



## Spotlight on Global Jihad (September 28 – October 2, 2017)

### Main events of the week<sup>1</sup>

- ▶ This week as well, the events in Syria centered around **the areas of Idlib and Deir ez-Zor**:
  - ◆ **In the area of Idlib**, Russian strategic bombers attacked targets of the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham. The airstrike was carried out in response to an attack on the Russian military policemen who oversaw the implementation of the de-escalation agreement. The Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham apparently sustained heavy losses, including the deaths of senior operatives. The Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham announced **personnel changes in its top command echelons**, including the “resignation” of its commander, Abu Jaber al-Sheikh. These personnel changes may have been made in light of the severe blows that the organization suffered in the Russian airstrikes.
  - ◆ **In the area of Deir ez-Zor**, ISIS carried out a **large-scale counterattack** which the Syrians believed was intended **to take control of the rural area west of Deir ez-Zor and east of Palmyra**. ISIS also attempted to cut off the vital logistics route between Deir ez-Zor and Palmyra. **The commander of the Syrian forces announced that his forces had repulsed the attack**. The Syrians also claim that they have gained control over the route between Deir ez-Zor and Palmyra and that ISIS’s attempts to cut off this route have failed.
- ▶ A noteworthy event at **the propaganda level** is an audiotape (around 46 minutes) released by ISIS and attributed to its leader, **Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi**. Having listened to the statements made by **Al-Baghdadi** on the tape, the ITIC has formed the impression that **it is authentic and current**. In the ITIC’s assessment, **releasing the tape at the present time served three purposes**: to convey the message that Al-Baghdadi is alive in the wake of the rumors that were spread about his death; to encourage ISIS operatives in Syria and Iraq to continue their persistent fighting despite the defeats that they have suffered; **and to**

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<sup>1</sup> Spotlight on Global Jihad will not appear next week because of the Sukkot holiday. We wish our readers a happy holiday and a happy Jewish New Year.

encourage ISIS's operatives and its supporters abroad to intensify their attacks, especially against Western countries.

► The calls by Al-Baghdadi and ISIS's propaganda machine **to intensify the attacks abroad are apparently being heeded**. There were two major ISIS-inspired attacks in Western countries this week: **a stabbing attack in Marseilles, France** (2 killed), **for which ISIS has claimed responsibility**; **a ramming attack in Canada** (five wounded), for which ISIS has not yet claimed responsibility, but **an ISIS flag** was found in the ramming driver's car. In addition, three ISIS operatives carried out a **suicide bombing attack at Kabul International Airport** a few hours after the US Secretary of Defense landed there.

## Involvement of Russia and the Coalition

### Russian Air Force airstrikes against ISIS and the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham

► On September 26, 2017, strategic bombers flew from Engels Airport in Russia to Syria, flying around 7,000 km over Iran and Iraq. While in Syrian airspace, **the bombers launched cruise missiles at targets of ISIS and the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham in the Deir ez-Zor and Idlib provinces**. According to a Russian report, these airstrikes destroyed command posts, facilities, and ammunition depots, and hit fighters. The Russian Defense Ministry stressed that all the targets were located outside inhabited areas and at a safe distance from both the American forces and the SDF (Russian Defense Ministry website, September 26, 2017).



**Right: One of the strategic bombers that took part in the airstrikes. Left: ISIS targets hit in the Deir ez-Zor Province (Russian Defense Ministry website, September 26, 2017)**

## Senior operatives of the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham killed in the Deir ez-Zor Province

- ▶ On September 27, the Russian Defense Ministry reported that **five commanders** (from the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham) who led the attack on the Russian Military Police (September 18, 2017) **were killed in an operation in the Idlib Province** (the center of power of the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham). The operation was carried out in the wake of information about the timing and location of a meeting of senior commanders of the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham in southern Idlib. After receiving the information, pinpoint airstrikes were carried out on the building where the meeting took place.
- ▶ According to the Russian report, **several senior operatives of the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham were killed in the attack:** Abu Salman al-Saudi (head of the southern region of the Idlib Province), Abu Abbas Alaeddin (the operative in charge of economic affairs), Abu Hassan (advisor to Emir Abu Mohammad al-Julani) and Walid al-Mustafa (a senior cleric). In addition, 32 operatives were killed. Weapons, ammunition and vehicles were destroyed. The Russian announcement said that **the special operations to target the operatives who took part in the attack against the Russian Military Police were still ongoing**<sup>2</sup> (Russian Defense Ministry's Facebook page, September 27, 2017).

