



## **Bimonthly Report**

# **Summary of Information on Jihadist Web Sites The Second Half of September 2013**



**International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT)**

**Additional resources are available on the ICT Web site: [www.ict.org.il](http://www.ict.org.il)**

## Highlights

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

- Sheikh Mukhtar Abu Zubeyr, leader of the Somali Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, claimed responsibility for the terrorist attack on the Westgate mall in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. According to him, the attack was carried out in response to Kenya's military involvement in Somalia and he promised that his organization would strike Kenya again.
- The Taliban in Pakistan claimed responsibility for a terrorist attack that its members carried out against one of Pakistan's largest military bases in southern Waziristan in revenge for the May 2013 killing of Waliur Rehman Mehsud, who was considered a possible successor for the organization's leadership.
- Abu Muhammad al-'Adnani, spokesman for the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham, criticized the smear campaign being waged against the organization by the media, which is reflected in its biased and distorted reporting. Al-'Adnani called on armed factions in Syria not to be deceived by these false reports as they are designed to sow division and separation among the ranks of the mujahideen.
- Salafi-jihadist activists called on the mujahideen to strike the Egyptian army in response to the wave of arrests of Muslim Brotherhood members and other Islamist activists in the country. According to them, the Egyptian army is operating against Islam and following the example of former Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, in serving the interests of the United States and Israel.

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## New Publications

### Guidebooks and Instruction Pamphlets

- The jihadist media institution of the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), Sawt Al-Islam, published instructional video No. 7 on the use of the Dragunov SVD [sniper rifle] and instructional video No. 8 on the production of RPG-7 shells. The videos were published as part of a series titled, "The Turkistan Mujahideen's Express Mail".<sup>1</sup>



Clips from instructional video No. 7

### Promoting the Myth of the Martyr

- A visitor to the Hanein jihadist Web forum posted an announcement according to which the "Palestinians of 1948" were in the village of Mushayrifa, located in Wadi Ara, celebrating the death of Mu'ayad Zakariya, a villager who was killed while waging jihad in Syria. The announcement stated that Zakariya had dreamed of dying as a martyr since he was young and that he had joined the mujahideen in Syria via Turkey.<sup>2</sup>



The photo of Mu'ayad Zakariya that was posted to the Hanein jihadist Web forum

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

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic); <http://www.pls48.net/?mod=articles&ID=1168692>

- The jihadist media institution of the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham, Al-Furqan, published a video in praise of those who fulfill the commandment of martyrdom. The video was dedicated to all those who have died as martyrs.<sup>3</sup>

## Magazines

- A collection of articles by jihad activists and prominent contributors to jihadist Web forums was published in the jihadist magazine, *Al-Balagh*, Issue No. 6 (53 pp.). Among the topics examined in the articles were the strategic importance of the arena of jihad in Syria and the role of the United States in overthrowing the Muslim Brotherhood regime in Egypt.<sup>4</sup>



**The banner page of the *Al-Balagh* jihadist magazine**

- The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan published seven issues of its new magazine, *Lashkari Khurasan*, in Parsi.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> <http://iraqsham.com/vb> (Arabic); <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLuW5DV7pCY>

<sup>4</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.jhuf.net/> (Urdu)



**The banner of the seventh issue of the jihadist magazine, *Lashkari Khurasan***

## **Reports from the Field**

### **Afghanistan-Pakistan**

*On September 21, 2013, Abdul Ghani Baradar, one of the founders of the Taliban in Afghanistan, was released from a Pakistani prison. Baradar was released and transferred to Afghanistan per the request of the Afghani government as part of the peace process between the two countries.*<sup>6</sup>

*On September 22, 2013, a double suicide attack took place at a church in Peshawar, Pakistan, in which 56 people were killed and 100 injured.*<sup>7</sup> *One week later, another terrorist attack occurred in the city when a bomb hidden in a market exploded, killing at least 25 people.*<sup>8</sup>

*On September 24, 2013, a large earthquake hit Balochistan Province in southwest Pakistan, near the Iranian border. 515 people were killed in the earthquake.*<sup>9</sup>

- During the second half of September 2013, the jihadist media institution of the Taliban in Pakistan, Umar Studio, published the following:
  - An announcement (No. 12) claiming responsibility for “the destruction of a Pakistani military base in Sararogha, southern Waziristan, and the killing of more than 100 soldiers” on August 27, 2013. According to the organization’s leadership, the attack on one of the Pakistani army’s largest military bases was in revenge for the May 2013 killing of Waliur Rehman Mehsud, who was considered to be the second-in-command of the Taliban in Pakistan. Mehsud served as

<sup>6</sup> <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=/2680835> (Hebrew).

<sup>7</sup> <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=/2679915> (Hebrew).

<sup>8</sup> <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=/2681255> (Hebrew).

<sup>9</sup> <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=/2681023> (Hebrew).

leader of the organization in southern Waziristan and as a senior strategist. He was also considered a possible successor for the organization's leadership. According to the organization, the military base that was attacked served as a base of departure for military attacks against the mujahideen, and against Muslims in Waziristan and in tribal areas. According to the announcement, four mujahideen participated in the attack, during which they broke into the army base at midnight using hand grenades and explosive belts.<sup>10</sup>



**Waliur Rehman Mehsud**

- A video (in two parts) of an interview, in Pashto, with Sheikh Khalid Haqani, a senior commander in the organization.<sup>11</sup> Several points were raised during the interview:
  - A. The organization had been successful in making the Pakistani nation aware that democracy is for the enemies of Islam and not for Muslims, and that it is forced upon them.
  - B. The mujahideen in Pakistan credit themselves with a series of victories in battle, citing the Pakistani government's request to the organization's leadership for cease-fire negotiations as evidence of this.
  - C. The reasons for the battle against the Pakistani regime include the fact that the regime is not Islamist and is fighting Islam in various ways, and the fact that the regime is an ally of the United States in the war against terrorism.
  - D. He criticized the Pakistani clerics for abiding by the dictates of the regime and for making rulings that disgrace the mujahideen.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

