



February 16, 2014

## Using suicide bombers as weapons: The leading modus operandi in the Al-Nusra Front and Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria's struggle against the Syrian regime and Hezbollah in Lebanon<sup>1</sup>



The suicide bomber known as Abu Usama al-Australi (aka Abu Usama al-Muhajir) reads his will standing on the roof of the truck he used in his suicide bombing attack. It was carried out on behalf of the Al-Nusra Front at the entrance to the Deir ez-Zor airport on September 11, 2013. In it he stated that jihad was the personal duty of every Muslim, and praised the jihad fighters (Alplatformmedia.com)

### Using Suicide Bombers in Syria and Lebanon

1. Using suicide bombers to attack the Syrian regime and Hezbollah in Lebanon is a modus operandi adopted from Al-Qaeda attacks in Iraq and other Islamic confrontation zones. In the three years of the Syrian civil war, suicide bombing attacks have become the trademark of the Al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria ("the Islamic State"), both affiliated with Al-Qaeda and the global jihad. Suicide bombing attacks were carried out extensively in 2012 and 2013 and inflicted heavy losses on the Syrian regime in terms of casualties and damage to property and infrastructure. They also had a detrimental effect on the symbols of its governance and sovereignty, and raised the standing of the suicide bombing organizations. **At the beginning of 2014 they began carrying out suicide bombing attacks in Lebanon**

<sup>1</sup> Continuation of the September 23, 2013 bulletin ["The Al-Nusra Front \(Jabhat al-Nusra\) is an Al-Qaeda Salafist-jihadi network, prominent in the rebel organizations in Syria. It seeks to overthrow the Assad regime and establish an Islamic Caliphate in Greater Syria, a center for regional and international terrorism and subversion."](#)

as well, where it became the leading modus operandi of the struggle against Hezbollah and the Shī'ites.

2. **The Al-Nusra Front**, a branch of Al-Qaeda in Syria, is the rebel organization responsible for the largest number of suicide bombing attacks in Syria during the civil war. Between its founding in January 2012 and the end of December 2012, the organization claimed responsibility for 43 of the 50 suicide bombing attacks against the Assad regime (LongwarJournal.org). In 2013 the Al-Nusra Front carried out 34 suicide bombing attacks. Nine others were carried out by the Islamic State, the Syrian branch of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, which began suicide bombing attacks in Syria at the end of May 2013. In 2013 the two organizations carried out a total of 43 suicide bombing attacks (similar to the number carried out by the Al-Nusra Front in 2012). Fifty-three suicide bombers participated in the attacks. The attacks in Syria accounted for approximately 15% of all the suicide bombing attacks carried out around the globe in 2013.<sup>2</sup> Suicide bombing attacks have since seeped into Lebanon, where five have been carried out since the beginning of 2014, four by the Al-Nusra Front and one by the Islamic State.

3. The attacks in Syria were carried out by suicide bombers wearing explosive belts who blew themselves up at targets associated with the Syrian regime. In some instances they detonated cars or trucks loaded with large quantities of explosives to cause more casualties and destruction. Some of the attacks were combined and involved two and sometimes even three car bombs which were detonated simultaneously or in succession. According to our analysis, some of the suicide bombing attacks were highly sophisticated and expertly planned: six suicide bombing attacks were carried out simultaneously in two nearby locations. Some of the attacks against preferred targets were carried out by several suicide bombers. Most of them were foreign fighters, mainly from the Arab-Muslim world (especially Saudi Arabia).

4. The organizations in Syria affiliated with Al-Qaeda and the global jihad have gained experience and expertise in orchestrating suicide bombing attacks. In our assessment, that expertise poses a threat whose implications go beyond the Syrian arena.

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<sup>2</sup> See the INSS Insight No. 507 by Yotam Rosner, Einav Yogev at Yoram Schweitzer, "A Report on Suicide Bombings in 2013," January 14, 2014, at <http://www.inss.org.il/index.aspx?id=4538&articleid=6408>. According to the report, in 2013 291 suicide bombing attacks were carried out in 18 countries and led to approximately 3,100 deaths. About 50% of the attacks (148) were carried out in the Middle East, 98 of them in Iraq. The statistics may indicate that Syria has become the second largest arena for suicide bombing attacks, after Iraq, for Al-Qaeda and the global jihad.

Current proof of the threat is that the suicide bombing attacks have seeped into Lebanon, where they are being used to attack Hezbollah, undermining of Lebanon's fragile internal stability. The longer the Syrian civil war continues, the greater the chances that suicide bombing attacks originating in Syria will seep into other countries. Foreign jihadist fighters who return to their countries of origin from Syria are liable to initiate or participate in suicide bombing attacks, utilizing the operational experience they gained and the operational contacts they made with Al-Qaeda and global jihad handlers. In addition, in our assessment **the organizations in Syria affiliated with Al-Qaeda and the global jihad are liable to initiate suicide bombing attacks in Western countries, the State of Israel and Arab countries** (although their top priority is still overthrowing the Assad regime).

## Methodological Notes

5. This study **analyzes 43 suicide bombing attacks carried out in Syria during 2013, 34 by the Al-Nusra Front and nine by the Islamic State**. It is based primarily on claims of responsibility issued by the organizations. In our assessment, they correspond approximately to the number of suicide bombing attacks actually carried out. In addition, there were suicide bombing attacks that were prevented or went awry about which we have no information. We have not included attacks carried out by other Islamic and jihadist rebel organizations, which account for only a small fraction. In addition, the study analyzes **five suicide bombing attacks carried out in Lebanon** by the Al-Nusra Front and Islamic State from the beginning of January 2014 to the beginning of February 2014.

6. The attacks in Syria referred to **include six combined suicide bombing attacks carried out simultaneously by two suicide bombers** at two locations in the same area. Each one of them is counted as two attacks. However, a combined attack of two or more suicide bombers carried out at one target is considered as one attack.

7. Our main sources of information were the Internet sites of the jihad organizations, especially postings of responsibility and videos issued by the Al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State. They were cross-referenced with information from Arab and Western media about the civil war in Syria and events in Lebanon.

## Results of the Analysis of Suicide Bombing Attacks in Syria in 2013

8. The main findings were the following:

1) **Suicide bombing attack targets:** Most of the attacks targeted facilities, bases and individuals associated with the Syrian security forces and administration. Prominent were attacks on **roadblocks, headquarters, military bases and camps belonging to the Syrian army and security and intelligence entities** affiliated with the regime. **Institutions affiliated with the government** were also attacked (police station, prison, munitions factory), as were the residences of Syrian security force personnel. Although the attacks were directed at government and security targets, they often caused collateral damage in the form of heavy civilian losses. On occasion **civilian targets** where members of the security force congregated were also attacked. The harm done to civilians created a problem for the organizations' image, especially the Al-Nusra Front, which makes an effort to gain the support of the Syrian population (the Islamic State is less sensitive about its image).