## Summary of the French support of the Iraqi Army

- ▶ In an article covering the activities of the French forces as part of the International Coalition against ISIS, **Colonel Patrik Steiger, spokesman for the French Armed Forces General Staff**, said that the French forces carried out 33 artillery attacks last week in support of the **Iraqi forces fighting in the Hawija region. The French Army has also trained 7,500 Iraqi soldiers, most of whom are now fighting against ISIS.** Since the beginning of the involvement of the Coalition forces in Syria and Iraq, the French Army has carried out **more than 7,000 sorties** in which some 3,000 ISIS operatives have been killed. According to him, the campaign against ISIS was intended not only to eliminate the presence of ISIS in Syria and Iraq but **to protect dozens of cities in Europe that are threatened by terrorism** (Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath, September 29, 2017).

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<sup>2</sup> For details about the attack against a Russian supervisory force in the Idlib area by the Fateh al-Sham Front operatives, see Spotlight on Global Jihad (September 19-27, 2017).

## Main developments in Syria

### The campaign to take over Al-Raqqah

Fighting between the SDF forces and ISIS focuses on the “security square” controlled by ISIS in the middle of Al-Raqqah. This week there were clashes between the SDF and ISIS operatives in several neighborhoods in central Al-Raqqah (Al-Kahraba and Al-Firdous).



**Left: ISIS operatives in central Al-Raqqah. Right: ISIS operatives with light arms, one of them carrying an RPG launcher, in central Al-Raqqah (Al-Sawarim, September 28, 2017)**



**Right: ISIS operative shooting at SDF forces in a neighborhood in central Al-Raqqah. Left: SDF outpost in central Al-Raqqah hit by ISIS fire (Al-Sawarim, September 28, 2017)**

### The campaign in Deir ez-Zor

This week, ISIS operatives launched **an extensive attack designed to take over the rural area between Deir ez-Zor and Palmyra and cut off the Deir ez-Zor-Al-Sukhnah-Palmyra road**. The commander of the Syrian troops reported that the attack had failed. At the same time, the Syrian forces continued **to establish their presence in the area south of Deir ez-Zor, on the road leading to the city of Al-Mayadeen**. Apparently, this city, which is currently ISIS’s main stronghold in Syria, **is now in the crosshairs of the Syrian forces**.

## Struggle for control over the Palmyra-Al-Sukhnah-Deir ez-Zor road

► On September 28 and 29, 2017, ISIS operatives attacked Syrian convoys on the road between Al-Sukhnah and Deir ez-Zor as well as Syrian army outposts in the area of Al-Sukhnah in order to cut off this vital logistics route. As a result, dozens of Syrian army soldiers and civilians were killed (Dimashq Al-Aan, September 30, 2017). **The Syrian forces halted this attempt.** Photos taken by the Syrian forces show bodies of ISIS operatives killed in clashes in the area of the village of Al-Shula, about 30 km southwest of Deir ez-Zor (Butulat Al-Jaysh Al-Suri, a website affiliated with the Syrian army, September 30, 2017).



The village of Al-Shula, on the road leading to Deir ez-Zor. Clashes between ISIS and the Syrian forces took place near this village (Google Maps)



Bodies of ISIS operatives killed in the clashes with the Syrian army (Butulat Al-Jaysh Al-Suri, a website affiliated with the Syrian army, September 30, 2017)

Following these incidents, the Syrian forces opened an **operation aiming to mop up the areas adjacent to the road between Palmyra and Deir ez-Zor from ISIS operatives.** The operation, **designed to secure a safe passage on the road**, focused **on the area between**

**the village of Al-Shula and Al-Sukhnah.** According to Hezbollah sources, **the Syrian forces achieved control over the Palmyra-Deir ez-Zor road,** after repelling a significant attack by ISIS. **Traffic on this road is now possible on both directions** (Reuters, September 29, 2017).