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

- E. He expressed his desire for the establishment of an Islamic emirate like those established by the Taliban in Afghanistan, by Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen in Somalia and by the mujahideen in the Caucasus.
  - F. He denied that the organization was involved in bomb attacks on mosques and schools that had Muslim civilians inside, and asserted that American intelligence agents and security companies, such as Black Water, are really the ones behind the claims of responsibility for the series of explosions. The mujahideen themselves promised to take revenge on anyone who harms Muslims. However, it is permissible to carry out terrorist attacks on mosques that house army forces since they are fighting the mujahideen.
  - G. Mullah Omar, leader of the Taliban in Afghanistan, supports Pakistani jihad. Hence, there is no basis to claims that he opposes the Taliban in Pakistan.
  - H. An Islamic regime will never be established through peaceful means or by taking part in the incumbent regime.
  - I. Various media outlets are harming the mujahideen by tarnishing and demonizing their reputation.
  - J. Anyone who takes part in the propaganda campaign against the mujahideen will be punished.
- A visitor to the Hanein jihadist Web forum referred to the suicide attack that took place near a church in Peshawar, northwest Pakistan, on September 22, 2013. Over 50 people were killed in the attack and more than 100 others were injured. The visitor expressed his hope that the Christians killed in the attack would be sent to hell, and added that the Christians in Pakistan "are like the rest of the Christians that live in Muslim lands – they are not immune to blood because they are not considered the People of the Dhimmā".<sup>12</sup> "Dhimmī" is an Islamic term referring to non-Muslim citizens of an Islamic state, including Jews and members of the Zoroastrian religion. The visitor's use of this term shows that he denies Pakistan's Christian citizens the right to personal safety and to

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic); [http://www.daralakhbar.com/news/2013/09/22/1179139/articles/3537208/%D9%85%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84\\_%D9%88%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%AD\\_153\\_%D8%A8%D8%AA%D9%81%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%B1\\_%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A\\_%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%85\\_%D9%83%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%B3%D8%A9\\_%D8%A8%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%88%D8%B1](http://www.daralakhbar.com/news/2013/09/22/1179139/articles/3537208/%D9%85%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84_%D9%88%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%AD_153_%D8%A8%D8%AA%D9%81%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%B1_%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A_%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%85_%D9%83%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%B3%D8%A9_%D8%A8%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%88%D8%B1)



religious expression under the Islamic regime, even though it has been afforded to them throughout Muslim history.

## The Arabian Peninsula

*Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) continues to operate against military targets in Yemen and the number of attacks on Yemeni security personnel is on the rise. On September 20, 2013 members of the organization carried out two terrorist attacks in Shabwa, in southern Yemen, which is considered to be an AQAP stronghold. In the first attack, two car bombs exploded at a military base, one at the entrance and the other at the center of the base. In the second attack, shots were fired at the military headquarters. 56 security personnel were killed in the two attacks.<sup>13</sup> In addition, there were reports of additional assassination attempts of Yemeni security agents; a Yemeni police officer was killed in Taz<sup>14</sup> and a military base in the port city Mukalla was seized by AQAP gunmen.<sup>15</sup>*

- The Fursan Al-Balagh jihadist media institution published an announcement by AQAP in which it expressed condolences to the Muslim Nation over the death of Sheikh Qaed bin Ahmed bin Nasser al-Zahab, who was killed during an American attack on the village Al-Manasekh, near Reda, in Yemen. The announcement stated that the sheikh had been a prominent activist for Islam and jihad, and that his death was part of the Americans' war against shari'a [Islamic law].<sup>16</sup>

## Iraq

*The war-torn country continues to cope with an increasing number of terrorist attacks against the backdrop of the ethnic rift between the Sunni minority and the Shi'ite majority. During the second half of September 2013, several devastating terrorist attacks were reported throughout Iraq, some of which took place during funeral processions for Sunnis and Shi'ites,<sup>17</sup> in mosques,<sup>18</sup> and on the streets of various cities.<sup>19</sup> According to*

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<sup>13</sup> <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/yemen/bomb-attacks-in-yemen-kill-56-police-troops-1.1233336> (English).

<sup>14</sup> <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/yemen/gunmen-kill-yemen-police-officer-1.1237263> (English).

<sup>15</sup> <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/yemen/al-qaida-gunmen-seize-army-hq-in-yemen-city-1.1237494> (English).

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

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/09/2013923163140988575.html>;

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/09/201392217925393229.html>;

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/09/20139211558613656.html>

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/09/2013914125744785379.html> (all in English).

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/09/2013913121850644645.html>;

media reports, in one of the most shocking incidents, the bodies of 10 youths were discovered with bullet holes to their heads or chests in the Baghdad area.<sup>20</sup> One news report claimed that the death toll from terrorist attacks in the month of September was nearing 800.<sup>21</sup>

- During the second half of September 2013, the jihadist media institution of the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham, Al-Furqan, published the following:
  - An audio clip from Abu Muhammad al-'Adnani, spokesman for the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham,<sup>22</sup> in which he criticized the smear campaign being waged by the Western media against members of the organization. For example, he denied reports that the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham was involved in the bombing of mosques in Sunni areas of Iraq. According to him, the Shi'ites were to blame for those attacks as they coordinate such operations with Shi'ite security forces. Al-'Adnani emphasized that the media neglects to include news items about the organization's successes, such as its release of prisoners from the Al-Taji and Abu Gharib prisons in Iraq, its involvement in liberating the Menagh Airport and several villages in Syria, and its attacks on several military bases in Syria. Instead, the media tends to exaggerate the minor problems faced by the organization, such as trivial disagreements with other factions in Syria. According to al-'Adnani, the media is spreading false reports about the organization. For instance, the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham was accused of trying to kill many people in Syria due to ideological differences or its desire to rule the country. In light of these accusations, al-'Adnani emphasized that the organization does not aspire to kill anyone and that it will accept with open arms anyone who wants to offer it assistance. Al-'Adnani mentioned several confrontations that the organization had with other jihadist factions, such as Ahfad Al-Rasul, Asifat Al-Shimal and Hilf Al-Fudul (The Alliance of Excellence). He emphasized that the organization does not harbor any hostility towards these factions, did not initiate conflict with them, and even

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<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/09/2013920105543319967.html> (both in English).

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/09/deadly-blasts-hit-markets-iraqi-capital-201392613225769220.html>;

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/09/2013917171743436248.html> (both in English).

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/09/20139199224225853.html> (English).

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/09/deadly-suicide-bombings-hit-iraq-2013929155747759953.html> (English).

<sup>22</sup> <https://alfidaa.info/vb> (Arabic).

treats them with tolerance despite the fact that they are allied with the Crusaders and are warring with the organization by virtue of this alliance.

Al-'Adnani elaborated on the collaboration between the above-mentioned factions and Western forces. For instance, he noted that the leader of Ahfad Al-Rasul had visited France and returned with an agreement, a plan, money and weapons to fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham in particular, and against the mujahideen in general. Based on this, al-'Adnani emphasized that Ahfad Al-Rasul seeks to provoke a reaction from the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham by cursing the Prophet Muhammad and shooting at its soldiers in an effort to instigate clashes, while the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham displays restraint and tolerance.

Al-'Adnani accused members of the Asifat Al-Shimal faction of collaborating with John Kerry, the US Secretary of State. According to him, the two signed an agreement in the framework of which the faction would fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham.

