



Bimonthly Report

Summary of Information on Jihadist Web Sites The First Half of August 2013



International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT)

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Highlights

This report summarizes notable events discussed on jihadist Web forums during the first half of August 2013. Following are the main points covered in the report:

- Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri criticizes the military revolution in Egypt and Morsi's removal. According to him, the revolution was made possible thanks to cooperation between Coptic Christians, secularists, supporters of the military and the anti-Islamic camp, with guidance from the United States. The democratic process by which Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood's representative, was elected President of Egypt proves that democracy is of no value and should be considered a failure. Furthermore, democracy is not in line with the principles of Islam.
- Sheikh Nasir al-Wahishi, leader of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, promised to work to free Sunni prisoners from jails.
- The Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham, Al-Qaeda's branch in Iraq, published a manifesto detailing all of the military operations that its group carried out in Iraq in 2012.
- The Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham successfully overtook the Mannagh Military Airport in Aleppo, in cooperation with other Islamist-jihadist organizations in Syria.
- As a result of the deaths of four members of the jihadist Ansar Beit al-Maqdas by an Israeli unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) or "drone" in the Sinai Peninsula, Salafi-jihadist groups in the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip are blaming the Egyptian Army for cooperating with Israel and protecting its borders. In light of this, jihadist organizations in the Sinai are calling on Bedouins in the Sinai Peninsula to help the mujahideen in their war against the Egyptian Army and to avenge their deaths.

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New Publications

Ideology

- Al-Qaeda's official jihadist media institution, Al-Sahab, published an audio clip, titled "The Democratic Deity" by Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri, leader of Al-Qaeda.¹ In the clip, al-Zawahiri claimed that Christians, the secular camp, the Egyptian Army, Mubarak supporters and anti-Islamists all joined together in order to topple the regime of former Egyptian President Muhammad Morsi, who was appointed by the Muslim Brotherhood and removed from power in the military coup. According to al-Zawahiri, the Christians wanted to overthrow Morsi because they were interested in promoting the Copts. The secular camp, led by Mohammed al-Baradei, was interested in avenging the crimes committed by the Mubarak regime, and brought disaster and destruction to Egypt just as they had in Iraq. The Egyptian Army was dependent on assistance and guidance from the United States, allowing it to intervene in the revolution and defend the security of its ally, Israel. Supporters of Mubarak led the opposition to Morsi's regime in the hope of bringing back the old, heretical regime. The events that took place in Egypt proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that the democratic process failed to bring about an Islamic government; the Muslim Brotherhood rose to power and achieved a majority in Parliament but it was forcibly taken away. Therefore, it should be acknowledged that democratic elections have no legitimacy and shari'a [Islamic law] is the only legitimate system; the chosen leader must lead an Islamic state, not a secular-nationalist state as Morsi did. Democracy is a Western creation and is not suited to followers of Islam. The battle being waged is one between heresy and faith, between Christianity and Zionism, and Islam.²
- Al-Qaeda's premiere jihadist Web forum, Shumukh Al-Islam, published five articles written by the jailed Sheikh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, a member of the Salafi-jihadist leadership in Jordan. These articles were published as part of a series, titled "Pages from a Prisoner's Journal". The first article was about the story of a Muslim prisoner who was arrested by Jordanian security forces without cause. The second article offered proof that demonstrations and protests are permitted. The third article was titled, "Advice for Brothers Asking Their Wives and Children to Join Them in Syria; The Black Attire of Salafi-Jihadists". The fourth article examined prison experiences. The fifth article

¹ <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

² <http://shabakataljihad.com/vb> (Arabic).

discussed the deeming of members of Parliament who belong to Islamist groups, to be heretics.³

- The jihadist media institution, Al-Masada, published an article, titled “Egypt and its Path towards Becoming a Caliphate [Islamic State]”, by Abu Bakr Ahamd.⁴ The article was structured as a series of answers given by the author to his followers’ questions regarding the consideration that the Salafi-jihadist movement in Egypt must show to the country’s political figures following the military revolution.
- The jihadist media institution, Ibn Taymiyya, published an article, titled “The Previous Shia [Group] was a Bastion of Cursed Treachery, and Today it Drowns in the Blood of Innocents”, by an anonymous author known as Mujahid Mansur.⁵
- The premiere jihadist media outlet, “The Best of Jihadist Propaganda” (Nukhbat Al-‘Ilam Al-Jihadi , published a “Letter to Our Brothers [In] Schools of Jihadist Propaganda”, by Sheikh Abu Yahya al-Libi, a senior leader of Al-Qaeda who was killed in June 2012 by an American drone.⁶ The letter, which was directed to everyone involved in jihadist media, was written in March 2010 and published on jihadist Web forums on August 11, 2013. Al-Libi appealed to members of media institutions and stressed that they were chosen by Allah for the most important and honorable mission: the call to battle, which was once given to the Prophet Muhammad himself. [He said that] jihad must awaken the Muslim Nation, get life flowing through its veins, and return Muslims to the righteous path; the Muslim Nation is good but it needs someone to direct it and show it the way, which is what jihadist media institutions do. The work involved in these institutions is suited only to people with high motivation and energy because it requires hard, continuous effort to produce the best results. Al-Libi then reiterated the importance of da’wa [the preaching of Islam] via media institutions in a manner that befits Allah’s commandments.⁷
- The administrator of the Hanein jihadist Web forum published a survey that asked, “What is the best way to liberate [Muslim] nations?”, and included multiple choice answers: liberation through peaceful means, liberation through war, or both. In response, one visitor said, “For us, for us, for us, jihad, jihad and jihad”. Another visitor said that he believed there are certain situations – as in Syria, the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia – that call for [armed] struggle, and there are others – as in Tunisia – that allow for the use of peaceful methods. Yet another visitor said he did not believe that just

³ <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁴ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic)

⁵ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

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

⁷ <http://shabakataljihad.com/vb> (Arabic)

anyone could offer the suggested alternatives, and that only religious scholars were allowed to rule on this matter. He agreed that “struggle and sword” are not always the right solution.⁸

- The Hanein jihadist Web forum launched a new section – “By Means of Your Pens Will There Be Discussion” – designed to raise different issues for open ideological debate among visitors, “no strings attached”. In response to the announcement of the launch, one visitor said that he believed it would be best not to raise issues that could cause a schism among Muslims, such as the dispute between Ansar Al-Islam, an Iraqi Salafi-jihadist organization, and the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham, Al-Qaeda’s branch in Iraq; between the Muslim Brotherhood and the rest of the Sunni community; and between Hamas and Fatah. Another visitor said that he hoped the new forum section would not serve as a platform for disparaging the mujahideen or interfering in their issues.⁹



The Web site banner

- A visitor to the Hanein jihadist Web forum proposed a way in which all jihadist groups would be able to unite “under one flag”. According to him, they must stop focusing on which jihadist groups are joining and which are not, and instead invest their energies in establishing an Islamic State based on shari’a [Islamic religious law]. The visitor also suggested that the Islamic principle of shura [consensus] be applied in a modern way, such that certain individuals with voting rights would determine who would rule the Islamic State]. The visitor noted that, in his opinion, voting rights must be given to every intelligent and honest Muslim adult, starting with the mujahideen only. In response, the administrator of the Web forum said that every attempt at uniting the jihadist factions had failed and he offered a different plan – during the first stage, jihad would be waged to defeat the enemies of Islam, and during the second stage, an Islamic State would be established. The visitor noted that, in his opinion, it would be perfectly acceptable for the first stage to include various factions and viewpoints, while general consensus and concessions would only be required during the second stage.¹⁰

⁸ <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁹ <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

¹⁰ <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

- Abdullah ibn Muhammed, administrator of a popular Twitter account on strategic affairs who appears frequently on jihadist Web forums, noted that the Western media bases its war against the mujahideen on two principles: a) the mujahideen do not represent Islam; b) the existence of the mujahideen presents a threat to security and to the lives of Western citizens. Ibn Muhammed explained that the goal of the first principle is to persuade Muslims that jihad is not part of their religion; one of the methods used by Western politicians to convince the Muslim public of this is to introduce the idea that “Islam is a religion of tolerance”. Ibn Muhammed emphasized that this incorrect perception has also developed among Arabs. He said that the second principle refers to an attempt to embellish the mujahideen’s mistakes and taint them – in order to create hostility between them and the general public.¹¹

