks.
 - D. Jihad leaders need to advise suicide terrorists and be careful not to send them out for questionable purposes.
 - E. Suicide terrorists must remember that they are going to carry out an attack that is not accepted by everyone and that some are concerned will be damaging.⁸



The video banner

⁷ <https://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁸ <https://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic); <http://justpaste.it/j1s1>

- A blogger named Sheikh Abu Arhim al-Libi, a supporter of the IS, published an article on social networks titled, “Libya is the Strategic Gateway of the Islamic State”, in which he referred to Libya’s strategic importance in the region. According to him, Libya’s coast can serve as an exit base for penetration of the European continent using simple boats. He added that approximately 500 illegal immigrant infiltrate into Europe every day using simple boats and successfully deceive most maritime security entities. According to him, if thought is paid to the development of a strategy to penetrate Europe via Libya, the result will be “that the situation of southern European countries will become hell, and when sufficient measures will be in place it will be possible to close the sea route and attack the Crusader ships and their containers”. The writer further noted that Libya houses a very large stockpile of weapons confiscated from Gaddafi’s storerooms. The transfer of some of these weapons to jihadist movements in Mali will enable them to capture over two-thirds of Mali in a very short period of time. In addition, he emphasized that Libya is the key to the Islamic State’s expansion across Tunisia, Sudan, Mali, Niger, into the African continent and north of it. Moreover, a battle against Europeans in Libya will help alleviate some of the pressure on the IS in Iraq.⁹



From left to right: the publication banner; a map showing the maritime routes from which it is possible to infiltrate into southern Europe

⁹ <http://justpaste.it/ly1>

Lone Wolves

- Nassir bin Ali al-Ansi, a senior member of AQAP, which claimed responsibility for the attack on the *Charlie Hebdo* magazine offices, continued to encourage Muslims in the West to carry out “lone wolf” style attacks in Western countries that are involved in the battle against Islam. According to him, such attacks against the West on Western soil are preferable as they cause more damage”. Al-Ansi said the above during a taped interview that he did with Al-Malahem jihadist media institution in the framework of answers to questions posed by visitors to jihadist Web forums – which was published on January 18, 2015 and distributed on jihadist forums on January 19-20, 2015.



The publication banner

- Al-Khilafah Media Foundation, a jihadist media institution involved in publicity for the IS, published an article in English on social networks calling for lone wolf attacks. The article included operative tips for “lone wolves” on how to carry out attacks in urban areas.¹⁰



The publication banner

¹⁰ <http://justpaste.it/T-hamilalbushra9>

Promoting the Myth of the Martyr

- The media wing of the IS in Al-Khayr (Deir Ezzor) Province in Syria published a video titled, “Words Watered with Blood 2”, documenting the last will and testament of a Moroccan suicide terrorist known as Abu Suhayb al-Maghribi. In October 2014, al-Maghribi carried out a suicide attack against Syrian army forces at the Hawijah Sakr checkpoint, using a Hummer vehicle loaded with over one ton of explosive material. According to media sources, 25 soldiers were killed in the attack and dozens more were injured.¹¹ In his recorded will, al-Maghribi claimed that coalition attacks only serve to strengthen the IS and encourage the mujahideen to continue on their path.¹²



Abu Suhayb al-Maghribi saying goodbye to another IS militant

- The Ifriqiyya jihadist media institution published a video in memory of a martyr named Musā al-Tunisi, a member of the ‘Uqba Ibn Nafi Battalion that operates in Tunisia. So far, it is not clear if his loyalty was to AQIM or to the IS. In the video, the martyr praised the path of jihad.¹³

Reports from the Field

Afghanistan-Pakistan

The Taliban in Afghanistan continued its routine of carrying out terrorist attacks against Afghan security forces. For example, the organization claimed responsibility for an attack that one of its members carried out on January 28 against an army base at the International Airport in Kabul.

¹¹ <http://www.alyaoum24.com/226223.html>

¹² <http://www.alfarough.com/?p=1574>

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

According to the spokesman for the Taliban, the attack was carried out by a Taliban fighter who penetrated into the Afghan security forces, assimilated among them and waited to carry out the long-awaited operation. In another attack at a checkpoint in Andar District in Ghazni Province, 11 policemen were killed.¹⁴

In addition to operations by the Taliban, there were increased reports of operations carried out by the IS on Afghan soil. A senior official in the Afghan army confirmed this and noted that the organization was focusing its efforts on recruiting members to its ranks.¹⁵ The Taliban itself and several tribes allied with the organization also confirmed this trend. According to the leader of one of the tribes, the organization strengthened its hold on Ghazni, Zabul and Farah Provinces, which are considered the Taliban's traditional arenas of influence. Reports also stated that two former Taliban leaders who joined the IS had set up training camps in mountainous areas such as Farah. There were also reports on the battle between Taliban and IS fighters.¹⁶

The Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan

- The Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan published a denial of rumors according to which it was holding peace talks with the government in Kabul, mediated by China. The announcement clarified that a delegation from the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan had visited China as part of its effort to preserve ties with neighbouring countries.¹⁷

The Arabian Peninsula

Yemen continued to crumble and fall apart in light of the war taking place there for the last few months. The Houthis, a Shi'ite minority in the country, managed to take control of Sana'a in September 2014 and to maintain coexistence with the President of Yemen, 'Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, which was manifested in the reconciliation agreement. However, during the second half of January 2015 the Houthis breached the agreement by breaking into Hadi's presidential palace.

¹⁴<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/01/afghanistan-policemen-killed-taliban-attack-150129045609108.html> (English)

¹⁵<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2015/01/afghan-officials-confirm-isil-presence-201511815245847478.html> (English).

¹⁶<http://www.alaraby.co.uk/politics/2015/1/31/داعش-يتمدد-في-أفغانستان-على-حساب-طالبان>

¹⁷<http://goo.gl/voOpgK>

Against the backdrop of this deterioration, both Yemen's President and Prime Minister resigned. This development aroused great protest across Yemen's provinces and brought out many people to demonstrate against the Houthi revolution. Some of the provinces even announced that they were disconnecting themselves from the central government in Yemen since they do not recognize the Houthi's authority to rule the country.

This worrying development could sabotage US efforts to fight terrorism by Al-Qaeda in Yemen, which has recently been an important ally to the US in this respect. Furthermore, Al-Qaeda is learning to exploit the situation to its advantage and continues to establish alliances with Sunni tribes in order to confront the Houthi threat and strengthen its own power. Abu Muhammad al-Yamani, a member of Al-Qaeda in Yemen, threatened that the next stage of the battle in Yemen would be an intense increase in operations against the Houthis. According to him, the Houthis' siege of the presidential palace was the straw that broke the camel's back, in light of Sunni tribes' collaboration to strike a strong blow to the Houthis.¹⁸

Another implication of the deterioration in Yemen could be seen in the worsening relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran, due to the former viewing the latter as responsible for the deterioration as an attempt by the Iranian regime to expand its influence over Yemen and turn it into a "backyard" from which to act against Saudi Arabia.¹⁹

At the same time as these developments, Al-Qaeda made threats against France against the backdrop of the attacks that took place in Paris in the beginning of January 2015. Sheikh Ibrahim al-Rubaysh, a member of the organization's Shura Council, emphasized that France had now become the primary target for carrying out terrorist attacks due to the incident of the caricature mocking the Prophet Muhammad and due to France's participation alongside coalition forces.