Al-'Adnani reiterated that the smear campaign being waged by the media against the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham is designed to turn Muslims against the organization, sow a rift among armed factions in Syria - especially among the Free Syrian Army, create the false impression that the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham is weak and has little influence, cause Muslim citizens to act against the mujahideen, and reduce the volume of assistance that the organization receives. [He added that] this is all being done in preparation for the Crusaders' campaign to strike the mujahideen in the event that they gain the upper hand and the Crusaders fail to establish resurgence movements in Syria.

In light of all this, al-'Adnani raised several points: For a balanced and accurate picture of the situation, one should read the organization's official Web forum and not be deceived by the enemy's media reports; The Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham does not consider everyone who does not share its ideology and path to be heretics. Rather, it considers all Sunnis in Iraq and in the Levant to be Muslims; The Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham is interested in maintaining peaceful relations with whoever is interested in doing the same. "Allah knows that the only ones we fight in the Levant are the Alawites. Moreover, it is wise to limit the [number of] enemies and reduce the [jihad] fronts. It would be foolish to open a number of fronts [simultaneously] and fight everyone [...]" ; All of the armed factions in Syria, especially those of the Free Syrian Army, need to be aware of

the smear campaign being waged against the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham with the aim of causing a civil war and a rift among the ranks. They need to be careful not to be deceived by the media; The United States and its allies have learned from their experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq that they are better off not confronting the mujahideen directly. Therefore, they are turning to third parties to fight for them. Armed factions operating under the guidance of the West, such as Katibat Al-Nasr in the city of Al-Bab, Aleppo Province, are helping Syrian and Iranian planes to shell areas where the mujahideen and other Muslims are gathered. However, despite the presence of collaborators, the mujahideen are proving their strength.

- A video of an interview with several operatives in the organization who had served a number of years in Saudi prisons. In the video, the operatives spoke about their experiences in prison and in the arenas of jihad [where they served], and they emphasized that “their only crime” was fulfilling their obligation as Muslims and joining jihad for the sake of their brothers (the Sunnis) in Iraq.<sup>23</sup>



**The video banner**

- A visitor to the Hanein jihadist Web forum criticized the (Sunni) Association of Muslim Scholars in Iraq. He accused the association of not exploiting the sympathy that the Sunnites have for the problems of the Sunni minority in Iraq, and of not taking advantage of the timing of events to declare jihad (against the Shi'ites). In response, another visitor called the organization's clerics "heretics" and said that they belong to the "Ba'ath Party" and the Iraqi "Islamic Party".<sup>24</sup>
- A visitor to the Hanein jihadist Web forum announced that six leaders of the Iraqi Salafi-jihadist group, Ansar Al-Islam, had been killed in Mosul after declaring war against the

<sup>23</sup> <http://iraqsham.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham. Ironically, the visitor criticized the person who had published the announcement before him on Twitter, and hinted that someone who praises jihad would not be likely to publish such an announcement.<sup>25</sup>

- The administrator of the Snam Al-Islam jihadist Web forum published a declaration of allegiance by the Shura Council to the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham and to its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The declaration stated that all areas of life should be based on the principles of the religion and that, for this reason, Islam includes the concept of a caliphate - the purpose of which is to fulfill the religious commandment to rule the world according to Islam.<sup>26</sup>

### Al-Sham [The Levant]

*While the international community is engaged in diplomatic efforts to dismantle the Syrian regime of its chemical weapons, the arena of jihad in Syria continues to rage.<sup>27</sup> For instance, the media is reporting on violent clashes between fighters in the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham - and fighters in the Al-Nusra Front and the Free Syrian Army.<sup>28</sup> In addition, it was reported that during the second half of September 2013, hundreds of fighters from the Free Syrian Army's 11th division pledged their allegiance to the Al-Nusra Front. If the report is accurate, [it means that] the Al-Nusra Front is strengthening its presence in the Raqqa region in northern Syria.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, prominent rebel groups, such as the Islamist Liwa' Al-Tawhid and the Salafist Al-Nusra Front, were reported to have expressed their opposition to the establishment of a Syrian national coalition, and they called on military and civilian forces to unite "under a clear Islamic context based on shari'a".<sup>30</sup> The number of rebels in Syria that identify with this ideology is a matter of concern for Syrian civilians who say that even though Islam is their religion, they wish to live under a democratic regime.<sup>31</sup>*

- During the second half of September 2013, the jihadist media institution of the Al-Nusra Front, Al-Manara Al-Baydha, published the following:

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>26</sup> <http://snamalislam.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/09/2013925161018748623.html> (English).

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/09/key-syrian-rebels-reject-national-coalition-201392512047715713.html> (English).

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/09/2013920164342453621.html> (English).

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/09/key-syrian-rebels-reject-national-coalition-201392512047715713.html> (English).

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/09/concerns-grow-over-foreign-fighters-syria-20139287230483646.html> (English).

- Announcements (Nos. 399-404) claiming responsibility for various terrorist attacks against the Syrian regime's security forces.
- A video following the development and manufacturing process of the Faysal rocket by members of the organization.<sup>32</sup>



**The video banner**

- During the second half of September 2013, the Al-Himam jihadist media agency, which tracks developments in Syria, published the following:
  - A video (No. 24) documenting the distribution of food by members of the Al-Nusra Front to needy residents in the Damascus area.<sup>33</sup>
  - A video (No. 25) in which the Muslim residents of Deir Al-Zour share their opinions about the United States' intention to intervene militarily in Syria.
  - A video (No. 26) documenting the repair of wells and electric wires for the benefit of the Muslim residents of Dar'a.
  - A video (No. 27) documenting a visit to a baking oven factory managed by members of the Al-Nusra Front in Al-Maysar, Aleppo Province.
- A visitor to the Hanein jihadist Web forum posted an announcement according to which an "open meeting" with Abu Muhammad Al-Golani, leader of the Al-Nusra Front, was to be held during which forum users would be permitted to ask him questions, which would later be published with his answers on the forum. A specific date for gathering the questions or for publishing the answers was not provided.<sup>34</sup>

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

<sup>33</sup> <http://jalnosra.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

- The Green Battalion, a new Salfist-jihadist group operating in Syria, published a video documenting a suicide attack that one of its members carried out against a military security unit and the Syrian customs building in Homs-Hasiya. The video was published as part of a new series titled, "Give them a Taste of Our Heroism".<sup>35</sup> According to Arabic sources, the group is supported by the Saudis.



