



Spotlight on Global Jihad

April 18-25, 2018



Main events of the week

- ▶ The main event of the week was **the expansion of the Syrian regime's control over the Damascus region**. On April 19, 2018, the Syrian army and the forces supporting it launched a campaign to take over the southern neighborhoods of Damascus, which are **under ISIS's control**. After a preliminary airstrike and artillery fire, the Syrian forces launched a ground attack whose center of gravity is apparently the northern part of the Yarmouk refugee camp. In addition, following the takeover of eastern Al-Ghouta, the Syrian army **expanded its control** (without any significant resistance) **to the eastern Al-Qalamoun** ridge northeast of Damascus. The Army of Islam (Jaysh Al-Islam), which was deployed in the area, **preferred to evacuate to the north without a battle**, handing over large quantities of weapons (including tanks) to the Syrian army.
- ▶ The main event in ISIS's provinces abroad this week was a **multi-casualty suicide bombing attack in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan**. The attack was carried out among civilians waiting to receive their national identity cards. The purpose of the attack was to disrupt the parliamentary elections scheduled for October 2018. Nearly 60 people were killed in the attack and over 100 were wounded. In the six months that have passed **since the fall of the Islamic State, Afghanistan has been a prominent site for ISIS's activity**. In contrast to the defensive position of ISIS's operatives in Syria, Iraq and other provinces, **in Afghanistan ISIS is taking the initiative and is working intensively in an attempt to gain a position of power vis-à-vis the Afghan government and the Taliban**.

Syria

The campaign to take over the southern suburbs of Damascus

Overview

On April 19, 2018, the information unit of the Syrian army announced the opening of the campaign to liberate the areas controlled by ISIS in southern Damascus. After around two weeks of preparations, the operation began with **artillery fire and airstrikes** against ISIS's headquarters, outposts, weapons and supply routes **in the Al-Yarmouk refugee camp and in the Al-Hajar al-Aswad neighborhood west of the camp** (ISIS's two main control areas). **After the preparatory bombardment, the Syrian army mounted a ground offensive** against several areas under the control of ISIS and the rebel organizations in the neighborhoods south of Damascus.

Leaflets

► **The General Staff of the Syrian army distributed leaflets calling on the armed operatives to lay down their arms in southern Damascus.** The leaflets were dropped from the air **in the Al-Hajar al-Aswad and Al-Tadamon neighborhoods and the Yarmouk refugee camp.** The leaflets read: “Make a decision about your fate. Death is coming closer and closer to you. Leave before it is too late. you have two options: **to give up your arms or an inescapable fate. The General Staff of the army and the Armed Forces**” (“The Yarmouk Camp is in our Hearts” Facebook page, April 23, 2018)



One of the leaflets dropped from the air in the Al-Hajar al-Aswad and Al-Tadamon neighborhoods and the Yarmouk refugee camp
 (“The Yarmouk Camp is in our Hearts” Facebook page, April 23, 2018)

Preparations for the campaign

► ISIS had prepared for the attack, estimating that at the end of the campaign in eastern Al-Ghouta, the Syrian army would launch a campaign to take over southern Damascus. ISIS's preparations for the campaign included: **expanding the areas under its control** (taking over the Al-Qadam neighborhood west of the Yarmouk refugee camp); **fortification** (digging trenches, revetting positions and digging tunnels); **and unsuccessful attempts to join forces with other rebel organizations operating in the area** (the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham and the Free Syrian Army refused to cooperate with ISIS).