### An ISIS counterattack fails

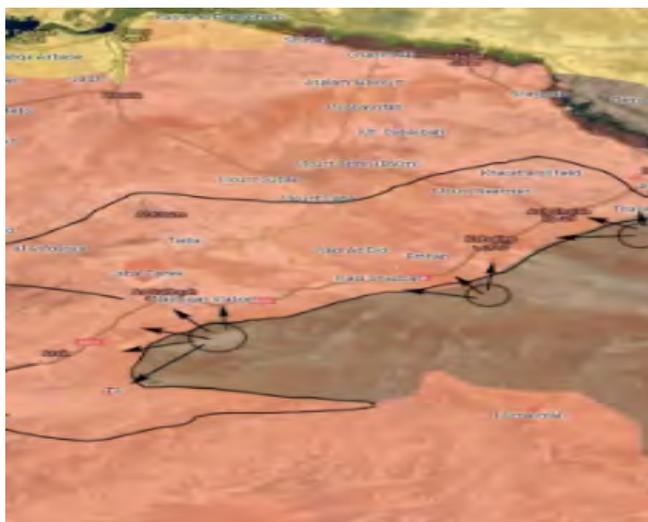
On September 29, 2017, **ISIS carried out a large-scale counterattack against the Syrian forces in the Palmyra area.** ISIS called the attack “**Sheikh Abu Mohammad al-Adnani Raid**” (ISIS’s spokesman and the unofficial second in command in the organization, killed in a US airstrike). The Twitter account of **Suheil Hassan (“the tiger”), the commander of the Syrian forces,** stated that the purpose of the attack was to take over **the rural area west of Deir ez-Zor and east of Palmyra and reach the enclave of Hama and Al-Qaryatayn** (The’Nimr’Tiger@Souria4Syrians Twitter account, September 30, 2017). **According to Suheil Hassan, the attack failed.**

► As part of this attack, ISIS reported a number of actions carried out by its operatives, including the detonation of a car bomb against Syrian army soldiers deployed at the T-3 oil pumping station, which resulted in 34 Syrian soldiers dead; attack against five Syrian army roadblocks in the area of Al-Sukhnah, with the Syrian army sustaining 40 dead and losing many weapons; and detonation of a car bomb against Syrian soldiers in the village of Suha, about 30 km east of Al-Salamiyah (Haqq, September 30, 2017).



**Right: ISIS operatives preparing for the raid named after Sheikh Abu Mohammad al-Adnani. Left: ISIS operative firing an anti-aircraft gun mounted on an off-road vehicle during the raid (Haqq, September 30, 2017)**

► **Syrian forces Commander Suheil Hassan released an announcement that the large-scale attack named after Abu Mohammad al-Adnani failed:**



**A map and a message that ISIS's large-scale attack named after Abu Mohammad al-Adnani failed. The purpose of the attack was to take over the rural area west of Deir ez-Zor and reach the enclave of Hama and Al-Qaryatayn (The'Nimr'Tiger@Souria4Syrians Twitter account, September 30, 2017)**

### The east bank of the Euphrates River

► On September 30, 2017, ISIS released photos showing a suicide bomber who, on September 28, 2017, **detonated a car bomb in a joint headquarters of the Russian and Syrian armies in the village of Mazloun**. ISIS announced that dozens of people were killed in the explosion, and that six military vehicles were destroyed. According to ISIS's announcement, the attack was carried out as part of the raid named after Sheikh Abu Mohammad Al-Adnani (Haqq, September 29-30, 2017).



**Right: Abu Zayd al-Tai, an ISIS suicide bomber who detonated a car bomb against a joint headquarters of the Russian and Syrian armies in the village of Mazloun. Left: The car bomb used by the suicide bomber (Haqq, September 30, 2017)**



The moment of the car bomb explosion (Haqq, September 30, 2017)

### Extension of the Syrian forces' control area to the Euphrates River south of Deir ez-Zor

- ▶ The Syrian forces in the Deir ez-Zor area **are trying to extend their control area to the Euphrates River south of Deir ez-Zor**. The Syrian troops have managed to take control of the **Al-Thardat area**, on the road leading from Deir ez-Zor **to the city of Al-Mayadeen**. This city is **due to become ISIS's main control area after the fall of Al-Raqqah and Deir ez-Zor**.
- ▶ On September 30, 2017, ISIS attacked several Syrian army outposts in the area of Al-Thardat. The Syrian army halted the attack. Syrian media reported that dozens of ISIS operatives had been killed in the attack. In addition, three car bombs were destroyed as well as ISIS weapons and equipment, and an APC was captured (Syrian TV, September 30, 2017).