**The video banner**

- Liwa Al-Islam, a jihadist group operating in Syria, mainly in Doma and Al-Ghota Al-Sharqiya, published an announcement regarding the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The announcement stated that Islam is an advocate of humanity and human rights even during times of war, and opposes the harming of innocent people. In contrast, the Bashar al-Assad regime's use of chemical weapons since June 2012 openly violates the commandment of shari'a as well as international law, which forbids the use of such weapons of mass destruction under any circumstances. The Syrian regime crossed all boundaries and red lines. Liwa Al-Islam criticized the international community's silence in the face of these events and promised to hunt down the ones responsible for carrying out these very grave offenses.<sup>36</sup>
- In recent months, a new online portal was created at <http://fisyria.com>, which published updates in Russian about operations by rebel forces, the military, and the Al-Nusra Front in the arena of jihad in Syria. All of the materials published are exclusive to the portal unless otherwise specified.
- A short video by Omar ah-Shishani was posted on the FiSyria Web portal, in which he was seen with others on a tank in Idlib Province, Syria. Ah-Shishani and his associates explained that they came to Syria in order to wage jihad, under Allah's guidance, and called on others to join them. They reminded [Muslims] that jihad affects the entire

<sup>35</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>36</sup> <http://snamalislam.com/vb> (Arabic).

Muslim Nation, and that no one has the right to oppose it and refuse to take part in battle.<sup>37</sup>

- Abdullah Ibn Muhammed, a jihadist analyst and administrator of a popular Twitter account on strategic affairs, referred to the announcement made by several prominent Syrian jihadist brigades, including the Al-Nusra Front, the Al-Tawhid Brigade and the Islamic Movement of the Free Men of the Levant, regarding their non-recognition of the Syrian coalition. Ibn Muhammed said that it had been the Islamic coalition's first communiqué and political speech in Syria, and added that "now the Syrian revolution has broken free from the dictates of the West and the East".<sup>38</sup>

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

- The jihadist media institution of the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham, Al-Farkan, published several videos (Nos. 6-8) about the arena of jihad in Syria as part of a series entitled, "Messages from the Land of Battles". Among other things, the video documented members of the organization distributing aid packages to needy residents in the streets of Aleppo, and raids on Syrian military outposts.<sup>39</sup>
- During the second half of September 2013 the jihadist media institution of the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham, Al-'Itisam, published the following:
  - A video titled, "Window to the Land of Wars – Part 11".<sup>40</sup>
  - A video titled, "Window to the Land of Wars – Part 12".<sup>41</sup>
- The Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham claimed responsibility for a series of operations that were carried out in eastern Hama against a Syrian Army Air Force battalion. The operations were preceded by more than a month of preparation and information gathering. Hundreds of fighters from the organization took part in the operations, which succeeded in pushing the enemy back, bringing down the air defense battalion near the mujahideen, and destroying many security checkpoints. Dozens of people among the enemy ranks were killed and injured, and the mujahideen managed to take possession of many weapons that had belonged to the regime. The Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham promised that these operations were just the beginning and that they would continue until the fall of the heretical Alawite regime.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> <http://fisyria.com/?p=1011> (Russian).

<sup>38</sup> <https://twitter.com/Strategyaffairs> (Arabic).

<sup>39</sup> <http://iraqsham.com/vb> (Arabic).

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

<sup>41</sup> <http://iraqsham.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>42</sup> <http://snamalislam.com/vb> (Arabic).



- A visitor to the Hanein jihadist Web forum posted the text of the ceasefire agreement that was reached between the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham and the North Storm Brigade, a unit affiliated with the Free Syrian Army.

The two groups had a violent confrontation after fighters in the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham attempted to kidnap a European doctor who worked in a hospital in A'zaz, a city located on the Syria-Turkey border. Even though the language of the ceasefire gives the impression that the matter was resolved, it is not the first time that fighting between the two groups has been reported.<sup>43</sup>

### The Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip

*The Egyptian Army continues its efforts to fight jihadist terrorism in the Sinai Peninsula. The Egyptian Ministry of Interior published photos and details about the scope of the killings carried out in the framework of the military operation in the Sinai Peninsula, at a time when the army was struggling to keep the peace throughout the region.<sup>44</sup> In addition, [the army] displayed the advanced weapons that were found in the possession of jihadist organizations in the Sinai Peninsula and even documented the investigations of the jihad fighters who were arrested.<sup>45</sup>*

- During the second half of September 2013, Ansar Beit Al-Maqdes, a Salafi-jihadist group operating in the Sinai Peninsula, published the following:
  - An announcement entitled, "The Crimes Continue – The Massacre in Al-Lafitat Village" about the Egyptian army's operation against jihadist elements in the Sinai Peninsula. The announcement claimed that the army continues to carry out serious crimes in destroying villages in the Sinai Peninsula, including the recently ravaged Al-Lafitat. The army invaded the village with 30 tanks and began to shoot in all directions, causing great destruction to houses there and killing seven innocent people, including four children and two women. The recurring attacks prove that the Egyptian army is trying to drive all supporters of Islam out of the Sinai Peninsula, and to serve Jewish and American interests in defending Israel's borders from attack. Ansar Beit Al-Maqdes emphasized that the blood of Muslims in the Sinai Peninsula is not cheap and promised to take revenge through reprisals against the army, some of which have already begun.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.aawsat.net/2013/09/article55317216>

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4429890,00.html> (Hebrew).

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

- A video documenting "The Army's Crimes in its Extensive Operation in the Sinai Peninsula between September 9-13, 2013".<sup>47</sup>
- During the second half of September 2013, the Al-Rayah jihadist media institution of the Army of the Nation, a Palestinian Salafi-jihadist organization in the Gaza Strip, launched the second video in the "Connecting the Good" series. The video documented members of the organization visiting sick and injured people in hospitals in the Gaza Strip during the month of Ramadan. In the framework of the visit, the activists handed out small gifts, such as many copies of the Quran and manifestos on religious matters.<sup>48</sup>
- A visitor to the Hanein jihadist Web forum posted a news item about the kidnapping and murder of Israeli soldier, Tomer Hazan, by a Palestinian in Qalqilya. Hazan's murderer, Nidal 'Amar, a resident of Beit Amin (south of Qalqilya), had planned the murder in order to trade Hazan's body for the release of his brother who is being held prisoner in Israel. Visitors to the forum expressed joy over the announcement and one of them posted a video of soldiers visiting the scene of the attack.<sup>49</sup>
- A visitor to the Hanein jihadist Web forum posted an invitation to a demonstration in memory of the Al-Aqsa Intifada on September 27, 2013, and even noted detailed points of departure for the processions in Jerusalem, Ramallah, Nablus, Hebron, Tulkarm, Jenin, Qalqilya, Bethlehem and the Gaza Strip.<sup>50</sup>



**The announcement banner**

## **The Maghreb [North Africa]**

*During the second half of September 2013, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) appointed two new leaders: Said Abou Mouqatil, an Algerian national, replaced Abd al-*

<sup>47</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>48</sup> <http://vb.beit-almaqdes.net/> (Arabic).