2) **Modus operandi:** Most of the attacks were carried out by a **lone suicide bomber** who either detonated an explosive belt or blew himself up in a car bomb. In some instances the attack was the combined effort of **three, four or even five suicide bombers**, either at one location or simultaneously at several adjacent locations. The complex attacks were carried out by the Al-Nusra Front, whose operational capabilities are higher than those of the Islamic State.

3) **Objectives:** There are two main types of suicide bombing attacks. One is the **preparatory attack**, carried out as the first stage before the main attack on a preferred target, such as a post, roadblock, camp or facility associated with the Syrian regime. The other is the **mass-casualty attack**, an attack intended to kill as many people as possible without a subsequent assault on a physical target.

4) **Locations:** **About a third of the attacks were carried out in Damascus and the villages surrounding it** (the *ghouta*). In our assessment, the intention was to deal the regime a painful blow, to expose its vulnerability and to achieve the greatest possible media coverage. About two thirds were carried out in Al-Nusra Front and Islamic State combat zones in **northern and eastern Syria**: Aleppo,

Hasakah, Idlib, Hama, Homs and Deir ez-Zor. One suicide bombing attack was carried out on the **Golan Heights** and another in the region of **Daraa'**, in southern Syria. In our assessment, the small number of suicide bombing attacks on the Golan Heights and around Daraa' indicate the relative weakness of the organizations affiliated with Al-Qaeda and the global jihad in those regions, at least so far (although the attacks were complex and painful for the regime).

5) **Frequency**: The Al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State kept up **a steady series of suicide bombing attacks throughout 2013**, usually about two a month. In January, June, August and September there were four or five attacks each month. In February 2013 there were **ten suicide bombing attacks**. In our assessment, maintaining a continuing succession of suicide bombing attacks, including complex integrated attacks, indicates **well-developed operational capabilities and a large reservoir of highly-motivated operatives ready to sacrifice themselves for jihad in Syria**.

6) **Collaboration with other organizations**: Most of the Al-Nusra Front or the Islamic State attacks were **not coordinated with other rebel organizations**. Some were carried out in collaboration with other rebel organizations, almost all of them jihadist in nature. **Only in one instance was there coordination between the Al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State in carrying out a suicide bombing attack**.

7) **The suicide bombers' wills**: In some cases videos were posted of suicide bombers reading their wills. An analysis of the wills indicates the emphasis the Al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State put on the **sectarian nature of the struggle between Sunnis and Alawites**. Much was made of **continuing the path of jihad against "infidels" as the personal duty (*fard ayn*) of every Muslim** (according to the school of Abdullah Azzam, Osama bin Laden's ideological mentor). The wills are disseminated to the Arab-Muslim world and the West by jihad websites, and their themes and messages **are transmitted to the countries of origin of the foreign fighters when they return from Syria**.

## Foreign Fighters in Suicide Bombing Attacks

9. **Fifty-three suicide bombers** participated in Al-Nusra Front and Islamic State suicide bombing attacks. Most of them were carried out by a single bomber, although in certain instances there were **three, four or even five suicide bombers**.

10. Of the 53 suicide bombers, we verified the names of **30: 23 foreign fighters and seven Syrians**. The identities of the rest are unknown. We based our identification of their countries of origin primarily on their nicknames, which usually, although not always, indicate where they came from. We cross-referenced the nicknames with other information which in most instances helped verify their countries of origin.

11. Of the 23 foreign fighters, **13 were from Saudi Arabia (more than half)**. Eleven were identified as definitely Saudi Arabian and two others had nicknames linking them to Saudi Arabia. **Four were verified as coming from Jordan, three were from Iraq** (two Kurds identified by their nicknames), **one from Tunisia** (identified by nickname), **one from Australia** (identified by nickname) and one foreign fighter whose country of origin could not be identified. **A Canadian foreign fighter** apparently carried out a suicide bombing attack but his identify and the circumstances of his death could not be verified.<sup>3</sup>

12. The relatively large number of foreign fighters who carried out suicide bombing attacks was mainly a function of the large number of foreign fighters in the ranks of the Al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State. In our assessment, it may also indicate **their high level of jihad motivation**, exploited by the two organizations. They are motivated by the jihad ideology that led them to Syria, where their motivation is **fostered by religious indoctrination which increases their ideological fervor and prepares a large cadre of potential suicide bombers**. However, it can be assumed that some of the foreign fighters who were offered the opportunity to carry out a suicide bombing attack refused, although the organizations **do not release that information** (for example, we know of an Israeli Arab who joined the ranks of the rebels and was offered the opportunity to carry out an attack but refused. In our assessment he was not unique.).

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<sup>3</sup> At the beginning of February 2014, **a suicide bomber from Britain** was identified. The Al-Nusra Front released a video of a British foreign fighter who carried out a suicide bombing attack during an attack on a prison in Aleppo (February 6, 2014). He was Abd al-Wahid Majed, who drove a truck bomb into the prison and blew himself up in it.

## The Large Number of Saudi Arabian Suicide Bombers

13. **More than half of the suicide bombers we identified were Saudi Arabian (13 of 23).** Moreover, there are large numbers of foreign fighters from Saudi Arabia in the ranks of the Al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State (the reason that relatively so many Saudi Arabians among the foreign fighters have died in Syria). Thus it is not surprising that there are many Saudis among the suicide bombers. Saudi Arabia, the principal foreign supporter of the revolt against the Assad regime, was the hothouse in which the seeds of Al-Qaeda and the global jihad were sown, despite the efforts of the Saudi regime to shirk responsibility for it (most of the terrorists who participated in the September 11, 2001 attack were of Saudi Arabian origin).

14. On the other hand, there is **genuine criticism in Saudi Arabia** of the young Saudis who join the ranks of organizations affiliated with Al-Qaeda and the global jihad, although that criticism has yet to be translated into steps effective enough to keep them from joining. An article published in the Saudi daily newspaper Al-Watan on January 27, 2014, countered the accusations in the Arab media against Saudi preachers that they were encouraging young Saudis to go to Syria to fight:

"There is no doubt that there are scholars and preachers, well known to the state and to members of the various schools of Islam, who instruct our young men, according to religious law, to go to Syria and even urge them to equip themselves with explosives and sacrifice their lives in vain...Unfortunately, our youngsters fuel the civil war being waged in Syria. They went there to perform a religious duty, but they lack knowledge, experience and political awareness. Their emotions have been exploited by innocent scholars, who did not know the young men would only serve interested parties and even be used by regional and global intelligence services..."