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

- On January 31, 2015 Al-Malahem jihadist media institution, the media wing of AQAP, published an audio clip by Sheikh Ibrahim al-Rubaysh, a member of AQAP's Shura Council, in which he

¹⁸ <http://www.elwatannews.com/news/details/645013>

¹⁹ <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/23/world/middleeast/yemen-houthi-crisis-sana.html>;
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/24/houthi-yemen-protesters-sanaa-president-hadi-resignation> (both in English).

declared that France must pay a price in its security and economy for insulting the Prophet Muhammad. According to him, France is the primary target for attacks instead of the US, which has currently been pushed to second place.²⁰

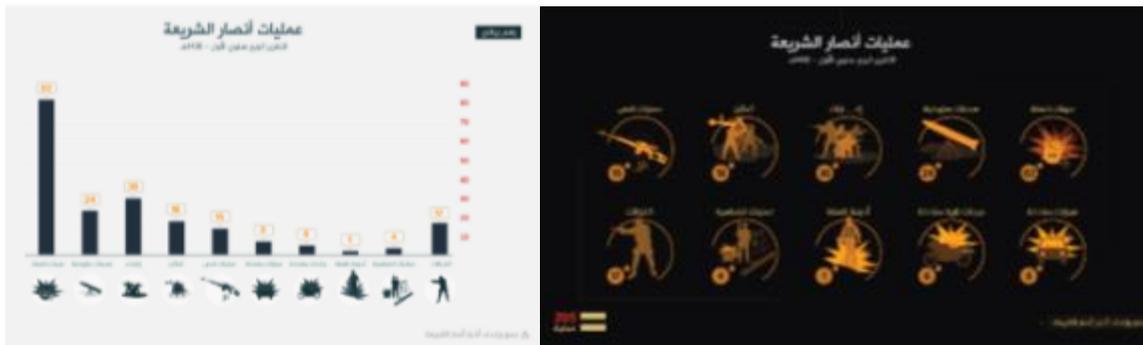


The publication banner

- Ansar al-Sharia, which is affiliated with AQAP, published on its Twitter account a statistical report containing data on the number and types of attacks carried out during the first three months of the Hijraic year 1426, which corresponds to the months of October-December 2014 on the Gregorian calendar. According to the report, its members carried out 205 attacks during those months, across 11 provinces in Yemen as well as the attack in Paris against the French magazine offices of *Charlie Hebdo*. According to the report, most of the attacks (91) took place in Al-Bayda' Province, in the area of Rada in particular, between the mujahideen and the Houthis. The second largest number of attacks took place in Hadramawt Province – 31 attacks. Sana'a took third place with 28 attacks, and Abyan Province took fourth place with 18 attacks. The attacks themselves were characterized by the use of car bombs, explosive-laden motorcycles, explosive vests, roadside bombs, rockets, suicide attacks, assassinations and sniper fire. In total, 11 types of attacks were carried out. According to the report, the use of explosive vests was the most widespread among members of the organization during that three-month period. In second place was the use of shelling, followed by ambushes, assassinations, etc.²¹

²⁰<http://www.dotmsr.com/details/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%AB-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D9%87%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%B6%D8%AF-%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7>

²¹<http://justpaste.it/j2b6>



The graphs that were published on the statistical report

Iraq

The month of January began with an exchange of fire between coalition forces and members of the IS. According to a statement by Michael Rouleau, the Commander of Special Operations Command in the Canadian army, IS forces had fired at Canadian forces using machine guns and mortar bombs, which forced them to return fire.²²

Several successes by IS opponents in Iraq were also recorded in January. Iraqi security forces managed to liberate Diyala Province from the IS²³ although this success was accompanied by accusations of a massacre carried out by Shi'ite militias against the Sunni population in the province.²⁴ In addition, Kurdish Peshmerga forces managed to re-take control of an oil field south of Kirkuk²⁵ as well as territory north of Mosul, and to kill 119 IS fighters north of Kirkuk.²⁶

Meanwhile, in the international arena, various countries around the world continued to support Iraq's fight against terrorism. Egypt and Iraq announced closer counter-terrorism cooperation between the two countries,²⁷ while France and Germany vowed to send military advisors to train Kurdish and Iraqi forces in northern Iraq.²⁸ In addition, the Prime Minister of Iraq,

²² <http://goo.gl/0zhV6F>

²³ <http://goo.gl/YYd7Bx>

²⁴ <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/iraq-shiite-militia-massacre-77-sunni-villagers-during-diyala-offensive-against-isis-1485859> (English).

²⁵ <http://goo.gl/5qf14s>

²⁶ <http://goo.gl/ow2FXA>

²⁷ <http://mawtani.al-shorfa.com/ar/articles/iii/features/2015/01/21/feature-02> (Arabic).

²⁸ <http://goo.gl/zeMzQc>

Haider al-Abadi, called on Russia to assist in the war to eradicate terrorism²⁹ and recommended establishing an international intelligence mechanism for monitoring terrorist activities.³⁰

- A video titled, “A Message to the Government and People of Japan”. In the video, a member of the organization known as “John the Jihadist” threatened to kill two Japanese hostages within 72 hours in response to Japan’s commitment to transfer 200 million dollars to support the coalition forces operating against the IS. However, John explained that the Japanese government could save the two hostages if it would send the same amount to the IS that it promised to the coalition. In an appeal to the Prime Minister of Japan, he noted that “although you are more than 8,500 kilometers from the Islamic State, you willingly have volunteered to take part in this crusade. You have proudly donated \$100 million to kill our women and children, to destroy the homes of the Muslims. Therefore, the lives of these citizens will also cost you millions”.

In a message directed at the Japanese public, John noted: “Just as how your government has made the foolish decision to pay 200 million dollars to fight the Islamic State, you now have 72 hours to pressure your government in making a wise decision, by paying the 200 million dollars to save the lives of your citizens. Otherwise, this knife will become your nightmare.”³¹

On January 24, 2015 the IS distributed another video in which one of the Japanese hostages, Kenji Goto Jogo, reported that his friend had been executed by members of the IS, while he held a photo of his friend’s severed head. Jogo then appealed to the Prime Minister of Japan and accused him, saying: “You killed Haruna. You did not take the threat of my captors seriously and you did not act within 72 hours.” Later, Jogo addressed his wife, Rinko, and talked of his love and longing for his two daughters while noting that his life could be saved if a female terrorist named Sajida al-Rishawi, who was sent by Al-Qaeda to carry out a suicide attack at a hotel in 2005.³²

On January 27, 2015 the IS distributed another audio clip, in English, in which Kenji Goto Jogo appealed to the Japanese government and citizens to put heavy political pressure on Jordan to

²⁹ <http://www.shafaq.com/sh2/index.php/news/iraq-news/89765-2015-01-19-18-28-07.html>

³⁰ <http://goo.gl/be9UJj>

³¹ https://twitter.com/News_3ajle_Ksa/status/557529992788070401/photo/1

³² <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

free jailed terrorist, Sajida al-Rishawi, along the Turkey-Syria border or else the captured Jordanian pilot would be immediately executed, followed by himself. According to him, he had 24 hours left to live and the Jordanian pilot had even less time. He implored the Japanese government not to delay this request as a delay would cost them their lives.³³

On January 31, 2015 the IS published another video titled, “A Message to the Government of Japan” in which it documented the execution of Japanese captive, Kenji Goto Jogo, by John the Jihadist. The latter accused the Japanese Prime Minister of deciding to support the coalition against the IS and claimed that, as a result, the organization would hurt Japanese citizens: “Because of your reckless decision to take part in an unwinnable war, this knife will not only slaughter Kenji, but will also carry on and cause carnage wherever your people are found. So let the nightmare for Japan begin.”³⁴



From left to right: Japanese captive, Kenji Goto Jogo, holding a photo of the Jordanian pilot; the banner of the first video showing the two Japanese captives

The Islamic State

- Al-Furqan jihadist media institution, the primary media wing of the IS, published the following:
 - A speech by the spokesman of the organization, Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, titled, “Say, Die in your Rage”. In the framework of the speech, al-Adnani described his organization as a “pain in the neck” for the “Jews, Crusaders, infidels, Shi’ites and apostates” and announced the Islamic State’s expansion to Khorasan Province in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region, as well as the appointment of Sheikh Hafez Said Khan to the role of