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

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

*Hamid Abou Zeid and Abu Talha al-Mauritani, a Mauritanian citizen, replaced Abdallah al-Chinguetti. The two previous commanders had been killed in battle in Mali.*<sup>51</sup>

*The Libyan people, who have been worried about the severe deterioration of the security situation in their country for some time now, are demanding the establishment of a professional army as a solution to their plight.*<sup>52</sup> *The well-known Libyan blogger, Mohamed Abdallah Chibani, said that "the war that united the nation against Muammar Gaddafi's regime has now become a cold war among the people, with weapons scattered in every direction and a government incapable of controlling them".*<sup>53</sup> *Nevertheless, it seems that the regime is trying to stabilize the country's security situation and over 3,000 men are said to be planning to undergo military training in Turkey, Italy, England and the United States.*<sup>54</sup>

*However, while the unstable country is trying to recover, the media is reporting that many activists from the Salafi-jihadist Mourabitounes movement are making their way to training camps in southern Libya or are already there. Security agencies in the Maghreb, the Sahel, and southern European countries warn that the movement seems to be considering carrying out terrorist attacks "bigger" than the siege on the gas facility in Algeria that took place last January.*<sup>55</sup>

- The Al-Rayah jihadist media institution, which serves as a platform for Ansar Al-Shari'a in Libya, published an audio clip titled, "The Danger of the Secular Camp and the Lie of Democracy" by Sheikh Muhamed al-Tarhuni.<sup>56</sup>

## Egypt

*The Muslim Brotherhood continues to be excluded from the public and religious spheres in Egypt. On September 23, 2013 an Egyptian court ordered that the Muslim Brotherhood be outlawed, its assets confiscated and its members prohibited from participating in any sort of organized activity in the country. In addition to former President Muhammed Morsi, who has been imprisoned since his ousting, the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Muhammad Badi', was arrested. Other senior members of the movement, including Khairat al-Shatar and Muhammad al-Baltaji, were arrested and*

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<sup>51</sup> [http://magharebia.com/en\\_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/09/25/feature-02](http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/09/25/feature-02) (English).

<sup>52</sup> [http://magharebia.com/en\\_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/09/18/feature-02](http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/09/18/feature-02);

[http://magharebia.com/en\\_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/09/24/feature-01](http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/09/24/feature-01) (both in English).

<sup>53</sup> [http://magharebia.com/en\\_GB/articles/awi/blog/2013/09/20/feature-03](http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/blog/2013/09/20/feature-03) (English).

<sup>54</sup> [http://magharebia.com/en\\_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/09/23/feature-01](http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/09/23/feature-01) (English).

<sup>55</sup> [http://magharebia.com/en\\_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/09/20/feature-02](http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/09/20/feature-02) (English).

<sup>56</sup> <https://shamikh1.info/vb> (Arabic).

*charged with incitement to murder.<sup>57</sup> In another show of exclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Egyptian Ministry of Education ordered the destruction of hundreds of thousands of school textbooks that praised Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood for their role in deposing former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.<sup>58</sup> A number of protests were held by the Muslim Brotherhood in response to these actions, but they were on a small scale.*

- The Egyptian organization, Youth of Shabab Al-Tawheed Wal-Jihad, published an announcement regarding recent events in the country. It claimed that the Egyptian army had recently carried out many crimes, including attacking innocent women and children, breaking into mosques and shooting at them, and arresting anyone who belongs to an Islamic movement. The Egyptian government has joined the US-led battle against Islam and on Muslims, which began after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Shabab Al-Tawheed Wal-Jihad declared war on the United States and all of its allies in the region, especially the heretical Egyptian army that is fighting Muslims and taking orders from the Americans and the Zionists. The organization called on every family concerned about the welfare of its sons not to send them to join the army. It even called on all Islamic movements that tried, and are still trying, to operate politically within a democratic framework to wake up and realize that it is not the way, and to wage jihad instead.<sup>59</sup> The organization itself was founded in December 2012.
- Ibn Taimiyya, a jihadist media institution responsible for publications about the Salafi-jihadist movement in the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip, called on the [Muslim] Nation to fight against the traitorous Egyptian army. It claimed that the Egyptian army is acting as an agent of Islam's enemies, especially the Americans, and is committing crimes against Egyptian citizens, destroying their houses, bombing their neighborhoods and killing innocent people, as recently happened in Al-Lafitat. [It also claimed that] the army is helping Jews settle in the region and protecting them from jihadists in the Sinai Peninsula by maintaining the siege on the Gaza Strip, which began during the reign of deposed President Hosni Mubarak. In effect, the army is serving the interests of the Christians and Jews rather than the interests of Muslims. Therefore, Ibn Taimiyya called on the mujahideen and on Muslims, whoever and wherever they are, to strike the army hard in order to stop its crimes and restore security to Egypt.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> <http://gulfnnews.com/news/region/egypt/egypt-court-orders-muslim-brotherhood-dissolved-1.1234574> (English).

<sup>58</sup> <http://gulfnnews.com/news/region/egypt/egypt-destroys-textbooks-praising-mursi-brotherhood-1.1232182> (English).

<sup>59</sup> <http://snamalislam.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>60</sup> <http://shabakataljihad.com/vb> (Arabic).

- Abdullah Ibn Muhammed, a jihadist analyst and administrator of a popular Twitter account on strategic affairs, commented on a news item about students in government schools reading the New Testament in the presence of the Minister of Education “for the first time in Egypt”. Ibn Muhammed denounced this as part of the agreement between Pope Tawadros II and General al-Sisi.<sup>61</sup>

## Nigeria

- The Al-Qabidun Ala Al-Jamar media institution, affiliated with the Snam Al-Islam jihadist Web forum, published a letter on the Al-Jihad Al-Alami Web forum. The letter was written by Abu Usama al-Ansari, leader of the Ansar Al-Muslimin group in Sudan, to the governments of France and Nigeria. He wrote that the French and Nigerian governments had already been given several opportunities to save the life of French hostage, Francis Collomp, who was taken captive by the jihadist organization, but that they seem to be [more] interested in deceiving the mujahideen. Therefore, the organization warned that the governments of France and Nigeria would be the only ones responsible for the fate of the hostage if they continue to commit their acts of violence and betrayal, and to fight against God’s commandments. The video that accompanied the letter was the first sign of life from the French hostage to be received in a long time.<sup>62</sup>

## Somalia

*On September 21, 2013, a large and devastating terrorist attack by Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen began in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. Armed members of the organization entered the upscale Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, instructed Muslims to leave, and then began shooting in every direction. They continued to shoot and wreak havoc, and even took hundreds of people hostage before starting a dialogue with security forces. Eventually, the Kenyan army initiated a special commando operation that included soldiers and helicopters in an effort to neutralize the terrorists and free the hostages. The army besieged the mall for several days and strong explosions could be heard all around the area. On September 25, 2013, the President of Kenya announced that the siege had ended and the terrorists had been defeated. At least 68 people were killed in the terrorist attack on the mall, including citizens of France, China, Canada and England, and even the Kenyan President’s nephew.<sup>63</sup>*

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<sup>61</sup> <https://twitter.com/Strategyaffairs> (Arabic); [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNqjXwZz0co&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNqjXwZz0co&feature=player_embedded)

<sup>62</sup> <http://shabakataljihad.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>63</sup> <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=/2680081/1> (Hebrew).