Strategy

- The jihadist media institution Al-Fajr published an audio clip (No. 35) as part of a series, titled “The Industry of Terrorism” by Sheikh Abu Ubaydah Abdullah al-Adam, a senior strategist in Al-Qaeda, who was killed by an American drone in April 2013. The clip refers to the stages of guerilla warfare.¹²

Guidebooks and Instruction Pamphlets

- A visitor to the Shumukh Al-Islam jihadist Web forum compiled eight tips for the mujahideen in Yemen and the Anbar Desert in Iraq on how to avoid injury from the UAVs and RPVs (drones) operating in the area. For example, he recommended exiting the car immediately if one suspects he is being trailed by a UAV: “Each person must go in a different direction because these planes are not able to follow and attack everyone simultaneously”. He also advised using natural camouflage, such as forests and caves, when one must hold a briefing, etc. Another tip was to create artificial camouflage, such as smoke, by burning car tires in areas where the planes are known to be operating, in order to confuse and misguide them.¹³
- The military department administrator of the jihadist Web forum Al-Jihad Al-Alami posted a guidebook on how to produce matches out of homemade materials.¹⁴

¹¹ <https://twitter.com/Strategyaffairs>;
<https://twitter.com/ggoo62/status/345007810964230144/photo/1> (both in Arabic).

¹² <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

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

¹⁴ <http://shabakataljihad.com/vb> (Arabic)

- The military department administrator of the jihadist Web forum Al-Jihad Al-Alami posted a guidebook on how to produce propellant using cooking salt. Propellant material is able to undergo a rapid chemical process that releases a large volume of energy, thereby causing explosions.¹⁵
- The military department administrator of the jihadist Web forum Al-Jihad Al-Alami posted a series of guidebooks on how to build mines. The guidebooks include verbal explanations as well as diagrams that illustrate the process.¹⁶



A picture from the guidebook

- The military department administrator of the jihadist Web forum Al-Jihad Al-Alami posted a guidebook about the different properties of ammonium nitrate, a substance used to create explosives by virtue of its status as a strong oxidizer. The guidebook includes chemical data about the substance, such as its boiling point, an explanation about its different reactions and states of matter, and even descriptions of possible ways to create it.¹⁷
- The military department administrator of the jihadist Web forum Snam Al-Islam posted a guidebook written by Badr al-Subhi for Al-Qaeda's official media institution, Al-Fajr, which is responsible for the distribution of the organization's official publications written by its representatives around the world. The guidebook was designed to teach [the mujahideen] how to fight the different military units combatting terrorism around the world, and it reminded the reader that despite the vigorous training that fighters in these units undergo, their hearts are not sincere, like those of the mujahideen. In addition, the guidebook described the method of operation taken by these units: set the goal, gather information in the field, assemble forces in the region, and break into the military facility. It mentioned different ways to disrupt these steps, including holding

¹⁵ <http://shabakataljihad.com/vb> (Arabic)

¹⁶ <http://shabakataljihad.com/vb> (Arabic)

¹⁷ <http://shabakataljihad.com/vb> (Arabic)

[military] maneuvers, confusing the enemy, creating obstacles to force the enemy to change its tactics, etc. In addition, the guidebook recommended that the mujahideen use poor areas without a lot of services because it is easier to conduct maneuvers there than it is in crowded, urban areas.¹⁸

- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum Al-Jihad Al-Alami posted a guidebook that detailed the advantages of different weapons at the mujahideen’s disposal. For example, the guidebook included a table comparing rockets and mortars in terms of ease of use and firing, the distance each can reach, level of precision, flexibility, and so on. The post received a positive response from the forum’s military department administrator.¹⁹



A picture from the guidebook

- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum Ushaq Al-Hur Al-Islamiya explained ways to protect oneself from methods of crowd dispersal used by [security] forces, such as mustard gas and black pepper spray. The visitor noted that one can protect the face by wearing a gas mask, the eyes by wearing a visor, and the nose and mouth by wearing a kerchief or piece of cloth drenched in water or vinegar. He explained that if one is attacked, it is best to exert self-control because the more out-of-control the situation becomes, the more severe the damage is likely to be.²⁰

Promoting the Myth of the Martyr

- The Mujahideen Council in the Environs of Jerusalem, a Salafi-jihadist group in the Sinai Peninsula, launched the second chapter in the series “The Journey to Martyrdom”, dedicated to a former mujahid, Haytham al-Mishal, who was killed by Israel when he took part in a Grad rocket attack on Eilat at the end of April 2013. The clip examined al-Mishal’s actions, and even included an interview with his mother.²¹

¹⁸ <http://snamalislam.com/vb> (Arabic).

¹⁹ <http://shabakataljihad.com/vb> (Arabic)

²⁰ <http://www.i7ur.com/vb> (Arabic).

²¹ http://vb.beit-almaqdes.net/showthread-t_1102.html



Video banner

- The Al-Fida jihadist Web forum posted a video clip in Turkish, titled “Those Who Promised (Part 4): Turkish Martyrs in Afghanistan”.²²

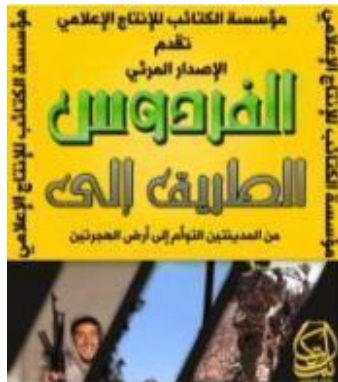


Video banner

- Al-Kataeb, the jihadist media institution of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, Al-Qaeda’s affiliate in Somalia, published a video clip titled, “The Path to Paradise: From the Twin Cities to the Land of the Two Migrations”.²³ The video praised the three Americans from Minnesota who joined the group and were killed fighting alongside it in Somalia. Two of the Americans were originally Somali, and one was an American who had converted to Islam. The video encouraged other young people to follow their example and emigrate from the West in order to join jihad. Furthermore, the video promoted the migration agenda through video clips in which the former leader of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Anwar al-Awlaki, talked about his life in the United States and his devotion to his days [engaged in] jihad.

²² <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

²³ <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).



Video banner

- The Somali Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen movement published another obituary about Abu Sufyan al-Azdi (Sa'ïd al-Shihri), deputy leader of the organization, who was killed by an American drone, apparently at the beginning of the year. AQAP only confirmed his death during the first half of July 2013. According to Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, al-Shihri's rightful place was beside Sheikh Osama bin Laden. It stressed to Christians and Jews that the killing of jihadist leaders and mujahideen would never stop the drive to jihad or the mujahideen's resolve to fight the West.²⁴



Announcement banner

- A visitor to the jihadist Web forum Shumukh Al-Islam posted a photo of a martyr named Mu'adh al-Abd who blew himself up at the Mannagh Military Airport in Aleppo. According to the visitor, the mujahideen were able to take control of the airport thanks to his suicide attack.²⁵

²⁴ <https://alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

²⁵ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).



Photo of the suicide bomber, Mu'adh al-Abd

- A visitor to the Hanein jihadist Web forum posted a video that documented the suicide attack of a fighter from the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham in the Diyala district of Iraq. The fighter blew himself up at a military camp, while driving a truck carrying 36,000 liters of liquefied gas.²⁶

Magazines

- The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan published new issues of its jihadist magazines in English and Urdu: Issue No. 55 for July 2013 of the English-language magazine *In Fight* (188 pp.);²⁷ Issue No. 56 for August 2013 of *Nawai Afghan Jihad*, in Urdu (71 pp.);²⁸ and Issue Nos. 15-17 for June-August 2013 of *Shariyat*, in Urdu,²⁹ all of which cover jihad in Afghanistan.



The covers of, from left to right, *In Fight*, *Nawai Afghan Jihad*, and *Shariyat*

- Issue No. 48 of the jihadist magazine *Al-Waki'* (14 pages) was published.³⁰

²⁶ <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

²⁷ <http://ansar1.info/> (Arabic).

²⁸ <http://ansar1.info/> (Arabic).