Soldiers and an APC of the Syrian army during clashes with ISIS in the area of Al-Thardat (YouTube, September 30, 2017)



**Left: An ISIS APC with the inscription “Army of the Caliphate” 261. The photo shows Syrian soldiers examining it after it had been captured by the Syrian army (SANA YouTube account, September 30, 2017). Right: Syrian army helicopter in the Al-Thardat area, where clashes with ISIS took place (YouTube, September 30, 2017)**

On August 30, 2017, the Twitter account of Colonel Suheil al-Hassan (codenamed “the tiger”) stated that **the Syrian army is getting ready for the campaign to take over the city of Al-Mayadeen**, about 45 km southeast of Deir ez-Zor. He describes Al-Mayadeen as **“ISIS’s new capital and main stronghold, where the organization commanders and their families live”** (The’Nimr’Tiger@Souria4Syrians Twitter account, September 30, 2017).



**The city of Al-Mayadeen on the Euphrates River, which is in the crosshairs of the Syrian forces (Google Maps)**

## Idlib area

### Personnel changes in the headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham

► On October 1, 2017, an administrative decision of the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham was published. It stated that the **Shura Council of the organization convened and made the following decisions** (Twitter, October 1, 2017):

- ◆ The resignation of **Sheikh Abu Jaber al-Sheikh as the general commander of the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham** has been accepted.
- ◆ His deputy, **Sheikh Abu Mohammad al-Julani**, will at the current time attend to the matters of the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham.
- ◆ Abu Jaber al-Sheikh will be appointed chief of the Shura Council of the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham.

► At this stage, the background for these changes is not yet clear. Abu Jaber al-Sheikh may have been made to resign **following the extensive airstrikes by the Russian Air Force against the organization bases in the Idlib area and the loss of many of its operatives, including senior ones.**



**The announcement of the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham on the personnel changes (Twitter, October 1, 2017)**

## Main developments in Iraq

### The campaign for taking over ISIS's enclave in Hawija

► This week, there was no significant progress in the campaign for taking over ISIS's enclave in Hawija, south of Mosul, led by the Iraqi forces. The Iraqi army announced that it had managed to liberate all the territories west of the city (Spokesperson's Office of the Iraqi joint operational forces, September 30, 2017).



Iraqi fighters in the Hawija area (Al-Aan Channel, September 30, 2017)

## Global jihad activity in other countries

### ISIS-inspired attacks

#### Stabbing attack in France (initial report)

► **Two female passersby, aged 17 and 20, were stabbed to death at the main train station in Marseilles on October 1, 2017.** The stabbing terrorist was shot and killed by French soldiers who were patrolling outside the train station. People at the station testified that **the man shouted “Allahu Akbar”** before attacking the two women. The stabber's motives are as yet unknown. A French police source told the media that the incident was apparently a terrorist attack (Reuters, October 1, 2017).

► **ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack.** On October 1, 2017, ISIS announced that the perpetrator of the stabbing attack in the city of Marseille, France, was “one of the soldiers of the Islamic State, **who carried out the attack in response to calls to attack the countries of the [International] Coalition**” (Amaq News Agency, October 1, 2017).

### Ramming attack in Canada (initial report)

- ▶ A man in his thirties carried out a ramming attack at two different sites in the city of Edmonton in the Province of Alberta, Canada. **A police officer and four civilians were wounded** in these attacks. The incident began **when a policeman was rammed by a van**. The policeman was wounded. The assailant then got out of the van and threatened passersby with a knife. He fled the scene of the attack in his van and was chased throughout the city of Edmonton. In downtown Edmonton he drove the van onto the sidewalk, wounding four civilians. The van overturned and the terrorist was arrested (AP, October 1, 2017).
- ▶ The local police chief said that **an ISIS flag was found in the van**. The perpetrator of the attack is a 30-year-old resident of Edmonton, **a refugee from Somalia** who is known to the police. A Canadian government official identified the terrorist as **Abdullahi Hassan Sharif** (AP, October 2, 2017). The Canadian police announced that the incident was being investigated as a terrorist incident carried out by a so-called lone wolf. **So far ISIS has not claimed responsibility for the attack.**



The van used to carry out the ramming attack, after it overturned  
(ZoeHTodd Twitter page, October 1, 2017)

### Suicide bombing attack at Kabul International Airport

On September 27, 2017, **three ISIS operatives carried out a suicide bombing attack at Kabul International Airport**. ISIS claimed that the attack was carried out during US Defense Secretary James Mattis's visit. The US media (CNN) and Reuters reported that the attack **was carried out a few hours after US Defense Secretary Mattis landed in Kabul** (Reuters, September 27, 2017).



