

## **Bimonthly Report**

### **Summary of Information on Jihadist Websites**

#### **The Second Half of May 2016**

## Highlights

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

- **The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan** announces the death of its leader, **Mullah Akhtar Mansour**, as a result of a US drone strike, and the appointment of the organization's new leader, **Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada**. As a result of the announcement, members of the Emirate and some Al-Qaeda branches give eulogies in Akhtar Mansour's memory. Meanwhile, members of the Taliban in Afghanistan swear allegiance to the new leader of the Emirate.
- **Abu Muhammad al-'Adnani**, the spokesman for the Islamic State, calls on supporters of the organization to help it carry out terrorist attacks on western soil using any means and provides permission for the killing of all civilians in the west. In addition, al-'Adnani accuses rebel factions in Syria, including Al-Nusra Front, of joining the infidel forces and collaborating with the US and coalition forces.
- **Abu Abdullah al-Shami**, a member of **Al-Nusra Front's** Shura Council, accuses the US of foiling the Syrian revolution and supporting the Alawite regime. According to him, this trend only serves to encourage the organization's fighters to keep fighting. In addition, al-Shami calls on all jihad factions in Syria to continue jihad until they achieve their goals.
- **Al-Nusra Front** is waging a PR campaign against Russian involvement in Syria. This campaign is characterized by presenting Russia's "war crimes" against the civilian population in Syria as well as opinion polls against it, and more.
- Sheikh **'Abd al-Haqq**, leader of the **Turkistan Islamic Party**, emphasizes the great importance of his organization in Syria and explains that the arena of jihad in Syria is one in which its members acquire tools and knowledge to help them fight against the Chinese regime once they return to their homeland in Xinjiang in western China. In addition, he explains that he does not recognize the Islamic Caliphate of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and he scorns the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan for splitting from the Taliban in Afghanistan and joining the Islamic Caliphate.
- **Khalid 'Umar Batarafi**, a senior leader of **Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula**, claims responsibility for the assassination of the governor of Aden who was in charge of security in the city. According to him, the organization continues to maintain its power and operate in the area

despite its withdrawal from the city of Al-Mukalla and the air strikes by coalition forces. In addition, Batarafi criticizes the Emirate for its battle against the organization's fighters in Hadramawt Province, accuses the US of attempting to create a new reality in Yemen, and accuses the Houthis of attempting to try to eliminate the Sunni presence in the area.

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## New Publications

### Ideology

- Al-Furqan jihadist media institution, which is affiliated with the Islamic State, published a speech by Abu Muhammad al-‘Adnani, spokesman for the organization. In the opening of the speech, which was titled, “that those who perished [through disbelief] would perish upon evidence and those who lived [in faith] would live upon evidence” (Quran, Chapter 8:42), al-‘Adnani referred to the current situation in Syria and emphasized that infidel forces had joined together in Syria in order to battle against the organization and its efforts to raise the banner of Allah. According to him, the battle against Islam and its believers is not new. This trend was also manifested in the United States’ war in Iraq 13 years ago after the Jews mocked the US government and persuaded it to wage war in Iraq. Today there is a similar situation in Syria as the US and its allies are sanctifying war against the IS. However, this war is destined to fail and the US is destined to suffer a very severe defeat in the Syrian war as it did in Iraq.

In light of this, al-‘Adnani called on the organization’s supporters in Europe to attack any target in western territory using any means, including by “casting a stone at the Crusaders in their stronghold”. According to him, it is permissible to kill western civilians and they should not be viewed as innocents since there is proof that the Muslim law permits this. According to him, western countries are killing Muslims in Muslim lands and, therefore, the killing of civilians in the West is permitted.

Al-‘Adnani even criticized rebel factions in Syria, including Al-Nusra Front, which it accused of heresy. According to him, the rebel factions are cooperating with the US and coalition forces in the battle against Islamic State fighters.<sup>1</sup>

Al-‘Adnani’s speech earned harsh criticism among supporters of Al-Qaeda, especially due to its accusation of heresy against Al-Nusra Front. Sheikh Dr. Hani al-Sibai, a prominent Salafi-jihadist sage in London who supports Al-Qaeda, noted that the IS was infected with a dichotomous outlook manifested in their classification of Muslims as infidels and, therefore, it has no right to direct such criticism against Al-Nusra Front and other jihadist factions.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ia801509.us.archive.org/2/items/KalemtSHabaan>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BVKhG4fGQPM>

It should be noted that supporters of the organization waged a network-wide campaign regarding al-'Adnani's speech before it was even published in light of reports on Twitter, Facebook and Telegram channels that a speech by a senior member of the organization was expected to be published. The campaign proved itself to be effective when its hashtag reached the top of the topic trends list,<sup>3</sup> the term for the most widely distributed hashtags that appear at the top of each user's Twitter account. An interesting and unusual phenomenon on this topic occurred when the geographical locations of some IS supporters were revealed on their Twitter accounts, risking having their location discovered by posting photos in which they held words of support for the organization.<sup>4</sup>



**From left to right: messages of support for the IS that were posted to Twitter by a Muslim from Münster, Germany and a Muslim from Stockholm, Sweden**

- Al-Hayat jihadist media institution, which is affiliated with the Islamic State, published the following:
  - A song in Turkish titled, “Come from Jihad”. The song urges Turkish-speaking Muslims to immigrate to arenas of jihad in Syria and Iraq in order to join the ranks of the IS and help in the battle against its enemies.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> [https://twitter.com/johannes\\_saal/status/734081212680179712](https://twitter.com/johannes_saal/status/734081212680179712)

<sup>4</sup> <https://twitter.com/jenanmoussa/status/734054748031160320>

<sup>5</sup> <https://ia801507.us.archive.org/4/items/HaydiEyMcahidim>

- A video titled, “Religion and Heresy are One”. In the video, the organization accused Russia and western countries, especially the US, of forming a coalition designed to fight a bitter war against the organization and Islam. According to the organization, Islamic movements pretending to battle against foreign invaders have also deviated from their path. The Taliban in Afghanistan, for example, was accused of holding peace talks with the US and of attempting to prevent jihadist organizations from fighting against the US. In light of this, the organization emphasized that the only answer to defeating the enemies of the Islamic State is to embrace jihad.<sup>6</sup>



**A clip from the video**

- The Himma Library jihadist media institution, which is affiliated with the IS and distributes of flyers and pamphlets on Islamic issues, published a video titled, “The Month of Sha'ban – Virtues and Provisions”. The video explained the Islamic importance of this month and the laws of fasting associated with it, as well as a warning against various customs for the month that essentially constitute Bid'a (“heretic innovations”).<sup>7</sup>
- The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan published a filmed interview with one of its activists regarding the importance of fulfilling the obligation of jihad, in which he emphasized that every Muslim has a duty to do so.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> <https://archive.org/download/TheReligionOfKufrIsOneAR>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZ3q8FnICBM>