³³ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

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

governor of the province. In addition, al-Adnani renewed his call on Muslims to strike targets belonging to Western countries using various methods, such as explosive vests, shooting, stabbing, running over with a car, etc. In this context, he mentioned Michael Zehaf-Bibeau, a Canadian terrorist who killed a soldier and then entered the parliament building with a gun in October 2014, as well as the terrorist attacks carried out in France, Australia and Belgium. In addition, he blessed the death of the King of Saudi Arabia, Abdullah bin Abdulaziz. The speech was translated into English, French and Russian.³⁵ This speech received harsh criticism from Sheikh Abu Mariyya al-Qahtani, a senior member of Al-Nusra Front's Shura Council. According to him, the IS acts like a gang doing whatever it wants and continuing to sow division among the ranks of the mujahideen, as manifested by the establishment of new provinces such as Khorasan Province. According to him, the Islamic State's haste in labeling as infidels other Muslims who do not follow its path causes great harm and division.³⁶

The Islamic State – Diyala Province

- The media wing of the Islamic State in Diyala Province published the following:
 - A filmed review titled, “Photos from the Land of Jihad 7”, which documented IS members in the province during shooting practice in an open area and inside pits, carrying out an attack against Iraqi army positions using machine guns and mortar bombs, setting army vehicles on fire and taking weapons and ammunition as plunder.³⁷



³⁵ <http://www.shabakataljihad.com/vb> (Arabic).

³⁶ <http://justpaste.it/j3p9>

³⁷ <http://khilapha.blogspot.com/2015/01/7.html>

“Photos from the Land of Jihad” in Diyala Province

- A filmed review of the distribution of food to Muslims in the province aimed at showing the relationship between IS members and the civilian population. The photos showed IS members distributing bags of flour while fraternizing with the locals and registering poor and needy families.³⁸
- A video containing a message from an IS member to Sunnis to fulfil the obligation of jihad. In addition, he guaranteed victory over coalition forces.³⁹
- A video titled, “I Swear in the Name of Allah that We Will Avenge” in which IS fighters in Diyala Province vowed to attack Shi’ites to avenge the massacre that the latter carried out of Sunnis in the province. The video later showed IS fighters leading a Shi’ite to be executed by having his throat slit. The end of the video showed the hanging bodies of Shi’ite members of the Iraqi security forces as revenge.⁴⁰
- A report listing all of the military operations (139 total) that were carried out by the IS in Diyala Province during the month of December 2014.⁴¹
- A video titled, “Their Merchandise will be Returned to Them”. The video focused on the way in which the organization uses the flares fired by Iraqi security forces towards the province in order to upgrade rockets. The video also documented the launch of these rockets towards Iraqi security forces.⁴²



The video banner

³⁸ <https://isdarat.org/3425> (Arabic).

³⁹ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁴⁰ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁴¹ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁴² <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

- A video documenting a raid carried out by IS militants of a site belonging to Kurdish Peshmerga forces in northern Diyala Province. The end of the video showed the beheading of two Peshmerga fighters.⁴³

The Islamic State – Al-Anbar Province

- The media wing of the Islamic State in Al-Anbar Province published the following:
 - A filmed review titled, “An Attack on Border Posts along the Imaginary Border with Jordan”. The photos showed members of the organization launching mortars and firing light arms at a building on the Iraq-Jordan border. The video did not provide additional details but media sources indicated that the attack, which was carried out against the Arkaban border post, was thwarted by members of the Iraqi border guard.⁴⁴
 - A video titled, “The Revenge – Part I”, which documented the destruction to lives and property caused as a result of coalition air strikes. In response to these strikes, members of the organization were shown beheading two people who were accused of spying on the homes of Muslims in the area that were later bombed.⁴⁵

The Islamic State – Al-Janub Province

- The media wing of the Islamic State in Al-Janub Province published the following:
 - A video including a statistical breakdown of operations carried out by the organization in the province during the month of December 2014. The video showed a table listing the operations, divided in the following manner: bombings and target strikes, assassinations, ambushes, intrusion and explosion of targets, outcomes and plunder. The end of the video displayed a pie chart showing the distribution of operations in percentages.⁴⁶

⁴³ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁴⁴ <https://isdarat.org/3519>; <http://www.el-balad.com/1359340>

⁴⁵ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁴⁶ <http://www.alfarough.com/?p=1612>



Al-Janub Province – statistical information about operations for the month of December 2014

The Islamic State – Kirkuk Province

- The media wing of the Islamic State in Kirkuk Province published the following:
 - A video about Islamic courts in the province. In the video, a member of the organization noted that four shari’a courts had been set up in Kirkuk Province – a main court and three secondary courts subject to the main one in Hawija, Riyad and Rashad districts. In addition, the speaker noted that the courts had imposed *hudud* penalties on residents who drank alcohol, engaged in witchcraft or broke the rules of the religion. The final part of the video included interviews with residents who expressed their satisfaction with the Islamic courts.⁴⁷
 - A filmed review of the end of training for snipers at the Sheikh Abu Umar al-Baghdadi training camp. The video showed fighters undergoing weapons and camouflage training in a wooded area.⁴⁸
 - A video about the oath of allegiance taken by tribes in Kirkuk to the leader of the IS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Without mentioning the names of the tribes, the video showed several dozen middle-age people who repeated the oath of allegiance to al-Baghdadi after listening to a sermon given by a member of the organization.⁴⁹
 - A filmed review of the downing of a drone in Al-Rashad. According to the text that accompanied the photos, it was an Iranian aircraft.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ <http://www.alfarough.com/?p=1820>

⁴⁸ http://khilapha.blogspot.com/2015/01/blog-post_42.html

⁴⁹ <http://www.alfarough.com/?p=1949>

⁵⁰ <http://www.alfarough.com/?p=1718>

- A filmed review documenting members of the organization breaking into and taking control over offices belonging to Kurdish Peshmerga forces in Kirkuk Province.⁵¹

The Islamic State – Saladin Province

- The media wing of the Islamic State in Saladin Province published the following:
 - A video containing the last will and testament of an IS fighter named Abu Turab al-Jazraw before he carried out a suicide attack against Iraqi security forces in the city of Samarra, as well as documentation of the attack itself. In his will, he emphasized the importance of fulfilling the commandment to wage jihad.⁵²
 - Interviews with several IS members following the death of Abdullah, King of Saudi Arabia. The members expressed joy over his death and described him as an infidel tyrant who acted against Muslims and served the interests of the Jews and the Crusaders. One activist noted that Abdullah’s legacy will not be remembered as someone who benefitted the mujahideen in Chechnya, Iraq and other regions.⁵³

The Islamic State – Nineveh Province

- The media wing of the Islamic State in Nineveh Province published the following:
 - A filmed review of the enforcement of *hudud* penalties in the province. The video showed executions carried out by: throwing people accused of sodomy off of a building, crucifying people accused of disturbing public order and stealing funds, and stoning women accused of adultery.⁵⁴

⁵¹ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁵² <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁵³ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁵⁴ http://shabakataljahad.blogspot.com/2015/01/blog-post_31.html



Enforcing *hudud* in Nineveh Province

- A filmed review about a suicide attack against Peshmerga forces in the area of the town of Aski Mosul in north Nineveh Province. The video showed an armored vehicle driven by a suicide terrorist as well as documentation of the explosion.⁵⁵



The car bomb on its way to attack Peshmerga forces in Nineveh Province

- A filmed review of the training undergone by the Fursan al-Harb [Knights of War] Battalion, which belongs to the IS. The photos showed battalion fighters practicing breaking into buildings, street fighting, fighting in open areas, and training with small and medium arms as well as sniper weapons.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ http://shabakataljihad.blogspot.com/2015/01/blog-post_34.html

