



ISIS's spokesman calls on Muslims around the globe to spearhead the struggle to thwart President Trump's plan and calls on ISIS operatives in Sinai and Syria to attack Israeli communities

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Speech by ISIS's spokesman and its significance

On January 27, 2020, ISIS's new spokesman released **an audiotape with an explicit call on ISIS operatives in Sinai and Syria to attack Israeli communities** and turn them into a proving ground for ISIS's weapons. In addition, he calls on **Muslims in Palestine and worldwide to spearhead the struggle to thwart US President Trump's Deal of the Century**. This is an **unusual statement** which, in the ITIC's assessment, indicates that **currently, ISIS has a special interest to promote terrorist attacks against Israel and the Jewish people in order to position itself as playing the leading role in the campaign to undermine President Trump's plan**, encourage its operatives and supporters, and maybe also indicate **a unique modus operandi of the recently elected leader**.

► **Ever since the establishment of ISIS, fighting against its various internal and external enemies has always occupied the first place in the organization's overall priorities.** The campaign against the immediate enemies representing a threat to ISIS has overcome the organization's aspiration to liberate Palestine and return it to Islam, which has been postponed for the future. In the ITIC's assessment, **these priorities have not changed fundamentally. However, it is possible that in view of President Trump's plan, ISIS will dedicate greater "attention" than before to carrying out attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets.**

► **What capabilities does ISIS possess in order to carry out the spokesman's call?** ISIS has **operational capabilities in southern Syria** (where the activity of the Hawran Province has recently intensified¹) and in **northern Sinai** (where operatives of ISIS's Sinai Province carry

¹ In recent months, there has been an increase in the scope of activity of the Hawran Province mainly against Syrian targets. ISIS operatives in the Hawran Province take advantage of the poor governance capabilities of the Syrian regime in southern Syria and of ISIS's shift from the rule over a population to guerrilla warfare, which makes it easy for them to regroup and operate in the region. As part of this activity, ISIS operatives in southern Syria have carried out attacks in various forms, including the planting of IEDs, shooting attacks, targeted killings, and raids. The Hawran Province also carried out attacks in the territory of the Golan Heights, mainly shooting at vehicles moving on the roads, also in the vicinity of the Syrian-Israeli border.

out intensive attacks against the Egyptian security forces). In the ITIC’s assessment, **the spokesman’s call is liable to drive ISIS networks in these regions to try to carry out attacks against Israel** (for example, rocket fire, planting IEDs, antitank fire, small arms fire, and perhaps even infiltrating into Israeli territory). In addition, **ISIS supporters around the globe, mainly in Western Europe, are liable to be inspired to carry out attacks against Jewish targets on their own initiative.**

First reverberation of ISIS spokesman’s audiotape in the media

► It should be taken into account that the audiotape of ISIS’s spokesman **may be echoed in various media outlets supporting ISIS around the world.** Thus, for instance, following the release of the audiotape, posters on behalf of a group calling itself Quraysh Media and supporting ISIS (appeared on the Telegram messaging system, January 28, 2020). These posters **echo motifs heard in ISIS spokesman’s audiotape.**



Right: Poster that reads, “O Muslim, O slave of Allah, this is a Jew behind me, come and kill him.”

This message is based on an Islamic tradition related to the Day of Judgment. Left: Poster showing a bomb which is about to land, with an English text that reads, “O Jew, beware, this is a chemical [weapon].” The word “soon” appears on the poster alongside the picture of the falling bomb (Telegram, January 28, 2020)



Another poster that reads in Hebrew, “Wait for this, you dog” (Telegram, January 28, 2020)

Appendix A

Made points made by ISIS's spokesman

Overview

► On January 27, 2020, Al-Furqan, ISIS's media arm, released an audiotape of Al-Muhajir Abu Hamza al-Qurashi, ISIS's new spokesman. The 37-minute audiotape is entitled, "Allah destroyed [everything] on them,² and for the disbelievers is something comparable" (Quran, Surah Muhammad, Chapter 47, Verse 10, Sahih International translation).

In the audiotape, Al-Qurashi calls on ISIS's operatives in Sinai, Syria and elsewhere around the world to spearhead the fighting against Israel and the Jews in order to thwart President Trump's Deal of the Century. He adds that under ISIS's new leader Abu Ibrahim al-Hashemi al-Qurashi, a new stage in jihad has been launched, which is the struggle against the Jews and the return of Jerusalem and all of Palestine to the rule of Islam. In explicit terms, he calls on ISIS operatives in Sinai and Syria to attack Israeli communities and turn Israeli soil into a proving ground for ISIS's weapons (including the launch of rockets with a chemical warhead).



The slide of the audiotape of ISIS's spokesman
(Telegram, January 27, 2020)

The main motifs of the audiotape

► At the beginning of the tape, ISIS's spokesman says that the infidels have waged an overall war against ISIS's jihad fighters, but unsuccessfully, for "the light of Allah is never extinguished" and **ISIS never disappears**. He adds that ISIS's enemies used infidel religious scholars, who incited against ISIS, disseminated propaganda against its operatives, and

² The verse is related to nations destroyed by Allah since they did not heed the words of prophets sent by Allah. The message conveyed is that this will be the fate of corrupt people who deviate from Allah's path.

placed their media at the disposal of the enemies (i.e., members of the US-led anti-ISIS Coalition).