## Hezbollah in the Crosshairs: Suicide Bombing Attacks Seep from Syria into Lebanon

### Overview

15. Since the beginning of 2014 the Al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State have claimed responsibility for suicide bombing attacks in Lebanon carried out using methods familiar from the Syrian arena (suicide bombers and car bombs). Between January 2 and February 4, 2014, **there were five suicide bombing attacks in Lebanon:** the Al-Nusra Front claimed responsibility for four and the Islamic State for one. They were

carried out in the **southern Shi'ite suburb of Beirut** and in the **Shi'ite town of Hermel**, in the northern Beqa'a Valley. Most of the attacks were carried out by a lone suicide bomber who detonated a car bomb.

### Short Descriptions of the Suicide Bombing Attacks

16. On **January 2, 2014**, a car bomb was detonated in the southern suburb of **Beirut** by a suicide bomber. The attack targeted **Hezbollah** and was carried out in close proximity to some of its most important institutions. **The Islamic State** claimed responsibility (by means of its Twitter account, which has since been closed). The attack killed four people and wounded more than 66. The Arab media reported that the suicide bomber was **Qutayba Muhammad al-Satem**, 20, a student from the village of Wadi Khaled on the Syrian-Lebanese border. It was also reported that in the past he had participated in the fighting in Syria in the ranks of the **Al-Nusra Front** (Al-Quds Al-Arabi, January 4, 2014).

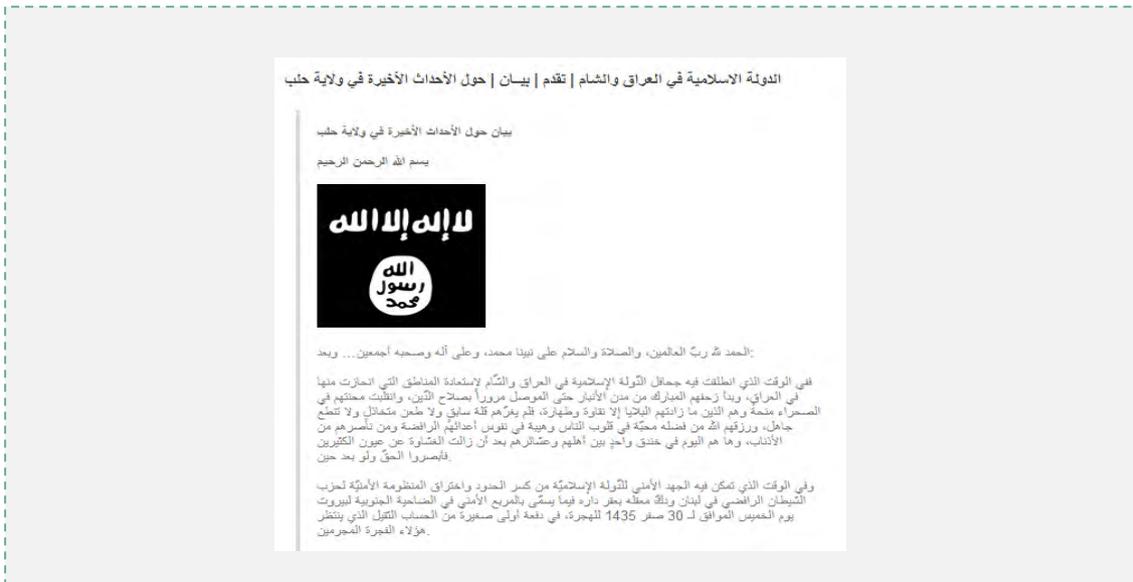
### Scent of the Attack (January 2, 2014)



(Yemeneconomist.com)



(Alhayat.com, January 4, 2014)



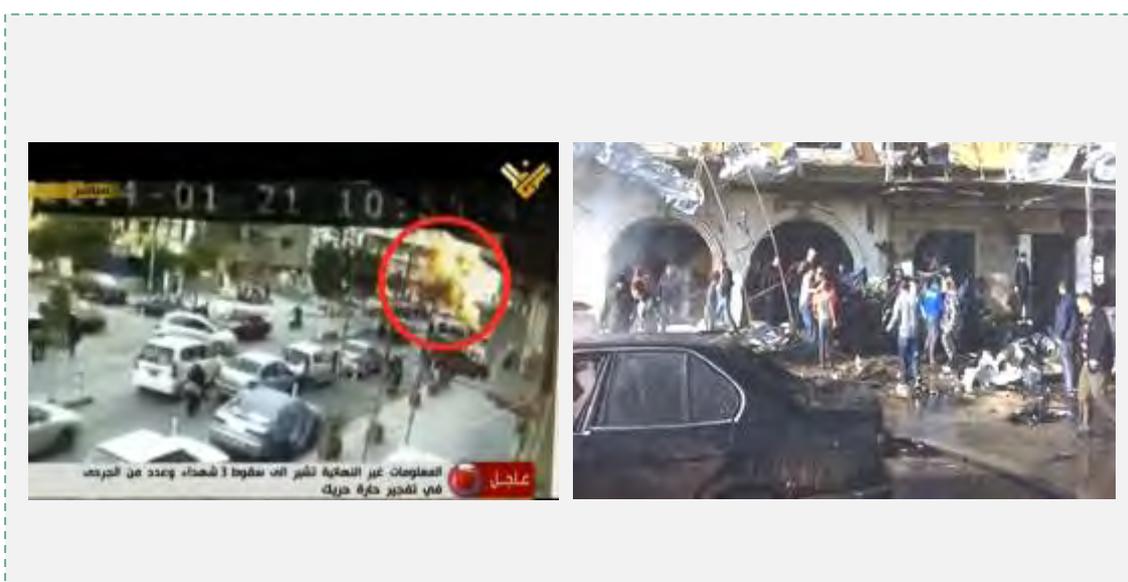
**The Islamic State's claim of responsibility for the suicide bombing attack on January 2, 2014. It notes that the organization attacked "the party of Satan [i.e., Hezbollah]" on its own doorstep in the southern suburb of Beirut. It calls the attack "the first small installment of a long bill waiting for [payment by] the criminal infidels" (Daawla.tumblr.com).**

**17. On January 17, 2014, a suicide bombing attack was carried out in the Shi'ite village of Hermel in the northern Beqa'a Valley.** The Lebanese media reported that a **suicide bomber wearing an explosive belt blew himself up in a car bomb.** The attack killed four people and wounded 38. According to the Lebanese media, the explosion occurred near government offices in Hermel in a crowded commercial area. (According to Agence France-Presse, on January 16, 2014, there was an explosion near a Hezbollah stronghold in Hermel). **The Al-Nusra Front claimed responsibility for the attack,** saying that it had targeted a stronghold of "the party of Iran" [i.e., Hezbollah]. The attack, it said, had been carried out by one of the "Al-Nusra Front lions in Lebanon" in response to Hezbollah's crimes in Lebanon against Sunni women and children (Jihadology, January 16, 2014).