<sup>8</sup> <https://ia801507.us.archive.org/4/items/HaydiEyMcahidim>

### ***The Rift between Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State***

- Sheikh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, a senior Salafi jihadist sage who supports Al-Qaeda, called on the IS to demonstrate maturity and responsibility for the fate of Muslim families who migrated to the organization's territory. According to him, the organization has been in terrible distress for several months in light of attacks by coalition forces on Al-Raqqah in Syria and the siege on Al-Falluja. Al-Maqdisi warned that the continued loss of territories and tilting the spoon of battle in favor of coalition forces is liable to considerably jeopardize the fate and dignity of Muslims, especially Muslim immigrants in IS territory since members of Shi'ite militias, Assad's army and other enemies could rape and murder them. Therefore, the IS must transcend its sense of ego and allow Muslims, especially refugees from Europe, to open the borders and return to their lands if they want to, or alternatively to hand them over to Al-Nusra Front or other jihadist factions who place considerable importance on preserving Muslim dignity. Al-Maqdisi further warned that if the IS does not take these steps, then it will bear responsibility for their honor and their lives.<sup>9</sup>
- Al-Sumud jihadist media institution published an article titled, "Al-Maqdisi Responds to Al-Maqdisi about the Legality of Killing Civilians" by Abu al-Ma'ali 'Uqayl bin 'Ali al-Ahmad. In the article, al-Ahmad accused al-Maqdisi of hypocrisy and subservience to the West in light of his reluctance to accept the words of al-Adnani regarding the permissibility of killing Western civilians. According to him, al-Maqdisi previously expressed support for the killing of civilians in the West but changed his tone following his release from prison in Jordan. Al-Ahmad emphasized that since al-Maqdisi's release, he has focused on demonizing the Islamic State and accusing its leadership of an extreme and exaggerated interpretation of Islamic holy sources.<sup>10</sup>

### **Promoting the Myth of the Martyr**

- Al-Furqan jihadist media institution published a biography of Abu Hasan al-Rimi, a former member of the Taliban in Afghanistan who was killed in Waziristan in an American drone strike

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<sup>9</sup> <https://justpaste.it/mohajerat>

<sup>10</sup> <https://ia601500.us.archive.org/27/items/almakdsiyarod>

in 2008. The biography was published in a series of publications titled, “The Martyrs of Khurasan”.<sup>11</sup>

- Al-Nusra Front published a video in memory of one of its members named Abu al-Muthana al-Madani, in the framework of a series of publications titled, “The Celebrated”. Al-Madani emigrated from Saudi Arabia to Syria in order to join the ranks of the organization and he was killed last year when he carried out a suicide attack in which he drove an explosives-ridden car into Syrian security forces in northern Aleppo. The video emphasized, among other things, the extent of a martyr’s devotion to the commandment of jihad and presented his last will and testament, which addressed the importance of fulfilling the obligation.<sup>12</sup>



**Abu al-Muthana al-Madani (pictured right)**

- Ansar al-Sharia published a eulogy to mark the anniversary of the death of Mansur al-Bar’asi, a former senior commander of the organization.<sup>13</sup>
- The IS in Baghdad published a video presenting the last will and testament of a suicide terrorist known as Abu Dharr al-Iraqi. In the framework of the video, al-Iraqi verbally attacked and threatened the Shi’ite population in Iraq, criticized Saudi sages, encouraged the mujahideen to continue to carry out attacks, and consoled his family members while calling on them to rejoice when they receive the news of his death. The end of the video showed photos from the suicide

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<sup>11</sup> <https://justpaste.it/uhzh>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3XEtBVHK6Mg>

<sup>13</sup> <https://archive.org/details/athi-040>

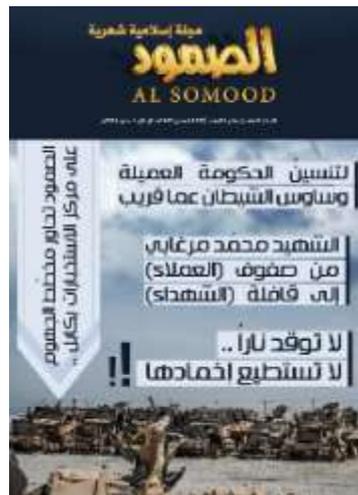
attack that al-Iraqi carried out amongst a group of Popular Mobilization Forces in Sadr City, Baghdad - an attack that killed and injured approximately 100 people.<sup>14</sup>



Promoting the messages of the IS through the last will and testament of a suicide bomber

## Magazines

- The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan published issue no. 122 (44 pp.) for May 2016 of its magazine, *Al-Somood*, which covers the arena of jihad in Afghanistan.<sup>15</sup>



The banner of the *Al-Somood* issue

- AQAP published issue no. 12 of its magazine, *Al-Masra*, which reviewed recent developments in various arenas of jihad by Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, including articles on: the appointment of a

<sup>14</sup> <http://3rbup.com/c804ce37deedbc21?pt=uvdbm9KQtsclFuLBrEEKmgfNo%2BLPNnOqbCAY5NyLAOE%3D>

<sup>15</sup> <https://ia601505.us.archive.org/18/items/Somood122>

new emir to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan; the successes of jihad fighters in the battlefield against Iranian, Alawite and Lebanese Hezbollah forces in the arena of jihad in Syria; the success of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen forces in Somalia in inflicting casualties among Ethiopian army forces; Russia’s involvement in the Horn of Africa, especially in Somalia; an interview with Sheikh Ibarhim al-Qusi – a member of Al-Qaeda’s Shura Council; the knife intifada in Israel; religious legal issues; and more.<sup>16</sup>



**The banner of the issue of *Al-Masra***

- Issues no. 31-33 of the periodical, *Al-Naba*, were published by the IS. The issues reviewed recent developments by the organization’s fighters in various arenas of jihad while glorifying their achievements in the battlefield.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> <http://up.top4top.net/downloadf-1493ro10-pdf.html>

<sup>17</sup> <https://ia601507.us.archive.org/33/items/Naba31>; <https://ia601509.us.archive.org/12/items/Naba32>; <https://ia601505.us.archive.org/4/items/Naba33>



The issue banners of *Al-Naba*

- Issue no. 3 of the magazine, *Rabi' al-Sham* (“the Spring of Al-Sham”) was published by Ahrar al-Sham.<sup>18</sup>



The banner of *Rabi' al-Sham*

- A new jihadist group called Al-Iman, which supports the IS, published a new magazine titled, *Tawasul*. The issued dealt with the importance of PR and of social networks as a PR tool for the

<sup>18</sup> [https://twitter.com/rabe3\\_asham/status/732967023559495680](https://twitter.com/rabe3_asham/status/732967023559495680)

organization. In addition, the issue covered historical battles in Islam against Christians, the Islamic State's achievements in various arenas of jihad, and more.<sup>19</sup>



From left to right: The banner of the new magazine, *Tawassul*; a graph containing details about the informational network campaign waged by IS supporters praising the stabbing of Jews

## Reports from the Field

### Afghanistan-Pakistan

The second half of May opened with the killing of the leader of the Taliban in Afghanistan, Mullah Akhtar Mansour, in a US drone strike that targeted his car near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.<sup>20</sup> Several days later, the organization declared a new leader, Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada, who had previously served as one of Mansour's deputies. According to reports within the organization, Akhundzada vowed to take revenge on foreign forces and on the Afghan government for the killing of Mansour and, therefore, there is little chance that he will take part in peace talks with the Afghan government.<sup>21</sup> The US President also claimed in his speech that he believes the Taliban will continue its offensive line and he questioned the renewal of peace talks

<sup>19</sup>[https://ia601504.us.archive.org/3/items/mterteing\\_tutanota\\_1\\_201605/%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84%20-%201.pdf](https://ia601504.us.archive.org/3/items/mterteing_tutanota_1_201605/%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84%20-%201.pdf)

<sup>20</sup><http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/taliban-leader-killed-drone-strike-160521204020111.html> (English).