²⁹ <http://theunjustmedia.com/> (Urdu).

³⁰ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).



The latest issue of Al-Waka'a

Reports from the Field Afghanistan-Pakistan

The routine terrorist attacks in Afghanistan continue. On August 3, 2013, a suicide bomber blew himself up in Jalalabad in eastern Afghanistan, next to the Indian Consulate,³¹ killing six people and injuring 22 others.³² In addition, on August 5, 2013, four people were killed in an explosion in a market in southern Afghanistan.³³

Pakistan also continues to suffer many terrible terrorist attacks. On August 6, 2013, a group of armed men stopped a convoy of buses, took out the passengers, and shot and killed 13 of them.³⁴ On August 7, 2013, seven people were killed when an explosive device detonated in a soccer stadium in southern Pakistan.³⁵ On August 8, 2013, a suicide bomber blew himself up at a funeral in western Pakistan, killing 35 people.³⁶ The next day, an armed terrorist shot and killed nine people as they were leaving a mosque in the same city.³⁷

At the same time, a wave of torrential storms struck Pakistan and Afghanistan, killing over 160 people. Many others were reported missing.³⁸

- Umar, the jihadist media institution of the Taliban in Pakistan, published a videotaped interview, in Urdu, titled "The Founding of an Islamic Regime Will Only Be Made Possible through Jihad for the Sake of God". The interview was with Sheikh AbuDhar Azzam,

³¹ <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=//2666635> (Hebrew).

³² <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=//2666341> (Hebrew).

³³ <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=//2667329> (Hebrew).

³⁴ <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=//2667542> (Hebrew).

³⁵ <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=//2667712> (Hebrew).

³⁶ <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=//2668305> (Hebrew).

³⁷ <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=//2668530> (Hebrew).

³⁸ <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=//2667064>; <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=//2667232>;
<http://news.walla.co.il/?w=//2668791> (all in Hebrew).

Mufti [spiritual leader] of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), which has close ties with the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan.³⁹

The Arabian Peninsula

In August 2013, the United States ordered the closure of 22 diplomatic missions in the Middle East following the interception of messages between Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri, leader of Al-Qaeda, and Sheikh al-Wahishi, leader of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), in which a threat was made to hit an American target in the Middle East, according to intelligence officials. Washington then issued a rare travel warning to American citizens, based not only on the conversation between the two leaders but also on additional information that was received and that raised serious concern about a terrorist act. According to the announcement posted on the Web site "The Daily Beast", the conversation between the two Al-Qaeda leaders was part of a conference call between representatives of Al-Qaeda in Pakistan, Iraq, Uzbekistan, the Islamic Maghreb [North Africa], and Boko Haram in Nigeria. As a result of this security warning, other governments, including those of Britain and Holland, also closed their diplomatic missions in Yemen.⁴⁰

Later, authorities in Yemen published a list of the 25 most-wanted Al-Qaeda operatives in the Arabian Peninsula, claiming that they were behind the plan to carry out attacks in the capital city of Sana'a and in other cities in Yemen. One of the names listed was Ibrahim al-Asiri, who had once reportedly developed an explosive undergarment and explosive charges that could be implanted in the body. Security forces in Yemen reported being able to thwart a plot by Al-Qaeda to blow up an oil pipeline and take control of central cities in the country, including two port cities in the south. Senior officials in the Yemeni security system said that, according to Al-Qaeda's plan, militants disguised as Yemeni soldiers were supposed to take over the ports where foreigners were working, and either kill or kidnap them.⁴¹ This was apparently to be done as revenge for the killing of Sheikh Sa'id al-Shihri, deputy leader of Al-Qaeda, who was killed either at the end of 2012 or the beginning of 2013, but whose death was only announced by the organization's spokesperson during the first half of July 2013. In light of the growing fear of a wide-scale terrorist attack, security in Yemen was tightened.

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

⁴⁰ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/yemen/10220294/Britons-urged-to-leave-Yemen-as-embassy-is-closed.html> (English).

⁴¹ <http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/world/middle-east/1.2092476> (Hebrew);

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/yemen/10229650/Yemen-foils-al-Qaeda-plot-to-take-foreign-workers-hostage-at-oil-terminal.html> (English).

While these developments were taking place, Yemeni security forces continued to take credit for other successes in the war against Al-Qaeda. During the first half of August 2013, there was a string of assassinations of Al-Qaeda operatives after approximately six were killed by a drone strike in the Marib district.⁴² In total, approximately 22 Al-Qaeda fighters were killed in Yemen at the beginning of August 2013.⁴³

- The jihadist media institution of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Al-Malahem, published a letter, titled "To the Prisoner Held in the Dictator's Jail", by Sheikh Nasir al-Wahishi, leader of AQAP. In his letter, al-Wahishi expressed support for Muslim prisoners sitting in jail for the sake of their religion, and he emphasized that they are always on the minds of the mujahideen. According to him, everyone is part of the same plan to elevate Islam to power. At the conclusion of the letter, he promised the prisoners that their liberation was close at hand; they must wait patiently and, in the end, both their bodies and souls would be free from the chains of this world.⁴⁴
- A visitor to the Snam Al-Islam jihadist Web forum posted an article titled, "The Continued Closure of the American Embassy in Sana'a (the capital of Yemen) Proves the Enormity of the Security Challenges Facing Obama". The article claimed that the re-opening of America's embassies in all Arab states, except for the embassy in Sana'a, proves that despite the many targeted killings of Al-Qaeda members carried out by American drones, America still fears the organization and its power (the embassy in Yemen, as well as most American embassies in the Middle East, was closed due to fear of an attack after American intelligence agents intercepted a conversation between Al-Qaeda leaders, in which they discussed a plan to attack American targets during the last week of the month of Ramadan).⁴⁵ [According to the article], the Americans seem to fear Al-Qaeda's power, both in Yemen and in other countries in the region, despite attempts to present a false impression of power by carrying out as many [targeted] killings as possible; the American policy of fighting terrorism is being met with bitter failure. Today the Americans have no clear strategy and they are solely engaged in dealing with random events and putting out brush fires.⁴⁶
- A visitor to the Snam al-Islam jihadist Web forum posted a notice in which he claimed that the mujahideen need to be wary, now more than ever, of traitors within Al-Qaeda. The visitor claimed that the attacks that recently claimed the lives of several prominent

⁴² <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/al-qaeda/10230804/Yemen-drone-strike-kills-6-al-Qaeda-militants.html> (English).

⁴³ <http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/world/middle-east/1.2092476> (Hebrew).

⁴⁴ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁴⁵ <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=/15/2667377> (Hebrew).

⁴⁶ <http://snamalislam.com/vb> (Arabic).

Al-Qaeda leaders in Yemen prove that there are traitors within the organization's ranks.⁴⁷

- A visitor to the Ushaq Al-Hur Al-Islamiya jihadist Web forum shared a press report with forum members, according to which the government of Yemen was willing to pay five million YER (Yemeni Rial), or approximately \$23,000 USD, to anyone who provided information leading to the capture of 25 members of AQAP. In light of the report, members were warned not to get caught; the visitor even posted the list of names of wanted Al-Qaeda militants that was issued by Yemen's Supreme Security Council. At the top of the list was the "star" Ibrahim al-Rubaysh, a senior Al-Qaeda operative in the Arabian Peninsula.⁴⁸
- A visitor to the Hanein jihadist Web forum shared a report regarding the closure of American embassies in the Middle East and North Africa, and described it as an act of "fear of Al-Qaeda militants". The visitor then hinted joyfully that it was a historic event, since all of the countries considered to be "independent" – including the United States, Britain, France and Germany – had decided to close their embassies in Yemen due to America's concerns. In addition, the visitor expressed his hope that America's fear would grow even more.⁴⁹ The jihadist strategist Abdullah ibn Muhammed also discussed the closure of the American embassies and said, cynically, that it happened after one of [U.S. President] Barak Obama's recent speeches in which he claimed that Al-Qaeda did not present a threat to the United States.⁵⁰

Iraq

Terrorist attacks in Iraq, which highlight the bloody conflict between Sunnis and Shi'ites, continue to claim victims.⁵¹ One of the worst attacks took place during the first half of August 2013 in a Shi'ite area in the capital city of Baghdad. Several car bombs were timed to blow up, and the explosions killed 60 people and injured approximately 140 others.⁵² The Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham, a front group for Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI),

⁴⁷ <http://snamalislam.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁴⁸ <http://www.i7ur.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁴⁹ <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁵⁰ <https://twitter.com/Strategyaffairs> (Arabic).