On the other side, Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen claimed that the Kenyan government used chemical weapons in order to kill the mujahideen and burned the mall in order to hide the evidence; the organization blame the Kenyan government for the deaths of 137 hostages but their claims are unsubstantiated.<sup>64</sup> In a recorded announcement, Sheikh Mukhtar Abu Zubeyr, leader of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, confirmed that his men were responsible for the attack and that it was in response to Kenya's military involvement in Somalia; Abu Zubeyr vowed that his organization would strike Kenya again.<sup>65</sup>

### References to the Terrorist Attack on Westgate Mall

- As a result of the terrorist attack on the Westgate mall in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, various jihadist Web forums opened special discussion rooms to continuously track events [as they unfolded]. In addition, Web forum visitors associated with Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen referred to the attack on their Twitter accounts, which were closed one after the other by Twitter management. For example, several Twitter accounts published a list of names allegedly belonging to the terrorists involved in the attack (full names, ages, and place of origin): Two from London, three from Sweden, one from Illinois (United States), one from Maine (United States), one from Arizona (United States), one from Ontario (Canada), two from Somalia, one from Helsinki (Finland), one from Aleppo (Syria), one from Damascus (Syria), one from Dagestan, two from Syria and one from Kenya.<sup>66</sup> It should be noted that this list was not verified by any source and was even refuted by senior officials in Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen.



The alleged list of participants in the terrorist attack

<sup>64</sup> <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=//2680744> (Hebrew).

<sup>65</sup> <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=//2680835> (Hebrew).

<sup>66</sup> <https://twitter.com/jackcp12/status/381945720825057280/photo/1> (Arabic).

- A visitor to the Hanein jihadist Web forum posted a news item regarding the terrorist attack that was carried out by Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen. In response, another visitor said that the organization had chosen the target of the attack since it served as a “painful target for the enemy” and noted that, in his opinion, by attacking women and children the organization showed its weakness rather than its strength. The visitor added that an attack on a military camp would have served its reputation better and voiced his concern that the attack would result in sanctions being placed against the organization down the line by the Somali public.<sup>67</sup>
- Abdullah Ibn Muhammed, a jihadist analyst and administrator of a popular Twitter account on strategic affairs, commented on the September 20, 2013 attack by Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen in Nairobi, Kenya. He claimed that Israel had played a crucial role in supporting the Christian regimes in the Horn of Africa and, therefore, Kenya had used Israeli forces in order to intervene quickly (during the attack). In addition, Ibn Muhammed said that the attack in Nairobi had sent the message that there was a heavy price to pay for Kenya’s involvement in the occupation of Somalia, and that it was the same price paid by Spain in the Madrid terrorist attacks in 2004, which eventually forced Spain to withdraw from Iraq.<sup>68</sup>

### **Criticism of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen’s Leadership**

Over the past two years, the signs of a deep rift among the leadership of the Somali Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen have increased. The latest testimony to this was the killing of Omar al-Hammami, also known as Abu Mansur al-Amriki, as a result of differences of opinion between him and Abu Zubeyr, leader of the organization.<sup>69</sup> Echoes of these disputes also reached jihadist Web forums:

- The administrator of the Snam Al-Islam jihadist Web forum published an announcement regarding the blood bath that Abu Zubeyr, the leader of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, is carrying out against other mujahideen in Somalia. The announcement claimed that many mujahideen had complained that Abu Zubeyr was persecuting them and then suddenly – before the reports were dealt with properly – they were killed in a manner contrary to shari’a. Among the persecuted individuals killed without cause by Abu Zubeyr and his men were the cleric Sheikh al-Zailaie, the jihadist leader Abu-Mansur al-Amriki, and the fighter Usama al-Baritani. The slaughter being carried out by Abu

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>68</sup> <https://twitter.com/Strategyaffairs> (Arabic).

<sup>69</sup> See Appendix at the end of this document.

Zubeyr in Somalia must be stopped immediately. Fighters in Somalia must refuse Abu Zubeyr's orders to kill and must conduct themselves according to Islam and the laws of Allah. They must not rely on commands and instructions from human beings: A Muslim must not harm another Muslim.<sup>70</sup>

- The Al-Zailaie jihadist media institution published the transcript of remarks made by Sheikh Khitab al-Masri, a member of the organization, to his comrades in Somalia. Al-Masri criticized the disputes and bloody conflicts among the mujahideen in Somalia, and reminded them that their goal should be, first and foremost, the implementation of shari'a and war against the heretics; in practice, the mujahideen in Somalia are busy fighting each other instead of their common enemy, and they are killing one another in an unacceptable manner. The mujahideen must unite and remember that their enemy is the heretical regime.<sup>71</sup>
- The administrator of the Snam Al-Islam jihadist Web forum published an announcement directed at Abu Zubeyr's soldiers, who know the truth but remain silent, reminding them that all mujahideen share a common enemy – the heretics – and therefore they need to be responsible for one another. The silence of Abu Zubeyr's soldiers surrounding the killing of their fellow mujahideen is contrary to Islam and harms the interest of jihad. They must speak the truth and condemn the murders of mujahideen by other mujahideen.<sup>72</sup>
- A prominent visitor to the Snam Al-Islam jihadist Web forum posted an announcement titled, "Jihad or Corruption in Somalia?" The announcement stated that there is a world of difference between waging jihad in the way of Allah and the corruption taking place in Somalia, in which one man (meaning Abu Zubeyr, leader of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen) is using jihad in order to achieve his own personal interests and is murdering his comrades. It claimed that, for some time already, the organization has been moving farther away from jihad as Allah commanded it. Recently, Sheikh Abu-Mansur al-Amriki and Sheikh Usama al-Baritani were killed in Somalia for no reason even though jihad prohibits the murder of innocent Muslims. The writer expressed hope that the Shari'a Council of the Mujahideen or one of the sheikhs would explain the issue to the people, and clarify that what is taking place in Somalia is corruption and not jihad. The announcement received many responses and became a "hot topic" on the forum. One visitor claimed that the problems stem from the fact that Abu Zubeyr does not consult with the other leaders of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen. Another visitor claimed that Ayman