<sup>21</sup><http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/taliban-leader-mullah-hibatullah-akhundzada-160525161334507.html> (English).

*between the organization and the Afghan government.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, the Taliban in Afghanistan continued to carry out attacks against security and government forces during the month of May. At least 50 police officers were killed within two days in an attack carried out by members of the organization in Helmand Province, in southern Afghanistan, at the end of the month.<sup>23</sup> In addition, members of the organization attacked four buses in the area of Kunduz in northern Afghanistan, which resulted in 12 deaths and the capture of 25 security officers,<sup>24</sup> as well as a bus carrying employees of the court in Kabul.<sup>25</sup>*

### ***The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan***

- The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan published the following:
  - An announcement regarding the death of the organization’s leader, Emir of the Faithful, Mullah Akhtar Mansour, and the appointment of a new leader to the organization. In the announcement, the organization admitted that Mansour had been killed by a US drone strike in the border area between Afghanistan and Pakistan on May 22, 2016. In addition, the announcement expressed condolences to his family, to members of the organization and to the Afghan nation, and praised Mansour’s accomplishments as leader of the Islamic Emirate. The announcement also stated that the leadership council of the Islamic Emirate had unanimously selected Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada as the new leader of the organization and swore allegiance to him. The announcement added that Sirajuddin Haqqani and Mohammad Yaqoob, Mullah Omar’s son, were selected as deputies to the organization’s leader. At the end of the announcement, the organization called on the mujahideen and the Afghan nation to unite, and it added that it is the religious obligation of all mujahideen to swear allegiance to the new Emir of the Faithful and to continue their activities under his leadership. The announcement noted that

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<sup>22</sup> <http://goo.gl/iEHQv4>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/afghanistan-helmand-clashes-160530142321319.html> (English).

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/afghan-taliban-kills-12-attack-bus-160531072418848.html> (English).

<sup>25</sup> <http://goo.gl/lohBxH>

religious ceremonies would be held for Mullah Akhtar Mansour over the next three days.<sup>26</sup>

In response, family members of the former leader of the Taliban in Afghanistan, Mullah Akhtar Mansour, expressed thanks for the condolences that they received and they swore allegiance to the new leader, Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada. The relatives also called on all mujahudeen to swear allegiance to the new leader.<sup>27</sup>

Various jihadist organizations allied with the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan also gave eulogies in his memory, including the Islamic Emirate of the Caucasus<sup>28</sup> and the Taliban in Pakistan.<sup>29</sup> It is interesting to note that AQAP, AQIM and Al-Nusra Front - Al-Qaeda's branch in Syria – published a joint message of condolences in which they vowed to continue to path of jihad.<sup>30</sup>

- Video clips showing training camps for members of the organization,<sup>31</sup> and including messages of condolences by various provinces in Afghanistan<sup>32</sup> over the death of the leader of the Taliban in Afghanistan, Mullah Akhtar Mansour, as well as their oaths of allegiance to the new leader, Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada.



**Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada – the new leader of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan**

### ***The Taliban in Pakistan***

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<sup>26</sup> <http://shahamat-english.com/?p=52> (English).

<sup>27</sup> <https://justpaste.it/uryb>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2016/05/26/112336/imatat-kavkaz-obraschenie-v-svyazi-s-shakhadoj-amira-islamskogo-emirata-afganistan-mullo-mansura-akhtara.shtml>

<sup>29</sup> <https://umarmedia.wordpress.com/2016/05/30/the-condolence>

<sup>30</sup> <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/Cjocz3OWEAA9WCZ.jpg>

<sup>31</sup> <https://archive.org/details/BDLB2>; <https://archive.org/details/Muaskar-baiat-mobileMp4>

<sup>32</sup> <https://ia601504.us.archive.org/3/items/NKBMobile>

- The Omar jihadist media institution, which belongs to Taliban in Pakistan, published a video titled, “Ghazi Force”. The video included mention of injustices carried out by the Pakistani government towards its subjects, a salute to its mujahideen members who fell in battle against Pakistani security forces, and a call by the organization’s leadership to Muslims to go out in protest against the Pakistani regime.<sup>33</sup>

### **The Islamic State in Khorasan Province**

- The IS in Khorasan Province published the following:
  - A video in which Tabik jihadists declared allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of the IS.<sup>34</sup>
  - A collection of photos documenting Quran memorization courses for children.<sup>35</sup>



**The banner of the publication**

### **The Arabian Peninsula**

*Al-Qaeda continued to suffer harsh blows by Arab coalition forces, led by Saudi Arabia, since its withdrawal from its stronghold in Al-Mukalla in the beginning of May 2016. For example, 13 Al-Qaeda fighters were killed in the city of Al-Mukalla as a result of fire from coalition air forces.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, the organization seemed to maintain its influence and good relations with several tribes, largely thanks to the oil fields in southern Yemen under its control. The attacks on fuel reserves in Yemen as a result of the civil war in the country essentially plays into the hands of the organization, which is leveraging its economic power in order to gain supporters. The city of Azan is*

<sup>33</sup> <https://archive.org/details/GhaziForce>

<sup>34</sup> [https://ia601506.us.archive.org/21/items/Bai3ahTajik\\_201605](https://ia601506.us.archive.org/21/items/Bai3ahTajik_201605)

<sup>35</sup> <https://justpaste.it/uffb>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2016/5/22//13-قتيلا-من-القاعدة-بهجوم-للقوات-اليمنية-في-المكلا-13> (Arabic).

one of the organization's oil smuggling centers.<sup>37</sup> The Islamic State is also facing the military threat posed by coalition forces but nevertheless has managed to carry out several terrorist attacks against the Yemeni army in Aden, in which approximately 41 people were killed.<sup>38</sup>

At the same time as the defeats suffered by terrorist organizations, efforts were made to renew peace talks in Kuwait in order to restore stability to Yemen. However, by the end of May there had been no breakthrough in the situation. For example, the head of the Yemeni government's delegation in Kuwait accused the Houthis of thwarting the peace talks due to their continued attacks against the Sunni population in Yemen.<sup>39</sup>

### **Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula**

- Al-Malahim jihadist media institution, which belongs to Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), published a speech by Khalid 'Umar Batarafi, a senior leader of the organization. Batarafi claimed responsibility for the assassination of 'Idrus al-Zubaydi, the governor of Aden, and Shalal Sha'l, the official responsible for security in Aden, in the beginning of May 2016. Batarafi explained that, despite the organization's withdrawal from the city of Al-Mukalla against the backdrop of air strikes by coalition forces, the organization continued to operate in the field. In addition, al-Batarafi criticized the Emirates for waging a battle against members of the organization in Hadramawt Province, and he accused the US of attempting to create a new reality in Yemen. Batarafi also addressed at length the war against the Houthis and accused them of trying to wipe out the Sunni presence in Yemen.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> <http://almashhad-alyemeni.com/news75787.html>; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-smuggling-idUSKCN0YI0Q2>; <http://24.ae/article/250626/>-المكلا-واحتلال-اليمن-تحذير-من-تنامي-نفوذ-القاعدة-بعد-طردها-من-المكلا-واحتلال-عزان.aspx

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/23/islamic-state-suicide-bomber-kills-41-people-in-yemen/> (English).