⁵¹ <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/08/03/Eight-killed-in-Iraq-violence-officials.html>; <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/08/03/Iraq-general-survives-blast-as-attacks-kill-24.html>; <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/08/15/Bomb-close-to-Baghdad-s-Green-Zone-kills-12.html> (all in English)

⁵² <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/08/10/Car-bombs-kill-60-wound-nearly-200-in-Iraq.htm> (English)

took responsibility [for the attack].⁵³ In July 2013, the United Nations claimed that the number of terrorism victims in the country had reached a new height of 1,000.⁵⁴

In addition to the terrorist attacks, Iraq is coping with the conflict between its Kurdish minority and the regime. Experts believe that the conflict is causing Kurdish regional stability to deteriorate in northern Iraq, which they say has become a hotbed of Al-Qaeda fighters.⁵⁵ The civil war in Syria is also fanning the flames of the Kurdish conflict. After the leader of Iraqi Kurdistan reported territorial clashes between Syrian Kurds and Al-Qaeda fighters in Syria during the second half of July 2013,⁵⁶ he also threatened to send his country's Kurds to join the struggle of [their fellow] Kurds in Syria during the first half of August 2013.⁵⁷

- During the first half of August 2013, the jihadist media institution Al-'Itisam, which helps distribute propaganda for The Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham, Al-Qaeda's affiliate in Iraq, published the following:
 - A report detailing 171 military operations that were carried out in Nineveh Province during February 2013.⁵⁸
 - A report detailing 294 military operations that were carried out in Nineveh Province during May 2013.⁵⁹
 - A report detailing 65 military operations that were carried out in Anbar Province during February 2013.⁶⁰
 - A report detailing 43 military operations that were carried out in Baghdad during May 2013.⁶¹
 - A report detailing 41 military operations that were carried out in the south during May 2013.⁶²
- The media institution of the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham (Al-Qaeda's branch in Iraq), Al-Furqan, published a periodical titled *Al-Nashra* (198 pp.), in which it

⁵³ <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/08/12/Al-Qaeda-front-group-claims-deadly-Eid-attacks-in-Iraq-.html> (English).

⁵⁴ <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/08/10/Car-bombs-kill-60-wound-nearly-200-in-Iraq.html>

⁵⁵ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/08/14/us-iraq-violence-alqaeda-insight-idUSBRE97D0LG20130814> (English).

⁵⁶ <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/07/19/syria-kurds-fight-jihadists-for-their-autonomy-analysts> (English).

⁵⁷ <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/08/10/Iraqi-Kurdistan-ready-to-defend-Syrian-Kurds-.html> (English).

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

⁵⁹ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

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

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

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

detailed all of the military operations that were carried out by its members in Iraq throughout 2012.⁶³



Periodical banner and Table of Contents

- A visitor to the Ushaq Al-Hur Al-Islamiya jihadist Web forum posted a letter from The Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham to “the Islamic Nation, the mujahideen, and other believers and supporters of the mujahideen on the Internet”. In the letter, the organization denied the allegations against it by “media figures”. For instance, it claimed that those media figures blamed the organization for harming mujahideen who were not part of The Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham. It explained that the rumors circulated by those anonymous media figures were tantamount to defamation of Ayman al-Zawahiri himself, the leader of Al-Qaeda, whom they presented as the person responsible for America’s assassination of Osama bin Laden and as one who holds a nationalist ideology.

At the end of the letter, the organization noted that it had no intention of investigating everything that those “anonymous” figures had said or to whom they had said it, but rather denied all charges against it.⁶⁴

- A visitor to the Hanein jihadist Web forum posted photos of members of Ansar Al-Islam, an Iraqi Salafi-jihadist organization. In recent months, a rift developed between Ansar Al-Islam and Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). In response to the photos, another visitor posted a video from 2008 in which he claimed that Ansar Al-Islam activists could be seen blessing and embracing AQI activists in honor of Eid Al-Adha.

⁶³ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁶⁴ <http://www.i7ur.com/vb> (Arabic).

The visitor noted that the video brought back nice memories for him and he hoped that the two movements would reconcile.⁶⁵



Ansar Al-Islam activists

- A visitor to the Al-Jihad Al-Alami jihadist Web forum posted an announcement by the Shari'a Council of the Nineveh Province, Mosul Region of the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham regarding Muslim women's dress. The announcement stated that enemies of the Muslim Nation were trying to create a culture of immodest dress, and that this culture was "taking over" the markets and streets of Iraq; this is a very dangerous and serious matter, and all women must avoid [dressing immodestly], because doing so is in complete contradiction to the Prophet Muhammad's commandments.⁶⁶
- A prominent visitor to the Snam Al-Islam jihadist Web forum posted an announcement by the jihadist media outlet of Nineveh Province, Mosul Region of the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham, titled "News". The announcement said that a brave fighter of the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham had carried out a high-quality suicide attack with a car bomb that he drove into Iraqi Army headquarters in Mosul. After shooting at guards with a Kalashnikov rifle, the fighter managed to penetrate the headquarters building, which collapsed on all those inside. The attack was part of a series of operations that the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham carried out against the infidels (a series of 12 car bombs that exploded simultaneously on July 29, 2013, in different regions in Iraq, killing 55 people⁶⁷).⁶⁸

The Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham: Operations in Syria

- During the first half of August 2013, the jihadist media institution Al-'Itisam, which distributes propaganda for the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham, published the following:

⁶⁵ <http://www.hanein.info/vb>; http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMNBRnCEm_8 (both in Arabic).

⁶⁶ <http://shabakataljihad.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁶⁷ <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=//2665051> (Hebrew).

⁶⁸ <http://snamalislam.com/vb> (Arabic).

- A claim of responsibility for the liberation of the Mannagh Military Airport in Aleppo, which was carried out under the command of the Islamic State of Iraq in cooperation with other jihadist factions in Syria. During the operation, approximately 50 Syrian security forces were killed.⁶⁹
- A notice announcing the start of a campaign to cleanse the coastal regions of Latakia of Syrian security forces and their allies.⁷⁰
- A video clip titled, "Window from the Land of Wars: A Glimpse into the Collective Oath of Allegiance". The video focused on a group of fighters in Syria who swore allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham.⁷¹



Video clip showing a group of fighters in Syria swearing allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham

- The media institution of the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham, Al-Furqan, published a video titled, "Message from the Land of War". The video showed a mujahid named Abu Amar al-Ansari, who took part in liberating the Mannagh Military Airport, slandering the Syrian security forces and their allies and praising the mujahideen in the different arenas of jihad, especially Syria, for their fight against the enemies of Islam. The end of the video listed the operations carried out by members of the organization, which killed Iraqi government security forces.⁷²

⁶⁹ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁷⁰ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

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

⁷² <http://www.dawaalhaq.com/?p=5510> (Arabic).



The video banner

- A visitor to the Shumukh Al-Islam jihadist Web forum posted a leaflet distributed by the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham in northern Aleppo. According to the announcement, residents of northern Aleppo who had property stolen from them by Syrian security forces were able to request the return of their property following the liberation by rebel forces of the Mannagh Military Airport, where stolen property was found.⁷³
- A visitor to the Shumukh Al-Islam jihadist Web forum posted a video documenting the establishment of a jihadist propaganda camp in Maarrat al-Nu'man, a city in the northwest province of Idlib, in Syria.⁷⁴
- Visitors to the Hanein jihadist Web forum shared numerous posts about the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham's operations, including videos and photos of members preaching to residents of Idlib and Aleppo Provinces in Syria; a photo of a pamphlet distributed by the movement; a photo of activists giving gas canisters to residents as an act of charity; and a photo of a supporter posing near Haram Al-Sharif in Jerusalem, where both the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Mosque of Omar are located.⁷⁵



Cover of the pamphlet; Supporter posing in front of the Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem

- A visitor to the Hanein jihadist Web forum asked other forum members if there was a connection between the raid on the Al-Taji and Abu Gharib Prisons in Iraq during the

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

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

⁷⁵ <http://www.hanein.info/vb>; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tS-bN2R8e-s>;
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-hMOwCgBO8> (all in Arabic).

second half of July 2013, and the operational advancement of the mujahideen in Syria. The visitor asked if it was possible that the prisoners who had escaped from the prisons had already managed to join the arena of jihad in Syria.