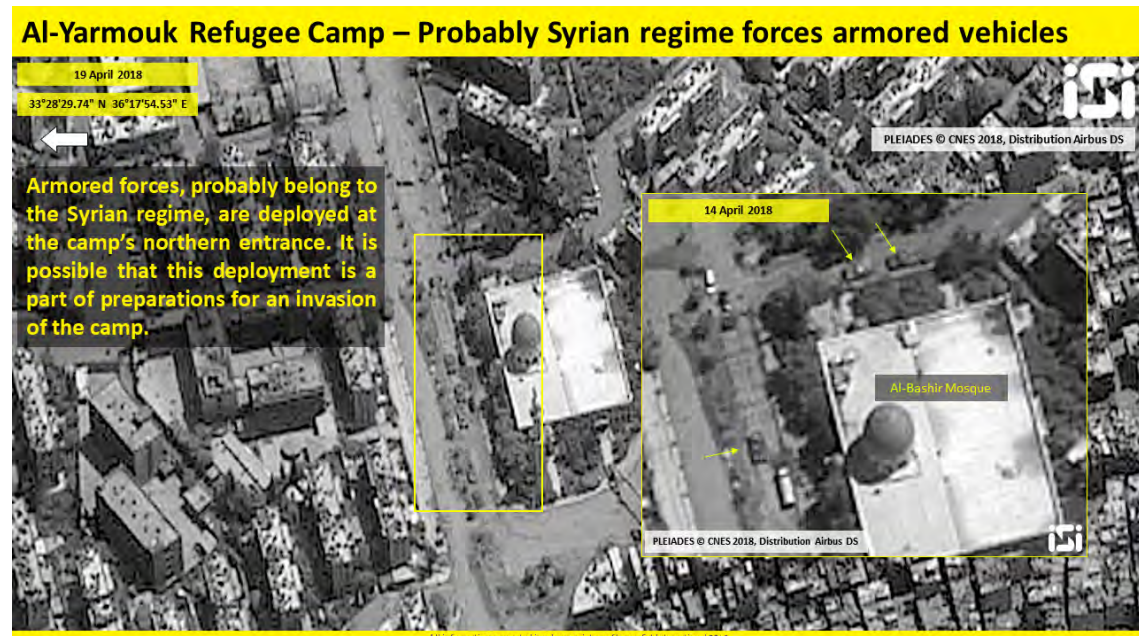
ISIS's entrenchment in the Yarmouk refugee camp – ImageSat International (ISI)

► Concurrently with the preparations for the attack, **ISIS negotiated with the Syrian regime to reach an evacuation agreement**, being aware **that it is at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the Syrian army in the southern neighborhoods of Damascus**. During the negotiations, it was proposed to evacuate the ISIS operatives **to the Bir Qassab area in the Syrian Desert** (east of Damascus) and later **to the Yarmouk Basin in the southern Syrian Golan Heights** (an area controlled by the ISIS-affiliated Khaled bin al-Walid Army). Following **the failure of the negotiations**, the Syrian regime gave ISIS 48 hours to leave the area south of Damascus for the Yarmouk Basin. At the end of this period, ISIS was given a further extension of 24 hours. **When no agreement was reached, the Syrian army mounted an offensive.**

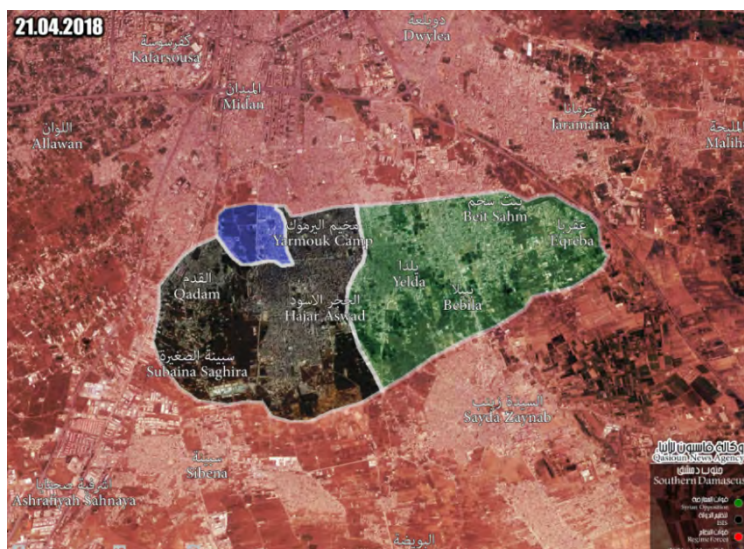
The beginning of the campaign

► **The campaign began on April 19, 2018**, with artillery fire and Syrian airstrikes on ISIS targets. The attacks focused on the **Yarmouk refugee camp and the Al-Hajar al-Aswad neighborhood**, two key neighborhoods controlled by ISIS. The Yarmouk camp was attacked by an armored force from the north. ISIS claimed that it had halted the attack. In addition, the Syrian army attacked ISIS and the other rebel organizations along other routes in additional neighborhoods in south Damascus.