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<sup>70</sup> <http://snamalislam.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>71</sup> <http://shabakataljihad.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>72</sup> <http://snamalislam.com/vb> (Arabic).



al-Zawahiri must intervene since he is the supreme leader, but another claimed that the mujahideen in Somalia do not obey al-Zawahiri's orders. One visitor noted that approximately 160 Somali clerics had published a ruling against Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen in light of recent events.<sup>73</sup>

- A visitor to the Hanein jihadist Web forum posted photos that apparently showed the administrator of a hospital in Barawe, Lower Shebelle Province, in Somalia, burning piles of "defective" drugs. According to the post, the province and the Ministry of Health, which is affiliated with Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, made a joint decision to burn the medications. The post also noted that a pharmacy employee was instructed not to sell "these drugs" to people since most of them had come from the "occupied" city of Mogadishu.<sup>74</sup>

## Sudan

- A visitor to the Hanein jihadist Web forum posted a video documenting a mass demonstration in Sudan in response to a government increase in the price of fuel and gas. The visitor said that blood was beginning to flow in Sudan and he expressed hope that a "Sudanese Spring" would take place.<sup>75</sup>

## The Caucasus

- The Valiat Dagestan Web site published a video by the Al-Nusra Front in Syria addressed to Emir Dokka Umarov and to Abu Muhammed, the qadi [Islamic religious court judge] of the Caucasus. The video included a song, words of praise and a blessing for the mujahideen in the Caucasus in their battle against the Russian Crusaders.<sup>76</sup>
- The Valiat Dagestan Web site posted a short video in which Hamzah, the commander of a team of mujahideen in the Caucasus, addressed Muslims in the Caucasus. He reminded them that this is not the first year in which fighting is taking place there, and that jihad should be the individual goal of every Muslim. Every Muslim must fulfill his obligation of jihad in whichever manner he finds most appropriate. Hamzah reminded them that Allah waives this obligation only for the blind, the disabled and the sick, and that even those individuals are obligated to provide moral support for jihad, as

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<sup>73</sup> <http://snamalislam.com/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic).

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.hanein.info/vb> (Arabic); <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfwmG9GDv30#t=36>; <http://alhayat.com/Details/556848>

<sup>76</sup> <http://vdagestan.com/mudzhaxidy-dzhabxat-an-nusra-poyut-nashid-dlya-amira-i-kadiya-ik.djihad> (Arabic and Russian).

determined by Ibn Taimiyya. Hamzah called those who do not fight “apathetic cowards” who allow the enemy to defeat and humiliate them incessantly.<sup>77</sup>

## The West

- Anjem Choudary, a radical Salafist activist in England, stated on his Twitter account that the day is fast approaching when Islamic caliphates will be established in Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, Indonesia and even Europe. He emphasized that the future Islamic state will protect the lives of Jews, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs and other minorities as long as they pay jizya [under Islamic law, a tax levied on non-Muslim citizens of an Islamic state]. In addition, Choudary called on Muslims in England to shake off their indifference and take action against the British army’s operations against Muslims in Islamic countries.<sup>78</sup>



**Anjem Choudary’s post on his Twitter account**

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<sup>77</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9Vopcc6SRo> (Russian).

<sup>78</sup> <https://twitter.com/anjemchoudary>

## Appendix A: Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen - History and Trends

### **Introduction**

Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen (literally: "The Holy Warriors Youth Movement") is a Somali Islamic terrorist organization affiliated with global Al-Qaeda and currently led by Mukhtar Abu Zubeyr. As of September 2013 the number of members in the organization was estimated at 7,000-9,000,<sup>79</sup> and the organization controls much territory in southern Somalia.<sup>80</sup>

Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen was founded as a Somali organization with nationalistic tendencies, as part of the ICU (Islamic Courts Union), an Islamist group that tried to implement shari'a rule in Somalia and even controlled large sections of the country until 2006. The ICU took an active role in the civil war that took place (and is still taking place to a certain extent) in Somalia, but Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen split from the ICU and chose a path that sanctifies Islam rather than nationalism. In practice, Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen focuses mainly on fighting the Somali government and its allies – especially Kenya and Eritrea.

When Osama bin Laden was still alive, attempts were made to merge Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen with global Al-Qaeda. In 2009, bin Laden appointed Fazul Abdullah Muhammed as the leader of Al-Qaeda in East Africa.<sup>81</sup> However, these attempts were unsuccessful because Fazul did not gain the trust of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen's senior members, and essentially served as bin Laden's representative in Africa rather than as the leader of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen. Abu Zubeyr functioned as the organization's spiritual leader and did not consent to its merger with Al-Qaeda.

In February 2012, a video was published in which Abu Zubeyr, leader of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, announced that the organization was joining global Al-Qaeda and pledged allegiance to its leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden's successor.<sup>82</sup> The announced merger of the two organizations caused a big rift among Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen's leadership. Its top leaders opposed Abu Zubeyr's decision, claiming that the organization should focus on internal Somali matters and not get involved in international issues; Hassan Dahir Aweys, a senior Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen leader and member of the organization's Shura Council, claimed that Al-Qaeda's way was not necessarily the correct way to wage

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<sup>79</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15336689> (English).

<sup>80</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/08/06/somalia-shabaab-idAFL6E7J601H20110806?pageNumber=1&virtualBrandChannel=0> (English).

<sup>81</sup> [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2009/11/al\\_qaeda\\_names\\_fazul.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2009/11/al_qaeda_names_fazul.php) (English).

<sup>82</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2012/02/09/world/africa/somalia-shabaab-qaeda> (English).

jihad.<sup>83</sup> Towards the end of the first half of 2013, the conflicts among the organization's leadership worsened to the point that four of its senior leaders were executed under Abu Zubeyr's command, including Ibrahim Haji Jama Mee'aad, who had criticized Abu Zubeyr to the leadership of global Al-Qaeda.<sup>84</sup> In September 2013, Abu Zubeyr's forces also assassinated Omar Hammami, commonly known as Abu-Mansour al-Amriki, a senior and well-known leader of the organization who had left it as a result of disagreements with Abu Zubeyr. He had claimed that Abu Zubeyr was chasing fame and threatening the organization's leadership.<sup>85</sup> Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen's internal power struggles greatly weakened the organization, and there are even those who attribute the organization's terrorist attack on the Westgate mall in Kenya to an attempt to gain fame and prestige in light of these power struggles.<sup>86</sup>

Further evidence of the severe internal strife in Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen can be found in letters that were published on jihadist Web sites by senior members of the organization criticizing its leader. One of the letters was written by Abu-Bakir al-Zayla'i, a senior member of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen who became an important figure in Somalia's jihad culture and one of the organization's top leaders; in his letter he claimed that the leadership of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen was underestimating its fighters in a manner that endangered the organization's continued operations. Al-Zayla'i even claimed that the leader of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen was operating prisons in which his opponents were being held under difficult conditions. Furthermore, al-Zayla'i cautiously criticized the leadership of Al-Qaeda, claiming that it was failing to unite Muslims and create a true Islamic state.<sup>87</sup>

Another important letter that testified to the internal friction was published by Al-Zubayr al-Muhajir, who had once been appointed by Godan (Abu Zubeyr's nickname) himself to the Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen Shura Council. Al-Muhajir claimed that he had tried to transmit messages to Godan regarding the arrests of members of the movement but that all of his efforts had been in vain; Godan had even refused to meet with him in person and, therefore, he chose to publish an open letter. Al-Muhajir harshly criticized Godan's policy, according to which every fighter that leaves Somalia without permission is considered a

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<sup>83</sup> [http://sabahionline.com/en\\_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2012/04/05/feature-01](http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2012/04/05/feature-01) (English).