Without even addressing the visitor's question, other forum users began to argue with one another about the extent of the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham's influence on the Syrian civil war. While one visitor said that affiliates of the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham were behind every large incursion in Syria, another visitor specifically sought to downplay the group's involvement and emphasized that the organization was not the only face of Syrian jihad. These disagreements attest to the disgust that those involved in global jihad have for AQI's limited involvement in the Syrian war.⁷⁶

Al-Sham [The Levant]

In the beginning of August 2013, Bashar al-Assad's forces captured a number of strategic strongholds in the center of Homs and near Damascus. After encouraging his soldiers by telling them that he is certain they will win the war,⁷⁷ Syrian rebels gained control of the military air base in Mannagh.⁷⁸

Despite "Operation Liberation of the Coast" in the Latakia region, the rebels made only limited progress,⁷⁹ and most of the region remains under control of the regime.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, their achievement is said to be of symbolic and moral importance, as it follows a series of rebel losses in central Syria.⁸¹ Ahmed al-Jarba, leader of the main opposition group in Syria, said that he is collaborating with the Free Syrian Army to establish a military force against Bashar al-Assad and his allies composed of, in his words, "all of the rebel groups".⁸²

Amidst all of this, ethnic tensions between Sunnis, Shi'ites and Alawites continue to deepen, especially in light of Shi'ite Hezbollah's increasing involvement in the Syrian civil war. In August 2013, a car bomb exploded at Hezbollah's military stronghold in Beirut,

⁷⁶ <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁷⁷ <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/08/01/Syria-s-Assad-lauds-his-army-says-he-will-win-war.html> (English).

⁷⁸ <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/2013/08/05/Video-Suicide-bomber-rocks-Assad-s-military-air-base-near-Aleppo.html> (English).

⁷⁹ <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/08/05/Syrian-rebels-take-villages-in-regime-s-heartland.html> (English).

⁸⁰ <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/08/13/FSA-chief-We-are-fighting-the-regime-not-Alawites-in-Latakia.html> (English).

⁸¹ <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/08/12/Free-Syrian-Army-chief-visits-Assad-s-home-province-.html> (English).

⁸² <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/08/09/Syrian-opposition-chief-says-planning-with-FSA-to-form-one-army.html> (English).

killing 25 people and injuring over 200 more.⁸³ In another prominent event this month, Lebanese Shi'ite militiamen from Beirut kidnapped a Turkish Airlines pilot and co-pilot. As ransom, the kidnappers demanded that the Turkish authorities free the Lebanese Shi'ite citizens who were kidnapped in May 2011 by armed Sunnis on the Syria-Turkey border.⁸⁴

- During the second half of June 2013, the media institution of the Al-Nusra Front (Al-Qaeda's affiliate in Syria), Al-Manarah Al-Bayda, published the following:
 - Announcements (Nos. 357-366) taking responsibility for operations that it carried out against Syrian security forces.⁸⁵
 - A video about one of the organization's training camps.⁸⁶
 - A video documenting various military operations against Syrian Army forces, such as a roadside charge that blew up a Syrian army BMP armored vehicle in Arbin, at the entrance to Damascus.⁸⁷
 - A video clip documenting the Front's takeover of a roadblock near Idlib.⁸⁸
- During the first half of August 2013, the jihadist news agency Al-Himam, which tracks developments in Syria, published the following:
 - A video clip (No. 8) documenting the distribution of water to needy people in eastern Hama.⁸⁹
 - A video clip (No. 9) tracking medical neglect during a visit to the Islamic Medical Center in Bansh, Idlib Province.⁹⁰
 - A video clip (No. 11) tracking the operations carried out by Al-Nusra Front fighters in the Adnan region of Aleppo.⁹¹
 - A video clip (No. 12) documenting the distribution of food to immigrants and refugees around Homs.⁹²
 - A video clip (No. 13) tracking the preparations being made to celebrate the end of Ramadan and the beginning of Eid Al-Fitr in "the mujahideen's kitchen".⁹³
 - A video clip (No. 14) documenting night prayers in the Abu Obeida bin al-Jarah Mosque in Haritan, Aleppo Province, on the 27th day of Ramadan.⁹⁴

⁸³ <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/08/15/-One-dead-as-large-explosion-hits-Hezbollah-complex-in-Beirut.html> (English).

⁸⁴ <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/08/09/Minister-two-Turkish-pilots-abducted-in-Lebanon-.html> (English).

⁸⁵ <http://jalnosra.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁸⁶ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁸⁷ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

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

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

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

⁹¹ <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁹² <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

⁹³ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

- The Abdullah Azzam Brigade, an organization affiliated with Al-Qaeda in the Lebanon-Syria area, published an audio clip by the leader of the organization, Majid bin Muhammad al-Majid. In the clip, al-Majid noted that various countries, including the United States, Russia and Iran, were trying to change and exploit the revolution in Syria for purposes irrelevant to the Syrian nation or, alternatively, to help the current regime. These foreign elements sought to turn Syria into a weak country in order to protect their own interests in the region, such as defending Israel. Al-Majid advised the mujahideen in Syria to rise above their internal differences of opinion, and operate together against the many elements trying to fight Islam and the Sunnah, because when all is said and done all mujahideen share a common goal. In addition, al-Majid advised the mujahideen's leaders to focus their military efforts on areas that foreign elements are trying to take over, such as Latakia and Qardaha, adding that it is forbidden to allow groups like Hezbollah to take control of significant and strategic areas. In addition, he emphasized that Iran was openly supporting the Syrian regime's fight against the mujahideen, despite its attempts to hide that fact for the past two years. He said that Iran's assistance proved that the regime was actually furthering the interests of the Americans and the Jews, despite its leaders' bellicose statements to the contrary. Al-Majid warned the Shi'ites in Al-Sham about the Sunni mujahideen's strength, lest they try to take control of parts of Syria and divide the country.⁹⁵
- Liwa Al-Fath, a jihadist organization in Syria, published a video clip documenting the takeover of the Mannagh Military Airport in Aleppo. Other jihadist organizations also took part in the attack, including the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham, the Islamic Saqr Battalion, the Army of Emigrants and Supporters, and others.⁹⁶ Sheikh Abu Umar al-Shishani, head of the Army of Emigrants and Supporters, oversaw the successful operation.



Abu Umar al-Shishani being interviewed by the media following the occupation of the Mannagh Military Airport

⁹⁴ <http://jalnosra.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁹⁵ <http://shabakataljihad.com/vb> (Arabic).

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

- A visitor to the Hanein jihadist Web forum discussed an announcement, according to which 4,000 prisoners were freed from the central Aleppo prison in Syria. The visitor also praised two operations that took place in July 2013 to free Islamic prisoners:
 1. The release of prisoners from the Abu Gharib jail in Iraq by the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham.
 2. The release of prisoners from a jail in northwest Pakistan by the Taliban.

The forum visitor who mentioned the announcement expressed his hope that the thousands of Palestinian prisoners sitting in Israeli jails in Nafha, Ashkelon, Tel Mond and Be'er Sheva would soon be freed in an operation "with minimal casualties".⁹⁷
- The Baqiya jihadist media institution published an interview with a mujahid in Damascus named Kareen al-Kalash. During the interview, al-Kalash talked about his life and how he came to the arena of jihad in Syria. For example, he said that he was greatly influenced by the jihadist videos posted on YouTube and that, at a certain stage, he became addicted to them and developed an intense need to watch them. Later, he became an active writer on jihadist forums, such as Al-Hisba, Shumukh Al-Islam and Al-Fida. Finally, he decided to join one of the arenas of jihad.⁹⁸
- Visitors to jihadist Web forums such as Shumukh Al-Islam and Ushaq Al-Hur Al-Islamiya praised the execution of a well-known Alawite mufti [Islamic scholar] in Syria, Badr al-Ghazali, who was apparently caught by Al-Nusra Front mujahideen during the operation to liberate Al-Sahel in western Syria.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ <http://www.hanein.info/vb;>
http://www.asharqalarabi.org.uk/%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%B3%D8%AC%D9%86-%D8%AD%D9%84%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%B2%D9%8A-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AC-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%B1%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B0%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AE%D9%84%D9%87-4-8-2013_ad-id!3887.ks#.UhSh29JkMu0;
http://www.france24.com/ar/20130730-%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%83%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B3%D8%AC%D9%86-%D8%B9%D9%86%D9%81-%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86?ns_campaign=editorial&ns_source=RSS_public&ns_mchannel=RSS&ns_fee=0&ns_linkname=20130730_%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%86_%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%83%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86_%D8%B3%D8%AC%D9%86_%D8%B9%D9%86%D9%81_%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%B7%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A9 (all in Arabic).