Locations of the various forces



**Armored forces (in the ITIC's assessment, of the Syrian army and the forces supporting it) detected in a satellite image in the northern Yarmouk refugee camp on the eve of the attack
ImageSat International (ISI)**



Deployment of the forces opposing the Syrian regime, at the beginning of the campaign: ISIS is marked in black; The Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham is marked in blue; Additional rebel organizations are marked in green (Qasiyoun, April 22, 2018).

Note: ISIS is the dominant force in this region.

Documentation of the fighting



Right: ISIS targets being hit by airstrikes and artillery fire in the Al-Hajar Al-Aswad (SANA, April 21, 2018). Left: Syrian army airstrikes against ISIS targets in the Yarmouk refugee camp (Euphrates Post Facebook page, April 20, 2018)



Syrian tanks attacking centers and fortified positions of “terrorist operatives” in the Al-Hajar Al-Aswad neighborhood in south Damascus (Al-Hadath Suriya, April 24, 2018)

Casualties

► According to reports by the Syrian regime, so far ISIS sustained many losses. The Syrian media reported that among the dead are commanders and leaders of ISIS and other organizations. One of the fatalities was reportedly **Abu Hashem al-Khabouri, ISIS leader (emir) in south Damascus** (“Al-Yarmouk Camp is in Our Hearts” Facebook page, April 20, 2018). Another ISIS leader, Khaled Houshan, was killed in the Al-Qadam neighborhood (“Al-Yarmouk Camp is in Our Hearts” Facebook page, April 23, 2018). Another commander, codenamed **Abu Fatimah al-Saudi**, of a Saudi origin, was also killed.



Right: ISIS emir in south Damascus, Abu Hashem al-Khabouri (“Al-Yarmouk Camp is in Our Hearts” Facebook page, April 20, 2018). **Left: Khaled Houshan, ISIS commander killed in the Al-Qadam neighborhood** (“Al-Yarmouk Camp is in Our Hearts” Facebook page, April 23, 2018)

► On the other hand, sources affiliated with regime opponents reported that during the battles in the southern neighborhoods, **55 Syrian soldiers and operatives of the militias supporting the Syrian army were killed so far** (Qasiyoun, April 23, 2018). ISIS’s Amaq News Agency reported that **51 Syrian army soldiers were killed** on April 23, 2018 in the Al-Tadamon neighborhood (Haqq, April 24, 2018). The fatalities included Palestinian militiamen fighting alongside the Syrian army.

► Sources in the Yarmouk refugee camp reported that more than ten residents were killed since the beginning of the attack. It was also reported that **Palestine Hospital was put out of commission** as a result of the attack. Various neighborhoods in the camp reportedly sustained heavy damage.

The takeover of the eastern Al-Qalamoun Mountains

► On April 21, 2018, following the takeover of eastern Al-Ghouta, **the Syrian army expanded its control area to the ridges of eastern Al-Qalamoun, northeast of Damascus**. The area

taken over by the Syrian army was held by **the Army of Islam (Jaysh al-Islam), whose operatives were reluctant to fight and preferred to hand over their weapons (including tanks) and evacuate the area.** According to the evacuation agreement, **the organization operatives were transferred to Idlib** (controlled by the Headquarters for the Liberation of Al-Sham) **and to Jarabulus** in northern Syria (under Turkish protection) (Muraselon, April 21, 2018). The Syrian army released photos of **many weapons handed over to it and of a large arms depot belonging to the Army of Islam, containing tanks and armored vehicles** (see below).

► In the week that preceded the Syrian army attack, **evacuation arrangements were reached** in which Army of Islam operatives and their families were evacuated and transferred to northern Syria. As part of the arrangements, it was stipulated that the Army of Islam operatives **would hand over to the Syrian army thirty tanks and many weapons**, including anti-aircraft guns, anti-tank missiles, mortars, vehicles with mounted machine guns, various types of rockets, and communications devices (SANA on YouTube, April 22, 2018; SANA, April 24, 2018). In view of these arrangements, **the Syrian army did not encounter significant resistance while taking over the eastern Al-Qalamoun ridges**, an operation which started on April 20, 2018, and ended the next day.