<sup>39</sup> <https://arabic.rt.com/news/823554/> (Arabic). /وفد-حكومة-اليمن-انسحاب-المفاوضات-الكويت-

<sup>40</sup> <https://justpaste.it/FATYAOSAR>



The banner of Batarafi's speech

### ***The Islamic State***

- The IS in Aden-Abyan Province published the following:
  - A collection of photos documenting a suicide attack that was carried out by an IS fighter in the recruiting center for Yemeni security forces in Khormaksar Province in Aden.<sup>41</sup>



The moment of the explosion at the recruiting center in Aden

- A video documenting the organization's activities in Abyan Province against the Houthis and Yemeni security forces. One IS fighter called on Muslims to move to the arena of jihad in Yemen in order to purify it from the contamination of heretics, polytheists, dictators and Muslim traitors.<sup>42</sup>

### **Iraq**

<sup>41</sup> <https://justpaste.it/ujwq>

<sup>42</sup> [http://dawaahaq.blogspot.co.il/2016/05/blog-post\\_839.html](http://dawaahaq.blogspot.co.il/2016/05/blog-post_839.html)

The second half of May opened with the Iraqi army's recapture of the city of Al-Rutbeh, west of Al-Anbar Province, with help from the US Air Force. Al-Rutbeh is a very important city due to its proximity to the main road leading to Syria and Jordan, and its capture served as another blow to the IS.<sup>43</sup> Several days after the recapture of Al-Rutbeh, the Prime Minister of Iraq, Haider al-Abadi, announced the launch of an operation to recapture the city of Al-Fallujah, an important stronghold that was left under IS control in Al-Anbar Province.<sup>44</sup> In the first stage, the military operation focused on capturing villages and towns surrounding Al-Fallujah, while in the second stage Iraqi forces entered the city from three directions aided by international coalition air strikes.<sup>45</sup>

In contrast, the IS increased its terrorist attacks and guerilla warfare against security forces and Shi'ite targets in the arenas of battle (such as Al-Fallujah), areas that were recaptured by the Iraqi army (such as the city of Heet),<sup>46</sup> and in Baghdad, the capital of Iraq.<sup>47</sup> Among the most notable attacks in Baghdad during this period was a car bombing in the Shi'ite neighborhood of Al-Shaab, in northern Baghdad, which killed 38 people and injured at least 70 others.<sup>48</sup>

### **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 and Military Deployments:
    - Fallujah Province: A video titled, "Fallujah Stands with Them", which documented battles on the outskirts of Fallujah against the Iraqi army and Popular Mobilization Forces. The video indicated that, in addition to the

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<sup>43</sup><http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/iraqi-forces-capture-rutba-isis-160520085115084.html>; <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/05/iraqi-forces-report-recapturing-city-in-western-anbar.php> (English).

<sup>44</sup><http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/iraq-pm-declares-offensive-retake-fallujah-isis-160522220106703.html> (English).

<sup>45</sup><http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/iraqi-army-launches-assault-isis-fallujah-160530053337977.html> (English).

<sup>46</sup><http://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/isis-attacks-heet-district-dozens-families-displaced-district/> (English).

<sup>47</sup><http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/17/at-least-44-killed-in-baghdad-twin-bombings/>; <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/iraq-multiple-blasts-around-baghdad-leave-over-dozen-dead-several-injured-1562716> (English).

<sup>48</sup><http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/2016/05/bloodbath-iraq-160518041724264.html> (English).

use of anti-aircraft, mid-range rockets and heavy machine guns, the attacks included two suicide bombings at army posts that were carried out by two fighters named Abu Sa'd al-Tajiki and Abu Aisha al-Muhajir.<sup>49</sup>

- Saladdin Province: A video titled, “Flame of Sacrifice 1”, which presented the story of Mustafa Zafer al-Naseri, also known as Aby Hasan al-Iraqi, a senior IS commander in the province who planned several important battles in Baiji and Samara. The video included the life story of al-Naseri, including his academic training, period of imprisonment and military experience, and it noted that he was killed in an air strike by coalition forces.<sup>50</sup>
- Nineveh Province: A video regarding a series of strikes against Peshmerga forces in the province. The video included images of crossfire, farewell interviews with several suicide terrorists who were sent in explosives-ridden cars to enemy posts, and images of the battleground that were taken by a drone.<sup>51</sup>



**Image and analysis by forces in the battlefield using a drone**

- Various provinces: Filmed reviews and videos on various topics, such as: battles west of the city of Baiji (*Saladdin*),<sup>52</sup> ribat by fighters north of the

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<sup>49</sup> <https://dawaalhaq.com/post/43659>

<sup>50</sup> <http://sendvid.com/a73cat4u>

<sup>51</sup> <https://goo.gl/yIFR99>

<sup>52</sup> <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/31450>

city of Haditha and east of Sinjar (*Al-Furat and Al-Jazira*),<sup>53</sup> sniper and mortar bomb fire directed at army units in Zoba' (*Al-Janub*),<sup>54</sup> the penetration of Peshmerga posts in the area of Mosul (*Nineveh*),<sup>55</sup> battles and two suicide attacks west of Fallujah,<sup>56</sup> and battles in the area of the 'Ujayl oil field (*Kirkuk*).<sup>57</sup>

B. Executions:

- *Al-Jazira Province*: A filmed review regarding the execution of three people accused of passing information about IS sites to Peshmerga intelligence and Iraqi government officials.<sup>58</sup>

C. Civilian Matters:

- *Nineveh Province*: Filmed reviews about civilian matters concerning the city of Mosul, such as: agriculture, ice cream factory production, the construction of a mosque and the activities of the institute for water filling.<sup>59</sup>
- *Al-Jazira Province*: Filmed reviews about issues concerning the city of Tal-Afar, such as: hothouses and final exams at schools in the city.<sup>60</sup>

D. Propaganda and PR:

- *Nineveh Province*: A filmed review titled, "The Destruction of Polytheistic Antiquities in the City of Mosul", which documented the destruction of the "Mashki Gate" archaeological site that was established during the times of Assyrian King Sennacherib.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/31510>; <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/31713>

<sup>54</sup> <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/31519>

<sup>55</sup> <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/31638>

<sup>56</sup> <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/31677>; <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/31790>

<sup>57</sup> <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/32227>

<sup>58</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20160529081723/https://justpaste.it/uqs0>

<sup>59</sup> <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/32258>; <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/31857>; <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/32045>; <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/32309>

<sup>60</sup> <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/31434>; <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/31921>

<sup>61</sup> <http://goo.gl/5PPdh7>



The destruction of an archeological site from the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC in the city of Mosul

## Al-Sham [The Levant]

### Syria

*Battles continued in Syria between all of the warring sides and on all fronts, including regime forces and its allies against the IS in Palmyra and against armed factions in Daraa. Meanwhile, rebel factions renewed bombings against the Sheikh Maqsd neighborhood in Aleppo, which was under the control of People’s Protection Units (YPG).<sup>62</sup> Intense battles also took place between the IS and the armed opposition in northern Syria in the city of Mare’.<sup>63</sup> Meanwhile, Syrian Democratic Forces – a coalition of factions supported by the US, expanded attacks on the suburbs of Raqqah while attempting to capture the area of Tabaqa, which holds strategic importance for the organization as it connects the city of Raqqah to the area under its control near Aleppo.<sup>64</sup>*

*In the political arena, various countries raised suggestions about Syria. Turkey proposed that Washington wage a joint operation in Syria but without the participation of Kurdish forces,<sup>65</sup> Russia proposed carrying out joint air strikes together with the US,<sup>66</sup> and Saudi Arabia called for ground forces to be sent into Syria.<sup>67</sup> Against the backdrop of the above, a statement by UN Envoy to Syria,*

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<sup>62</sup> <http://goo.gl/MTx7Tw>

<sup>63</sup> [http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2016/05/160528\\_syria\\_fighting\\_is\\_rebels](http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2016/05/160528_syria_fighting_is_rebels) (Arabic).