⁹⁸ <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

⁹⁹ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> ; <http://www.i7ur.com/vb/> (both in Arabic).



Photo of Badr al-Ghazali

- A visitor to the Hanein jihadist Web forum posted several photos that showed a mujahid beheading an Alawite officer. In response, another visitor said that the mujahideen gave Bashar al-Assad's allies the opportunity to defect from his army, but they refused and sought to worship al-Assad instead, and so "Let us cut off their necks for Allah".¹⁰⁰



Photo of the beheading of an Alawite officer by a mujahid

- Abdullah ibn Muhammed, a self-described strategist popular on jihadist Web forums, posted a press release on his Twitter account according to which Syrian citizens, particularly residents of Aleppo, were prevented from eating croissants after one of the strict [religious] legal committees in the region ruled that their consumption was prohibited. The committee claimed that the croissant, specifically, was associated with remnants of French imperialism in Syria. According to the announcement, the ruling reflected the religious extremism that has taken over Aleppo during the last few months. It also noted that another ruling was recently issued by a group of fighters, in which women were forbidden to wear summer attire or leave their homes wearing makeup. In

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

response, Ibn Muhammed said that the announcement demonstrated the American CIA's attempts to tarnish the mujahideen's image with lies.¹⁰¹

Lebanon

- A visitor to the Ushaq Al-Hur Al-Islamiya jihadist Web forum posted a review of a speech by Ayman al-Zawahiri, leader of Al-Qaeda, which was published during the second half of July 2013, in which he criticized Hezbollah's involvement in the Syrian civil war. The visitor attached a caricature of Nasrallah, Secretary-General of Hezbollah, as a wind-up doll pushing a wagon with a bomb that read "The Iranian Project". The caricature reflected Hezbollah's image not only in jihadist discourse, but also in the Sunni world in general, where it is believed that Hezbollah serves to protect Iranian interests in the Middle East.¹⁰²



Caricature of Nasrallah

The Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip

Against the backdrop of the military revolution in Egypt and the harsh and violent clashes between the Egyptian Army and the Muslim Brotherhood, violent incidents continue to take place as the Egyptian Army attacks Salafi-jihadist forces in the Sinai Peninsula.

On August 9, 2013, a drone belonging to the Israeli Air Force attacked a squad of rocket launchers in Egyptian Rafah, killing five people who, according to reports, were preparing to launch rockets into Israel.¹⁰³ It was later clarified that the terrorists killed were fighters in Ansar Beit Al-Maqdes, an Al-Qaeda affiliate that operates in the Sinai Peninsula.¹⁰⁴ The Israeli attack on Egyptian soil spurred a great deal of protest among a number of factions, which claimed that it was a violation of Egypt's sovereignty. The

¹⁰¹ <https://twitter.com/Strategyaffairs>;

<http://arabic.cnn.com/2013/entertainment/8/3/Croissant.Syria/index.html> (both in Arabic).

¹⁰² <http://www.i7ur.com/vb> (Arabic).

¹⁰³ <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=/2668584> (Hebrew).

¹⁰⁴ <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=/2668644> (Hebrew).

Egyptian Army, for its part, denied that Israel was behind the attack.¹⁰⁵ Two days later, on August 11, 2013, Egyptian Army helicopters attacked a squad of jihad activists in the northeastern Sinai Peninsula as part of Egypt's large-scale operation against global jihad elements there; five activists were killed in the attack.¹⁰⁶

Despite the heavy losses suffered by global jihad activists in the Sinai Peninsula, they continue to respond aggressively to the Egyptian Army; on August 15, 2013, armed men in the Sinai shot seven Egyptian soldiers to death.¹⁰⁷

- During the first half of August 2013, Ansar Beit Al-Maqdes, a Salafi-jihadist group operating in the Sinai Peninsula, published the following:
 - A eulogy for four of its members who were killed during an attempt to launch rockets from the Sinai Peninsula into Israel. According to the eulogy, the four men, all residents of the Sinai Peninsula, were killed by Israeli drones. According to the announcement, the four martyrs - Hussein Ibrahim Salem al-Tayhi, Yusri Muhareb al-Sawarkeh, Ibrahim Khilf al-Mani'i, and Muhammed Hussein al-Mani'i – died fulfilling their Islamic duty while attempting to launch rockets at the Zionist settlements located on the border of the Occupied Territories. It claimed that [the drone attack] was a joint operation between the Zionists and the Egyptian Army in order to defend Israel's borders. In addition, the group threatened to take revenge on the Egyptian Army for the killing of four of its members and for its cooperation with Israel.¹⁰⁸
 - A video clip documenting the funeral of the four group members mentioned above.¹⁰⁹



The video banner

¹⁰⁵ <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=//2668594> (Hebrew).

¹⁰⁶ <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=//2668767> (Hebrew).

¹⁰⁷ <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=//2670396> (Hebrew).

¹⁰⁸ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

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

- During the first half of August 2013, the Shura Council of the Mujahideen in the Environs of Jerusalem, a Salafi-jihadist group operating in the Sinai Peninsula, published the following items via the Ibn Taymiyyah jihadist media institution:
 - An announcement (No. 39) regarding “The Jewish Attack on Sinai Soil”, during which four members of Ansar Beit Al-Maqdes were killed. In the beginning of the announcement, the Council expressed its condolences for the deaths of the four men. Later, the group emphasized that the killing was a direct continuation of the Egyptian Army’s policy of killing Islamists, as was its suppression of a demonstration by the Muslim Brotherhood and its operations against Islamists in the Sinai Peninsula. The announcement also noted that the Egyptian Army needed to remember that Israel is the real enemy at which it should aim its weapons. Finally, the Council addressed the Bedouin in Sinai and called on them to assist the mujahideen and avenge the deaths of the four mujahideen.¹¹⁰



The announcement banner

- A claim of responsibility for the Grad rocket that was launched at Eilat on August 13, 2013, in revenge for the killing of four of its members by an Israeli drone.¹¹¹
- During the first half of August 2013, the “Salafi-jihadist movement in the Sinai Peninsula” published the following:
 - An announcement regarding the large-scale operation carried out by the Egyptian Army against jihadist elements in the Sinai. The announcement said that the Egyptian Army had become an enemy of Islam in the war against Egypt’s Islamic identity, which is presented to the world as a war against the Muslim Brotherhood, and that the media blackout enabled the army to carry out severe crimes against supporters of Islam. In the Sinai, especially, the blood of Muslims had become worthless. The announcement mentioned a number of events during which the army opened fire on citizens, indiscriminately and unnecessarily, and caused many deaths. It also emphasized that the army allowed Egyptian skies to become a playground for Israeli planes. In order to deny its crimes, the Egyptian

¹¹⁰ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

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

- Army forced victims' family members to sign documents clearing the army of any responsibility for their deaths, in exchange for the return of their bodies.¹¹²
- A eulogy for the martyrs who were killed by the Zionist bombing of the Sinai Peninsula, with the approval of the [Egyptian] Army.¹¹³
 - A public statement about the war crimes allegedly committed by the Egyptian Army against residents of Al-Thoma village in southern Sheikh Zuwayed on August 10, 2013, during which several villagers were killed. According to the organization, this crime joined the long list of war crimes carried out by the Egyptian Army against residents of the Sinai Peninsula.¹¹⁴
 - The Al-Raya jihadist media institution of the Army of the Nation, a Salafi-jihadist organization in the Gaza Strip, published a video clip in which Abu Hafs al-Maqdisi, leader of the organization, called on the people of Egypt to wage jihad against army commander Al-Sisi. Al-Maqdisi also expressed his hope that one of al-Sisi's bodyguards would assassinate him. Despite the military revolution in Egypt, and even though the Army of the Nation was not acting in coordination with other Salafist movements in Egypt, al-Maqdisi believed that it was ready to cooperate with all Muslims willing to implement shari'a [Islamic law].¹¹⁵



Video clip

- A member of the Shumukh Al-Islam jihadist Web forum posted a photo of Yusri Muhareb al-Sawarkeh, one of four martyrs killed by an Israeli drone in the Sinai Peninsula while attempting to launch a rocket into Israel on August 9, 2013. According to the forum member, the man killed had been active in the Shumukh Al-Islam jihadist Web forum and had posted a great many threads on the site.¹¹⁶

¹¹² <http://shabakataljahad.com/vb> (Arabic).