One of the buses which evacuated operatives of the Army of Islam and their families from the eastern Al-Qalamoun Mountains towards northern Syria (SANA, April 24, 2018)

► The Army of Islam released a leaflet explaining the reasons for the withdrawal of its operatives from the eastern Al-Qalamoun Mountains without fighting while surrendering their weapons. Among other things, **it accused ISIS of responsibility, over a period of three years, for wearing down and killing hundreds of Army of Islam operatives in the eastern Al-Qalamoun Mountains.** Other reasons mentioned: the advanced weapons used by the Syrians, Russian threats, and the wish to protect the lives of civilians. It was claimed in the leaflet that **the Russian side insisted during the negotiations that all heavy and**

medium weapons in the hands of the Army of Islam operatives had to be surrendered, in return for not attacking the cities and towns on the eastern Qalamoun Mountains (Euphrates Post Facebook page, April 23, 2018).

القيادة العامة
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جيش الإسلام

بعد خمس سنوات من تحرير بعض مدن وجبال القلمون الشرقي والذي تم بدماء شهدائنا وتضحياتهم. يظن الثوار اليوم أمام صلف روسيا وترسانتها العسكرية للانسحاب من هذه المناطق بعد أن أصبح الخروج من المنطقة خياراً وحيداً للحفاظ على المدنيين.

وهنا لا بد أن نبيّن لأحرار شعبنا الصامدين الصابرين بعض الأحداث التي أدت لاتخاذ هذا القرار. إن المنطقة المحررة من القلمون الشرقي ساقطة عسكرياً ومرصودة نارياً حيث تحيط قطعات النظام العسكرية من أوية وكتائب بكل مدن وبلدات المنطقة في ظل حصار مطبق يفصل القلمون عن غيره من المناطق المحررة. وقد كان لتنظيم "داعش" دور كبير في استنزاف المقاتلين حيث قتل التنظيم خلال هجومه على المنطقة مئات من خيرة الثوار على مدار ثلاث سنوات بتواطؤ دولي. حيث كانت قوافل داعش وإمداداته العسكرية تجوب الصحراء المكشوفة وصولاً إلى القلمون الشرقي دون أن تتعرض لنصف من طائرات النظام وروسيا أو طائرات التحالف الدولي.

إن النزيف المستمر في أعداد المجاهدين على جبهات النظام وداعش أنك الفصائل الثورية في المنطقة حيث بقي ما لا يزيد على 2500 مقاتل من كل الفصائل يرايطون على عشرات الكيلو مترات في سلاسل من الجبال الواسعة وعلى أطراف المدن المحررة. وفي الفترة الأخيرة بقي 1200 مقاتل موزعين على كل فصائل المنطقة. وللأسف كان للحاضنة الشعبية في القلمون الشرقي دور كبير في إفشال الصمود والدفع باتجاه التسوية مع النظام ومنعوا خلال السنوات الماضية إتمام أو حتى إطلاق أية معركة لك الحصار عن القوطة الشرقية أو للسيطرة على بعض القطعات العسكرية خوفاً من تصف مدنها المكتظة بالأهالي والنازحين. ووفق هذا الواقع الصعب والتحديات الروسية بسحق المنطقة، شكلت فصائل القلمون الشرقي وفعاليتها المدنية قيادة موحدة يرأسها الزائد أحمد المصري للتفاوض والخروج بقرار جماعي. وبعد مفاوضات مع الجانب الروسي - الذي رفض بقاء الثوار في المنطقة إلا إذا انضموا لقوات النظام في مواجهة داعش - كان قرار الفصائل هو الخروج من المنطقة.

لقد أمر الجانب الروسي خلال المفاوضات على تسليم الفصائل العشرة لسلاحها الثقيل والمتوسط مقابل عدم تصف مدن القلمون الشرقي وبلداتها. ما اضطر الثوار لتسليم بعض الأسلحة الثقيلة، حصّة جيش الإسلام منها 8 دبابات وآليات جرى عطيها قبل تسليمها، وفي محاولة من النظام لتحقيق نصر إعلامي جديد قام بمخافة أعداد السلاح المسلم، وقد تجح للأسف بترويج أكاذيبه بأنقاصه مأجورة وقنوات ومواقع محسوبة على الثورة زوراً وبهتاناً.

