

Report Summary:

Methods to Cope with Attempts to Block Jihadi Websites¹

On September 27, 2008, the Al-Hesbah forum² hosted a debate addressing mechanisms to cope with the blocking of jihadi sites and forums.³ Forum member Abu Tah⁴ initiated the discussion, calling for forum members to consider different means of coping with this challenge.

During the debate, suggestions were made on how to stop forums from being blocked. In retribution for the blocking of Islamic sites, forum members also proposed offensive measures that could be taken by Jihadi hackers against western websites – particularly those of government and banks.

The jihadi forum members also expressed their resentment and distress over blocked forums, not only because of the loss of a central and important informational tool, but also because of the reduced ability to reach new target populations such as students, reporters and government personnel. This search for new target communities demonstrates the ongoing efforts of the global jihad movement to expand its circle of influence beyond the traditional participants of forum debates. By using additional internet platforms not specifically identified as jihadi forums (Islamic sites with wide distribution) or the distribution capabilities of widespread internet servers, the global Jihad movement continues to expand its reach.

Relevant to this discussion, the Jamestown Foundation (www.jamestown.org) published an article in September 2008 discussing how jihadi activists are beginning to track those who are tracking them. The article states that the jihadists are demonstrating a high level of awareness of western internet sites, which are tracking the communications of jihadi forums. The popular jihadi forum Al-Ekhlaas published a list at the beginning of September 2008 called "Know the Enemy by Tracking and Analyzing Websites," in which a member of the forum presented a list of western bodies carrying out such surveillance.⁵

¹ A detailed report about the topic was sent to a limited mailing list.

² The Al-Hesbah forum is considered to be one of the leading Islamic sites, serving as a channel of communication between Al-Qaida and other jihadi organizations.

³ <http://al-hesbah.info/v/showthread.php?t=193377>

⁴ A registered active member of Al-Hesbah forum since January 2006. He raises topics for debate and distributes jihadi material. For example, see links for downloading which deal with the study of armaments dated 7.26.08: <http://al-hesbah.info/v/showthread.php?t=1614227>

⁵ <http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2374415>