The Al-Nusra Front claims responsibility for the suicide bombing attack in Hermel (Dawaalhaq.com)

18. On January 21, 2014, there was a suicide bombing attack in the Shi'ite neighborhood of Haret Hreik in the southern suburb of Beirut. The Al-Nusra Front claimed responsibility on its Twitter account. It said the attack was in response to the slaughter inflicted by "the party of Iran" [i.e., Hezbollah] on the children of Syria and Aarsal<sup>4</sup> (a Sunni village in the northern Beqa'a Valley, a stronghold of Hezbollah opponents). The Lebanese media reported that a lone suicide bomber blew himself up inside a car bomb. According to Al-Hayat (January 22, 2014) the car contained three 120mm mortar shells connected to 20 kilos, or 44 pounds, of explosives. The Lebanese media reported that the blast killed five people and wounded 74.



Left: The scene of the attack in Haret Hreik photographed by a local surveillance camera (Almanar.com.lb). Right: The scene of the attack in Hermel (Almanar.com.lb)

<sup>4</sup> On January 18, 2013, five siblings were killed by a rocket hit in Aarsal. Hezbollah was accused but that was not verified.

19. **On February 1, 2014, there was a suicide bombing attack near a gas station on the main street of the Shi'ite village of Hermel** in the northern Beqa'a Valley. A suicide bomber driving a **car bomb** carried out the attack. According to the Lebanese media, five people were killed and 20 wounded. The **Al-Nusra Front** claimed responsibility on its Twitter account. It said that the attack had been carried out in "the den of the party of Iran" [i.e., a Hezbollah stronghold] because of [Hezbollah's] continuing crimes against the Syrian people.



The gas station in Hermel near the site of the suicide bombing attack (Aleqt.com)

20. **On February 3, 2014, a suicide bomber blew himself up on the road passing through the Druze neighborhood of Choueifat** near the southern Shi'ite suburb of Beirut. The attack killed two people and wounded several. According to the Lebanese media, the suicide bomber was wearing an explosive belt with five kilos, or 11 pounds, of explosives and was **a passenger on a minibus going to the southern suburb of Beirut**. According to Lebanese "security sources" he blew himself up by accident, while other sources claimed he blew himself up after the bus driver or passengers became suspicious of him (Al-Joumhouria, February 4, 2014).

21. The Al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State claimed responsibility for five suicide bombing attacks in Lebanon. In addition, there was also **a combined, mass-casualty suicide bombing attack carried out at the entrance to the Iranian embassy in Beirut on November 19, 2013**. Responsibility was claimed by the **Abdullah Azzam Brigades**, a terrorist organization affiliated with the **global jihad** operating in Lebanon.<sup>5</sup> Two suicide bombers blew themselves up in succession, similar to the

<sup>5</sup> For further information see the November 27, 2013 bulletin ["Mass-casualty double suicide bombing attack carried out at the Iranian embassy in Beirut."](#)

modus operandi of the suicide bombing attacks carried out in Syria by the Al-Nusra Front in 2013, indicating that operational capabilities may have been passed from Syria to Lebanon.

## Hezbollah's Response

22. **Hezbollah accused the organizations operating in Syria** affiliated with Al-Qaeda and the global jihad (what they refer to as the *takfir* organizations) **of the suicide bombing attacks in Lebanon. Hezbollah head Hassan Nasrallah claimed they drove car bombs into Lebanon from the Al-Qalamoun mountains in Syria through the town of Arsal in the northern Beqa'a Valley.** He gave a speech in which the security threat was represented as the main justification for increasing Hezbollah's involvement in the Syrian civil war.<sup>6</sup> On the ground, Hezbollah instituted a series of security measures, among them piling sandbags in front of stores as protection, especially in the southern suburb of Beirut. However, so far such measures do not seem to be an effective response to the threats of Al-Qaeda and the global jihad terrorism, which have reached Hezbollah's front door.



**Left: Sandbags protect the entrance to a store in the southern suburb of Beirut (Alhadathnews.net). Right: Sandbags protect the entrance to a store in the southern suburb of Beirut (Bintjbeil.org)**

<sup>6</sup> For further information see the December 25, 2013 bulletin "In late 2013, Hezbollah again intensified its military involvement in the Syrian civil war, suffering heavy losses."

## Conclusion

23. In our assessment, **the main objective of the wave of suicide bombing attacks in Lebanon is to disrupt Hezbollah's military involvement in the fighting in Syria by forcing it to deal with homeland security.** The seeping of suicide bombing attacks into Lebanon from Syria may indicate that the Al-Nusra Front, the Islamic State and other global jihad-affiliated organizations have **improved their operational capabilities** in Lebanon. Thus they pose a serious challenge to Hezbollah, which has not yet found a way to counter them. Moreover, the Al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State's capabilities for terrorism, which are currently being used in Syria and Lebanon, **may make their way in the future to other Arab states, the Palestinian arena, and even to Israel and the Western countries.**<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Updated evidence of the intention of creating an operational connection between the global jihad network in Israel and the operatives in Syria was revealed by the exposure of three operatives of a network affiliated the global jihad at the end of December 2013. Two of them were residents of east Jerusalem and were handled by an operative from the Gaza Strip, mainly through the Internet. The network planned, among other attacks, to carry out a double suicide bombing attack, simultaneously bombing the **International Conference Center in Jerusalem and the American embassy in Tel Aviv. One of the operatives was supposed to go to Syria via Turkey for military training and coordination for the planned attack** (Israel Security Agency website and Haaretz, January 23, 2014).

## Appendix

### Suicide Bombing Attacks in Syria Carried Out by Al-Nusra Front

1. **January 13, 2013** – A video was released documenting two combined Al-Nusra Front attacks against Syrian military targets in a number of arenas in the city of Idlib:

1) A suicide bombing attack carried out at a Syrian army roadblock in Al-Mutlaq Square. The suicide bomber used an ice cream truck. After the blast Al-Nusra Front operatives attacked and took control of the roadblock. The suicide bomber was nicknamed **Abu Umar al-Janubi**.