الواقع في 2018/04/23
الموقع لـ 1439/08/07

Leaflet issued by the Army of Islam explaining the reasons for its withdrawal from the eastern Al-Qalamoun Mountains (Euphrates Post Facebook page, April 23, 2018)

Weapons that fell into the hands of the Syrian army



Right: Major weapons depot taken over by the Syrian army in the eastern Al-Qalamoun Mountains (Muraselon, April 21, 2018). Left: Tanks seized by the Syrian army (Islamic World Update Twitter account, April 21, 2018)



Right: Tanks handed over to the Syrian army. Left: Gun carried on a truck, handed over to the Syrian army (SANA, April 22, 2018)



Anti-tank missiles and launching pads handed over to the Syrian army (SANA, April 22, 2018)



Right: Anti-aircraft guns handed over to the Syrian army. Left: Mortars and mortar shells (SANA's YouTube channel, April 22, 2018)

The lower Euphrates Valley

Clashes took place this week in the lower Euphrates Valley between ISIS and the Syrian army **at a higher level of intensity than in recent weeks**. The main sites of the battles were **the city of Al-Mayadeen and the town of Hajin, north of Albukamal**. Eighteen Syrian army soldiers were reportedly killed in an attack carried out by ISIS operatives against Syrian army positions in Al-Mayadeen. In addition, it was reported that at least 13 ISIS operatives were killed by artillery fire and Syrian army airstrikes against ISIS targets in Al-Mayadeen (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, April 19, 2018).



**Right: ISIS operative launches a rocket at a Syrian army position in a village north of Albukamal.
Left: The rocket hits the target (Nasher, April 21, 2018)**

Airstrikes against ISIS targets in eastern Syria by the Coalition and the Iraqi Air Force

- ▶ On April 17, 2018, airstrikes were carried out, apparently by the International Coalition, **against ISIS targets in the town of Hajin, north of Albukamal.** A total of 28 ISIS operatives were killed, including seven commanders. One of the targets was reportedly an apartment where a meeting of commanders of ISIS's Furat Province was being held (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, April 20, 2018).
- ▶ The Iraqi media reported that on April 19, 2018, **Iraqi Air Force F-16 fighter planes had attacked ISIS targets in Syria.** The location of the airstrike was not mentioned, but in the ITIC's assessment, it was an **area close to the border between Syria and Iraq. A total of 36 ISIS operatives, including six commanders, were reportedly killed in the airstrike.** Sometime before that, Iraqi Prime Minister Haydar al-Abadi declared that the Iraqi security forces would hunt down ISIS operatives throughout the entire region **and not only in Iraq** (Al-Sumaria News, April 22, 2018).
- ▶ The Iraqi media reported that on April 23, 2018, the Iraqi Air Force had carried out another airstrike, **killing the deputy of ISIS leader, codenamed Abu Luqman al-Suri** (i.e., the Syrian), who attended a meeting that took place **in a building on Syrian territory.** Abu Luqman al-Suri was in charge of recruiting suicide bombers and sending them to Iraq to carry out terrorist attacks (Iraqi News, April 23, 2018).



Right: ISIS target in Syria before being attacked by the Iraqi Air Force. Left: Same target after the attack (Al-Sumaria News, April 19, 2018)

Main developments in Iraq

Iraqi security forces' activity against ISIS

- ▶ The Iraqi security forces continue to operate against local ISIS networks throughout Iraq:
 - ◆ **Kirkuk Province:** Three ISIS operatives were killed in clashes with the Iraqi federal police and forces of the Popular Mobilization in the Al-Zab district, about 88 km west of Kirkuk (Al-Sumaria News, April 19, 2018).
 - ◆ **The city of Mosul:** The Iraqi Security Information Center reported that thirty explosive belts, several IEDs and a body of a suicide bomber had been found in the city of Mosul, on the east bank of the Tigris River (Al-Sumaria News, April 20, 2018).
 - ◆ **The city of Mosul:** The Iraqi security forces captured **the man in charge of security in ISIS** after he had returned from Syria. Many weapons were found in his possession. He admitted setting up two terrorist squads whose intention was to undermine security. In addition, **the man in charge of preparing weapons in ISIS** was also **captured in Mosul** (the Iraqi News Agency, April 22, 2018).