<sup>64</sup> <http://goo.gl/LtrKTt>

<sup>65</sup> <https://goo.gl/NSXu75>

<sup>66</sup> [http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2016/05/160520\\_syria\\_russia\\_usd\\_airriads](http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2016/05/160520_syria_russia_usd_airriads) (Arabic).

<sup>67</sup> <http://goo.gl/ue8Oyu>

*Staffan de Mistura, was published that ruled out the possibility of a renewed round of talks in the coming weeks.*<sup>68</sup>

### **Al-Nusra Front**

- The jihadist media institution of Al-Nusra Front, Al-Manara Al-Bayda, published the following:
  - A video titled, “Continuing to Assist You” by a member of the organization’s Shura Council, Abu Abdullah al-Shami. In the video, al-Shami criticized the role played by the US in Syria as it is, according to him, acting against the Syrian revolution and he accused the US of supporting the Alawite regime. He claimed that each time the organization achieves victory against regime forces, the US bombs its fighters, and added that the US carried out a “serious crime” when it bombed Al-Nusra Front fighters in an air strike. Al-Shami also claimed that US attacks against Al-Nusra Front only strengthens the continued battle and he called on all factions to continue to wage jihad until they achieve their goals and until the residents of Syria achieve their freedom under Islam.<sup>69</sup>



**Abu Abdullah al-Shami**

- A message of condolences over the death of Abu Aseel al-Anzi, a military commander in charge of training, during battles in the northern suburb of Homs.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> <http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/un-envoy-rules-out-new-syria-talks-in-next-few-weeks> (English).

<sup>69</sup> <https://justpaste.it/madoon>

<sup>70</sup> <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CirgYWIXEAEQn7C.jpg>

- A PR campaign criticizing Russia’s military involvement in Syria. Among the propaganda materials published were videos documenting the destruction of villages as a result of bombings by Russian planes, opinions of residents in the street criticizing Russia, and more.<sup>71</sup>

### **Jaysh al-Fustat**

- Jaysh al-Fustat, an umbrella organization composed of Al-Nusra Front, Ahrar al-Sham and Fajr al-Umma, published the following:
  - An announcement clarifying the battle against Jaysh al-Islam, in which it accused the organization of constructing barriers that made it difficult for the mujahideen to move around in Al-Ghouta and of shooting at them. The announcement also accused the organization of blocking the entrance to Al-Ghouta and imposing taxes on Muslims, forcing the youth to fight under the banner of Jaysh al-Islam, seizing control of the courts and civilian institutions, and fighting against smaller factions and organizations in the area. The organization also claimed in the announcement that senior shari’a officials in Jaysh al-Islam had referred to other factions as Kharijites, assassinated their members and breached previous ceasefire agreements. At the end of the announcement, the organization called for solidarity with Faylaq al-Rahman, which responds to the injustice carried out by Jaysh al-Islam but added that it would consider any shari’a opportunity to resolve the crisis between the sides.<sup>72</sup>
  - An announcement regarding the release of 20 members of Jaysh al-Islam in response to the latter’s gesture towards the organization. The announcement added that the gesture by Jaysh al-Islam did not include the release of prisoners belonging to Jaysh al-Fustat and that the latter called on the former to release the wounded who were captured by the organization so that they can get medical attention.<sup>73</sup>
  - An announcement regarding the ceasefire agreement between Filak al-Rahman and Jaysh al-Islam in eastern Al-Ghouta. In the announcement, the organization welcomed

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<sup>71</sup> <http://dawaahaq.blogspot.co.il/>

<sup>72</sup> <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/Ciq8Rw6WgAAy2yO.jpg>

<sup>73</sup> [https://pbs.twimg.com/media/Ci\\_y1s-WsAAhKij.jpg](https://pbs.twimg.com/media/Ci_y1s-WsAAhKij.jpg)

the agreement and called on all Muslims in the area of eastern Al-Ghouta to direct their weapons at the aggressive Alawite regime.<sup>74</sup>

### ***Jaysh al-Fatah***

- Jaysh al-Fatah published a video addressed to Arab officials regarding the ceasefire agreement between the organization and the Alawite regime in the villages of Kafriya and al-Fu'ah. In the video, the organization noted that it had attacked military targets in the Kafriya and al-Fu'ah villages in response to air strikes by the Alawite regime and its allies on the city of Idlib and its surrounding areas. The video also stated that the situation in which the Alawite regime and its allies continue to bomb civilians is considered an escalation and will be met with an appropriate response.<sup>75</sup>

### ***The Shura Council of Ahl al-Ilm in al-Sham***

- The Shura Council of Ahl al-Ilm in al-Sham, an organization composed of Salafi-jihadist scholars affiliated with Al-Nusra Front and other jihadist organizations in Syria, published the following:
  - An announcement in which it called on the factions fighting in northern Syria to support the battle in the city of Marea, which is located in the northern suburb of Aleppo, against the Alawite regime, the IS, and YPD and PKK militias. The announcement added that the battle against the Islamic State is one of the most important jihad missions at the present time.<sup>76</sup>

### ***The Islamic Turkestan Party***

- The jihadist media institution of the Islamic Turkestan Party in Al-Sham, Sawt al-Islam, published the following:
  - Videos reviewing the battlefronts in which the organization's fighters operate; a video eulogizing several members of the organization who were killed in Syria; a video praising

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<sup>74</sup> <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CjUWJ3EXAAAdO2k.jpg>

<sup>75</sup> <http://eldorar.com/node/98443>

<sup>76</sup> <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/Cju2Xh WEAMvDvQ.jpg>

the fulfilment of jihad; interviews with members of the organization regarding their experiences in the battlefield in Syria; and a video marking the anniversary of the liberation of the city of Jisr Al-Shughur.<sup>77</sup>

- An interview with Sheikh 'Abd al-Haqq, the leader of the Islamic Turkestan Party, in which he discussed at length the organization's role in Syria and around the world. According to him, the organization's main goal in Syria is to train Muslims and give them the tools to help them in their battle against the enemies of Islam. At the same time, he emphasized that his organization's fighters need to be prepared to return to their homeland in Xinjiang in western China in order to fight against the Sinai regime. He levelled harsh criticism against the IS as well and emphasized that the Islamic Caliphate established by the organization is illegitimate and was established in sin, claiming that its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, did not request permission from Islamic leaders before establishing it. In addition, he criticized the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan "for leaving the Taliban in Afghanistan in order to act under the Islamic Caliphate". According to him, this move was a disaster and led to the collapse of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Sheikh 'Abd al-Haqq also praised Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of Al-Qaeda, against the backdrop of photos showing prominent Al-Qaeda-supporting Salafi-jihadist refugees, including Sheikh Abu Muhammad al Maqdisi and Sheikh Abu Qatada al-Filastini, former leaders of AQAP such as Harith bin Ghazi al Nadhari, and others.<sup>78</sup>

It should be noted that this was the first appearance by al-Haqq since rumors were spread that he had been killed in 2010 in a US drone strike in Pakistan.