**The three ISIS operatives and the weapons that they used in the attack at Kabul International Airport (Haqq, September 28, 2017)**

- ▶ The US Central Command reported that on September 27, 2017, shots were fired by a number of gunmen near Kabul International Airport. The gunmen blew themselves up with explosive vests. An Afghan elite unit, with US air support, quickly responded to the attack. One of the missiles fired by the American planes was defective and caused several casualties, including civilians. An investigation into the attack and the malfunctioning of the American ammunition has begun (US Central Command website).
- ▶ The attack at the airport was unprecedented in scope, **lasting more than six hours**. According to the Afghan police, the barrage fired by the gunmen **included 12 rockets** fired from two locations. The gunmen **used civilians as human shields**. ISIS and the Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack, which was carried out while US Secretary of Defense James Mattis and the NATO Secretary General were meeting with senior officials in Afghanistan. The Afghan Interior Ministry announced that one civilian was killed and at least 11 others were wounded by one of the rockets fired by the gunmen near the airport (Washington Post, September 27, 2017).
- ▶ **Following is a description of the attack by ISIS** (Haqq, September 28, 2017):
  - ◆ The attack was carried out by three ISIS operatives who carried a large quantity of weapons: **explosive vests, an SPG-9 launcher and rockets, a mortar and mortar shells**. This is an **unusually large quantity of weapons in terms of both size and weight**, which may have been smuggled into the airport by collaborators prior to the attack.
  - ◆ The attack began with the firing of **SPG rockets and mortar shells** at the positions of US, Turkish and UN forces at the airport. Hand grenades were thrown at the positions. Immediately afterwards there were close clashes between the three ISIS

operatives and the forces at the site. The ISIS operatives barricaded themselves in new positions after leaving a 50 kg IED in their previous position. This IED was detonated by them when the forces entered the area of the position.

- ◆ After several hours of clashes, **the ISIS operatives detonated their explosive vests**. The explosions were directed against the concentration of American, Turkish and Afghan forces.

## Operatives and weapons smuggled into Egypt

- ▶ A video posted on the Facebook page of the Egyptian Armed Forces spokesman **documents an Egyptian Air Force airstrike on the Egyptian-Libyan border** against a convoy of a 4x4 vehicles **attempting to smuggle weapons and ammunition into Egypt** (Facebook page of the Egyptian Armed Forces spokesman, September 28, 2017). The Egyptian newspaper Al-Dostor quoted an ISIS-affiliated website which **published the routes from Libya to Egypt** and called on its men to use them. Use of 4X4 vehicles on all the routes is recommended.

- ▶ According to a study by a European research institute for combating terrorism and extremism, **terrorist operatives travel from Libya to Egypt via a number of land routes, especially the Arqin border crossing between Egypt and Sudan, and the Al-Arbaeen road between Egypt and Sudan**. According to the article, the smugglers move about 10 km from the border crossings and transport people and weapons via Lake Nasser and via the tourist town of Abu Simbel (Al-Dostor, September 29, 2017).

## The battle for hearts and minds

### Audiocassette of ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi

On September 28, 2017, **ISIS's Al-Furqan Media Foundation released an audiotape attributed to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi**. In his speech, **which is about 46 minutes long**, Al-Baghdadi discusses ISIS's situation and calls on its supporters abroad **to increase their attacks**. It should be noted that Al-Baghdadi's last tape was released in **November 2016**. Based on the statements made by Al-Baghdadi, it is evident that the tape is **authentic and current**.

- ▶ In the ITIC's assessment, releasing the tape at this time serves **three purposes**:
  - ◆ To convey a message to ISIS's supporters that **Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is alive and that the rumors that were spread about his death are incorrect**.

- ◆ To encourage ISIS operatives in Syria and Iraq **to adhere to jihad, to continue fighting resolutely against the coalitions fighting against them, and to refuse any agreement or settlement** in view of ISIS's defeats on the ground.
- ◆ **To encourage ISIS's operatives and its supporters abroad to intensify their attacks against the various enemies, especially against the West**, in order to thwart the campaign waged by ISIS in Syria and Iraq.