ISIS activity

- ▶ ISIS reported that its operatives had set up ambushes to Popular Mobilization fighters on a military route in **the area of Khanaqin** (96 km northeast of Baqubah, about 8 km west of the border between Iraq and Iran). A Popular Mobilization commander was killed and four other fighters were wounded. Iraqi police forces which arrived in the scene were also attacked (Nasher, April 19, 2018).



Fifteen ISIS operatives saying a prayer before setting out to the area where they would set up ambushes for Popular Mobilization fighters in Khanaqin (Nasher, April 19, 2018)

Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula

► **The Egyptian army** reported that **Nasser Abu Zaql**, ISIS's emir in central Sinai, was killed in the fighting in the central Sinai Peninsula (Facebook page of the Egyptian Armed Forces Spokesman, April 18, 2018). **ISIS's Amaq News Agency** released a video showing wreckage from an Egyptian army APC destroyed by an IED detonated by ISIS near the Al-Jura airport, south of Sheikh Zuweid (Amaq, April 21, 2018).



Right: ISIS operative standing near the track of an Egyptian army APC destroyed by an IED near the Al-Jura airport (Amaq, April 21, 2018). Left: ISIS emir in central Sinai who was killed by the Egyptian security forces (Facebook page of the Egyptian Armed Forces Spokesman, April 18, 2018)

Activity in other countries

Suicide bombing attack in Kabul

► On April 22, 2018, an ISIS suicide bomber blew himself up in west Kabul. The explosion was carried out **among civilians waiting on line to receive their national identity cards**. The

identity cards were distributed in preparation for the Afghan **parliamentary elections scheduled for October 2018**. According to the spokesman of the Afghan Ministry of Health, **57 people were killed and 119 others were wounded** (Afghanistan Times, April 22, 2018). In the ITIC's assessment, the latest suicide bombing attack indicates that **ISIS intends to make an effort to disrupt the upcoming elections in Afghanistan**.

► ISIS reported that the attack was carried out at an election center in Kabul by a **suicide bomber with an explosive vest** (Amaq News Agency, April 22, 2018). Based on the suicide bomber's name, he is apparently an ISIS operative from Pakistan (Haqq, April 22, 2018).



**The scene of the terrorist attack in western Kabul
(Al-Mayadeen, April 22, 2018)**

In the six months that have passed since the fall of the Islamic State, **Afghanistan has been a prominent site** for ISIS's activity in the various provinces. While in Syria, Iraq, Egypt and other countries, **ISIS operatives are on the defensive**, the Khorasan Province (Afghanistan and Pakistan) is an arena where **ISIS takes the initiative and is working intensively to gain a position of power vis-à-vis the Afghan government and the Taliban**. The terrorist activity carried out by ISIS includes **multi-casualty suicide bombing attacks, mainly against Afghan army and security forces, Afghan government institutions, and Shiite Muslims living in Afghanistan**. During the past six months, ISIS carried out **at least nine suicide bombing attacks** (by detonating explosive vests) and another combined attack (detonating a car bomb, firing a rocket and activating IEDs).

Counterterrorism and preventive activity

Discovery of a tunnel between Tunisia and Libya used by ISIS operatives

► According to a Libyan media report, the Tunisian National Guard announced **the discovery of a 70-km tunnel between Tunisia and Libya. The tunnel was apparently used for sending ISIS operatives to Tunisia and by Tunisians who wanted to join the ranks of ISIS.** It is estimated that after the defeats suffered by ISIS in Iraq and Syria, the tunnel was intended to be used by Tunisians returning from the areas of tension (i.e., Syria and Iraq). Tunisian security sources surmise that there are additional tunnels crossing the Tunisia-Libya border and Tunisia-Algeria border (Akhbar Libya, April 24, 2018).

Facebook activity against radical content related to ISIS and Al-Qaeda

► According to Reuters, in the first three months of 2018 (from January to the end of March 2018), **Facebook removed or added warning notes to 1.9 million items of radical content related to ISIS and Al-Qaeda.** This is almost double the amount in the previous quarter (October to December 2017). Facebook says that it uses automatic software that compares images in order to detect content related to radicalism and that the removal of radical content took an average of less than one minute during the first quarter of 2018 (Reuters, April 24, 2018).