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

¹¹⁴ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

¹¹⁵ <http://vb.beit-almaqdes.net/> (Arabic).

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



Photo of Yusri Muhareb Al-Sawarkeh

- As a result of the talks that began between the Palestinian Authority and Israel in an attempt to reach a permanent agreement between the two sides, the Army of the Nation, a Salafi-jihadist group in the Gaza Strip, published an official announcement in which it criticized the initiative. The announcement stated that not only did the Oslo Accords not represent the organization's position, but that it did not even recognize the right of Israel to exist. The announcement went on to say that after 20 years of negotiations, the "Zionist enemy" had not made even one tangible concession or implemented any clause from the [Oslo] Agreements, the first one being a withdrawal to the 1967 borders.

It explained that Palestine was given to the Muslim Nation and so it cannot give up even one inch of the land, as that would be considered a betrayal of Allah, his emissaries, his believers, the blood of the martyrs, the prisoners, etc. It said that the liberation of Palestine cannot be achieved through negotiations and concessions, but rather through arenas of jihad "for the sake of Allah and for the sake of implementing shari'a", as this was the only solution for liberating Muslim lands from "the impurity of the occupation".¹¹⁷

The Maghreb [North Africa]

The Libyan people are complaining about the unstable security situation in the country in general, and in the city of Benghazi in particular, which is suffering from the growing, unhindered presence of militias. For instance, according to the media, the phenomenon of assassinations in Libya has become routine. This was especially evident in early August 2013, when 15 people were killed within 48 hours. A Libyan citizen was reported as saying that "the only way to confront [the situation] is to rely on the army", adding that countries around the world must send security advisors to Libya because "we do not have the necessary experience to even defend ourselves". A former prisoner said in an interview that Benzhagi's desperate predicament was the fault of extremist militiamen, including members of the Salafi-jihadist Ansar Al-Shari'a. The prisoner described members

¹¹⁷ <http://vb.beit-almaqdes.net/> (Arabic).

of the group as "murderers hiding behind religion" who are plotting to take control of the country and implement shari'a".¹¹⁸

Tunisia and Algeria are combining forces in the fight against terrorist attacks, which are originating along their shared border. According to a media source, the Tunisian Army attacked terrorist targets in the Jebel Chaambi region in cooperation with the Algerian Army, which allocated 10,000 soldiers to protect the country's borders and prevent terrorists from escaping during the siege. It was revealed that neighboring countries are sharing [intelligence] information regarding the movements of terrorist groups in the region; this also contributes to their success in foiling these operations.¹¹⁹

This move by the Tunisian Army has garnered support from residents,¹²⁰ who even take part themselves in the "terrorist hunt" on occasion, as was the case in the Ouardia suburb. According to the media source, several residents called in security forces after catching six suspected terrorists – all on their own.¹²¹

According to media reports, security forces in Morocco and Spain are also working together and have begun to operate special units in certain areas of both countries, including in territorial waters, in order to guarantee the safety of tourists vacationing in Morocco during the summer break. Portugal and France were also said to be taking part in the operation.¹²²

At the same time, experts claim that, despite Al-Qaeda's success in freeing Islamist prisoners from several prisons in Iraq, Libya and Pakistan, the organization is facing a crisis due to the loss of many of its leaders and commanders. The experts explain that instead of planning terrorist attacks, Al-Qaeda is currently focusing on morale-building operations, recruitment, and speeches to attract young people to the organization.¹²³

- The jihadist media institution of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Al-Andalus, published an article on the Muslim Africa Blog, titled "People of Algeria, Please Take Care of the Malian Refugees", by Abd al-Hamid al-Sahrawai. In the article, al-Sahrawai referred to the Malian refugee problem that developed as a result of the war in Mali after it was invaded by France. He praised the Algerians' generosity and asked them to

¹¹⁸ http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/reportage/2013/08/02/reportage-01; http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/08/13/feature-01 (both in English).

¹¹⁹ http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/08/05/feature-01; http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/08/07/feature-01; http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/08/08/feature-01 (all in English).

¹²⁰ http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/08/02/feature-01 (English).

¹²¹ http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/08/06/feature-01;

http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/08/14/feature-01 (both in English).

¹²² http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/08/13/feature-03 (English).

¹²³ http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/08/15/feature-01 (English).

provide sanctuary to the refugees from Mali who are arriving in Algeria – a moral obligation ignored by the Algerian government.¹²⁴



Article banner

- The Muslim Africa Blog, operated by AQIM, published an article on its Twitter account about the angry protests by Moroccan citizens against the amnesty granted under pressure from the Spanish government by the King of Morocco to a Spanish citizen who sexually abused 11 Moroccan children.¹²⁵
- The Al-Bayareq jihadist media institution, which serves as a platform for Ansar Al-Sunna in Tunisia, published a speech given by the group's spokesman, Sheikh Seif al-Din al-Rais, to the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham.¹²⁶
- A member of the Hanein jihadist Web forum published a video in which a devout Moroccan Muslim spoke about how he was kicked out of a mosque in the city of Zaio "just for striving to do the work of God". In response to the video, a visitor to the forum said that the number of mosques designated for the purpose of 'itikaf [extended retreat to demonstrate devotion to the service of God] was limited and monitored by the regime. The visitor claimed that even in the city of Oujda, considered to be the second largest city in Morocco, only three out of 300 mosques allow an extended retreat in the mosque, adding sadly that "this is the Islamic State".¹²⁷

¹²⁴ <https://twitter.com/Africamuslima/status/363742341967781889> (Arabic).

¹²⁵ <https://twitter.com/Africamuslima/status/364106567064363008> (Arabic).

¹²⁶ <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

¹²⁷ <http://www.hanein.info/vb>; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGUQkFkqCbA#at=147> (both in Arabic).



The Moroccan Muslim kicked out of a mosque in the city of Zaio

Egypt

In Egypt, tensions continue to flare between military forces and the Muslim Brotherhood against the backdrop of the military revolution and the overthrow of Muslim Brotherhood representative, Morsi, from the presidency of Egypt at the end of June 2013. On August 7, 2013, at the close of Eid al-Fitr, which marks the end of Ramadan, it was announced that the diplomatic efforts made to end the crisis, had failed. Egyptian leader Dr. Hazem al-Beblawi announced that the army had made a final decision to take all steps necessary to clear out demonstrators and Muslim Brotherhood supporters from the squares where they had gathered since June 30, 2013.¹²⁸ At the same time, the army conducted an additional wave of arrests of Muslim Brotherhood leaders in Egypt. It also extended Morsi's remand due to his escape from prison, the murder of prisoners and police commanders, the kidnapping of soldiers, and his collaboration with Hamas during the revolution in 2011.¹²⁹

On August 14, 2013, violent clashes erupted again between Egyptian security forces and Muslim Brotherhood supporters. As a result, hundreds of Muslim Brotherhood supporters were killed. In response, calls of condemnation were heard from around the world, including the United States, Qatar and Turkey.¹³⁰ In light of this deterioration, there is growing concern of an escalation by the Muslim Brotherhood and the country's spiral into an armed civil war.

