



## Comments by Al-Qaeda and its supporters marking the anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks

September 13, 2022

### Overview

- ▶ Al-Sahab Foundation, which is affiliated with the Al-Qaeda leadership, published an announcement on behalf of the organization's leadership marking the anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks, attributing to them the importance of a formative event in Islamic history. The announcement glorifies the dire impact of the attacks on the US economy and the international status of the US and conveys the message that the US "will soon be defeated, Allah willing, in Somalia and elsewhere."
- ▶ As in previous years, posts on social media by Islamic elements affiliated with Al-Qaeda expressed joy for the 9/11 attacks and threatened the US and the West.

### The main messages

#### **Announcement of Al-Qaeda's central leadership commemorating the occasion**

- ▶ On September 11, 2022, Al-Sahab Foundation, which is affiliated with the Al-Qaeda leadership, published an announcement marking the 21st anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks entitled "Achievements of Al-Furqan Day [i.e., the Battle of Badr] on which both groups met [believers vs. infidels]<sup>1</sup> – between the first [Day of] Al-Furqan and the [Day of] Al-Furqan of the current era, the [11th] day of September [2001]." The announcement expresses satisfaction and joy at the 9/11 attacks, equating them to the Battle of Badr, which was the first battle in the history of Islam led by the Prophet Muhammad. Having been held between the Prophet's few supporters and the "infidels" of Mecca, it was the most important battle in the history of Islam, since the small Muslim army could defeat a much larger "infidel" force, thus becoming an ethos in Islam. The victory in the battle paved the road to further conquests. Since that battle, the Muslims had conquered vast territories around the globe,

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<sup>1</sup> This is a reference to a Quranic verse (Surat Al-Anfal, Verse 41) on the first Muslims defeating their opponents from Mecca. Al-Furqan is another name for the Quran. It is intended to separate the truth (Islam) from the lies (the infidels).

from Spain in the west to East Asia. By equating the attacks to the Battle of Badr, the announcement glorifies them, attributing to them the importance of a founding event in Islamic history from which Islam sprang to the height of its power.

► The announcement includes details on the 9/11 attacks and their adverse effect on the United States, especially the major blow to the US economy and international status. It claims that following the 9/11 attacks, the US had been waging its wars around the globe without the capacity to impose its domination on the various regions, and that is why it was defeated in Iraq and Afghanistan, and “it will soon be defeated, Allah willing, in Somalia and elsewhere” (Telegram, September 11, 2022). It seems that the Al-Qaeda leadership is impressed with the activity of the organization’s branch in Somalia, the Al-Shabaab organization, which has recently expanded its activity; it expects that it will expand and spread throughout Somalia and the neighboring regions (apparently, to the Sahel region and other territories nearby) and maybe even become a leading factor in Al-Qaeda.



**The leading page of the announcement (Telegram, September 11, 2022)**

### **Commemorating the 9/11 attacks on social media**

► As in previous years, Islamic elements affiliated with Al-Qaeda commemorated the date on social media by expressing threats against the West and joy for the terror attacks (Telegram, September 11, 2022).

► One of the posters, posted by Sawt al-Zarqawi, a media foundation affiliated with Al-Qaeda, shows Osama bin Laden, Al-Qaeda’s leader at the time of the 9/11 attacks, and demonstrates

the attack on the Twin Towers, with an English caption saying that America will not achieve security until Islam rules “Palestine”<sup>2</sup> (Telegram, September 11, 2022).



**A poster threatening the West, published by Sawt al-Zarqawi, a media foundation affiliated with Al-Qaeda (Telegram, September 11, 2022)**

► Another poster produced by Sawt al-Zarqawi states that the war against the Christians is a war of existence. The caption appears alongside a picture of a masked man brandishing a knife<sup>3</sup> (Telegram, September 11, 2022).



**A poster threatening the United States published by Sawt al-Zarqawi (Telegram, September 11, 2022)**

► Other posters included pictures of birthday cakes designed to commemorate the occasion, as part of the expressions of joy by Al-Qaeda supporters and other Islamic jihadist elements (Telegram, September 11, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> This is a quote from a statement by Bin Laden.

<sup>3</sup> This is a picture of Jihadi John, the codename of Kuwaiti-born Mohammad Emwazi, an ISIS operative notorious for beheading many of the organization’s victims, who was killed in Syria in December 2015. Those who produced the poster are affiliated with Al-Qaeda. Hence, the poster is attributed to Al-Qaeda, apparently using Jihadi John as a way of enhancing the threat.



Cakes made to commemorate the date as part of the expressions of joy by Al-Qaeda supporters (Telegram, September 11, 2022)