



## ISIS supporters spontaneously respond to the killing of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, while so far there has been no "formal response"

October 30, 2019

### Overview

► **So far no formal ISIS response has been issued regarding the killing of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi** (as of the morning of October 30, 2019). Since October 27, 2019, ISIS has issued routine claims of responsibility for attacks carried out by its operatives in Syria, Iraq and its various provinces in Asia and Africa, with no mention of the killing of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. In ITIC assessment, the absence of a formal response and the continuation of its routine functioning may indicate that **ISIS is in shock**. It may also indicate that there will be **internal power struggles in searching for a successor**.

► However, **the social networks (mainly Facebook and Telegram) have already begun posting spontaneous reactions from ISIS supporters about Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's death**. The main themes are the following:

- ◆ **Praise for Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi** who died as a martyr, emphasizing that the State will continue to exist: "...**The Islamic State remains firmly in place and will continue to harass and punish the infidels...**"
- ◆ **The jihad will continue even after the death of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi or any other senior leader**: "...The prophet [Muhammad] died, Osama bin Laden died...Abu Musab al-Zarqawi died...**but the jihad does not stop when a specific person dies**, even when he is the Caliph himself..."
- ◆ **Threats of revenge**: "...The Emir of the faithful, Abu Bakr Hussein al-Qurashi al-Baghdadi, **promises revenge...**"

## Examples of Reactions from ISIS Supporters

### On Facebook



An Islamic liturgical poem in praise of the Islamic State and al-Baghdadi (Abd al-Rahman al-Maslawi Facebook page, October 28, 2019).



Islamic liturgical poem praising the Islamic State and al-Baghdadi (Facebook page of Nathan Chicharito Newton, October 28, 2019).



A notice reading, "At your order, oh Emir of the faithful, Abu Ibrahim al-Qurashi" (Facebook page of Umu Dujana Wa Nuceym, October 26, 2019).



"Greetings to you and the mercy of Allah and his blessing. Allah will resurrect the soldiers of our [Islamic] State and make them victorious, Allah will preserve our Emir" (Facebook page of Rochelle Molyneux, October 28, 2019).



A picture of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi with the inscription, "The Emir of the faithful, Abu Bakr al-Husseini al-Qurashi al-Baghdadi, promises revenge" (Abu Laith Abu Laith Facebook page, October 27, 2019).

## On Telegram



A Telegram chat mourning the death of al-Baghdadi. In the first response (written on the account of Mubarak al-Badhali, a Kuwaiti extremist Salafist preacher) says, "Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, may Allah have mercy on him. [Your killing] does not mean jihad will end or stop those following your path. I ask our brothers to use the thinking of the golden path that reconciles with reality and ignorance of the religion of the oneness of Allah, which harmed the [Islamic] nation." "Nuhair al-Fadli" answers him, saying, "We ask Allah to receive him [among the shaheeds]. Two of his sons preceded him [as shaheeds] and he aspired to die the death of a martyr for the sake of Allah" (Telegram, October 28, 2019).



"...All jihad fighters who go to fight [for jihad] aspire to die the deaths of martyrs. The prophet [Muhammad] died, Osama bin Laden died, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi died but jihad does not stop when a specific person dies, even when he is the Caliph himself..." (Telegram, October 27, 2019, as quoted by MEMRI).

► Another response stated that "Jihad does not rely on people, but on faith. If al-Baghdadi was in fact killed, we pray to Allah to protect him [until judgment day and the resurrection of the dead]. **The Islamic State remains firmly in place and will continue to harass and**

**punish the infidels..."** (Telegram, October 27, 2019). Another ISIS supporter repeated the theme, **saying that even if al-Baghdadi was killed, ISIS will continue to exist and will not disappear** (Telegram, October 27, 2019).

### **Reaction from the al-Houl displaced persons camp where ISIS wives are being kept**



Interviewed by the Syrian Khutwa website, which is affiliated with the opposition to the Syrian regime, one of the women in the al-Houl DP camp said, "Our faith has remained firm [and even] strengthened" (Khutwa, October 28, 2019).