**Abu Umar al-Janubi next to the ice cream truck he used to attack the Syrian army roadblock (YouTube)**

2) A suicide bombing attack carried out at a Syrian army post at the villa of Nabigh Barakat, Idlib. After the blast Al-Nusra Front operatives attacked and took control of the post. The suicide bomber was **Abu al-Darda' al-Shami**.

3) The suicide bombing attacks were combined with **another attack in Idlib** which included detonating an unmanned vehicle at a location where Syrian army reinforcements were expected to arrive and attacks on two other Syrian roadblocks.

2. **January 21, 2013** – A truck was loaded with 3.5 tons of explosives and detonated in the city of Al-Salamiyah, near Hama. The explosion took place at the Al-Sajad factory in the midst of a large number of army and security

personnel. The suicide bomber was a Saudi named **Sulaman Ibrahim al-Hajir** (i.e., from the Hajir tribe), aka **Abu Abd al-Jabbar al-Najdi**.



The suicide bomber Abu Abd al-Jabbar al-Najdi stands next to the Al-Nusra Front flag (Vdc-sy.info)

3. **January 23, 2013** – There was a suicide bombing attack at the Syrian army roadblock at Al-Mushtal in the city of Al-Qusayr (which fell to the regime forces in the summer of 2013). A truck carrying 20 tons of explosives was used. The truck belonged to the Syrian army, apparently either taken as booty or stolen. The roadblock was completely destroyed. The Al-Nusra Front, according to its announcement, coordinated the attack with other rebel organizations (Katibat al-Farouq and Katibat Ashbal al-Aqidah). The suicide bomber was nicknamed **Abu Islam al-Shami**.



Left: The truck used in the attack (Twitmail.com). Right: Abu Islam al-Shami and the Al-Nusra Front flag (Twitmail.com)

4. **January 24, 2013** – There was a combined suicide bombing attack in the village of Sasa in the Golan Heights. A building housing the Quneitra branch of Syrian military intelligence was blown up by three car bombs detonated in succession. The first car held one ton of explosives and was driven by **Abu Hamza al-Halabi**. Later, the second car drove into the building itself and was blown up by **Abu Hudhayfa al-Halabi**. Terrorist operatives stormed the building and a third car bomb was detonated by **Abu Duha al-Janubi**. The Al-Nusra Front claimed the attack killed at least 60 people. According to Syrian sources, 53 military intelligence personnel were killed, including six officers, and 90 were wounded. Among those killed was **Brigadier General Adnan Ibrahim**, head of military intelligence for the Quneitra district (Syriahr.net).



**The site of the attack on the Syrian military intelligence building (Alhadath.news)**

5. **January 30, 2013** – A suicide bomber blew himself up in a car bomb at the building of the national security apparatus in the eastern region of Deir ez-Zor. After the attack the building was stormed by operatives from several Islamic rebel organizations (**Liwa al-Furqan**, **Liwa al-Qadisiya**, **Al-Majlis al-Thawri** and other organizations). The suicide bomber was nicknamed **Abu al-Walid al-Shimali**.



**The Syrian national security apparatus building in eastern Deir ez-Zor after the attack (YouTube.com)**

6. **February 6, 2013** – There was a double suicide bombing attack at the headquarters of Syrian intelligence and Syrian national security in the city of Palmyra in the Homs district. The **first suicide bomber** blew up a car bomb with three tons of explosives at the gate of the intelligence headquarters. The **second suicide bomber** blew up a car bomb with 4.5 tons of explosives at the national security building. According to initial reports in the Syrian media, at least 12 security personnel were killed in the attack. The Al-Nusra Front claimed at least 400 were killed. Names or nicknames of the suicide bombers were not made public.

7. **February 6, 2013** – There was a suicide bombing attack using a minibus loaded with 2.5 tons of explosives. The Al-Nusra Front claimed the target was a weapons factory west of the city of Al-Salamiyah in the Hama district. At least 60 people were killed. According to the Al-Nusra Front, the suicide bomber's nickname was **Abu al-Braa' al-Homsi**, and the attack was carried out "to avenge the children of Homs who were killed." The suicide bomber was 21, a Saudi, named **Abd al-Wahhab bin Atef al-Zahrani**, nicknamed **Abu Mihjin al-Azadi**.



Abd al-Wahhab bin Atef al-Zahrani (Alkhabar-ts.com)

8. **February 6, 2013** – A suicide bomber detonated a truck bomb at a facility of the Shabiha (the Assad regime's militia) in the Yarmouk refugee camp south of Damascus. The suicide bomber's nickname was **Abu al-Fawz al-Ansari**.



The truck bomb en route to the Yarmouk refugee camp (YouTube.com)

9. **February 10, 2013** – A truck was used for a suicide bombing attack against the infirmary near the Aleppo airport. The Al-Nusra Front later claimed there had been Syrian soldiers present. After the blast Al-Nusra Front operatives broke into the infirmary and took control of it. According to the Al-Nusra Front announcement, the suicide bomber was nicknamed **Abu al-Nafir al-Taib** 19, and was a foreign fighter whose country of origin could not be verified.

10. **February 12, 2013** – There was a simultaneous combined suicide bombing attack in two locations in the city of Al-Shdadi in the northeastern district of Hasakah. The **first suicide bomber** blew himself up in the headquarters of military security. The **second suicide bomber** blew himself up at the city's western roadblock. No mention was made of the suicide bombers' names or nicknames.

11. **February 21, 2013** – A combined suicide bombing attack was unsuccessfully attempted in the Al-Mazraa region of Damascus. It was supposed to be carried out by three suicide bombers: a foreign fighter from Canada, nicknamed **Abu Dujjana** (apparently a Canadian from Montreal named **Jamal Muhammad Abd al-Qadir**). He was supposed to approach in a car bomb, exit the car and blow it up. However, the car accidentally blew up before the terrorist operative could get away and he was killed. Another suicide bomber, who was supposed to blow himself up after the first explosion, was wounded by shrapnel and captured by the Syrian army. He was **Muhammad Ismael Salah Jarallah**, nicknamed **Abu al-Qa'qa'**, a Jordanian of Palestinian extraction from the city of Zarkaa. The third terrorist was of Palestinian extraction and nicknamed **Khutab**. While in the hospital the Jordanian terrorist, a Hezbollah supporter, was interviewed by the Lebanese TV channel **Al-Mayadeen** (affiliated with Hezbollah). Asked what the objective of his organization was, he said it was "the imposition of the laws of Allah by means of fighting, to glorify the role of the shaheed [martyr] and to institute an Islamic Caliphate" (Breakingnews.com.sy).