<sup>84</sup> <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gM9Wk4gV0HvUOoCIOWzLKJ2PGXdA?docId=CNG.3d37aa60e57810b34cd41d8c96b39aff.4d1&hl=en> (English).

<sup>85</sup> <http://somalilandsun.com/index.php/regional/3737-somalia-al-shabaab-assassinate-abu-mansoor-al-amriki-and-usama-al-britani-> (English).

<sup>86</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/22/kenya-attack-power-struggle-al-shabaab> (English).

<sup>87</sup> <http://www.esisc.org/upload/publications/briefings/a-new-document-showing-the-internal-tensions-of-al-qaeda/INTERNAL%20TENSIONS%20OF%20AL%20QAEDA.pdf>

traitor. Al-Muhajir even claimed that many fighters had been tortured to death by Godan's men.<sup>88</sup>

### **Propaganda and the Recruitment of Foreigners**

Over the years, Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen has become known for its tendency to attract foreigners from all over the world.<sup>89</sup> In the United States, for example, members of the organization are trying to recruit Americans from local Muslim communities; according to American estimates, the organization has recruited over 40 American Muslims and 20 Canadian Muslims since 2007.<sup>90</sup> The foreign recruits are sent to fight in the arena of jihad in Somalia and are used as propaganda tools in online videos. For instance, Abu-Mansour al-Amriki, an American who converted to Islam and became a prominent leader of the organization, appeared in many propaganda films that were circulated on Internet Web forums in order to impassion Muslims to join jihad. He also became known for the songs that he composed and sang on his videos. Another well-known figure that joined Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen was Samantha Lewthwaite (aka "the White Widow"), the widow of one of the terrorists who carried out the 7/7 attacks in London. Most foreigners who join Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen come from Yemen, Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia; in 2010 the number of foreigners in the organization was estimated to be 200-300.<sup>91</sup> In addition, Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen attracts poor Muslims from Kenya who convert from Christianity to Islam and are interested in taking part in jihad. It is estimated that Kenyans comprise 10% of the organization's fighters.

Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen widely uses the Internet for propaganda purposes (see Appendix B) since it is the most accessible and the cheapest form of media capable of reaching everywhere with ease. As was previously mentioned, foreign members of the organization are mainly used for purposes of publicity, propaganda and recruitment. Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen is active in jihadist Web forums and chat rooms dedicated to recruitment (however, recent discourse on jihadist Web forums is not sympathetic to the organization, but rather to those leaders who have left it). The organization also used to have a Web site, which was taken down by the network, as well as a propaganda television station in Somalia.<sup>92</sup> Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen also used to have a Twitter account in which it

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<sup>88</sup> <http://newsomali.com/2013/05/01/somalia-open-letter-to-al-shabaab-leader-reveals-yes-there-are-problems>

<sup>89</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/07/nyregion/07shabaab.html?src=mv&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/07/nyregion/07shabaab.html?src=mv&_r=0) (English).

<sup>90</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/07/27/al-qaeda-american-recruits\\_n\\_911432.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/07/27/al-qaeda-american-recruits_n_911432.html) (English).

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/201011.shinn.somalia.html>

<sup>92</sup> <http://www.fas.org/spp/crs/terror/R41473.pdf>

published its most militant propaganda, which eventually led to the suspension of its account in January 2013.<sup>93</sup>

### **The Organization's Partners**

There are reports of collaboration between Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen, and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) as well as the Nigerian Boko Haram organization. Such collaboration includes the synchronization and coordination of terrorist attacks, the division of money and weapons, and joint training exercises. AQIM is a direct affiliate of Al-Qaeda in northwest Africa and even pledged its allegiance to global Al-Qaeda in 2007. Boko Haram is Nigeria's main Islamist-jihadist terrorist organization and has carried out many terrorist attacks in the country.<sup>94</sup>

Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen is at constant war with Somalia, the country in which it is based. However, the organization is actually helped by some of Somalia's neighboring countries: its members train in Eritrea<sup>95</sup> and Somaliland<sup>96</sup> (an area that is officially-internationally recognized as being part of Somalia but which functions internally as an independent state). There have also been reports of members of the organization training in Afghanistan.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> <http://twitter.com/HSMPress> (the former account address)

<sup>94</sup> <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-06-25/african-terrorist-groups-starting-to-cooperate-u-dot-s-dot-says> (English).

<sup>95</sup> <http://alhayat.com/Details/554438>

<sup>96</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/07/29/idUSN29287781> (English).

<sup>97</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/pages/ce8c3fb1-0425-4d01-a9ad-24f4d07129a6>



Source: The George Washington University<sup>98</sup>

<sup>98</sup><http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/HSPI%20Issue%20Brief%202022%20Somalia%20Al%20Shabaab.pdf> (English).

## Appendix B: Leadership of Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen

Photo	Title	Name
	<b>Emir</b>	<b>Ahmed Abdi Godane (aka Mukhtar Abu Zubeyr)</b>
	<b>Deputy Leader and Spokesperson</b>	<b>Sheikh Mukhtar Robow (aka Abu Mansur)</b>
	<b>Member of the movement's Shura Council</b>	<b>Fuad Mohamed Qalaf (Shongole)</b>
	<b>Spokesperson</b>	<b>Ali Mohamud Rage (aka Ali Dheere)</b>
 <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 5px;">and Allah Subhanahu Wata'ala in another verse tells us:</p>	<b>Emir of the movement's affiliate in Kenya<sup>99</sup></b>	<b>Sheikh Ahmad Iman Ali</b>

<sup>99</sup> As published on January 6, 2012.



## Appendix C: Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen Media Institutions

 <p>مؤسسة شباب للإنتاج الإعلامي</p>	<p><b>Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen's Official Media Institution</b></p>	<p><b>Al-Kataib Media Foundation</b></p>
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