► Al-Qurashi addresses the United States and the “tyrannical” rulers of the Arab states (mainly the Iraqi regime) and says that **their allegations on the elimination of ISIS are baseless**. He mentions that US President George W. Bush announced a victory (in Iraq, in 2003), but his soldiers and those collaborating with the United States continued to be exposed to car bombs and sustain many fatalities even after his announcement. Eventually, ISIS’s spokesman notes, the Americans fled Iraq (referring to the US withdrawal from Iraq in late 2011).

► **He describes the long-time fighting between the US and ISIS**, commending **Abu Mus’ab al-Zarqawi’s** contribution to jihad in Iraq (Al-Zarqawi established Al-Qaeda’s branch in Iraq, from which ISIS emerged). ISIS’s spokesman notes that **Al-Zarqawi asserted that jihad would continue until the conquest of Jerusalem**. He adds that when Al-Zarqawi was killed, the US and the West claimed that ISIS had been defeated, but the organization continued to operate under the leadership of Abu Omar al-Baghdadi and Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi after him (the two ISIS leaders who preceded the current leader). He stresses that believers have fought and are still fighting against the concept of federation in Iraq, against the rule of “infidels” (i.e., the Shiites), and against democracy. **He notes that even then (when fighting against the US in Iraq), ISIS operatives continued to turn their eyes toward Jerusalem.**

► He says that **the Americans believed that with the elimination of Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi ISIS was eliminated – but they were mistaken once again**. For ISIS’s new leader Abu Ibrahim al-Hashemi Al-Qurashi continues down the same path and the “infidels” sustain more and more fatalities. According to him, the Americans are talking about abandoning Iraq now, as they are being defeated, **while ISIS is heading towards Jerusalem**. He adds that the Islamic Caliphate established by ISIS in Syria and Iraq had been exemplary in the implementation of Islamic religious law (sharia). The caliphate had been a source of attraction for immigrants from all over the world, who abandoned the infidel democracies where they had lived. He reiterates that **even after the elimination of Al-Baghdadi, ISIS’s Islamic State continues to exist and expands to various regions around the world**, against the will of those declaring its defeat.

► Al-Qurashi announces that a new stage has begun in ISIS's fighting against the "infidels," noting that all the soldiers of the Islamic caliphate have their eyes turned toward Jerusalem. He threatens that in the coming days, grave things will happen that will make everything done so far be forgotten. According to him, jihad will continue under ISIS's new leader. He says he is praying that Allah will assist the new leader in dealing the "infidels" a severe blow and taking revenge on them. According to him, the new leader is determined, **along with the operatives in all the provinces and countries, to execute the new stage, which is fighting against the Jews and regaining everything that they have stolen from the Muslims, until the conquest of Jerusalem.**

Apart from the vision of the conquest of Jerusalem and the appeal to all of ISIS supporters, **ISIS's spokesman specifically addresses ISIS operatives in Sinai and Syria and calls on them to attack Israeli communities and the Jews' marketplaces.** He calls on ISIS operatives **to use Israel's territory as a proving ground for their weapons and rockets,** chemical and "other" rockets alike.

► **The spokesman calls on Muslims in Palestine and other countries around the globe to spearhead the fighting against the Jews in order to foil their plots and thwart [US President Trump's] Deal of the Century.** He calls on Palestinians to stay away from Hamas and the other organizations collaborating with Iran and expressing their sorrow on the killing of Qassem Soleimani ("Allah's curse upon him"). He calls on Hamas [and the other Palestinian terrorist organizations] to join ISIS, remove the borders with the Jews and fight against them inside "Palestine" [i.e., within the territories of Israel until 1967]. **He also calls on Muslims to fight against the Jews anywhere [in the world]** to "sow fear in their hearts until Jerusalem is free of those infidels and Palestine is returned to the rule of Islam."

► ISIS's spokesman once again turns to the rulers of the United States and the West (the "Crusaders"), noting that their claims of victory over ISIS are baseless. He turns to US President Donald Trump ("the dog of Byzantium"), noting that he and the other presidents of the US ("the dogs") have been claiming for 15 years that they have eliminated the jihadists. However, he says, in practice, "you are the defeated ones," while ISIS has expanded around the world. In relation to the expansion of ISIS, he mentions **Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Sinai, Libya, Somalia, Khorasan (Afghanistan), Pakistan, India, the Caucasus, West and Central Africa, Tunisia, and Algeria.** He calls on jihad fighters [in the various places] to step up their activity against the "infidels," **be patient and stand fast.**

- ▶ He addresses **the Shiites in Iraq** (“rejectionists”), threatening that ISIS has a long-time score to settle with them and stating that a new stage has been launched against them as well. He also threatens **the Kurds** saying that they will pay for what they have done and **calls on tribes in Syria and Iraq**, with which ISIS has a long-time score to settle, to repent. He notes once again **that ISIS has not forgotten its prisoners and is working to liberate them.**
- ▶ At the end of his speech, **ISIS’s spokesman calls on all Muslims to join ISIS and support it.** He calls on them **to “emigrate” to the provinces of the Islamic State and join ISIS’s training camps.** He also calls on ISIS operatives to continue fighting, adhere to their faith, and refrain from division.