### The degree of reliability of the tape

- ▶ Having listened to the statements made by Al-Baghdadi, the ITIC has formed the impression that **the tape is authentic and the speaker is indeed Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi**. There is no information on when the audiotape was recorded, but in the ITIC's assessment, **it is current**, since it mentions ISIS's defeat in Mosul, the Astana agreement, and North Korea's threats to use nuclear weapons against Japan and the United States.
- ▶ It should be noted that in June 2017, **the Russian Army announced that Al-Baghdadi had apparently been killed in an airstrike in the Al-Raqqah area**. The Russian announcement **was not verified**. Subsequently, a senior US military official said that Al-Baghdadi was probably still alive.

### The content of the tape

- ▶ Following are the main points made by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi:
  - ◆ **Victory will belong to the "true believers"**: Al-Baghdadi begins his speech with quotes from the Quran about man's purpose in the world. His purpose, according to Al-Baghdadi, is Islam and its implementation through jihad. Al-Baghdadi makes a distinction between the Muslims, "the men of truth," who are destined for Paradise, and the others, "the men of lies," "the infidels," who are destined for Hell. He returns to the days of the Prophet Muhammad and notes that victory will belong to the true believers, those who did not stop fighting for Islam despite the difficulties.
  - ◆ **The weakness of the United States and the Coalition countries**: Al-Baghdadi then proceeds **to analyze the current international circumstances**. He notes that there is now frustration among the "infidels" who are uniting forces against the Islamic State. He adds that there are those who exploit the situation in order to gain control of Muslim lands (a veiled reference to the US, Russia, and Iran). He says: "**America** [i.e., the United States], which presents itself as the only superpower, **is losing its status as the world's top leader and is becoming an exhausted country** with huge debts. **This**

**is preparing the ground for its collapse and the fall of other countries into the abyss. Russia** is exploiting the American weakness in order to show that it is the alternative superpower to America, and as the Astana Agreement shows, it is trying to take control of Syria and transfer territories to the Alawites. The situation has reached the point where **“North Korea is threatening the United States and Japan with nuclear weapons”** (a clear indication **of the tape’s current timing**). He adds that the Russians, Americans and Europeans have begun to live in fear of the blows being dealt by the jihad fighters.

◆ **A call to the ISIS fighters to be patient, to adhere to their faith, to continue fighting to the last drop of their blood, since victory will eventually come:** According to him, ISIS operatives have inflicted “painful blows” on the “infidel nations” around the world. He calls on ISIS’s fighters to be patient and steadfast. **He notes that victory is measured not by the balance of power, but rather by adherence to faith.** Al-Baghdadi notes that the Prophet Muhammad was greatly outnumbered in one battle but adherence to faith led him and his supporters to victory. He says that this is how the fighters of the Caliphate of the Islamic State are fighting, **and the fighting in Mosul is an example of this.** In this fighting, ISIS fighters demonstrated steadfastness when they were unwilling to hand over the city’s soil, save after a large quantity of blood was sacrificed, proud of their religion and adhering to their faith. They did not give up and they handed over the city only after they sacrificed their lives. He calls on the organization’s operatives to continue on their way.

◆ **Calling on the Sunnis in the Arab countries to rise up and ordering ISIS operatives not to agree to settlements:** Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi calls on the Sunnis in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen and everywhere **to rise up and shake off the “dust of humiliation.”** He adds: “Know that the Shiites and the Alawite (Syrian) regime do not accept half-solutions after they robbed the countries and desecrated the honor.” Al-Baghdadi orders the **organization’s operatives not to reach a settlement, not to surrender and not to lay down their arms, but to adhere to their religion and show steadfastness.** He details the salary paid to a shahid and praises the “true jihad fighters” who adhere to their path and fulfill the commands of Allah.

**Call on ISIS operatives and supporters around the world to continue to carry out attacks against the enemies and to “ignite the flame of war” against them:** “Fight

them and ambush them everywhere, increase the attacks against them. Target the infidels' information and media centers and their psychological warfare centers [...]  
Continue your actions [...] **Ensure that the Crusaders [i.e., Westerners] and those who have abandoned Islam do not enjoy a peaceful life in their homes** while your brothers are suffering from bombing, killing, and destruction.”