Left: Abu Dujjana (Jamal Muhammad Abd al-Qadir), killed in a "work accident" (Blazingcatfur.blogspot.ca). Right: The Jordanian terrorist Abu al-Qa'qa', from the Al-Mayadeen interview (Breakingnews.com.sy).

## The Canadian Terrorist Abu Dujjana

12. **Abu Dujjana**, who died in the February 21, 2013 suicide bombing attack, was apparently a Canadian from Montreal named **Jamal Muhammad Abd al-Qadir**. He apparently grew up in Montreal; his parents came from a village in northeastern Syria. They emigrated to Germany, where they stayed for seven years, and from there moved to Canada. He was a student in Canada. In July 2012 he went to Syria via Turkey. At first he joined the Free Syrian Army, later transferred to the Ahrar al-Sham movement and from there found his way to the Al-Nusra Front. In 2012 he participated in the fighting in the region of Aleppo and then in the region of Damascus. The day the suicide bombing attack described above was carried out he was listed as missing and his cell phone stopped working. However, according to another (unconfirmed) report he was killed by Syrian army fire a few days afterwards.

13. **February 25, 2013 – There were integrated suicide bombing attacks in two locations in Damascus:** The first was at a tank yard in the region of Al-Abassein. After the blast Al-Nusra Front operatives stormed the yard. Immediately thereafter the second suicide bombing attack was carried out at a building belonging to military security in the neighborhood of Jobar. According to an announcement issued by the Al-Nusra Front everyone in the building was hurt. The names and nicknames of the suicide bombers were not made public.

14. **March 4, 2013** – There was a combined suicide bombing attack at a roadblock on the road to the Damascus airport. It was claimed that fifty security personnel were killed. The name and nickname of the suicide bomber were not made public.

15. **March 20, 2013** – There was a suicide bombing attack using a car bomb at a roadblock near Al-Qusayr. After the car blew up Al-Nusra Front operatives attacked the Syrian soldiers who survived. The suicide bomber was nicknamed **Abu Muadh al-Shimali**.

16. **April 22, 2013 – Two simultaneous suicide bombing attacks** were carried out using car bombs at two roadblocks in the rural area east of Damascus. The first took place at the roadblock at the Al-Nour gas station and the second at the Al-Maliha roadblock. Both were carried out by the Al-Nusra Front in collaboration an Islamic group called Khatib al-Ansar Salah al-Din, and with other organizations. Al-Nusra Front

operatives carried out the suicide bombing attacks and then operatives from other organizations attacked the Syrian soldiers at the roadblocks. The first suicide bomber was nicknamed **Abu Layth al-Shami**. The nickname of the other suicide bomber was not publicized.



**Abu Layth al-Shami reads his will sitting in front of the Al-Nusra Front flag. He directed his remarks at the soldiers of the Syria army, accusing them of spreading corruption and offending the honor of Muslims, their children and their property. He made it clear that they would continue to serve as targets for suicide bombing attacks (Jihadmin.com).**

17. **May 21, 2013** – There was a suicide bombing attack using a car bomb at a Syrian army building in Harasta, in the rural area east of Damascus. The suicide bomber was **Amin Hasan al-Jayyusi**, nicknamed **Abu Hasan al-Urduni**, 21, a Jordanian of Palestinian extraction. He was an engineering student at the Al-Balqa' University in Jordan. He also delivered sermons to young people in a mosque. According to the Al-Nusra Front claim, at least 60 people belonging to the Syrian regime died in the attack (Shagor.com).



Left: Amin Hasan al-Jayyusi photographed next to the Al-Nusra Front (YouTube.com). Right: Amin Hasan al-Jayyusi (Shaghor.com)



Amin Hasan al-Jayyusi in front of the Islamic State flag;he apparently had a connection to that organization as well (YouTube.com).

18. **June 14, 2013** – A suicide bomber driving a truck bomb attacked a Syrian army roadblock in the city of Al-Rastan in the Homs district. The bomber was a Saudi from Buraydah named **Ibrahim Muhammad al-Fa'im**, nicknamed **Abu Khaled al-Dawsari**. It was claimed that about 50 Syrian soldiers were killed in the attack.



The Saudi suicide bomber Ibrahim Muhammad al-Fa'im.

19. **June 18, 2013** – A car loaded with three tons of explosives was used in a suicide bombing attack at a Syrian army post near the Alawite area on the outskirts of Hama. The Al-Nusra Front claimed that at least 20 Syrian soldiers were killed. The suicide bomber was a Saudi named **Ali al-Mani'i**, nicknamed **Abu Hamza al-Qurashi**, from the city of Damam in Saudi Arabia.



The Saudi suicide bomber nicknamed Abu Hamza al-Qurashi.

20. **June 23, 2013** – A combined suicide bombing attack was carried out at two sites in Damascus:

- 1) Three suicide bombers wearing explosive belts broke into a police building in the neighborhood of Ruken al-Din. One of them detonated his belt. The Al-Nusra

Front claimed that many policemen were killed. Names and nicknames of the suicide bombers were not made public.

2) Four suicide bombers wearing explosive belts attempted to enter the criminal investigations building in Bab Masli Square. Two of them detonated their belts. According to the Syrian ministry of the interior, the four were killed before they entered the building. One of them was a Saudi from the city of Hafar al-Batin, named **Saqr Mulhi al-Faridi al-Harbi**, nicknamed **Abu Azzam al-Hafrawi**.

21. **June 27, 2013** – Two Syrian army roadblocks near high buildings in the city of Daraa' were attacked with two car bombs. The attack was a collaboration between the Al-Nusra Front and other Islamist organizations. A video uploaded to YouTube on July 9, 2013, documented the attack. One of the car bombs was detonated by a suicide bomber named **Al-Mu'tasim bi-Allah A'id Al Qutaym al-Qahtani**, nicknamed **Abu al-Mu'tasim**. The other was detonated by remote control by one of the Islamic organizations. The attackers took control of the area around the roadblock and blew up the buildings in controlled explosions. The will left by **Al-Mu'tasim bi-Allah A'id Al Qutaym al-Qahtani** emphasized the religious-sectarian nature of the confrontation in Syria, representing it as a war between Sunnis and Shi'ites.