⁵⁶ http://shabakataljihad.blogspot.com/2015/01/blog-post_51.html



Training by members of the Islamic State’s Fursan al-Harb Battalion

- A video titled, “Blood of Jihad 3”, which showed an IS training camp and documented parts of an attempt to seize control of an Iraqi army barracks in the province.⁵⁷
- A video documenting the destruction and casualties in Mosul as a result of shelling and poisoning by coalition forces.⁵⁸
- A filmed review of the training undergone by one of the sniper battalions in the province. The photos showed fighters practicing shooting sniper rifles at buildings and wearing bullet-proof vests.⁵⁹



Sniper training in Nineveh Province

⁵⁷ <http://www.alfarough.com/?p=1666>

⁵⁸ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁵⁹ <https://isdarat.org/3551>

- A video titled, “Messages from the Land of the Front Lines – Part 1”, in which a member of the organization addressed Muslims and guaranteed an IS victory, and told them that their enemies will suffer a harsh defeat. Another fighter emphasized the importance of fulfilling the commandment to wage jihad.⁶⁰

The Islamic State – Al-Faluja Province

- The media wing of the Islamic State in Al-Faluja Province published the following:
 - A video titled, “Messages from the Land of the Front Lines – Part 2”, in which a member of the organization recited verses from the Quran justifying jihad against the enemies of Islam. Another member criticized the attacks by coalition forces against Muslims in Iraq.⁶¹
 - A video titled, “Preach the Truth among Yourselves – Part 2”, which painted a pastoral picture of routine life under shari’a and reviewed the activities of Hisba officials {those responsible for maintaining public order and enforcing shari’a}.⁶²

Al-Sham [The Levant]

After four months of fighting, the YPG (People’s Protection Units) announced that it had freed the city of Kobane from the hands of the IS through collaboration with coalition forces, Peshmerga forces, and the Free Syrian Army.⁶³ The expulsion of IS forces from the city led political analysts to assess that Kurdish officials in Syria are currently seeking to establish a Kurdish area in northern Syria similar to the area of northern Iraq.⁶⁴ These assessments, in turn, led the President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, to declare that his country is not interested in a “Syrian Kurdistan”.⁶⁵

Another incident concerning the Kurds was a crossfire battle that took place for the first time between Assad’s army and Kurdish forces in the city of Hasaka in northeast Syria.⁶⁶ According to

⁶⁰ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁶¹ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁶² <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁶³ <http://goo.gl/duTqgm>

⁶⁴ <http://goo.gl/rrEXS0>

⁶⁵ <http://goo.gl/qU80yP>

⁶⁶ <http://goo.gl/xm6ZfT>

some analysts, the tensions in Hasaka stem from the Syrian regime's fear of close cooperation between YPG and coalition forces.⁶⁷

In the political arena, a round of Russian-sponsored consultations began in Moscow between representatives of President Bashar al-Assad and some Syrian opposition officials, though not the notable ones.⁶⁸ In this context, the National Coalition for Syrian Revolution and Opposition announced that it had approved a draft of a document containing 13 clauses defining the roadmap for a political solution in Syria and the points for resuming the negotiations that were stopped at the Geneva II Conference.⁶⁹

Syria

Al-Nusra Front

- During the second half of January 2015, the jihadist media institution of Al-Nusra Front in Syria, Al-Manarah al-Bayda, published the following:
 - A claim of responsibility for the downing of a Syrian army cargo plane over the Abu al-Duhur Military Airbase in Idlib Province.⁷⁰ However, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) and other sources, the plane crashed due to bad visibility conditions in the area caused by heavy fog.⁷¹
 - An announcement that the organization had re-taken control of Al-Sheikh Suleiman Camp from the Hazzm Movement, a group of Syrian rebels embroiled in a battle with Al-Nusra Front and considered moderate by some Western officials. According to the announcement, the site was recaptured in order to free four members of the organization and several civilians who were being held captive by the Hazzm Movement.⁷² The camp, which is located in western Aleppo serves as a setting for Al-Nusra Front military and religious training.⁷³

⁶⁷ <http://goo.gl/Fu3tUZ>

⁶⁸ <http://www.alriyadh.com/1017015>

⁶⁹ <http://goo.gl/05O9Sv>

⁷⁰ https://twitter.com/morasel_JN/status/557148947459080192;

https://twitter.com/morasel_JN/status/556827366539145216

⁷¹ <http://www.arabnews.com/news/691611>

⁷² https://twitter.com/morasel_JN/status/561136303975043072

⁷³ <http://english.dohainstitute.org/file/get/9dd86818-7314-40ec-bf8e-be4a0db226c0.pdf>

- Filmed interviews with residents of Aleppo regarding the improper use of civilians by members of the Hazzm movement as human shields and the torturing of prisoners.⁷⁴
- A filmed Friday sermon by a preacher from the organization at a mosque in which he expressed support for the honor of the Prophet Muhammad. After prayers, worshippers held a demonstration of support for the honor of the Prophet Muhammad while calling for attacks on Jews.⁷⁵
- An announcement to the media (no. 11); a clarification regarding the importance of adhering to the rules of publishing Al-Nusra Front related announcements on social media. According to Al-Nusra Front, social networks play a significant role in various aspects of jihad, including dawah and spreading the message of the mujahideen from the arenas of jihad. Nevertheless, the organization emphasized that there are those who exploit social networks in order to spread false messages and to sow division among the ranks of the mujahideen. In light of this, Al-Nusra Front clarified that anyone who does not follow the rules of publication and tries to sow seeds of division and separation will be called to judgement and immediately kicked out of Al-Nusra Front.⁷⁶
- An announcement criticizing rebel groups that exploit the revolution and jihad in order to attain personal interests, such as the Syrian Rebel Front led by Jamal Ma'ruf. According to Al-Nusra Front, these rebel groups are sabotaging efforts to topple the Alawite regime by forcing Al-Nusra Front to battle these groups, as happened with members of the Syrian Rebel Front in Jabal al-Zawiyya near Idlib. In light of this, Ma'ruf and the leaders of other rebel groups, as well as their supporters, are wanted in order to face judgement. Finally, Al-Nusra Front emphasized that rebel groups need to understand that if they help in the battle against the Alawite regime, they will receive help from the mujahideen.⁷⁷
- A video reviewing the front line positions of Al-Nusra Front in Al-Ghawta in Damascus. The review included interviews with Al-Nusra Front fighters positioned on the front lines

⁷⁴ <https://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁷⁵ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁷⁶ <https://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁷⁷ <https://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

in the difficult weather conditions of cold and snow. They expressed great satisfaction in fulfilling the commandment to wage jihad and called on Muslims to join their ranks and take part in jihad.⁷⁸

- A video titled, “Aspects of the Dawah Forum in the Town of Turmanin Near Western Aleppo”. The forum itself included sermons by members of the organization condemning coalition strikes in the area.⁷⁹
- A video documenting a tour in the village of Al-Hamadiyah after its liberation with an observation post overlooking the Abu al-Zuhur military airport in Idlib. One Al-Nusra Front member described how the military operation to free the village was carried out.⁸⁰
- A video containing a message from an Al-Nusra Front fighter on the front lines in Al-Malah – Handarat village in Aleppo to young Muslims, calling on them to wake up and help the mujahideen in their efforts in Syria.⁸¹
- A video reviewing the battles to free Military Company 83 in the north of the city of Shaykh Miskin – Dar’a.⁸²
- A video reviewing the opening ceremony of the dawah and guidance offices in the village of Al-Najiyya.⁸³

The Islamic State – Al-Raqqah Province

- The media wing of the Islamic State in Al-Raqqah Province published the following:
 - The second chapter in a series of videos titled, “Racers to Paradise”, which document suicide terrorists. This chapter told the story of an Egyptian activist named Abu al-Muthanna al-Misri who carried out a suicide attack using an armored vehicle that was laden with explosive material against a group of Kurdish PKK militiamen in the city of Kobane in northern Syria. The video documented al-Misri’s farewell to his friends and

⁷⁸ <https://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁷⁹ <https://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁸⁰ <https://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁸¹ <https://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁸² <https://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁸³ <https://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

included his last will and testament, in which he encouraged other Muslims to follow in his footsteps.⁸⁴



A clip from the video

- A video titled, “Meetings regarding the Jordanian Pilot”. In the video, a member of the organization provided the background of the fall of Moaz al-Kasasbeh, the Jordanian pilot, into captivity. The video also included a series of street interviews with people who were asked what they thought about the issue of the pilot and if he should be freed. Needless to say, everyone responded that the pilot should be executed for harming innocent Muslims and they even noted that it would deter other pilots.⁸⁵



The video banner

- A filmed review of the punishment given to three false witnesses in the town of Tall Abyad in the north of the province. The video explained that the three people had testified to the death of a man who was later found to be alive. As punishment, the

⁸⁴ <http://www.alfarough.com/?p=1877>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgNWtL5LI00> (Arabic).