<sup>77</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B18wa3ko775UdIIXR01oMEFLTWs/view?pref=2&pli=1>

<sup>78</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3DK3jGRPRiGeU4xakxEckdvbFU/view>

A clip from the video, Sheikh 'Abd al-Haqq with former and present Al-Qaeda leaders in the background

### ***Al-Muhajirun***

- Al-Muhajirun, an independent jihadist organization in Syria, published a video containing legal rulings by Sheikh Abu Shams, a judge in the organization's shari'a court, in response to questions from Muslims living outside Syria. For example, one dealt with questions regarding the opposition by family members of a Muslim citizen in Europe to his desire to move to the arena of jihad in Syria. According to the questioner, it is not sufficient if their lifestyle does not conform to the principles of Islam. In response, Abu Shams replied that shari'a requires moving to Muslim lands in which the civilian population is being attacked by an external enemy - and today it is being attacked by the US, France and Russia in particular – in order to push back the attack through the use of jihad.<sup>79</sup> The video was published in Arabic along with subtitles in foreign languages, such as English, German, Turkish and more.

The organization seeks to brand itself as an umbrella organization of foreign fighters who want to topple the Alawite regime led by Assad through the use of jihad, as well as an organization that takes care of the welfare of Syrian residents and invests in building civilian infrastructure such as a medical system for the civilian population.



Sheikh Abu Shams responds to questions by Muslims living in the West

### ***Ahrar al-Sham***

- Ahrar al-Sham published the following:

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<sup>79</sup><https://almuhajirunblog.wordpress.com/2016/05/19//qa-episode-2-questions-and-answers-with-sheikh-abu-shams-سؤال-و-جواب-مع-الشيخ-أبي-شمس-Abu-Shams> (Arabic).

- An announcement regarding attacks carried out by the Syrian regime against Christian areas in the outskirts of Damascus, such as the city of Darayya in the northern suburb of Homs, and in the Deir Ezzor neighbourhood, which are carried out with the approval of the international community that condones its actions. The announcement also stated that the Alawite regime is preventing the entry of food and medications to Christian areas, and is taking care of its own interests. The announcement added that any attack on an area under siege constitutes a red line, politically and militarily speaking, and it called on anyone taking part in the Syrian revolution to take care of these areas and their security as a condition for the continuation of any political process. In addition, at the end of the announcement, the organization called on factions in Syria to unite against the Alawite regime and added that it would oppose the division of Syria and any political solution that gives preference to the regime.<sup>80</sup>
- An announcement regarding the launch of an operation to lift the siege in western Al-Ghouta placed by the Alawite regime.<sup>81</sup>

### ***The Islamic State***

- The A'maq news agency published the following regarding IS operations in Syria:
  - An announcement regarding a series of attacks against the coastal cities of Tartus and Jableh that were carried out by ten fighters, killing and injuring approximately 400 people, according to the announcement. According to A'maq, the attacks were carried out using a car bomb and explosive vests, and they targeted "crowds of Alawites" in those two cities "in response to the bombings by Russian and Syrian planes against cities and areas under IS control in Syria".<sup>82</sup>
  - A video regarding two Syrian soldiers who turned themselves in to the IS in Al-Barida, east of Al-Qaryatayn. They detailed how they had defected from the army and blessed them for joining the IS.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CjJRC1uXEAAVRxn.jpg>

<sup>81</sup> <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CjZHJiRW0AIEkcl.jpg>

<sup>82</sup> <http://alta9wa.bbgraf.com/t1832-topic>

<sup>83</sup> <https://goo.gl/lGpxd6>

- A video titled, “Deir Ezzor - Footage of Islamic State Forces’ Advance on Syrian Regime Positions in the Surroundings of the Panorama Checkpoint”. In the video, IS fighters were shown shooting various weapons at posts in the area.<sup>84</sup>
- A video regarding the release of former Al-Qaeda fighters who turned themselves in to the organization at Al-Yarmouk Camp.<sup>85</sup>
- The media departments of the various provinces of the Islamic State in Syria published a wide range of videos and filmed reviews, which dealt with the following issues:
  - A. Battles and Military Deployments:
    - Al-Khayr Province: A filmed review regarding the takeover of a cemetery west of Deir Ezzor where Syrian army forces were entrenched.<sup>86</sup>
    - Various provinces: Filmed reviews regarding various topics, including: battles in northern Raqqah Province,<sup>87</sup> battles in villages in the area of the city of A’zaz,<sup>88</sup> an attack on the city of Mare’ (Aleppo),<sup>89</sup> activities of the anti-tank unit and battles on the outskirts of Palmyra (Homs),<sup>90</sup> the takeover of a military post west of the city of Deir Ezzor (Al-Khayr),<sup>91</sup> the recapture of several villages in the north of the province (Aleppo),<sup>92</sup> and machine gun fire aimed at American aircraft in northern Aleppo.<sup>93</sup>
  - B. Executions:
    - Raqqah Province: A video titled, “Die in Your Rage”. The video - which opened with documentation of the destruction caused to the city of Raqqah as a result of air strikes by coalition forces – documented the execution of four men who were accused of spying and passing information to the “Crusader coalition”, including photos of structures

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<sup>84</sup> <https://goo.gl/p7h8Hi>

<sup>85</sup> <https://goo.gl/3UtnMU>

<sup>86</sup> <http://goo.gl/hRltqb>

<sup>87</sup> <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/31943>

<sup>88</sup> <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/32000>; <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/32072>

<sup>89</sup> <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/32200>

<sup>90</sup> <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/31484>; <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/31606>

<sup>91</sup> <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/31475>

<sup>92</sup> <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/31575>

<sup>93</sup> <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/31533>

and vehicles belonging to the organization (according to recorded confessions played in the background of the video). The last part of the video included documentation from daily life in the province in an attempt to show that life goes on despite the attacks.<sup>94</sup>

- *Raqqah Province*: A filmed review regarding the execution of three men accused of spying for the Syrian regime, the Sahawat and the “Crusader coalition”.<sup>95</sup>



The execution of men accused of spying in Raqqah Province

### C. Civilian Matters:

- *Various Provinces*: Filmed reviews regarding various civilian topics, such as: market activities and dawah convention activities in the city of Manbij (*Aleppo*),<sup>96</sup> a pavement production workshop (*Al-Khayr*),<sup>97</sup> harvest season in the city of Al-Mayadin (*Al-Khayr*),<sup>98</sup> photos from the Ja’bar Fortress (*Raqqah*),<sup>99</sup> popular Islamic clinics (*Raqqah*),<sup>100</sup> test administration for

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<sup>94</sup> <http://3rbup.com/0437bc197fb6da3c>

<sup>95</sup> <https://justpaste.it/ufsm>

<sup>96</sup> <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/31490>; <https://justpaste.it/uq53>

<sup>97</sup> <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/31465>

<sup>98</sup> <http://dabiq24may2016.ml/31585>

<sup>99</sup> <http://goo.gl/1BlwQY>

<sup>100</sup> <http://goo.gl/WfrXQz>

elementary school students in the city of Al-Hajar Al-Aswad (Damascus).<sup>101</sup>

D. Oaths of Allegiance:

- Al-Khayr Province: A filmed review regarding a shari'a course and a group oath of allegiance that took place in Al-Sh'eetat.<sup>102</sup>

E. Propaganda and PR:

- Al-Baraka Province: A video titled, "Generation of Battles" documenting a training camp for children and youth from various Asian countries, specifically Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. The video showed several fighters originally from these countries, including a fighter known as Abu Talha al-Malizi ("the Malaysian"), who made threats against the governments of these countries and encouraged children in the training camp to burn their passports as a sign that they are not willing to ever return to homelands. The rest of the video showed the children during religious lessons, physical fitness training and firearm training.<sup>103</sup>