The detonation of the buildings near the roadblock (YouTube.com)

Suicide bomber Al-Mu'tasim bi-Allah A'id Al Qutaym al-Qahtani reads his will (YouTube.com)

22. **August 10, 2013** – There was a suicide bombing attack at the Abu Rahmoun roadblock on the outskirts of Hama. It was carried out by means of a car bomb carrying three tons of explosives. The Al-Nusra Front claimed that eight Syrian officers and 35

soldiers were killed in the attack. The suicide bomber was nicknamed **Abu Abd al-Karim al-Hamawi**.

23. **August 13, 2013** – A BMP armored vehicle loaded with explosives was used in a suicide bombing attack against a school in the Al-Huweiqqa neighborhood of Deir ez-Zor, where, it was claimed, there were Syrian army soldiers. The attack was carried out by the Al-Nusra Front in collaboration with other Islamist organizations. According to the Al-Nusra Front's announcement, most of the soldiers in the school were killed and the rest were wounded. After the attack Al-Nusra Front operatives took over the roadblock. The suicide bomber was nicknamed **Abu Bilal al-Diri**.



**The suicide bombing attack at the school in Deir ez-Zor (Almanara Al-Bidaa, August 14, 2013)**

24. **August 22, 2013** – A BMP armored vehicle loaded with explosives was used in a suicide bombing attack against the Taama roadblock (Damascus region). It targeted a building used by the Shabiha (the Assad regime's militia) and was carried out by the Al-Nusra Front in collaboration with other Islamist organizations. The suicide bomber was nicknamed **Abu Asim al-Muhajir**, or **Abu Asim al-Urduni** (i.e., Abu Asim the Jordanian)



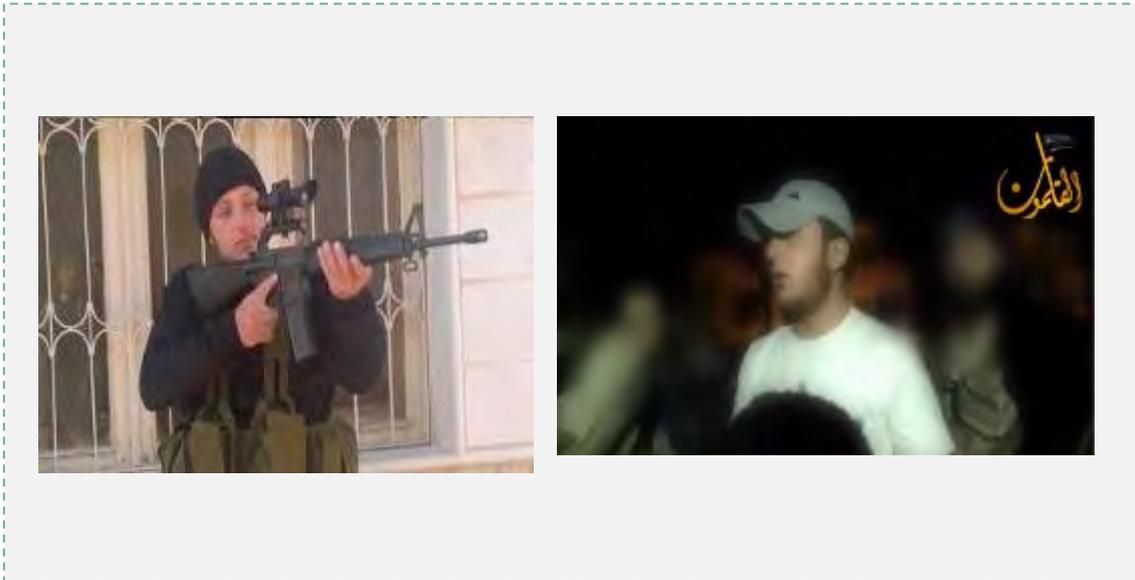
Suicide bomber Abu Asim al-Muhajir, or Abu Asim al-Urduni (Dailymotion.com)

The blast at the Taama roadblock in the Damascus region (Almanara Al-Bidaa, August 22, 2013)



Suicide bomber Abu Asim al-Urduni in front of the Al-Nusra Front flag (Documents.sy)

25. **September 4, 2013** – There was a suicide bombing attack at the Syrian army roadblock in the town of Maaloula in the Homs region. It was carried out by the Al-Nusra Front in collaboration with an Islamist organization called the **Harakat Ahrar al-Sham** movement. The blast killed nine Syrian soldiers. The suicide bomber was **'Amer Ismael Sa'dat al-Jimzawi**, nicknamed **Abu Mus'ib al-Zarqawi** or **Abu Muhammad**. He was 20, a Jordanian of Palestinian extraction who worked in a clothing store in the Zarqaa market.



The suicide bomber (Hournews.com, YouTube.com)

26. **September 11, 2013** – A suicide bombing attack was carried out using a truck bomb containing 12 tons of explosives. It took place at the roadblock at the entrance to the Deir ez-Zor airport. The Al-Nusra Front claimed that 35 Syrian soldiers had been killed in the attack. The suicide bomber was an Al-Nusra Front operative nicknamed **Abu Usama al-Australi** or **Abu Usama al-Muhajir**.



Abu Usama al-Muhajir reads his will standing on the truck bomb. “Jihad is a personal duty (*fard ‘ayn*) imposed on us...You in the West or in other [non-Muslim] countries think you are successful people living a good life, but the best people are those who are in the land of jihad and defend the religion of Allah” (Alplatformmedia.com)

27. **October 21, 2013** – There was a combined suicide bombing attack using two car bombs, each one carrying six tons of explosives. The attack was carried out against

Syrian soldiers at an army camp near the town of Sadad in the Homs district. Immediately after the blast operatives broke into the camp. The Al-Nusra Front claimed that nearly 100 Syrian soldiers and Shabiha operatives were killed in the attack. Names and nicknames of the suicide bombers were not made public.

28. **November 16, 2013** – There was a suicide bombing attack at the Al-Kua roadblock on the outskirts of Damascus. The suicide bomber was nicknamed **Abu al-Ayna' al-Khurasani**. He might have come from the region of Khorasan in Iran.<sup>8</sup>



**Suicide bomber Abu al-Ayna' al-Khurasani (YouTube.com)**

29. **December 20, 2013** – Two truck bombs were detonated at the Al-Kindi hospital in Aleppo. The attack was carried out by two Iraqi suicide bombers of Kurdish extraction. One of them was nicknamed **Abu al-Wadda' al-Kurdistani** and the other **Abu Turab al-Kurdistani**. The attack was one facet of an attack on the hospital compound and carried out in collaboration with two other Islamist groups (Fajr al-Sham and Al-Jabha al-Islamiyyah).