The battle for hearts and minds

ISIS's Al-Furqan Media Foundation¹ recently released an audiotape attributed to **Abu Hassan al-Muhajir**, the organization's official spokesman (about 50 minutes long). This is the **first such announcement** since the fall of the Islamic State (November 2017).² It is intended to **strengthen the spirit of ISIS operatives in the various provinces and encourage them to adhere to the "path of jihad" against the "infidels"**. Al-Muhajir stresses that from ISIS's

¹ An institution for the production of ISIS's propaganda materials, especially videos on behalf of ISIS's leadership.

² Abu al-Hassan al-Muhajir was appointed as ISIS's spokesman on December 5, 2016. On that day, an audiocassette of him speaking was released. His other audiotapes were released on April 4, 2017, and June 22, 2017. ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi released his last audiotape on September 28, 2017. **Since the fall of the Islamic State, no audiotapes of ISIS's leader or its spokesman have been released.**

point of view, **there is no difference between the fighting against the Western regimes** (including Egypt and Saudi Arabia) **and the war against the other enemies** (the United States, the Jewish People, and Iran). He ends by calling on the soldiers and supporters of the Islamic Caliphate, noting that **the jihad against the enemy, which wants to take control of Muslim lands, is now facing a new stage and a crossroads**. He calls on ISIS supporters to attack **Russia, Iran, and the United States** which, according to him, the jihad fighters have managed to wear down.



Abu Hassan al-Muhajir, who was appointed as ISIS's official spokesman in December 2016 after the killing of his predecessor, Abu Mohammad al-Adnani (Al-Sabah, December 5, 2016)

► Following are the main points of Abu Hassan al-Muhajir's statements (Archive.org file-sharing website, through which ISIS frequently distributes videos that it produces):

- ◆ The Islamic State **still has loyal fighters who continue to fight against the infidels in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Khorasan (Afghanistan and Pakistan), Libya, Sinai, West Africa, Somalia and Tunisia**. These fighters constantly adhere to their faith **and continue to practice jihad**.
- ◆ As far as ISIS is concerned, there is no difference **between fighting against the Saudi regime, the Egyptian army, Hamas, and the Palestinian Authority, and fighting against the United States, Syria, and Europe**. In its war, the Islamic State does not distinguish between the tyrants in Arab and Muslim countries and the masters of those tyrants. The spokesman calls for adhering to jihad **until Islam rules the world**.
- ◆ **The United States is "daydreaming" when it believes that the Islamic State has been eliminated**. The situation of the jihad fighters is excellent. Their power is increasing, they are united, and within a few years, Allah will grant them victory. **The spokesman notes that the American announcement about moving the embassy to**

Jerusalem is a desire to divert attention from the failure of US policy in the Middle East, and that the account of the “soldiers of Islam” with the Jews is long-standing. He calls on **the United States to get out of the region** and adds that ISIS’s branches around the world are **attacking those who collaborate with it and would continue to do so until the end of time.** He adds that **Russia**, which believes that it is winning, **has also failed.** He blames the two world powers for the devastation caused in Syria and accuses them of persecuting Sunni Muslims.

◆ **The spokesman encourages the ISIS operatives in Egypt and Sinai** and calls on them to be patient. He adds that the organization’s **fighters are fighting the “infidels” in order to (ultimately) confront the Jews (Israel).** The spokesman devotes special attention **to Iraq:** He calls for **attacks on the Iranian Shiites and their collaborators in Iraq.** He addresses the Iraqi jihad fighters and calls on them to destroy every security, military or media facility of the Iraqi government (the “Shiite government”). **The spokesman calls on Sunnis in Iraq to stay away from the polls in the coming elections** (the general elections are scheduled to take place next month). This is because **the polling stations will be targets for the organization’s attacks.**

◆ He concludes by addressing the soldiers and supporters of the Caliphate, saying that **the jihad against the hated enemy**, which wants to take control of Muslim lands, **is now facing a new stage and a crossroads.** He asserts that jihad fighters have managed to exhaust the US and calls on them to **attack the Americans, the Russians, and the Iranians.**