⁸⁵ <http://www.alfarough.com/?p=1597>

three were humiliated in the town square for a full day with signs reading “false witness” taped to their chests.⁸⁶



Humiliation ceremony for false witnesses in Al-Raqqa Province

- A filmed review of a motorcycle driving school that was established by the “Islamic Police” in the province. The video explained that in light of popular use of motorcycles in the city, and as a result of the fear of accidents, it was decided to provide motorcycle driving lessons and to provide a license to anyone who passes the test.⁸⁷
- A video reviewing the battles between members of the organization and Kurdish Peshmerga forces in Kobane, referred to by members of the organization as ‘Ayn al-Islam. In the video, several members of the organization gave their impression of the fighting.⁸⁸
- A video titled, “Meetings about the Death of the Arabian Peninsula Tyrant”. In the video, several members of the organization, as well as residents of the province, were interviewed regarding the death of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia on January 23, 2015, and expressed joy over the event. According to them, the King of Saudi Arabia had committed many crimes against the Muslim population throughout the Middle East, including in Yemen and Syria, with the help of the US.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ http://shabakataljahad.blogspot.com/2015/01/blog-post_22.html

⁸⁷ http://shabakataljahad.blogspot.com/2015/01/blog-post_62.html (Arabic).

⁸⁸ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁸⁹ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

Another video that was published in this context and titled, “Messages from the Lions of the Arabian Peninsula”, also focused on the joy expressed by members of the organization over the death of the King of Saudi Arabia. In addition, they vowed that the IS would advance and reach the Arabian Peninsula in order to liberate its residents from the rule of the Saudi Kingdom.⁹⁰

The Islamic State – Homs Province

- The media wing of the IS in Homs Province published the following:
 - The recorded last will and testament of two Moroccan suicide terrorists who carried out an attack against a gas company in the town of Furqlus in the western part of the province. The two made threats against the tyrants and called on Muslims to join the IS, which they described as “full of laughter, joy and an atmosphere of brotherhood”. The video was published under the title, “Words of Light for Lovers of Paradise and Black-Eyed Virgins”.⁹¹



The video banner

The Islamic State – Al-Baraka Province

- The media wing of the Islamic State in Al-Hasaka Province (referred to as Al-Baraka Province by the organization) published the following:
 - Part 5 in a series of videos titled, “Glances in the Shadows of the Caliphate”. The video showed several fighters in the province as they recited verses from the Quran, called on

⁹⁰ <https://shamikh1.info/vb/> (Arabic).

⁹¹ <http://www.alfarough.com/?p=1669>

Muslims around the world to perform “hijra” to the IS and made threats against the US.⁹²

The Islamic State – Aleppo

- The media wing of the IS in Aleppo published the following:
 - A video titled, “Life in the Shadow of the Caliphate”, which documented routine life in Aleppo. The video showed bustling activity in the markets, bakeries and stores, as well as youth and children’s activities.⁹³



The video banner

- A video about infrastructure maintenance and waste disposal in the city of Al-Bab in northeast Aleppo. The video explained the cleaning work that takes place in the city and its importance according to Islamic sources.⁹⁴
- A filmed review of the distribution of *zakat* payments in and around the town of Akhtarín. The video showed poor and needy people with blurred faces holding “*zakat* eligibility” notepads and receiving money from members of the organization.⁹⁵
- A video focusing on the medical services provided by the Abu Omar al-Baghdadi Hospital in the city of Jarabulus.⁹⁶

⁹² <http://www.alfarough.com/?p=1594>

⁹³ <http://www.alfarough.com/?p=1823> (Arabic).

⁹⁴ <https://isdarat.org/3283> (Arabic).

⁹⁵ http://shabakataljahad.blogspot.com/2015/01/blog-post_57.html (Arabic).

⁹⁶ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

- An audio clip of a speech given titled, “Those who Believed, Migrated and Fought a Holy War” given by Sheikh Uthman Aal Nazi on one of the front lines regarding the importance of participating in the war of jihad against enemies of Islam.⁹⁷

Aal Nazi, a senior IS leader of Saudi origin, was killed in the beginning of January 2015 in the Kurdish city of Kobane. Before joining the IS, he had served as a senior lecturer at King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia. After the revolution broke out in Syria, he moved to Syria and joined the IS.

The Islamic State – Al-Khayr (formerly Deir Ezzor) Province

- The media wing of the Islamic State in Al-Khayr (formerly Deir Ezzor) Province published the following:
 - A video titled, “Words from the Heart – Part 3”, in which a member of the IS spoke of the organization’s struggle against the Alawites and the unwillingness of Arab states to defend the principles of Islam and the honor of Muslims. According to him, IS fighters are the ones who take upon themselves the responsibility to defend the honor of Muslims by waging jihad against enemies of Islam.⁹⁸
 - A video documenting the remnants of a coalition forces’ plane that was shot down by members of the organization. The plane itself was displayed in front of residents while IS members praised their achievement in front of the camera.⁹⁹



The video banner

- Filmed interviews with members of the organization who expressed joy over the death of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁹⁸ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁹⁹ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

- A video containing a short interview with an alleged Jordanian spy who was caught by members of the IS security services. In the beginning of the video, the Jordanian said that he worked for the Jordanian intelligence services. The video later stated that the punishment for spying is execution. The end of the video documents the execution of the Jordanian by beheading.¹⁰¹



The Jordanian “spy” who was executed

Other organizations

- The media wing of Ansar al-Din, a Salafi-jihadist organization established in Syria in July 2014, published a video documenting children reciting the Quran at one of the organization’s religious institutions where they undergo a process of indoctrination by members of the organization.¹⁰²

The Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip

The Islamic State in the Sinai Peninsula continued to prove that its power has not been diminished and that it can still carry out devastating attacks in the region. At the end of January 2015, it managed to carry out a combined attack against at least ten targets in the city of Al-Arish, in northern Sinai, including a hotel, a residential complex for military and police personnel, an officers’ club and security positions. A local police station in the town of Sheikh Zayed, near the border with the Gaza Strip, was also attacked as well as a police station in Egyptian Rafah.¹⁰³

This attack presented a difficult challenge to the Egyptian army in its war against terrorism

¹⁰⁰ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

¹⁰¹ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

¹⁰² <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

¹⁰³ <http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/world/middle-east/.premium-1.2552666> (Hebrew).

and drew criticism of the army's poor functioning in preparing for this threat. In response, the Egyptian army announced its intention to expand its military operation to eliminate terrorist nests in Sinai.