**A training camp in Al-Baraka Province for children from Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines**

- Homs Province: A video titled, "Between Pain and Hope". The video – which included a translation to Urdu – combined a historical review of Islamic conquests in the Indian Subcontinent with emphasis on the

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<sup>101</sup> <https://justpaste.it/umme>

<sup>102</sup> <https://justpaste.it/uj1q>

<sup>103</sup> <https://goo.gl/ghesS1>

geographic and demographical importance of this region. The video showed several fighters of Indian origin who criticized the fact that Muslims in India are living alongside Hindu idolaters and told how they moved from India to Khorasan, and from there to Syria after being in the Ansar al-Tawhid group. The video included additional content and messages, including: a call on Muslims in India, Pakistan and Afghanistan to swear allegiance to the Caliph and move to the land of the Caliphate (especially engineers and doctors), a review and condemnation of violent acts against Muslims in India, a criticism of sages in the Indian Subcontinent for forbidding jihad, a vow to free prisoners from jails in India, and threats to carry out attacks on Indian soil.<sup>104</sup>



**Messages by fighters of Indian origin in Homs Province to their governments and countrymen**

- *Kirkuk Province*: A video titled, “Bashir Village and the Pile of Stones”, which documented the story of the capture of this village, which is located south of Kirkuk and serves as home to a Shi’ite-Turk population. The video opened with a review of the village’s history and local Shi’ite leaders, continued with photos of battles against Popular Mobilization Forces to capture the city, and ended with a display of soldiers’ corpses and looted plunder.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> <https://goo.gl/uKpzd8>

<sup>105</sup> <https://goo.gl/yIPAQ3>

- The Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade and the Islamic Muthanna Movement, which are affiliated with the IS, and fighters in the area of Daraa in southern Syria announced their merger under a new name for the umbrella organization: The Khalid ibn al-Walid Army.<sup>106</sup>



From left to right: the logo of the new organization, “The Khalid ibn al-Walid Army”; the logo of the Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade and the Islamic Muthanna Movement

### ***Jaysh al-Islam***

- Jaysh al-Islam published a video documenting its members’ military activities and training camps. The video opened with eulogies in memory of Nidhal Khalid al-‘Ayshi, a senior member of the organization who moved from the Gaza Strip to the arena of jihad in Syria and was killed in Aleppo in 2012.<sup>107</sup>

## **The Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula**

### ***The Islamic State in the Sinai Peninsula***

- The Islamic State in the Sinai Peninsula published a video documenting its activities against Egyptian security forces in the Sinai Peninsula.<sup>108</sup>

## **Africa**

### ***The Maghreb***

<sup>106</sup> <http://all4syria.info/Archive/316245>

<sup>107</sup> [https://ia801504.us.archive.org/16/items/seyfou\\_mail](https://ia801504.us.archive.org/16/items/seyfou_mail)

<sup>108</sup> <https://adkhilafah.wordpress.com/2016/05/22/السيناء-مقبرة-الأشقي-akhbardawlatalislam-أخبار-الخلافة/>

Battles continued in Libya surrounding the country's oil reserves. The battles focused on, among other places, the area of Bin Jawad where it was reported that two PFG soldiers were killed and five others wounded in battles against the IS,<sup>109</sup> although at end of the month, the Libyan unity government reported that it had recaptured Bin Jawad and Nawfaliyya from the jihadists.<sup>110</sup> In addition, battles were reported in the area of Sirte (in which it was reported that a former minister in the Libyan government led by Ali Zidan had been killed), as well as a suicide attack in the city of Misrata and battles in Bugrein.<sup>111</sup>

In Tunisia, discourse again arose concerning the danger posed by foreign fighters returning to their homelands but this time from Libya rather than Syria.<sup>112</sup> Despite the threat of fighters returning, and despite the economic downturn caused by a terrorist presence,<sup>113</sup> Tunisia also noted success when Tunisian security forces killed Sayf al-Din al-Jamali, a senior member of the Jund al-Khilafa group who swore allegiance to the IS, and even dismantled a Takfiri cell in Sousse Province.<sup>114</sup>

Similar successes were also noted in Algeria. The Algerian Ministry of Defense announced the killing of six terrorists and the discovery of weapons in Al-Bouira Province,<sup>115</sup> a cell identified as part of Al-Ghurabaa group, the oldest wing of AQIM in Algeria.<sup>116</sup> Meanwhile, in Morocco, efforts were made to increase security at tourist sites and in sensitive areas, and an attempt was made to locate student movements that preach violence at universities.<sup>117</sup>

### **Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb**

- The jihadist media institution of AQIM, Al-Andalus, published the following:

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<sup>109</sup> <http://www.eanlibya.com/archives/82432>

<sup>110</sup> <http://goo.gl/2Xrh8z>

<sup>111</sup> <http://goo.gl/7zXDBH>

<sup>112</sup> <http://ara.reuters.com/article/topNews/idARAKCNOYF2DO>

<sup>113</sup> <http://www.middle-east-online.com/?id=225116>;

<https://www.assawsana.com/portal/pages.php?newsid=264611>

<sup>114</sup> <https://goo.gl/9UwLlJ>; <https://www.assawsana.com/portal/pages.php?newsid=264611>

<sup>115</sup> <https://goo.gl/RcpdCJ>

<sup>116</sup> <http://goo.gl/2zEr9T>

<sup>117</sup> <http://goo.gl/66KYbw>; <https://goo.gl/gn2k7y>

- A video titled, “They Were Right in What They Promised”. The video covered the biography of Sheikh Abu Ilyas ‘Abd al-Hamid, a former senior member of the organization.<sup>118</sup>



**Sheikh Abu Ilyas ‘Abd al-Hamid**

## **Libya**

### ***The Islamic State***

- The IS in Raqqah Province published the following:
  - A video titled, “He Will Establish for Them Their Religion”. The video opened with a review of Libya’s Islamic history and a denouncement of the politicians currently leading the country “not according to Islamic shari’a”. The video showed a fighter named Abu Malek al-Barqawi who reviewed the organization’s advancement in Libya, starting from Derna (where IS forces were pushed back at the end of April 2016) to Benghazi and Ajdabiya in eastern Libya, and from there to Harawa and Bin Jawad in the west. In addition to coverage of the battles, the video also attempted to create the impression that, despite the battle, the Islamic State is successfully implementing shari’a in the territories under its control through the operation of the Islamic Police, an Islamic legal system, and centers for hisba, zakat, dawah and mosques.<sup>119</sup>
- The IS in Tripoli Province published the following:
  - A video titled, “From Humiliation to Glory”. The video, which opened with a review of the situation of Muslims in West Africa, showed several fighters from this region –

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<sup>118</sup> <https://ia801507.us.archive.org/29/items/lyessss-agmi>

<sup>119</sup> <https://my.mail.ru/mail/tb2slamna/video/myvideo/2.html>

specifically Mali, Nigeria, Ghana and Senegal – who appealed to their compatriots and encouraged them to move to the “land of the Caliphate” where they are guaranteed a “life of happiness” and justice. The second part of the video showed fighters undergoing tactical fighter training, documented suicide attacks using car bombs that were carried out by a fighter of African and Tunisian origin, and battles against Libya Dawn forces west of Sirte.<sup>120</sup>