### **Suicide Bombing Attacks Carried Out by the Islamic State<sup>9</sup>**

30. **May 27, 2013** – A truck bomb was used to attack a Syrian army camp at Jisr al-Shughur in the Aleppo district. The Islamic State claimed it killed 100, while the Syrian

<sup>8</sup> Khorasan is a region of eastern Iran on the Afghanistan border. Many Sunni Muslims live there, some of them of Turkish and Pashtun extraction. In Islamic sources from the Middle Ages Khorasan is described as a region that included Afghanistan and Central Asia, so it is possible that the suicide bomber was Afghan or from Turkmenistan.

<sup>9</sup> The Islamic State's high operational capabilities are primarily and extensively put to use in Iraq, The organization has carried out hundreds of suicide bombing attacks against the Shi'ite population and the Iraqi security forces in Iraq. The number of suicide bombing attacks it carried out in Syria in 2013 is significantly lower than the number carried out by the Al-Nusra Front, mainly because Iraq is its top priority. The attacks described here began at the end of May 2013 following the split between the Al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State.

regime reported only seven deaths. The suicide bomber was a Saudi named **Walid Ali Muhammad Yahya Al Madani al-'Asiri**, nicknamed **Abu Dujjana al-Azadi**. Walid al-'Asiri, 27, had an academic degree in Sharia studies. He was apparently **the first Islamic State suicide bomber in Syria** (Alplatformmedia.com).<sup>10</sup>



The Islamic State suicide bomber **Walid Ali Muhammad Yahya Al Madani al-'Asiri**, nicknamed **Abu Dujjana** (YouTube.com)

31. **July 10, 2013** – An Tunisian suicide bomber named **Hamza al-'Awni**, nicknamed **Abu Hajir al-Tunisi**, reportedly carried out an attack. The unconfirmed announcement of the attack did not mention where or how it was carried out. The same day there was no report of a suicide bombing attack in Syria.

32. **July 30, 2013** – There was a suicide bombing attack on the outskirts of Idlib carried out by two suicide bombers, each of whom blew up a car bomb at the same location. The target of the attack is unknown. One of the suicide bombers was **Abdallah Omar Farhan**, nicknamed **Mansour al-Khaldi**, a Saudi from the city of Sakaka in the Al-Jawf province.

33. **August 6, 2013** – A BMP armored vehicle was used in a suicide bombing attack near the wall of the Syrian air force base at Menagh. Following the blast Free Syrian Army forces attacked the airport. The attack was carried out by **Mu'adh Abd al-Rahim**, from Buraydah in Saudi Arabia.

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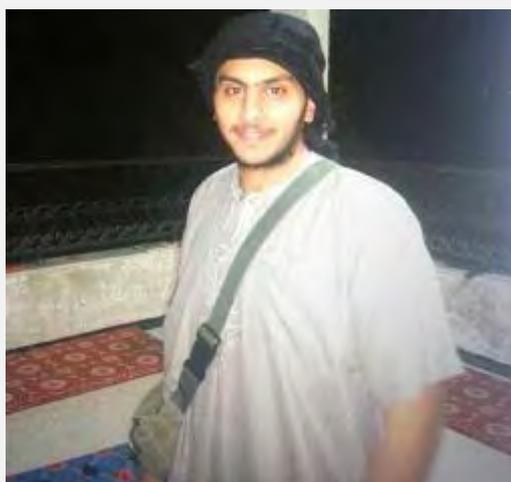
<sup>10</sup> According to a different report he was an Al-Nusra Front operative.



**Mu'adh Abd al-Rahim, the Saudi suicide bomber (Mjhar.com)**

34. **August 7, 2013** – There was a suicide bombing attack on the outskirts of Aleppo. It is unclear what its target was. The suicide bomber was a Saudi from Riyadh named **Yusif Madd Allah al-Ruwayli** nicknamed **Abu Darda'** or **Abu Yaaqoub**.

35. **September 22, 2013** – There was a suicide bombing attack in the building housing the police traffic bureau in the city of Al-Nabk, north of Damascus. The suicide bomber was nicknamed **Abu al-Zubayr al-Madani**, which might indicate he came from the city of Al-Madinah in Saudi Arabia. He was also nicknamed **Abu al-Zubayr al-Muhajir**.



**The Saudi suicide bomber Abu al-Zubayr al-Madani.**

36. **September 23, 2013** – A car bomb was used for a suicide bombing attack at a Syrian army roadblock in Suran, in the Hama district. The Islamic State claimed 60 Syrian soldiers were killed. The suicide bomber who drove the car was nicknamed **Abu Hatun al-Jizrawi**.



The site of the suicide bombing attack (Facebook.com)



Abu Hatun al-Jizrawi, recites his will before the suicide bombing attack (Facebook.com)

### The Main Points of Abu Hatun al-Jizrawi's Will

37. **Abu Hatun al-Jizrawi** appealed to the *nusairis* [an pejorative term for Alawites], to the *ruwafads* [rejecters, a pejorative term for Shi'ites] and to the Shabiha [the Assad regime's militia], saying "We have come to slaughter you and we will not rest until we torture you with the tortures of the damned." He called the Alawites, Shi'ites and the Shabiha "enemies of Allah." He added that that he was on the path to accompany them to hell. He dedicated his will to Abu Omar al-Bakr, the leader of the Islamic State, and called on him to trust in Allah and not to stop his activities. **He asked the jihad fighters to continue on the path of jihad** despite the difficulties and sacrifices. He also left a will in the form of a poem in which he said he went to wage jihad with a divine command for the sake of the victory of the religion of Islam and to struggle against the infidels.

38. **October 17, 2013** – There was a joint suicide bombing attack in which the main jail in Aleppo was broken into by the Al-Nusra Front, the Islamic State and the Ahrar al-Sham movement. It was claimed that at least 500 prisoners were released. Before the

break-in the prison wall was demolished by five suicide bombers wearing explosive belts.

39. **November 14, 2013** – A car bomb was used in a suicide bombing attack against a Syrian army building in the region of Tal Hasil, in the Aleppo district. It was claimed that Hezbollah operatives were inside. The suicide bomber was a Saudi, a cardiologist from Riyadh, named **Abdallah al-Qammasi al-Anzi** nicknamed **Abu Sammak al-Jizrawi**. While in Syria he went from one hospital to another treating the wounded. It was reported that he refused to obey his commander, who ordered him not to carry out a suicide bombing attack because the organization needed his medical skills (Ararnews.net).



**The Saudi suicide bomber Abdallah al-Qammasi al-Anzi (Ararnews.net)**