The Islamic State in Sinai Province (formerly Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis)

- The media wing of the IS in Sinai Province (formerly Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis) published the following:
 - A video titled, “We Vow to Avenge” regarding the capture of police officer, Ayman al-Desouki, in an ambush that was carried out by members of the organization on the Al Arish-Rafah road on January 11, 2015. Al-Desouki was executed by shooting in what was described as revenge for harming and denigrating the honor of Muslim women by the Interior Ministry and other authorities in Egypt.¹⁰⁴



The Egyptian police officer who was captured and executed by the Islamic State in the Sinai Peninsula

- A claim of responsibility for three military operations that were carried out simultaneously by members of the organization in three different cities against Egyptian security forces at the end of January 2015. The announcement described the course of the attacks.

The first attack took place in Al-Arish when three car bombs laden with tons of explosives exploded after bursting into an Egyptian army and police security compound. Afterwards, two terrorists wearing explosive vests and carrying small arms penetrated the area and began firing in all directions. Other fighters took part in battles in southeast

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.alfarough.com/?p=1892> (Arabic).

Al-Arish, using small and medium arms, and firing rocket-propelled grenades. The second attack took place in the city of Shaykh Zuweid and the third attack took place in Rafah.

According to the organization, the three attacks were carried out in revenge for the denigration of Muslim women imprisoned in Egyptian jails and in order to help Muslims.¹⁰⁵

- A video titled, “Lions of War”, in which members of the organization vowed to attack Egyptian army forces and accused al-Sisi of collaborating with Israel.¹⁰⁶
- A report listing all of the organization’s military activities in the Sinai Peninsula during December 2014-January 2015. For example, the organization claimed responsibility for the explosion of a gas pipe to Jordan due to the country’s participation in the war against the IS, damage to Egyptian army vehicles, the killing of Egyptian army officers and soldiers, etc.¹⁰⁷

Other jihadist organizations

- Katibat al-Ribat al-Jihadiyya in Sinai published an announcement titled, “Beware, the People of Sinai”. The beginning of the announcement blessed the organization for the help that it provides to the residents of Sinai in the battle against Egyptian security forces. However, it also sought to clarify that a substantial effort was being made by Egyptian security forces to create division among the ranks and to create a rift between the residents of Sinai and the mujahideen in various ways. According to the organization, claims have recently been made by several tribal members that it is wrong to fulfil the commandment of jihad. In light of this, the organization implored the residents of Sinai to continue to help the mujahideen, and not to blindly follow rumors and false claims criticizing jihad. Meanwhile, the organization called on Egyptian intelligence agencies to do some soul-searching and expose their collaboration with the Jews

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

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

¹⁰⁷ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

and Crusaders, as well as their crimes against the population in the Sinai Peninsula, which include kidnappings and killings.¹⁰⁸

- Al-Nusra al-Maqdisiyya media group, a Palestinian group involved in publicity for the IS, published a video documenting an angry demonstration in front of the French center in the Gaza Strip against the backdrop of the insult to the Prophet Muhammad and the terrorist attacks in Paris. During the demonstration, participants called out derogatory remarks against France, expressed support for the attacks in Paris, and vowed to kill anyone who dares to dishonor the Prophet Muhammad. Among the speakers at the demonstration were the prominent Salafi preacher, Adnan Mayet, who left Hamas and became an impassioned supporter of the IS.¹⁰⁹



The video banner

The Maghreb [North Africa]

In Libya, the second half of January opened with a declaration by the Fajr Libya (Libya Dawn) Islamic militias guaranteeing a ceasefire on all fronts, against the backdrop of the end of the first round of reconciliation talks that was held in Geneva under the auspices of the United Nations.¹¹⁰ However, just one day after the declaration, Fajr Libya went back on its word and attacked targets west of Tripoli with artillery and Grad rocket fire.¹¹¹ The end of the month of January in Libya looked even less encouraging with the execution of a suicide attack by IS fighters at the Corinthia Hotel in

¹⁰⁸ <http://justpaste.it/izan>; <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

¹⁰⁹ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

¹¹⁰ <http://goo.gl/E65eVR>

¹¹¹ <http://goo.gl/RDhIAx>

Tripoli, in which ten people were killed.¹¹² Meanwhile, in Benghazi, in eastern Libya, intense battles took place between the Libyan army and forces from the Shura Council of Benghazi Revolutionaries, a coalition of Islamist militias.¹¹³

In Tunisia, counterterrorism efforts continued. On January 21, authorities carried out arrests of militants in Kasserine in western Tunisia,¹¹⁴ and on January 28, the Tunisian Interior Ministry announced the discovery and dismantling of a cell in the capital of Tunis, four members of which were involved in funding terrorism and maintaining ties with Tunisian terrorists outside of the country.¹¹⁵ The following day, the Ministry published another announcement regarding the thwarting of terrorist acts and the arrest of 11 other terrorists in southern Tunisia after uncovering a plan to smuggle weapons from Libya to Tunisia.¹¹⁶

Authorities in Morocco also announced the dismantling of a terrorist cell suspected of sending fighters to Syria and Iraq with the goal of integrating them into the ranks of the IS. The cell – whose number of members was not noted – operated in the cities of Meknès, El-Hajeb and Al Hoceima.¹¹⁷ Meanwhile, Algeria announced its counter-terrorism collaboration with five other African countries,¹¹⁸ while the Minister of Justice announced the need for amendments to Algerian law in order help in this struggle.¹¹⁹

Libya

The Islamic State in Tripoli

- The IS in Tripoli published the following:
 - A claim of responsibility for the attack at the Corinthia Hotel in the capital of Tripoli, in which ten people were killed. According to the announcement, the IS fighters who carried out the attack - Abu Ibrahim al-Tunisi and Abu Sulayman al-Sudani – entered the

¹¹² <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/27/libya-gunmen-kill-guards-take-hostages-luxury-hotel-tripoli> (English).

¹¹³ <http://www.alwasat.ly/ar/news/libya/57410> (Arabic).

¹¹⁴ <http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=283470>

¹¹⁵ <http://goo.gl/pNrWSn>

¹¹⁶ <http://www.albawabhnews.com/1083418> (Arabic).

¹¹⁷ http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/middleeast/2015/01/150117_morocco_islamist_cell_dismantlement (Arabic).

¹¹⁸ <http://www.elbilad.net/article/detail?id=30491> (Arabic).

¹¹⁹ <http://www.radioalgerie.dz/news/ar/article/20150126/28161.html>

hotel and opened fire with the aim of harming the security forces who arrived at the scene. The hotel itself was described as “a nest of Allah’s enemies populated by Crusader security and diplomatic delegations”. The attack was referred to as the “Abu Anas al-Libi attack”, referring to a former senior Al-Qaeda operative who was imprisoned in the US and died in custody on January 2, 2015.¹²⁰

- A video titled, “A Message to our Brothers, Believers in One God”, in the Amazigh language (Berber). In the video, the IS called on the Berber population in Libya, Algeria and northern Mali to join its ranks and swear allegiance to its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. One of the activists, who appeared in the video under the nickname Abu Sulayman al-Tareqi, noted that the commandment for jihad applies to each and every Muslim, and he emphasized that the media is creating a distorted image of the IS that should not be believed.¹²¹



A call on the Berber population in North Africa to join the ranks of the IS

- A claim of responsibility for throwing an explosive device at the Algerian Embassy in Tripoli in an attack that injured three people.¹²²

The Islamic State in Barqa Province

- The IS in Barqa Province published the following:

¹²⁰ <https://manbar.me/bauan> (Arabic).

¹²¹ <http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=283400>; <https://archive.org/details/RSALH.LLMWAHEDYN.MP4> (Arabic).

¹²² <https://justpaste.it/iymd> (Arabic).