- A visitor to the Snam Al-Islam jihadist Web forum published a ruling concerning the events taking place in Egypt. The question that prompted the ruling was whether it is permissible to kill soldiers and commanders in the Egyptian Armed Forces, as well as police officers, since they have killed protesters who demand implementation of shari'a. In response, several issues were raised:
 - The replacement of shari'a with manmade laws is a heretical act, and fighting infidel soldiers will prevent this.

¹²⁸ <http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/world/middle-east/1.2092209> (Hebrew).

¹²⁹ <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART2/498/658.html?hp=1&cat=666&loc=10> (Hebrew).

¹³⁰ <http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/world/middle-east/1.2098408> (Hebrew).

- One should fight every group that tries to prevent the implementation of shari'a, even if it is made up of Muslims.
- The groups that called for peaceful demonstrations only cause damage and make a grave mistake.

Therefore, the ruling concluded that fighting Egyptian security forces is permitted and one is obligated to take part. The post received a positive response from the administrator of the forum.¹³¹

Somalia

- The Muslim Youth Center, a Salafi-jihadist organization in Kenya closely affiliated with the Somali group Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, leveled criticism at a UN report published on July 12, 2013, regarding its intention to impose supervision on Somalia and Eritrea. The organization emphasized that it is obligated to wage jihad, and to continue to support the mujahideen in Somalia as well as Al-Qaeda's global agenda.¹³²

Sudan

- The Al-Hijratain jihadist media institution of the Preachers of Shari'a in the Land of the Two Niles, a new Salafi-jihadist organization active in Sudan that declared its establishment during the first half of July 2013, published a video clip titled "Those Who Call for Shari'a".¹³³ The video displayed historical events regarding how the Islamic movement in Sudan coped with challenges and sanctions placed upon it by local and foreign anti-Islamist elements. The video was dedicated to the honorable mujahideen, among others, whose patience and steadfastness were the reason for the failure of the Zionist-Crusaders plans.¹³⁴

¹³¹ <http://snamalislam.com/vb> (Arabic).

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

¹³³ <http://al-fidaa.com/vb> (Arabic).

¹³⁴ <http://vb.beit-almaqdes.net/> (Arabic).



The video banner

The Caucasus

- The Valiat Dagestan Web site published a short article about the courses offered by the Russian authorities to the Jewish community in the Caucasus in order to raise awareness about jihad and to teach the Jewish community how to protect itself from the phenomenon. According to the article, these courses were being given as a result of what happened to [Ovadiya] Isakov, a rabbi in the community [who was shot and wounded in Dagestan in July 2013]. The courses served as part of a general plan of "defense" for the Jewish community, due to which the security at Jewish sites in general, and at synagogues in particular, had been increased. It should be noted that the article was written from an objective point of view, which is uncharacteristic of this Web site; it did not elicit any responses on the site or in other Russian-language jihadist portals.¹³⁵
- The Valiat Dagestan Web site published an opinion piece titled, "Two Kingdoms" by a Muslim citizen of the Caucasus who called herself Hamzah. The article discussed the nature of the Muslim soul and the importance of using force to achieve Muslim goals, which creates the need for a violent revolution. She said that this revolution must be carried out by the Muslim collective, made up of Muslim individuals, and so every Muslim must be prepared to do what is necessary when the situation calls for it. She added that every Muslim stands before two kingdoms – the Heavenly Kingdom and the Earthly Kingdom – both of which are important and both of which call for Muslims to strive for maximum justice for the majority of people. However, the question remains – from whom should this justice be demanded? The writer of the article answered that justice must first be demanded from Muslims themselves through the reduction of social gaps

¹³⁵ <http://vdagestan.com/abdulatipov-organizuet-dlya-evreev-v-dagestane-kursy-samooborony-ot-modzhaxedov.djihad> (Russian).

within the Muslim community and through camaraderie, such that each person would see himself as a protector of Muslims and strive to martyrdom.¹³⁶

- The Valiat Dagestan Web site appealed to Muslim citizens of the Caucasus and called on them to report to the site, via the Internet portal, every instance of injustice against them by the authorities. The Web site guaranteed that all of the evidence and testimony brought to it would be used to initiate legal proceedings against the authorities.¹³⁷
- The publication of a video in Chechen, in which Doku Umarov, spokesman for the Islamic Emirate of the Caucasus, responded to questions sent to him by Muslims outside of the Caucasus. Umarov began the video with condolences for the families of those killed in today's arenas of jihad, including Syria and Iraq. He emphasized that the struggle in the Caucasus was inexorably tied to the global struggle, and that one should not forget that all Muslims are brothers. In his opinion, the current state of war resulted from the economic and political power held by the heretics who interfere with Muslim religious interests, causing the war to get out of control. The fighters in the Caucasus today are split between the mountains, forests and cities – some actively fighting and others assisting them – in order to utilize every opportunity to strike the heretics. The advantage that these fighters have is the connection between them, their mutual support, and the knowledge that many others will get up and fight by their side in time of need. With this understanding, many fighters leave to support their brothers abroad. Umarov claimed that this support demonstrated the strength and bravery of the fighters. In this context, he believed that the heretics' democratic regime had played itself out and must be replaced by an Islamic state.¹³⁸

Miscellaneous

- A visitor to the Ushaq Al-Hur Al-Islamiya jihadist Web forum posted a photo in which commanders in the Spanish Army can be seen carrying the Islamic Army flag, which was "stolen" from the Muslims after the Battle of Al-'Uqab in 1212 A.D. During the battle, which took place in Sierra Morena in Spain, four Christian allies fought against the Almohad Muslim rulers, who ultimately suffered defeat. The visitor explained that the Spanish people mark the outcome of this battle with celebrations, as it symbolizes the beginning of the end of the historical Islamic Al-Andalus kingdom. The visitor said sadly

¹³⁶ <http://vdagestan.com/dve-granicy.djihad> (Russian).

¹³⁷ <http://vdagestan.com/obrashhenie-redakcii-sajta-vdagestan-k-zhitelyam-vilajyata.djihad> (Russian).

¹³⁸ <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

"that [while] the Spanish celebrate our downfall...we cheer for Real Madrid and Barcelona..."¹³⁹



Spanish commanders holding the flag of the Islamic Army that was "stolen" from the Muslims in the Battle of Al-'Uqab.

- A visitor to the Hanein jihadist Web forum posted photos of the [Czech] Sedlec Ossuary, which was made famous around the world thanks to its interior decoration made of tens of thousands of human bones. The visitor claimed that the bones belonged to Muslim martyrs, which were brought to the Ossuary in 1218 A.D., during the Crusades, by the head of the Church of Jerusalem at the time, in order to decorate it and bring him honor.

In response, another visitor compared photos of the flags of Christian countries bearing the symbol of the Cross to the flag bearing the shahadah [Muslim creed]. He said that while flags bearing the shahadah are considered to be a symbol of "extremism" by the West, the flags of Christian countries symbolize "religiosity" combined with "democracy". The visitor added that "the Western democracy of skulls is clearly expressed in all of its flags and media lies".



Extremism versus the religion of democracy

Another visitor said that the Sedlec Ossuary had started a Web site (<http://www.kostnice.cz>), on which it claims in several languages that the bones did not belong to Muslims. In addition, the visitor said that had the others bothered to read a few sources on Wikipedia, in Arabic and English, it would have been clear to them that there is disagreement regarding the source of the bones. Instead, the visitor attached

¹³⁹ <http://www.i7ur.com/vb> (Arabic).

an article regarding the cruelty shown by the Crusaders towards Muslims in Bosnia. In doing so, he sought to prove the bestial treatment and abhorrence shown by the West towards Muslims.¹⁴⁰



The Sedlec Ossuary

Facebook and Twitter

- On August 10, 2013, a new Facebook page was launched called the "Aleppo Islamic Network"; it had received over 2,000 likes as of the end of August 2013. The page describes operations on Syrian soil by mujahideen in the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham and The Al-Nusra Front, Al-Qaeda affiliates.¹⁴¹ This page also has a Twitter account: <https://twitter.com/@aleppoIslamic>.



Banner of the Aleppo Islamic Network Facebook page

¹⁴⁰ <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

¹⁴¹ <https://www.facebook.com/network.Islamic.Alep> (Arabic).