#### **A call from the IS in Libya to residents of West African countries to join the Caliphate**

- An announcement regarding the death and injury of dozens of Libya Dawn fighters who tried to advance to the city of Sirte. According to the announcement, IS forces attacked the Libya Dawn fighters using Grad rockets, dispatched a suicide terrorist in a car bomb, and advanced towards their posts where they engaged in heavy exchanges of fire.<sup>121</sup>
- Filmed reviews regarding attacks against Libya Dawn forces’ posts and gun battles between the organizations, including light and heavy weapons fire and mortar bomb fire.<sup>122</sup>

#### ***The Shura Council of the Mujahideen in Derna***

- The jihadist media institution of the Shura Council of the Mujahideen in Derna, Al-‘Ahd, published the following:
  - Videos including interviews with residents of Derna after it was liberated by members of the organization. Residents of the city praised the organization’s fighters for their

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<sup>120</sup> [https://ia801509.us.archive.org/33/items/ezaa\\_l/ezaa.mp4](https://ia801509.us.archive.org/33/items/ezaa_l/ezaa.mp4)

<sup>121</sup> <http://alta9wa.bbgraf.com/t2121-topic>

<sup>122</sup> <https://justpaste.it/uozk>; <https://justpaste.it/unoe>

success in expelling IS fighters from the city and for their efforts to rehabilitate the city.<sup>123</sup>

- A video documenting the destruction that was caused to infrastructure in the city of Derna as a result of shellings by General Haftar's forces.<sup>124</sup>

### ***The Shura Council of Benghazi Revolutionaries***

- The jihadist media institution of the Shura Council of Benghazi Revolutionaries, Markaz al-Saraya, published the following:
  - A video documenting the lives of children in Qanfudha, in western Benghazi, against the backdrop of battles in the area. The video included interviews with children about the fear and distress that accompany them in light of the shellings and battles taking place in the area.<sup>125</sup>
  - A filmed interview with a soldier in General Haftar's army who was captured by members of the organization about the "war crimes" committed by General Haftar against the residents of Libya.<sup>126</sup>
  - A video documenting the prisoner exchange deal between the Shura Council of Benghazi Revolutionaries and General Haftar's forces on May 26, 2016.<sup>127</sup>

## **Mali**

### ***Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb***

- The jihadist media institution of AQIM, Al-Andalus, published the following:
  - A claim of responsibility for an attack that was carried out against MINUSMA forces in Gao, Mali. According to the organization, the attack was carried out in revenge for the

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<sup>123</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBYGYUQy3A>;  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=youtu.be&v=Xr0igVtJYZ0>

<sup>124</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uG7rohnECJo>

<sup>125</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-n8vT1bO8IQ>

<sup>126</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7vyLMQg5rg>

<sup>127</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkVTadYaOrU>

killing of four members of the organization by “disloyal forces” cooperating with France.<sup>128</sup>

- A video titled, “Photos From Azawad – Part 2”, which included photos of fighters in the area of Mali.<sup>129</sup>

### ***Al-Morabitun***

- Al-Morabitun, which is affiliated with AQIM, published two audio clips by Abu Hamza al-Ansari, a senior commander in the organization, regarding Islamic law.<sup>130</sup>

### ***Ansar al-Din***

- Ansar al-Din published a video documenting for the first time the military activities of one of its units in the area of Macina.<sup>131</sup>

## **Somalia**

*During the second half of May, clashes continued between Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, and security forces and African Union forces operating in Somalia. On the one hand, Al-Shabab fighters attacked bases of Ethiopian forces belonging to the African Union Forces operating in Somalia in Hiran Province, in central Somalia.<sup>132</sup> In addition, according to the organization’s news agency, Al-Shabab fighters managed to repel an attack by American forces on a town near the capital of Somalia, Mogadishu.<sup>133</sup> In addition, the organization claimed responsibility for attacks carried out against Somali security forces in Mogadishu<sup>134</sup> and Middle Shebelle Province.<sup>135</sup> On the other hand, Somali security forces along with African Union Forces and the US launched an operation against Al-*

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<sup>128</sup> <http://dawaahaq.blogspot.co.il>

<sup>129</sup> [https://justpaste.it/Azawad\\_Photos\\_2](https://justpaste.it/Azawad_Photos_2)

<sup>130</sup> <https://ia801508.us.archive.org/19/items/lesson4-murabitoun;>  
<https://ia601500.us.archive.org/25/items/lesson5-murabitoun>

<sup>131</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8vrx0jMCGw>

<sup>132</sup> [https://twitter.com/shahada\\_news/status/731908683324661762](https://twitter.com/shahada_news/status/731908683324661762)

<sup>133</sup> [https://twitter.com/shahada\\_news/status/732135373393014784](https://twitter.com/shahada_news/status/732135373393014784)

<sup>134</sup> [https://twitter.com/shahada\\_news/status/732873126233690112](https://twitter.com/shahada_news/status/732873126233690112)

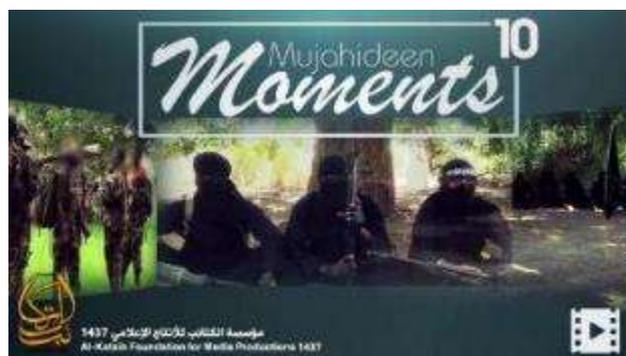
<sup>135</sup> [https://twitter.com/shahada\\_news/status/734375887945273345](https://twitter.com/shahada_news/status/734375887945273345)

*Shabab bases in southern Somalia.*<sup>136</sup> In addition, Kenyan forces taking part in the African Union Forces claimed that they had managed to kill 21 Al-Shabab fighters during an ambush launched by the latter in western Somalia.<sup>137</sup>

Meanwhile, Kenya threatened to remove its forces operating in Somalia in the framework of the African Union Force due to difficulties financing the force.<sup>138</sup>

### **Shabab al-Mujahideen**

- Al-Kataib jihadist media institution, which belongs to Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, published the tenth part in a series titled, “Mujahideen Moments”, which showed Kenyan fighters calling on Muslims to join the battlefield.<sup>139</sup>



**The video banner**

### **Miscellaneous**

- Al-Tahaya jihadist media institution, which is involved in publicity for Al-Qaeda, published the following:
  - A request for help from the audience in choosing a name for a new Web site about dawah and jihad that members of the above-mentioned group will establish. Suggestions were posted on the hashtag: #اقتراحات\_التحايا (Suggestions for Al-Tahaya).<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> <http://europe.newsweek.com/somalia-commandos-launch-offensive-against-al-shabab-460282?rm=eu> (English).

<sup>137</sup> <http://allafrica.com/stories/201605260110.html>; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-security-kenya-idUSKCN0YGOVT> (English).

<sup>138</sup> <http://goo.gl/M2l1uz>; <http://goo.gl/i7g2uX>

<sup>139</sup> [https://archive.org/download/sh\\_GIMF](https://archive.org/download/sh_GIMF)

<sup>140</sup> <https://twitter.com/tayaha8/status/733139337961996288>

## ABOUT THE ICT

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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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