- A filmed review documenting members of the organization encouraging merchants and vendors to stop doing business and go to pray in the mosque.¹²³ The video also showed members of the Hisbah (an Islamic body charged with maintaining public order and morality) removing “offensive items” from the public sphere, such as hookahs from coffee shops,¹²⁴ smashing statues placed on the street, and destroying “polytheistic” burial structures.¹²⁵



Hisbah activities in eastern Libya

Ansar al-Sharia in Libya

- Ansar al-Sharia in Libya published an announcement regarding the death of the organization’s leader, Muhammad al-Zahawi. The announcement, which included statements in al-Zahawi’s memory and praise for his actions as a mujahid, ended with a call on fighters in Libya to continue jihad until they achieve victory or a martyr’s death, and with a threat to seek revenge on “enemies of Allah”.¹²⁶

The Mujahideen Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem, a Palestinian Salafi-jihadist group in the Sinai Peninsula, also expressed sorrow and eulogized al-Zahawi via the Ibn Tamiyya jihadist media institution. The group sympathized with the mujahideen in Libya, especially with Ansar al-Sharia in Libya. The announcement also emphasized that the US was responsible for the gang of criminals who killed al-Zahawi on Libyan soil, just as it kidnapped Abu Anas al-Libi and murdered him in one of its jails, and just as it killed other Libyan jihad leaders such as Abu Yahya

¹²³ <https://isdarat.org/3402> (Arabic).

¹²⁴ http://khilapha.blogspot.com/2015/01/blog-post_94.html (Arabic).

¹²⁵ http://khilapha.blogspot.com/2015/01/blog-post_60.html (Arabic).

¹²⁶ <http://www.alwasat.ly/ar/news/libya/57997> (Arabic).

al-Libi. Therefore, the organization emphasized that the Muslim Nation must take revenge on the US and its allies.¹²⁷



A statement published by Ansar al-Sharia in memory of Muhammad al-Zahawi

- Al-Raya, the jihadist media institution of Ansar al-Sharia in Libya, published a video titled, “From Residents on the Front Line – Part 1”, in which a fighter from the organization on the front line emphasized the importance of embracing jihad in order to spread the true faith of Islam.¹²⁸

Mali

- The Ifriqiyya jihadist media institution published a two-part article titled, “The Full Story of the Islamic State of Azawad”, based on an interview with Sheikh Abd al-‘Aziz Habib, a member of AQIM’s Shari’a Council and the leader of the Islamic Emirate in Azawad, conducted by Zakariya Bughara, a Moroccan writer and former political prisoner.¹²⁹ The article reviewed the way in which the Azawad Emirate in Mali was established, how it conducts its operations including at the management level, its relationship with other Islamic movements, and more. According to the editor, the article was designed to preserve the memory of the Azawad Emirate in Mali in the pages of jihadist history and he asked that the publication be widely distributed via social networks.¹³⁰

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

¹²⁸ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

¹²⁹ The interview itself was published at the end of 2013 and re-published by the Al-Ghuraba jihadist media institution in 2014.

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



The publication banner

Egypt

Ajnad Misr

- During the second half of January 2015, the jihadist media institution of Ajnad Misr, Al-Kinana, published the following:
 - An announcement (no. 15) detailing several military operations against Egyptian security forces during the month of January 2015. For example, the organization claimed responsibility for an attack that its members carried out on the presidential palace on January 23, 2015. At the end of the announcement, the organization vowed to continue its series of attacks against Egyptian security forces.¹³¹
 - An article by Dr. Ali Sai'd, responsible for the media committee of the Al-Kinana institution. In his article, he blessed Egyptian Muslim men for their protest against the Egyptian regime and called for them to recommence the revolution that, according to him, was stolen from their hands. At the end of the announcement, he implored Egyptians to continue the revolution and attack infrastructure and factories connected to the Egyptian security forces.¹³²

¹³¹ <http://justpaste.it/ajnadmisr15>; <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

¹³² <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

- An article by Dr. Ali Sai'd, responsible for the media committee of the Al-Kinana institution, titled, "Why Do We Choose to Operate in Egypt?" According to the writer, members of the organization chose Egypt as an arena of jihad activity because Egyptians are indigenous people, a fact that helps them because they are familiar with many local dialects as well as with Egypt's customs, culture and the manner in which its residents should be treated: "We learned from the way of jihad of our predecessors. We are not strangers [...]".

According to him, the Egyptian regime is a tyrannical regime considered to be one of America's most important collaborators and serves as a central pillar in the implementation of its strategy in the region. It also receives very extensive US aid in order to protect the Jewish State from attacks by the mujahideen in Sinai and Gaza, and in order to oppress the Muslim Nation through, among other things, its conceptual, cultural and moral influence. The American support also stems from a desire to protect the US Navy and oil tankers stolen from Muslim lands via the Suez Canal. There is also security and intelligence collaboration between the US and Egypt. In light of this, the writer emphasized that there is just cause to undermine the power of the Egyptian regime. This should be the first step in liberating Islam's holy places and building an Islamic state. According to him, Egypt is currently experiencing a difficult period of oppression and the general climate is replete with rising anger and a desire to take revenge on the regime. In light of this, jihad will continue to gain momentum and adhere to its path until the flag of Islam is raised above the land of Egypt.¹³³

- An article by Bilal al-Qahiri, responsible for the organization's general contacts, in which he justified attacks against Egyptian security personnel by any means possible. According to him, great importance should also be ascribed to PR activities and to increasing awareness of the danger posed by authoritarian regimes, such as the Egyptian regime, to Islam and to the lives of Muslims.¹³⁴

¹³³ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

¹³⁴ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

Nigeria

Against the backdrop of the arrival of US Foreign Minister, John Kerry, to Nigeria on January 25, 2015, a week before Nigeria's presidential elections, Boko Haram carried out another attack in the city of Maiduguri in northeast Nigeria. In addition, the organization seized control of the town of Monguno, located 140 kilometers northeast of Maiduguri, and attacked Konduga. Even though it was not clear how large the territory is that Boko Haram effectively controls, analysts and experts estimate that it controls most of Borno State and a significant part of the border area with Cameroon and Chad. Despite the Nigerian army's announcement regarding preparations for the start of an extensive operation against the organization, it seems to be having difficulty blocking the advancement of the jihadists.¹³⁵

The Islamic State in West Africa (Boko Haram/Assembly of the Helpers of Sunnah for Dawah and Jihad)

- The Assembly of the Helpers of Sunnah for Dawah and Jihad, known as Boko Haram, published a video containing a message from Abu Bakr Shekau, the leader of Boko Haram, regarding events in Baga. Shekau claimed responsibility for the massacre that his organization carried out in the town of Baga in the beginning of January, and claimed that his organization seized many weapons that could serve his organization in its battle against the Nigerian army. In addition, he threatened to carry out attacks and raids on towns and villages. In the framework of the video, he referred to other issues, including praise for the attack in Paris against the *Charlie Hebdo* magazine offices.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ <http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/world/africa/.premium-1.2547953> (Hebrew).

¹³⁶ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).



Shekau in the video

- The media institution, Al-'Urwa al-Wuthqa ("The Strong Connection"), which represents the Assembly of the Helpers of Sunnah for Dawah and Jihad (Boko Haram), published the following:
 - A filmed interview with the official spokesman of the organization, Shaikh Abu Mus'ab al-Barnawi, regarding events in the city of Baga in northeast Nigeria.

In response to a question regarding the importance of the city of Baga to the IS and to the Nigerian government, Abu Mus'ab explained that the city holds commercial and military value for the Nigerian government. Its military value stems from the fact that the Nigerian government has a coalition with Cameroon, Chad and Niger against Boko Haram. This coalition controls Lake Chad, which is considered one of the most important economic resources in the region. For Boko Haram, the importance of the region lies in removing the military presence from IS territory, followed by establishing shari'a in the area and creating security for the Muslims there.

Regarding whether the organization is called Boko Haram and whether it is really spilling Muslim blood as reported in the media, Abu Mus'ab responded that the media is delivering mostly false information and spreading lies. In addition, he added that the organization is not called Boko Haram but rather "The Assembly of the Helpers of Sunnah for Dawah and Jihad", and its goal is to bring victory to the Sunnis and establish the rule of Allah on Earth. In addition, Abu Mus'ab claimed that the organization is not spilling the blood of Muslims but rather is fighting for their goals. He added that the organization is only fighting those who fight against it and forgives those who express remorse.

