



ISIS's media response to the imminent defeat in the village of Al-Baghouz

March 12, 2019

While the fighting in Al-Baghouz is drawing to a close, ISIS released a video entitled “The significance of the steadfastness in Al-Baghouz.” The messages of the video are intended to cope with the (additional) blow sustained by ISIS, by emphasizing that **the loss in the battle does not indicate a loss in the campaign, which is not over yet, and it is too early to declare ISIS's defeat** (a video released by ISIS's Al-Barakah Province through Shabakat Shumukh, March 11, 2019).



Right: A photo from the video of ISIS's “pocket” in Al-Baghouz Fawqani (Shabakat Shumukh, March 11, 2019). Left: The title of the video: “The significance of the steadfastness in Al-Baghouz” (Shabakat Shumukh, March 1, 2019)

► Several ISIS operatives appeared in the video conveying two main messages addressed to their operatives and supporters. **Following are the two main messages:**

- ◆ **The loss in Al-Baghouz is a loss in the battle, but not in the entire campaign.** One of the operatives who appear in the video says that **the first Muslims in the beginning of Islam lost the battles, but eventually Islam succeeded in establishing itself.** The operative concludes his statement by saying, “War is fickle, sometimes you win, sometimes you lose, but the campaign is not over yet.” Another operative notes that when enemies attack the Muslim believers, the only way [possible] is either victory or martyr's death.
- ◆ **ISIS's operatives in Al-Baghouz are fighting to implement sharia (Islamic law), therefore they will be privileged to enter Paradise, which is the “ultimate eternal**

victory.” An ISIS operative who appears in the video says, **“... if we are killed [for our religion], it means that eventually we won.”** On the other hand, the punishment of the infidels will be eternal Hell. The only ruler in the world who acts in accordance with Allah’s laws is Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, and the only place where sharia is implemented is in the Islamic State’s control area.



ISIS operative codenamed Abu Abd al-Azim: “According to the parameters of this world [...] we lost, but not according to the parameters of the next world” (Shabakat Shumukh, March 11, 2019)



ISIS operative codenamed Abu Abd al-Aziz: “The infidels will be punished by Hell, and the righteous will be privileged to enter Paradise” (Shabakat Shumukh, March 11, 2019)



ISIS operative codenamed Abu Abd al-Rahman: “The nations of the world attack the ISIS operatives for their adherence to Allah’s laws” (Shabakat Shumukh, March 11, 2019)



ISIS operative codenamed Abu Abdallah: “The believers’ way is either victory or martyr’s death” (Shabakat Shumukh, March 11, 2019)