Regarding the question of how Abu Mus'ab's words will reach those who have no access to the forum and how people who expressed remorse will know that the organization will not kill them, Abu Mus'ab responded that it is possible to issue proclamations and publish them on the Internet, and that if people express regret, it is also possible to send their brethren a request to express regret too. As proof that his organization is not killing those who express regret, he mentioned that the organization did not attack anyone in the cities of Mobi, Damatro and Felka.

In response to the final question regarding the organization's strategy vis-à-vis the residents of the cities that they conquered, Abu Mus'ab responded that the same strategy is employed in every city that the organization conquers. He added that the residents of Baga had fought against the organization and, therefore, when his fighters entered the city they fled, while most of the residents of other cities conquered by the organization (such as Mobi and Damatro) welcomed them and so his organization recommended that they express remorse, return home in safety and stand by the organization against the Nigerian government.

At the end of the video, Abu Mus'ab sent a message to the coalition forces, composed of Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger, as well as their supporters. He called on them to stop their maliciousness and threatened that if they do not stop, his organization will invade the homes of coalition members just as the latter invaded their homes. He added that Cameroon had attacked the organization and so the organization attacked it in return. He also vowed that if Chad and Niger do not act against the organization, it will not attack them, and he asked them to leave the coalition or else they will regret it.

Abu Mus'ab also called on supporters of the coalition to retract their support and stand by their brothers, the mujahideen. Finally, he addressed those people who talk about the organization in the media and asked them to verify their claims with the organization before publishing them.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1KJavZ-26i0>



A clip from the interview

- A video titled, “Message from a Mujahid – Part 1” in English. A member of the organization named Abu ‘Aysha from the city of Gambaru in Nigeria said that the goal of the group is not to fight for democracy or for money, but rather the sole goal is to implement shari’a. He emphasized that his organization will kill anyone who stands in its way and tries to interfere in the fulfilment of its goal.¹³⁸



A clip from the video

Ansar al-Muslimin fi Bilad al-Sudan (The Supporters of Muslims in the Land of the Blacks)

- Al-Hidayya, the jihadist media institution of Ansar al-Muslimin fi Bilad al-Sudan (The Supporters of Muslims in the Land of the Blacks), published a video titled, “God is our Master”. In the video, a member of the organization talks about the organization’s goals, including the implementation of shari’a in Africa. According to him, his organization’s methods are vastly different from those of Boko Haram since the latter attacks mosques and crowded places, and kills Muslims indiscriminately while his organization is revolted by the killing of Muslims and

¹³⁸ <http://justpaste.it/j4xo>

only does so if there is a justified reason. He emphasized that his organization adheres to jihad only against enemies of Islam and that it helps oppressed Muslims. Later in the video, he showed the loot plundered by members of the organization in a raid that they carried out against Nigerian army forces. Finally, the member of the organization declared that its members would continue to wage jihad while defending the lives of Muslims for the sake of implementing shari'a.¹³⁹



A clip from the video

Somalia

The announcement by Zakariya Ismail Hersi, a senior intelligence chief in Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen who surrendered himself to Somalia authorities in December 2014, regarding his official retirement from the movement, and his description of the organization as one afflicted with violence that should be destroyed, instilled hope among Somalia authorities of additional defections from the movement. However, these hopes were proven false.¹⁴⁰ The movement continued to present a serious threat to the security of Somalia and Kenya. Against the backdrop of the visit by the President of Turkey to Somalia, the movement carried out a suicide attack at a hotel in Mogadishu. According to the military spokesman for Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, the attack targeted police officers who had gathered in the hotel.¹⁴¹ Turkey is a key ally of the Somali regime as part of efforts to re-build it.

¹³⁹ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

¹⁴⁰ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/01/al-shabab-intelligence-chief-quitting-150127180558773.html>

¹⁴¹ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/22/shabaab-bomb-mogadishu-hotel_n_6522838.html (English).

Iran

- The jihadist media institution of Ansar al-Furqan, a Salafi-jihadist organization operating in Balochistan against the Iranian regime - Al-Furqan – published a video titled, “A Message from the Mountain Lovers: Testimony for the Safayids”, a spokesman for the organization speaking in Farsi stated that his organization aims to undermine the symbols and powers of the Iranian regime.¹⁴²

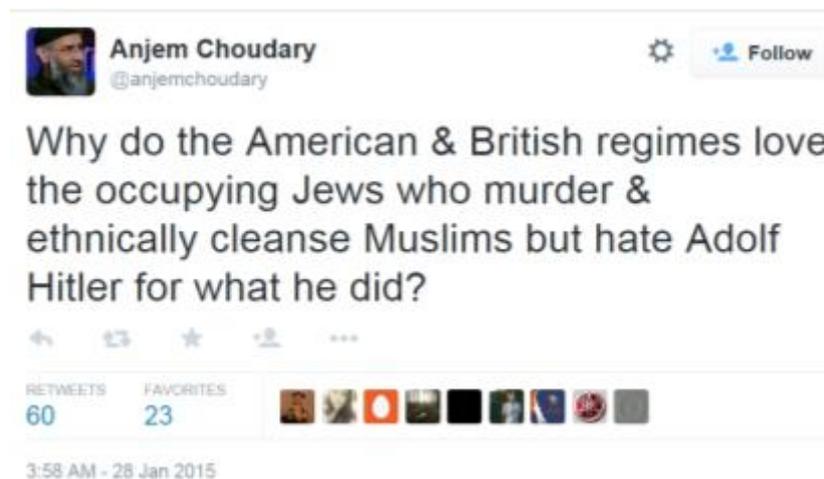
The West

- The jihadist media institution of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, Al-Qaeda’s branch in Somalia - Al-Kataib – published an announcement in which it blessed the “heroic operation against the *Charlie Hebdo* magazine”. The announcement was titled, “May Our Mothers Mourn for Us If We Do Not Come to the Aid of Our Prophet”. In addition to expressing satisfaction and joy over the attack, the organization blessed AQAP as the organization responsible for the attack and the one that continues to initiate and carry out attacks in the heart of Crusader territory. Later in the announcement, the organization encouraged Muslims living in Europe to emulate the attack by the Kouachi brothers against the *Charlie Hebdo* magazine offices in revenge for the magazine’s insults towards Allah and the Prophet Muhammad. Finally, the organization made threats against France that if it continues to insult Islam it will never enjoy security, and that the streets of Paris and Toulouse would continue to serve as targets for attacks by the mujahideen. The recent attacks, according to the writer, were a message that should be heeded.¹⁴³
- Sheikh Anjem Choudary, a radical Islamic preacher in England, continued to publish controversial correspondence on his Twitter account. During the second half of January 2015, Choudary posted several tweets, including the following claims: an accusation against Britain for using terrorism against Muslims; insults of the Prophet Muhammad, the occupation of Muslim lands and the killing of Muslims serve as a primary factor in the trend of radicalization among Muslims; the US and its allies are making cynical use of the term “terrorism” in order to categorize certain Muslims as terrorists while they themselves are considered the biggest

¹⁴² <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

¹⁴³ <https://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

terrorists in the world; democracy is not at all compatible with the principles of Islam; the definition of jihad is not confined to the ego but is also expressed in the defense of life, honor and property, and in the removal of obstacles to the implementation of shari'a; Saudi Arabia is imposing heretical laws and its leaders are considered to have deserted Islam. They are allied with enemies and jail Muslim scholars; the Saudi Kingdom must be dismantled and replaced with shari'a; anti-Semitic and anti-Israel sentiments; and more.¹⁴⁴



One of Choudary's tweets

¹⁴⁴ <https://twitter.com/anjemchoudary>

ABOUT THE ICT

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